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30 January 1985 ... 1113Q

Interview with Ted Henry

by Jack Richman in Europe

June 1984

Richman: I am at the home of Ted and Margaret Henry at Evian-les-Bains, about 45 kilometres from Geneva. Today is that famous D-Day June 6th, the fortieth anniversary of which is being celebrated by our President Reagan, all of the French authorities and the crownedd heads of Europe. This little taping is perhaps not as important in world affairs, but as far as UNICEF is concerned, Ted Henry was a very important figure in the development of the Supply Division of UNICEF. This should be a very interesting tape.

Ted, you started with UNICEF in 1953, and as memory serves, you came directly from UNRWA, where you had a number of dealings with Ed Bridgewater and UNICEF in the bulk food affairs. Would you mind starting at that point?

Henry: In the 1950s, the early 1950s, 51-52, I was Chief of the Procurement Division of UNRWA, Middle East. We were having endless problems with the importation of bulk foods, particularly flour, sugar, oils and fats and related items, which formed the diet of the 1,900,000 Palestine refugees. Mr. Bridgewater was on a visit to the Middle East in connection with provision of skimmed milk powder to this programme by UNICEF, and discussions were entered into with Ed Bridgewater as to whether or not there was some means by which UNRWA

and UNICEF could cooperate so that we could have the advantage of the purchasing power of UNICEF - plus, of course, its almost unlimited knowledge of markets. In particular, Ed Bridgewater had been, before his UNICEF days, marketing man in grains. It took a little while, we had a few problems to iron out, but eventually Ed agreed that he would put this to the UNICEF Executive Board, and towards the end of 1953 an agreement was signed whereby UNICEF would act on behalf of UNRWA in all markets outside of the Middle East.

Richman: You mentioned that UNICEF would act on behalf of UNRWA. Would you mind explaining that a little more fully? To what extent did UNICEF actually assist? Do you recall any of the figures, either in tonnage or in the number of children that were serviced, or in the money value perhaps, that we can then put a tag to it?

Henry: It would be difficult at this point to have an absolute exact recollection of the volume involved, but I could give some indications. There was something in the order of about 30,000 tons of flour required every month, approximately 2,000 tons of sugar and approximately 2,000 tons of oils and fats, and considerable tonnage of other materials. In terms of money, perhaps as much as $5 million a month would have been expended on all the bulk foods. I might add that, as this cooperation with UNICEF got going and expanded, UNICEF was able to take over the bulk buying of some other items, particularly for education and, indeed, for some of the medical fields too. I can't recall exactly what that would have amounted to. Education would have been quite sizeable, medical perhaps not quite so much.

But I can recall, quite early in 1954-55 the development in the Middle East for clean water, one of the earliest adventures of UNICEF into the field of clean water on a large scale; they were in it for a small way before that. UNICEF had not had great experience in the types of flour, types of food required in the Middle East, which was one of the reasons why I was transferred from the Middle East to join UNICEF staff to help in this. In deed, helping to decipher for UNICEF some of the odd requirements which were called for by UNRWA from time to time and for some of the other areas.

Richman: Is it not said that one of the major reasons for placing the UNRWA requirements into UNICEF hands was because UNRWA was not being accorded the same treatment from USAID and from the US Government that UNICEF was receiving?

Henry: That was certainly one of the reasons, but they were many. So far as my recollection goes, and I am quite sure that I am right in saying it, one of the major reasons for this move was the integrity of the UNICEF's Supply Division and their ability to cover wide areas of the market without the intervention of secondary and even tertiary parties in their transactions.

Richman: You then came into UNICEF as an UNRWA employee to handle and assist in the handling of the food intended for the Middle East. But you thereafter were taken over entirely and brought into the UNICEF family.

Henry: Yes, this was a very nice arrangement, a very happy one. Mr. Bridgewater suggested that, in addition to the functions I was performing as "liaison officer" between UNRWA and UNICEF, I should join the UNICEF family, and I was very happy to do so. At that point, in addition to assisting with the continued aquisition of the materials for the Middle East, I worked together with my other colleagues in UNICEF, who by this time had become close colleagues. That was one of the nice things about the Supply Division in UNICEF: one was only a short time in the place and one became a colleague, you were no longer a stranger. As a matter of fact, I didn't feel a stranger from the first day I set foot in the place.

Richman: After a short time in handling the bulk foods almost exclusively, Ken Grant was reassigned from the Supply Division to Latin America, which left a void which I believe you filled at that time.

Henry: That's right. When Ken Grant went to Latin America, I stepped into the gap that he left and began to become more and more involved with the direct UNICEF programme. The activities on behalf of the Middle East became more advisory than concerned with actual acquisition, and this continued to expand. It was, again, one of the attributes of UNICEF: one was not stuck indefinitely in one particular field of work; there was always the opportunity to learn the intricaciies of other products, the acquisition of other products. We were ambidextrous as a team. We able to step into each other's shoes, and where highly technical matters were involved, there was always another colleague who was prepared to help, prepared to advise. I

fitted in very quickly and very easily into the regular puchasing staff of UNICEF.

Richman: During this period, as I recall, you were obliged to learn a great deal about laboratory supplies, medicals, audio-visuals and other areas that Ken Grant had started to develop from the very first days. However, you also, I think, started to take some responsibilities for establishing the first warehouse that UNICEF ever generated, which was in the third basement of the Secretariat building. This happened only a few years after you came, I believe.

Henry: This was something that was very exciting in its simplicity. To begin with, one wonders why it had not been thought of before - a concept, I think, that George Marshall had originally conceived, the idea of carrying stock somewhere of items that were fairly quickly turned over. If I am correct, the first real group of items carried in stock were the original midwifery kits, the design of a midwife box and the equipment that went into it, and some drugs and dietary supplements.

The first type of bag we tried to prepare was not the actual midwife box that we know today. It was a canvas affair which had in it supplies, in accordance with the design of Dr. Leo Eloesser, which was somewhat more elaborate than the present-day midwife kit. We also had very large stocks of simple medicaments such as penincillin, which was used for yaws, and some streptomycin, which we had also allocated for quick shipments from the basement to field programmes for tuberculosis.

This operation was beginning to get quite beyond the capacity of the procurement officer, the Chief of Procurement, to handle together with his other many responsibilities. It was incumbent on me to try and develop this concept and to identify additional items to those already carried, which might be successfully stored for short periods of time in quantity for quick turnover. We allocated a very small area in the third basement, and it was under the management of Mr. Nick Angelini. We had many headaches trying to develop storage facilites, how this was going to be arranged and then to arrange for packing different kits. We worked many many hours on developing the techniques of doing this, gradually moving forward until at one point we were turning over several hundred items to a value of something in the order of a quarter million dollars a year, from the third basement alone.

Richman: At that time, about 1955, the services that UNICEF was demanding from the Supply Division became so complicated and complex that we had occasion then to separate the functions of some of the so-called senior staff into separate categories. I believe at that time you became responsible for what we called "supply services".

Henry: That is right. The programmes were really becoming quite complicated, the demands were increasing. It was almost impossible for Supply people - at that time it was practically all procurement - to keep track of the paper and to try and establish a rationale in its method of procurement. After much discussion, it was decided to establish what was called the Supply Services Section, which really was to take the requests coming from the Programme Division in the

form of procurement requests and try to amalgamate those items that were capable of amalgamation and present them to procurement in a more rational fashion, so that their time was not wasted in trying to decipher what was meant by particular specifications. To try and literally rationalize the pieces of paper coming from the Programme Division so that they were more readily integrated into the procurement system. This also gave rise to the realization that many more items had a common denominator than was first thought, and that these items might also lend themselves to bulk buying not specifically intended for any particular programme, but bought in bulk for a variety of programmes. And we found that the little operation in the third basement had begun to grow. We began to pester our UN colleagues for more and more space. At one point we were actually storing items on the loading ramps in the entrance to the UN.

Richman: One of the tasks of arranging for the separate functions of the different departments of the Supply Division called for you, I believe, to work up a field manual as well as a desk manual.

Henry: The field manual was largely the responsibility of Mr. Heyward, but as I recall, we had a very large input into that process. The idea was that while we in the Supply Division might know very well what we might be doing, our colleagues elsewhere in the Organization were not very well informed on the intricacies of acquiring thousands of items of supplies under conditions which were quite not those of a free market. Bear in mind that much of UNICEF's money was in non-convertable curriencies and the Chief of Procurement and the

staff were constantly under pressure to utilize these currencies to maximum advantage. It was necessary that our colleagues in the field should be at least fairly well informed of the problems of the Supply Division. So the Director of the Division at the time thought that it would be a good idea to produce a desk manual, which we did. We produced this desk manual, which I planned freely in considerable detail. All the work that was required from beginning to end, including the procurement, the supply services section, shipping, insurance - all these items were covered in a fair amount of detail with examples of documentation. From this came the necessity to update the field manual, to bring it more into line with the ever-widening market research that was required by the Supply Division to make the best use of all these currencies that I have already spoken about. So that the Supply Division did contribute very largely to the content of that particular aspect of operations in the field manual.

Richman: To put this into some perspective, the Supply Division at that time was divided largely into two major areas, one in New York at Headquarters and the other in Paris. Therefore, your desk manual and field manual served to harmonize the efforts of both of these offices, even though we were far apart in space.

Henry: That is true. Bear in mind the operation in New York was somewhat different from the operation in Europe. In New York we were working, to all intents and purposes, in a single country for definite procurement (not forgetting that Canada is an individual country - but to all intents and purposes, it was literally the same country).

In Europe however, there were other problems, because the different countries particularly, those in what is known as the Eastern bloc had different methods of operating. And it became necessary to harmonize the operations in Europe with those in America. For this purpose I spent a year with my colleagues in Paris to help introduce into the system in Europe the provisions of the desk manual, so that a procurement officer coming from New York to Paris could automatically know precisely where the different files were and what each different file contained, and vice-versa.

Richman: To advance your career, from this assignment both in New York and in Paris, you were then sent to Brazil because of difficulties at times with some bulk shipments of foods. Would you mind explaining that a bit?

Henry: This was a quite an interesting assignment, not the easiest in the world but nevertheless an interesting one. In addition to the UNICEF provision of skimmed milk powder, the United States Department of Agriculture was also shipping enormous quantities of milk powder to Brazil, and we were having a great amount of difficulty, many many problems in getting the necessary documentation. While I was on a mission basically for UNICEF to try and rationalize their supply methods in Brazil, bear in mind, (if I am correct I can't remember exactly, but I think there were eight ports of entry into Brazil) ships calling at these ports, discharging perhaps several thousand tons of bulk milk powder, presented problems. UNICEF did not have the staff in Brazil to have someone at every port; we had to depend upon the consignee, perhaps the Ministry of Education, Ministry of

Health or whatever in the various states. It ended up, in effect, that we lost several thousand tons of skimmed milk powder. It was part of my assignment to try and locate this and to stop things like this happening in the future. This was purely and simply a matter of staffing and an exercise in supply control, trying to encourage people to have the concept that material things meant money. That not because it was coming from UNICEF, but because it was coming from the U.S. Government, the item involved represented a charge on somebody's budget, and therefore represented money and must be protected, as money should be protected. So my six months in Brazil were spent trying to develop the methods whereby the supply control would be considerably strengthened. Out of this came another manual for supply operations which was distributed fairly widely through UNICEF.

Richman: At about that time, we found that the warehouse in the third basement was completely inadequate, and Mr. Bridgewater was then very largely concerned with finding an alternative packing area, and then looked towards Europe as the site for this second warehouse in our history, and Copenhagen was ultimately selected. There were lots of problems obviously involved in the start of Copenhagen and in which you had a very large part to play.

Henry: The Copenhagen concept stemming from the first operation in the third basement was, should I call it, a masterpiece of thinking development. At the time Copenhagen was selected, perhaps not the best place in Europe. But the actual physical location another

matter. But the selection of Europe was decided upon largely because more and more of the items forming the content for a supply operation in bulk were coming from Europe, or at that point the Procurement Division was developing new markets. For example, many, many surgical instruments were coming from Pakistan, and it was easier to have this centralized in Europe than in the United States. In addition to that, of course at that time, costs would have been much lower in Europe. Yes, the problems were enormous. The first view I had of the site that had been allocated in the free port of Copenhagen was rather frightening. It was huge, huge factory that had formerly been making armaments, and some of the drilling machines were still there. These were dismantled and taken away, and we had this enormous area of space which had to be laid out. That was done. We laid it out, assigned different bearers for bulk storage, other bearers for packing various types of kits. If I recall correctly, the first turnover out of Copenhagen for a nine-month period was of the order of $950,000.

Richman: Although it was not uppermost in our minds at the time that we thought of packing these materials in Europe, it became apparent almost immediately that this was perhaps the most effective way that we could utilize the various difficult-to-spend currencies contributed by the Eastern European countries. It was, as I recall, very difficult for us to place individual orders for shipments from these countries directly to our programmes since in most part, the programmes used only small lots of each individual item. But by buying these large lots which we could put in a warehouse, we could store these materials for a period of time and could select those

items as needed for each programme. We were then able to place large contracts in Romania, Poland, Bulgaria and the USSR, among other coutries. So that the contributions which they made could be assimilated during the year of the contribution, and UNICEF would feel it appropriate to request an additional contribution for the following year.

Henry: That is perfectly correct, exactly the way it worked out. Something we must also mention was that Copenhagen, the idea of storage in Copenhagen, permitted the Procurement Officers in UNICEF to take full advantage of economies of scale. Knowing what items were going to be requested year after year, they were then able to negotiate contracts far larger quantities than needed by any one individual programme. This enabled the Division to take full advantage of purchasing. This was carried to various extremes, one might say, by even at one point storing certain vehicles in Copenhagen. Of being able to take advantage of vehicles for which there was no immediate home, because we were able to order on a production schedule basis and take any surplus that we had even when no programme was immediately ready. We could take them into Copenhagen and then they could be transferred to a programme at a later point.

Richman: You are preceding the story because I think that was coincident to the build-up of our supply for emergency relief, where we maintained stocks of Land Rovers, since Land Rovers had one year or longer delivery period from the factory.

Henry: You are quite right, I was going ahead of things. Maybe I wanted to get in this point about economies of scale because it was very, very important. In the Supply Division, the motivating factor was always value for money, and if one could squeeze the extra one quarter of one percent discount, one must always attempt to do it.

Richman: At that time, you left the Supply Division in New York to accept a post offered by the Programme Division in Brazzaville, Congo. I am sure you had experiences that related to supplies there, as well. I think, in general, we would like to hear something of your stay in Brazzaville.

Henry: It was very interesting, my stay in the Congo and the former French Equatorial territory, Central Africa. One did learn a lot since, if I can say so, three of the countries in the area were land-locked. I had many many lessons in the problems of trans-shipment and transportation of supplies. I also learned something of the problems of ports of entry, particularly in relation to handling. There were a number of people involved in handling supplies from UNICEF who couldn't read where they were destined for; the programmes were probably many hundreds of miles away - in some instances, if we think of the Central African Republic, Chad - several thousand miles away from the port of entry. This led to the idea of marking the cases of goods with identification colours, identification marks, so that the handling people at the port of entry would simply be told that everything that is red or green goes this way, everything that is blue or black goes the other way. Colour coding aided considerably in shipping. These were many of the problems that one saw in the

field. If I might at this point relate a little anecdote of my stay in Brazzaville: I was confronted with a supply problem on one occasion and gave my verdict as to how the problem should be handled and what the solution was, and one of the staff members who had been there sometime said, "Oh no, no; we can't do it that way. You see, Headquarters says it must be done this way." And I was handed a directive from New York Headquarters indicating indeed that this man was right and that I was totally wrong. You can image how I felt when I turned the piece of paper over to identify the culprit and found that it was my own name that was on it. So I did learn a lesson, at least one in Brazzaville, that people in Headquarters didn't know at all.

Richman: Are there any other matters that relate to your period in Africa that you would like to mention at this time?

Henry: There are many things that one can think about, but it is awfully difficult to select. The time I was there, of course, there was the conflagration in Biafra, and the inflow of children from that war-torn State into neighbouring countries such as Gabon, Cameroon caused many, many problems. This was in 1968-1969, and there were real problems of providing these children, no matter how temporarily it might have been, with the materials for continuing school work, even for basic medicine. I can remember being very, very touched when I visited one of the centres where Dr. Kyaruzi, who was the Director for UNICEF in Africa at that time, was working, and seeing the total dedication of the young French soldiers who were helping to take care of these children in hospitals, the orderlies and the

doctors. It was tremedously touching, and to know that UNICEF was at that point developing - indeed, I think, already developed - and shipping out the special food for these children. Somewhere amongst my souvenirs - I don't have them here - I have photographs of before-and-after children who were skeletons, stick legs, bloated bellies, and later after administration of this special food from UNICEF, they were dancing on the table, singing, joyful, I don't know what the long-term results of that experience would have been, but at least, in that very, very short time, it was a proud moment to be a part of the UNICEF Organization.

Richman: By special foods, do you mean the K-mix, that we generated?

Henry: That is right, K-mix.

Richman: I recall the beginnings of this K-mix, which would lead to another chapter later. After your Brazzaville episode, which lasted some two years or longer, you returned to the Supply Division. By then the entire Organization was beset by a number of disasters in which we were becoming more and more active in helping to relieve. Would you like to talk a bit about that?

Henry: In terms of excitement - if one could use tragedies as being appropriate to a feeling of excitement, I don't think it is quite right - but nevertheless, that is how one felt, was always keyed up This was the most thrilling and satisfying period, even though on the other side there was great suffering.

The first real disaster was an earthquake in Latin America - Chile - I think. It was followed almost immediately, before we had time to clear our desks from one, we had this enormous tidal wave sweeping up the rivers at Dhaka (at that time East Pakistan), and as soon as the flood waters subsided, there was the civil war, and then came Bangladesh. The exit of 18 million people into Calcutta. I can remember very well at that time I think we had (Supply Division I am talking about) a 707 jet somewhere in the skies between the Western Hemisphere and Dum Dum airport in Calcutta every twenty-four hours. Forty-two tons of supplies had to be found and loaded on each airplane because, I was reminded on one occasion, an aircraft cost $4,000 an hour to keep on the ground, and those people that were providing us with the aircraft, the Canadians and United States Government, did not like to pay $4,000 for aircraft sitting idle. So for the Supply Division at that time, many of the rules and regulations were slightly bent. I may cock my hat to the Chief of the Supply Division at the time and the Comptroller: they worked out a very neat arrangement of overcoming the requirement that all contracts had to be passed by the Contracts Review Committee. We succeeded in getting this limited to about a ten-minute operation in order that Mr. Richman could get his contacts out and be assured that the material was going to be at a particular airport. I can remember many, many times - he is not bald but I am - he tore his hair out, but we had to move supplies sometimes from one airport to another because the aircraft couldn't land at a particular point. There was one occasion, I think it was on a Friday afternoon, that we received a telephone call from Washington, saying that an aircraft at that point was flying over Teheran and would be landing in Frankfurt.

Could we have 40 tons of supplies at Frankfurt Airport in a few hours time? Jack Richman and myself consulted, and we found out that there was no way we could do anything about it. So I called Heino Wittrin in Paris, and Heino thought a little while and said he would call be back. We sat waiting for a telephone call and eventually it came, and he said, no we can't get anything to Frankfurt but we could get you 40 tons to Schippol (sp), in Holland. Then we had to call Washington, and by this time the plane had traversed another couple of thousand miles and must be nearing the coast of Europe. The Transport Controller in Washington said, I hope you know what you are doing because that means another hour's flying time, and so many more gallons of petrol would be consumed and we better have the tonnage there. Our colleagues in Paris had the tonnage at the airport, and the aircraft was loaded and left again, and a few hours later heading back for Dom Dom airport. But no one had very much sleep that night.

Richman: In addition to the free airlifts that we obtained from both Canada and the U.S as well as some of the Scandinavan countries, our Copenhagen warehouse was able to airlift within 24 hours after demand a wide variety of supplies and on very numerous occasions paid for entirely by UNICEF including the airlift. The preparation, however, by UNICEF for UNIPAC to become a demand warehouse of that nature required a great deal of planning.

Henry: Indeed it did. It required not only a great deal of planning; it required a great deal of foresight to be able to anticipate the kinds of things that were likely to be needed. I can recall many meetings, not formal meetings, very informal - maybe over a cup of tea or

coffee - when ideas were thrown out and rejected, accepted, fought over, argued about, but evenutally we managed to get a very good range of items carried in stock in Copenhagen.

The UNICEF Supply Division had some other roles to play, simple, maybe not too terribly important. I can recall one, in the time of one of these disasters, a rather famous orthopaedic surgeon in New York died, and after attempting to offer his x-ray equipment and other facilities and his library, his daughter called UNICEF to find out if they could make use of it or suggest a use for it. This piece of equipment, I had no idea of its value, but I had been given to understand that it was one of the finest libraries in New York. UNICEF was able to arrange for the original manufacturers of this equipment, largely because UNICEF had good contacts with them, Mr. Richman got the engineers to look at the equipment, put it into good order, change the lamps that required changing, and it was packed at no cost and shipped to Peru, where this hospital had been completely damaged by the earthquake and was able to get this piece of equipment. In many instances, we were a reference point for contributions from manufacturers of different items that were of no use in our programmes and we channelled them to other organizations where they could be used to their best advantage.

Richman: That is true, but we tried to minimise those because 99 percent of the offers we received turned out to be valueless for UNICEF's use. Most articles used by doctors for many years were no longer trustworthy even in the United States, also they were built for different electrical currents and energy demands. And we found it

was useless in the long run to accept these, so that later we made it a practice to reject such offers.

However, we did continue to take pharmaceutical manufacturers end-runs and other types of free material as Ted just mentioned. We accepted bandages and band-aids free of charge from Smith and Nephews in the U.K., which we used as fillings for virtually every shipment to health clinics made from the warehouse. From this build-up of disaster supplies, you then went to Geneva for a period of time, after which you left UNICEF. Would you mind saying a few words on Geneva?

Henry: Following all of these disasters, the United Nations created the Office of the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator. This office was located in Geneva, and it was part of the function of the Geneva Office to co-ordinate the UNICEF activities with the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator. Of course, because Geneva was the home of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva was the obvious point of co-ordination.

The Geneva Office, in addition to its continued supplies operation, was the focal point with the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator for channelling UNICEF's contribution into the whole UN operation for disasters. Shortly after, a year after I was in Geneva, I finally retired.

Richman: To conclude this, although you retired from UNICEF, you did accept appointments to ECA in Addis Ababa. Then afterwards to the IIC

UNCTAD in Geneva, which led to your final retirement from the U.N. family.

Henry: These were interesting assignments, not completely unrelated to what I was doing before in UNICEF. It was the concept that the developing countries, particularly those that were classified as least developed had very little in the way of knowledge and external trade of their countries. Bear in mind that most of the least developed countries are least able to export, but they do have enormous programmes of importation, whether from their own resources or from loans and grants from offshore. It was this programme that ECA was to try to further enlighten the Government officials of the least developed countries about: the importance of rationalizing all aspects of the import trade. In this function I covered most of the countries in Africa, sometimes two or three times to a different country, sometimes for a week, sometimes longer. Out of this pilot project, there became a much wider, world-wide programme, developed and centred in the International Trade Centre of UNCTAD and GATT in Geneva, and I had the privilege to help get this programme going before I finally hung up my fountain pen.

Richman: Thank you very much, Ted, for a very, very illuminating discussion of what I think was a very worthwhile career in public service.

END OF INTERVIEW

*From 1955-1968 Edward Henry was in the Supply Division, in the latter years as Chief of Supply Services. In 1968 he was appointed UNICEF Representative in Brazzaville where he remained until _____. Previous to UNICEF he was personal assistant to the Executive Officer of UNRRA. Later he worked with IRO and UNRWA in their supply and procurement division.

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