

A United Nations Assessment Project Study

August 30, 1983

UNICEF, BEWARE—DANGEROUS SHOALS AHEAD

INTRODUCTION

UNICEF is widely admired as one of the most successful United Nations programs. Fund-raising efforts for UNICEF attract the sympathy and support of private citizens, government officials, nongovernmental organizations, and private corporations throughout the world. Best known, perhaps, are the UNICEF greeting cards and the annual Halloween "Trick or Treat for UNICEF" drives. Officials within U.N. specialized agencies, other voluntary programs, and national missions describe UNICEF as having one of the most "enviable" missions of any U.N. program.

Indeed, the UNICEF staff is devoted to improving the lot of the world's children through better health and nutrition, support for cleaner water and improved sanitation, and educational and social services for children and mothers in developing countries. These tasks UNICEF has performed capably and professionally for almost four decades. The United States and its citizens have been the strongest supporters of UNICEF efforts, providing \$73.1 million or 19 percent of UNICEF's total 1982 income of \$378 million in general resource, specific purpose, and nongovernment contributions. Since 1945, Americans have given approximately \$800 million in both government and nongovernment contributions.

UNICEF is much more than greeting cards and Trick-or-Treaters, however, and the funds raised by these and other efforts at times support activities that are not only missing from the original UNICEF mandate but, in many cases, may hinder the attainment of its ambitious and worthwhile goals. Some of the changes taking place within UNICEF have been evolving over several years, while others are much more recent.

With the retirement of the former UNICEF director, Henry Labouisse, in 1981 and the appointment of the current director,

Dr. James Grant, the image of UNICEF has changed from one of charity and "aid-for-children" to one of "advocate-for-children"-- an image underlying a new activism at UNICEF headquarters and regional offices. When Dr. Grant assumed the helm at UNICEF, he vowed to make UNICEF more aggressive and productive, but redirecting UNICEF's course toward advocacy for children's rights and health may prove less than effective in delivering the basic improvements needed by the some 1.3 billion children in the developing world. It means that UNICEF has begun to steer a course toward the dangerous shoals of political rhetoric and ideology upon which many U.N. specialized agencies already have foundered. Instead of concentrating on the well-being of infants and children in developing countries, where some 40,000 children die each day,¹ UNICEF has begun diverting its time, energy, and financial resources to those activities and agenda typical of the now highly politicized United Nations. Examples:

1) UNICEF is becoming increasingly active on the issue of disarmament. It decries the enormous sums spent on armaments, relative to the smaller sums spent on child nutrition and health. An important theme of UNICEF's "Development Education Kits" is called "Peace Education." Not only does this ignore the enormous sums spent on armaments in the developing countries in recent years,² particularly among those who are members of the UNICEF Executive Board, but it diverts the valuable attention of the Board from its primary focus. The tendency to shift the focus of the Executive Board to issues unrelated to the UNICEF mandate has been relatively well controlled--thus far--yet there are indications that the pressures are mounting and the rhetoric may become more strident in future UNICEF meetings. Reduction of the vast military arsenals throughout the world certainly deserves widespread support, but it is not a task that UNICEF should undertake.

2) Members of the UNICEF Executive Board have advocated establishment of the so-called New International Economic Order as a foundation for "more rapid socio-economic development in the developing countries." They see this as a prerequisite for improving the health and nutrition of the world's children,³ although many economic experts warn that the New International Economic Order will impede development and thus undermine the health and welfare of children. Rather than devote its resources to such a strategy, UNICEF should be more directly applying its technical expertise to the real problems of women and children in developing countries.

¹ James P. Grant, Executive Director of UNICEF, The State of The World's Children 1982-83 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 1.

² Armaments expenditures in developing countries in 1979 have been estimated to be \$118.7 billion, representing an 8 percent increase over 1978. See: John Buckman, "The U.N. and Disarmament: The Second Special Session," Heritage Foundation Background No. 186, May 16, 1982, pp. 1-2.

³ United Nations, Economic and Social Council, UNICEF Executive Board Summary Record of the 567th Meeting, May 10, 1982, E/ICEF/SR.567, p. 2.

3) UNICEF has strayed from its primary path by collaborating with the World Health Organization (WHO), a specialized agency of the U.N., in monitoring the International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes. This makes UNICEF a quasi-international regulatory agency, a function not authorized by the 1946 resolution that established the Charter for UNICEF.⁴

4) UNICEF provides administrative and financial support to several U.N. nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), which purportedly further consumer causes, but are inherently biased against the free enterprise system. Such support elevates the status of some NGOs at the U.N. above the merely consultative role that they are intended to play. It is doubtful that U.N. agencies such as UNICEF should provide financial and technical means for NGOs to pursue their particular objectives. After all, funding for U.N. agencies comes from member states to execute an approved program, not for outside NGOs whose activities and agenda the U.N. donor member states may not endorse.

Recent changes in the membership of UNICEF may also pose problems for those both within the organization and within the U.N. who wish to maintain a technical, apolitical direction to UNICEF programs. In 1982, the membership of the UNICEF Executive Board was enlarged from 30 members to 41. Not only is the number of Board members larger than it was for UNICEF's first 36 years, but the nature of the Board has changed as well. Through 1981, the Board had consisted of fifteen developed and fifteen developing nations. In 1982, the General Assembly voted the increase in the number of countries on the Board and the new composition, to include nine African states, nine Asian states, six Latin American states, four East European states, and twelve West European and other states. The forty-first seat rotates among these regional groups annually, with African, Latin American, and Asian states respectively holding that seat through 1984.

These changes mean that 29 of 41 Executive Board members represent either the developing nations in the so-called Group of 77 or the Soviet Union and its allies. This creates a majority on the Board who favor the ideology of the so-called New International Economic Order, and oppose free market approaches to development problems. It is also likely that the expansion of the Board will mean decisions are more difficult to make and consensus more difficult to reach. While it may be true, as many U.S. observers maintain, that UNICEF has not yet been "hampered by the disruptive political rhetoric that marks the specialized agencies,"⁵ UNICEF may find the "channel markings" much more difficult to follow in the years ahead. The direction that the organization already has begun steering does not appear to be as steady or legitimate as the course it was originally designated to navigate.

⁴ General Assembly Resolution 57 (I), "Establishment of an International Children's Emergency Fund," 11 December 1946.

⁵ Stephen S. Fenichell, "Suffer the Little Children," *Worldview*, Volume 26, Number 7 (July 1983), p. 16.

EARLY UNICEF ACTIVITIES

General Assembly Resolution 57(I) created the U.N. International Children's Emergency Fund in December 1946 to provide emergency relief and rehabilitation to children who were victims of World War II. The Resolution provided that UNICEF was to be financed by voluntary contributions of governments and individuals and the residual assets of the U.N. Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), which had provided relief to European children immediately after the War and which was being phased out.

At the peak of UNICEF operations in Europe between 1946 and 1948, some six million children were receiving a daily supplemental meal through 50,000 centers in twelve countries. More than eight million children were vaccinated against tuberculosis, and various other types of health programs were supported as well. Outside Europe, UNICEF delivered aid for health and child feeding--first in China in 1948 and then in other Asian countries. In 1949, UNICEF began extending aid, mainly for anti-tuberculosis vaccinations, to countries in the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa. Aid to Latin America for child nutrition and health projects also began in 1949.⁶

In 1950, UNICEF began to turn even more toward fulfilling the basic needs of children in developing countries. By 1953, 62 percent of UNICEF program allocations were for projects in Asia, 17 percent in Latin America, 5 percent in Africa, and only 4 percent in Europe. In October 1953, the General Assembly voted to make UNICEF permanent (Resolution 802(VIII)), reaffirming the broader terms of reference that it had established in 1950. The words "International" and "Emergency" were dropped from the name, and the organization became known as the "United Nations Children's Fund," although the acronym UNICEF was retained.

In 1976, the General Assembly proclaimed 1979 as the International Year of the Child (IYC), and gave UNICEF the responsibility of coordinating activities of all the countries. One goal of IYC was to create a permanent high-level concern for children on the part of the various nations' governments and populations. Another goal was to foster worldwide recognition that programs for children should be an integral part of each country's economic and social plan. In 1979, General Assembly Resolution 34/4 designated UNICEF as the lead agency of the U.N. System responsible for coordinating the follow-up activities for the International Year of the Child. UNICEF was also given responsibility for educating the governments of developing and industrialized countries in the needs and problems of children throughout the world.⁷ Yet it

⁶ U.N. Economic and Social Council, UNICEF, An Overview of UNICEF's Policies, Organization and Working Methods, E/ICEF/670/Rev. 2 (30 March 1983), p. 1.

⁷ U.S. Congress, House Appropriations Committee, Survey and Investigations Staff, A Report to the Committee on the Selected Organizations and Programs of the United Nations, March 1983, p. 43.

was also in 1979 that UNICEF funds were believed to have been diverted to the African National Congress (ANC) for the support of terrorist raids into Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and South Africa. The strong evidence of this raised the question of UNICEF's ability to ensure that its assistance is restricted to humanitarian services alone and that the organization's activities remain above and outside of politics.

UNICEF AID TO KAMPUCHEA

The year 1979 also marked the beginning of UNICEF's role as the lead agency for the U.N. in Kampuchean (Cambodian) emergency operations. Since August that year, UNICEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross, in cooperation with the U.N. World Food Program, have been providing Kampuchea with humanitarian aid, particularly food and medical supplies. While UNICEF will spend close to \$4.25 million for general resources in Kampuchea in 1983, the level of UNICEF involvement in that country is decreasing. This is important, for it was feared that UNICEF's role in Kampuchea could bestow legitimacy to Vietnam's puppet regime in Phnom Penh. In an attempt to allay these fears, UNICEF has assured the U.S., for example, that no expenditures will be made in Kampuchea for major capital items. In addition, UNICEF's program there is subject to annual review by the Executive Board, and UNICEF has placed only temporary project personnel in Phnom Penh.⁸

While accepting the need for humanitarian assistance, the U.S. government rightly maintains that educational assistance is not an appropriate use of UNICEF resources because the Vietnamese imposed regime probably will use Kampuchean schools for indoctrination purposes. U.S. suspicions regarding such programs have mounted since it recently was discovered that schools in refugee camps in Lebanon, administered by the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), were used for military training and indoctrination of terrorists of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).⁹

Between January and December 1981, when UNICEF was the lead agency in the Kampuchea Emergency Program, UNICEF funding for education programs was \$2.2 million, or approximately 8 percent of the total assistance package from UNICEF. In that same period of time, UNICEF spent only slightly more on health programs in Kampuchea (\$3.5 million). Under circumstances in which hundreds of thousands of Cambodians have been displaced and thousands killed during the Vietnamese invasion, beginning in 1979,¹⁰ UNICEF funds

⁸ UNICEF, Position Paper on UNICEF's Proposed Program for Kampuchea, Agenda Committee Item 4 (e), Program Committee, May 9-20, 1983, UNEC D-169 Add 3/1, p. 2.

⁹ The United Nations Chronicle (New York, The United Nations, December 1982), p. 94.

¹⁰ Recent estimates indicate that since 1979, at least 300,000 Cambodians have fled their own country and have crossed the Thai-Cambodian border, entering Thailand as refugees. At least 50 percent of these are estimated to be women and children. Source: Migration and Refugee Services, United States Catholic Conference.

might have been more prudently spent on health and shelter aid, rather than education programs that could be employed to propagandize against the Kampuchea Program's largest contributor--the U.S.

UNICEF'S NEW PRIORITIES

In March 1983, UNICEF's Executive Board released its Medium-Term Plan for 1982-1986. This plan, the Executive Board explains,

sets out UNICEF work within the framework of relevant global objectives adopted by the international community to reduce infant and young child mortality and improve child development through primary health care, clean water, sanitation, limitation of severe malnutrition, universal primary education, abolition of widespread illiteracy and improvement of the situation of women.¹¹

UNICEF is also described in the Plan as seeking "to cooperate with countries in their national reviews of policies, programs, and services affecting children in the national development effort." Within the framework of this plan, Executive Director of UNICEF James Grant has proposed measures that, he claims, will bring about a revolution in child health. A serious commitment to this revolution, Grant maintains, could "yet reaccelerate progress for the world's children, slow down the rate of population growth, and reduce child malnutrition and child deaths by at least half before the end of the 1990s."¹² Grant demonstrates how four specific opportunities--oral rehydration therapy, universal child immunization, the promotion of breastfeeding, and the mass use of child growth charts--provide "low-cost, low-risk, low-resistance, peoples' health actions which do not depend on the economic and political changes which are necessary in the longer term if poverty itself is to be eradicated."¹³

To these, Grant adds the advantages of "Family Spacing"--that is, the spacing out of births which can "shorten the time-lag between falling birth rates and falling death-rates"--and "Food Supplementation," providing food subsidies for those who do not have the means to earn enough to buy the right amount of food in the "vital years." Together, these six measures (Growth Charts, Oral Rehydration, Breastfeeding, Immunizations, Food Supplementation, and Family Spacing) describe the UNICEF acronym GOBI-FF, which Grant has been attempting to promote as the potential, low-cost solution to reducing the 40,000 daily child deaths in the developing world. Grant also is attempting to obtain the active support of the infant formula and pharmaceutical industry for

¹¹ U.S. Economic and Social Council, UNICEF, Medium-Term Plan for the Period 1982-1986 (New York, UNICEF, 22 March 1983), E/ICEF/699, p. 6.

¹² Grant, op. cit., p. 2.

¹³ Grant, op. cit., p. 6.

marketing the oral rehydration packets in developing countries. The strains in the recent past relationship between UNICEF and several of these companies, particularly in the issue of the implementation of the World Health Organization's Infant Formula Marketing Code, may make future cooperation difficult.

Although UNICEF has correctly portrayed GOBI-FF as a new strategy "package" for dealing with infant mortality and morbidity in developing countries, the components of the program are not new and have been employed extensively for many years in several developing countries. One of the previously most common programs throughout the developing world is the use of growth charts.

Growth charts comprise individual records of a child's weight over a period of 36 months. The charts are kept either with the child, and maintained by the mother, or in a central health clinic at the village or community level. They are intended, Dr. Grant maintains, to serve "as a stimulus and guide to the proper feeding of the pre-school child."¹⁴ UNICEF intends the growth charts to be used in such a way that "regular monthly weighing, and the entering up of the results by the mother herself, can make malnutrition 'visible' to the one person who cares most and can do most about improving the child's diet."¹⁵

While the use of growth charts and other components of the GOBI-FF program are, as several experts in the field of infant health and nutrition maintain, important and helpful, the problem in most developing countries lies in their implementation. In many instances in these countries, data that are necessary to improve infant health are often improperly logged, examined, administered, and maintained. Most developing countries, particularly the poorest ones, do not have the trained personnel to maintain the thousands of records needed to monitor infant growth, proper nutrition, and immunizations. Related experiences with growth charts that are maintained and updated by the mother, instead of at the local clinic, have all too often produced mainly incomplete or misplaced charts.

At an administrative level, UNICEF appears to be involved in a struggle with the World Health Organization for responsibility for health programs in the Third World. Several senior staff members of WHO, as well as its director, reportedly have been annoyed with the publicity that UNICEF has received for the recent UNICEF proposals for reducing infant mortality and morbidity in the GOBI-FF Program. UNICEF may be forced to alter its image as a health organization and to ensure integration of its programs with those already established in developing countries by WHO. The U.S. Congress should seek further information on the extent of UNICEF-WHO cooperation and potential confrontation in the health

¹⁴ Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

field, and should be particularly wary of redundancies in the programs of the two organizations.

It is too early to assess whether UNICEF's GOBI-FF Program will succeed. Certainly, anything that offers hope in reducing infant and child mortality and morbidity in developing countries is welcome, particularly if the program promises improvement at relatively little expense. Many experts who have worked in nutrition programs in developing countries for many years, however, express some skepticism of UNICEF's claims of advances in health improvement. Not only the use of growth charts, but also a "campaign to halt and reverse the disastrous trend from breast to bottlefeeding," seem less well substantiated than UNICEF admits.

The UNICEF GOBI-FF Program does appear to offer some hope in at least partially reversing the trends in infant mortality and morbidity in the developing countries and should therefore receive U.S. support. The extent of this support, however, should be determined after the program has been tested in those countries where children suffer most severely from malnutrition and various diarrheal diseases.

The Expansion of UNICEF's Roles

UNICEF is a subsidiary of the General Assembly but maintains its own governing body. Its staff and facilities are financed from its own resources, derived from voluntary contributions. The work of UNICEF is reviewed annually by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the General Assembly. Its financial report, accounts, and the report of the Board of Auditors are submitted to the General Assembly and are reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and by the Fifth Committee.¹⁶

UNICEF's Executive Board has been able to maintain some independence from the General Assembly and ECOSOC. As such, UNICEF programs and agenda have not succumbed completely to the anti-Western, anti-free market rhetoric and action that have characterized the main U.N. bodies since the mid-1970s. Nevertheless, some of this rhetoric has been seeping into the programs and agenda of UNICEF and its Executive Board. Examples of this "creeping politicization" are found in the discussion of disarmament and the world's children and the New International Economic Order at recent meetings of the Executive Board of UNICEF, in the expansion of UNICEF's role to that of a quasi-regulatory agency in monitoring various aspects of the World Health Organization's code for the Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes, and in UNICEF's handling of various international aid programs throughout the developing world.

¹⁶ E/ICEF/670/Rev.2, 30 March 1983, op. cit., p. 3.

UNICEF and Disarmament

On several occasions during the past two years, UNICEF Executive Board members have used the UNICEF platform to warn against the dangers of a "new" arms race or to ask UNICEF to send a message calling for "new effective disarmament measures in the interests of the children of the world"¹⁷ to the General Assembly's Second Special Session on Disarmament. While disarmament is a critically important matter, it is unlikely that UNICEF's Executive Board has the technical expertise to contribute usefully to a discussion of it. A continuing discussion of this issue at the Executive Board meetings and the publication of UNICEF's "An Approach to Peace Education,"¹⁸ reflect the kind of politicization that has crippled such specialized agencies as the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), and the International Labor Organization (ILO). Inside and outside the U.N., there are numerous forums for addressing the issues of arms and disarmament; UNICEF is not one of them, nor should it be. Consideration of this issue diverts UNICEF from its assigned work--improving the health and nutrition of children in the developing world.

UNICEF and the New International Economic Order

A summary of the 567th UNICEF Executive Board meeting in May 1982 reveals how delegates to the UNICEF Executive Board have begun using the Board to support the ideals of the NIEO and to make the connection--not supported by evidence--of NIEO's importance to the world's children. The chairman of the Executive Board, Dragaur Mateljcek of Yugoslavia, spoke of the concern of developing countries for the "injustice inherent in current international economic relations:"¹⁹

The strengthening of world peace and the establishment of a new international order were the only possible foundations for more rapid socio-economic development in developing countries, which was itself a prerequisite for improving the situation of their children.²⁰

The "new international order" of which the Executive Board chairman spoke is the New International Economic Order, formally adopted by the Sixth Special Session of the General Assembly in April 1974, and used as the basis for a wide range of initiatives within the U.N. These initiatives include the United Nations Law

¹⁷ Address by Mr. Simai (Hungary) at 569th meeting of UNICEF Executive Board, May 13, 1982, UNICEF, New York, E/ICEF/SR.569, p. 2. (This speech was severely criticized later by the American delegate, Mrs. Benton.)

¹⁸ UNICEF's Development Education Kit, No. 6, "An Approach to Peace Education."

¹⁹ Remarks of Chairman of the Executive Board at the 567th meeting of the UNICEF Executive Board, May 10, 1982, E/ICEF/SR.567, p. 2.

²⁰ Ibid.

of the Sea Convention and the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. Both have been rejected by the U.S. Though NIEO has been presented as simply a kind of recompense for the West's alleged exploitation of the developing world's resources, its real thrust, according to Peter Bauer, Professor of Economics at the London School of Economics, and John O'Sullivan of the London Daily Telegraph, is the implication that "everyone everywhere should be entitled to a substantial income by virtue of being alive, regardless of economic performance."²¹ "Correcting inequalities and redressing existing injustices" translates into a massive worldwide redistribution of wealth.²² This means a mandatory transfer of goods, resources, and technology from the industrial to the developing nations--without compensation.

There is not a shred of evidence, moreover, that the NIEO's policies will quicken economic development or even--as is crucially relevant for UNICEF--improve the health, nutrition, and general well-being of the 1.3 billion children in the 112 countries where UNICEF operates. The NIEO plainly seems designed to expand the size and enhance the wealth of Third World bureaucrats at the expense of improvements in the "state of the world's children."

In an interview with the Heritage Foundation, UNICEF Executive Director James Grant forcefully argued that UNICEF, alone among programs and agencies of the U.N., has avoided the politicization that hampers such organizations as UNESCO and the World Health Organization. Yet he admitted that the directors of UNICEF had a responsibility to support the goals and objectives of the U.N. General Assembly, including the New International Economic Order, and could not divorce themselves from those objectives. Ironically, however, UNICEF's delivery of its vital services to the world's children depends on how much UNICEF does divorce itself from the NIEO and the rest of the highly politicized agenda of the U.N.'s radicalized majority.

UNICEF As Regulator

Nowhere have the activities of UNICEF appeared more remote from the guidelines of its original mandate than in its increasing participation in monitoring various U.N. codes, particularly the World Health Organization's International Code for the Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes, more commonly known as the Infant Formula Code. UNICEF had a significant role in drafting the Code at a series of WHO/UNICEF conferences on infant and child feeding, beginning in Geneva in 1979--two years before the Code was voted upon in the World Health Assembly. Even before this, WHO and

²¹ Peter Bauer and John O'Sullivan, "Foreign Aid for What?" Commentary, Vol. 66, No. 5 (December 1978), pp. 41-48.

²² William Scully, "The Brandt Commission: Deluding the Third World," Heritage Foundation Backgrounders No. 182, April 30, 1982, p. 8.

UNICEF joined forces at Alma Ata in the Soviet Union in 1978 to sponsor a conference on primary health care. A UNICEF/WHO Committee on Health Policy (JCHP), consisting of representatives of the Executive Boards of UNICEF and WHO, meets periodically to review progress of joint activities, including the Infant Formula Code. The WHO/ UNICEF Committee can also recommend changes in UNICEF programs to the latter's Executive Board.²³

Of the many arguments for and against the Infant Formula Code,²⁴ several relate specifically to UNICEF's involvement in monitoring the Code. These are:

1. The narrow focus of the Code. Some of the leading pediatric organizations in the industrialized world, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, have supported the Code's aim to promote breastfeeding and to ensure the proper use of breast-milk substitutes through adequate information and appropriate marketing and distribution. They criticize the WHO Code, however, for concentrating primarily on the regulation of marketing practices of formula manufacturers to the exclusion of other aspects of the problem. Neither UNICEF nor WHO has provided adequate information about the social, economic, and motivational factors involved in the use of infant formula products and in breastfeeding in developing countries.

In the recently published UNICEF report on The State of the World's Children, Director Grant places full blame for the alleged decline in breastfeeding in developing countries on the multinational infant formula manufacturers. As Grant sees it, those manufacturers

...looked outward from the stagnating markets of the industrialized countries in the 1960s and 1970s and saw the potential of increasing sales among the large and rising infant populations of the developing world. And to a mother whose confidence may already be low in the face of more 'scientific' ideas and more 'modern' products imported from other cultures, even the most innocent promotions ... can create the anxiety which is one of the major causes for breastfeedings' decline.²⁵

Grant here ignores other evidence and reasons for the changes in breastfeeding habits in the developing countries.

²³ E/ICEF/670/R.2, op. cit., p. 2.

²⁴ Two cogent articles on the Infant Formula Code may be found in Carol Adelman, "Infant Formula, Science, and Politics," Policy Review (Washington, D.C., The Heritage Foundation, Number 23, Winter 1983), pp. 107-126; and in Fred D. Miller, Jr., Out of the Mouths of Babes: The Infant Formula Controversy, Studies in Social Philosophy and Policy No. 3 (Bowling Green Ohio, Bowling Green State University, Social Philosophy Center, 1983).

²⁵ Grant, op. cit., p. 4.

2. The need for guidelines. The majority of infant formula companies believe that there is a need for guidelines governing the promotion of infant formula in developing countries. These firms have written their own industry codes and regulations which, in fact, predate the WHO code. Yet UNICEF, perhaps for political reasons, seems determined to castigate the industry. In April 1983, for example, Grant wrote to Nestlé, one of the largest producers of infant formula, to express "serious misgivings" on Nestlé's interpretations of "significant aspects" of the Infant Formula Code.²⁶ Grant here ignores the fact that Nestlé has been making extraordinary efforts to comply with the WHO Code and established an Infant Formula Audit Commission, headed by former Secretary of State Edmund Muskie, to ensure Nestlé's compliance with the code and to receive and process complaints about violations in countries in which Nestlé operates. UNICEF's criticism of Nestlé's efforts seems unwarranted.

If UNICEF continues to move in this direction, it will find itself compromised by the reflexive anti-Western rhetoric and anti-free market arguments that have undermined other U.N. agencies.

UNICEF'S FUNDING

UNICEF's funding comprises voluntary contributions from both government and nongovernment sources. The latter include fund-raising campaigns by the National Committees for UNICEF, the sale of greeting cards, and individual donations. The United States has been by far the largest single contributor to UNICEF, and the U.S. Committee for UNICEF has been the most successful fund raiser of all national committees. In 1982, the U.S. provided \$41.5 million in general resource contributions, or 22 percent of all such contributions; \$13.1 million in specific resource contributions (12 percent); and \$18.5 million in nongovernment contributions (23 percent). The total U.S. contribution was \$73.1 million, or 19 percent of UNICEF's 1982 income of \$378 million.

In contrast, the Soviet Union, including the Ukraine and Byelorussia, contributed only \$1.09 million in general resource contributions to UNICEF, with no contributions for specific resources. This is about \$730,000 less than Brazil, a major recipient of UNICEF funds and projects, contributed in 1982. When queried about the Soviet shortfall, Grant maintains that he rarely misses an opportunity to seek greater contributions from the Soviets or to criticize them directly for their lack of support--apparently with little effect.

While the 1984-1985 budget proposals call for a reduction in personnel and operating costs--zero growth of professional posts

²⁶ "UNICEF Hits Nestlé on Infant Formula Code," The Washington Post, May 10, 1982.

and consolidation of operations--they also propose new costs and new posts, which the U.S. should examine carefully. In particular, the U.S. should continue to oppose the funding of twelve national officer posts and of five new administrative offices in Africa.

Few Americans would oppose their government's providing useful aid and support to needy children in developing countries or to UNICEF's relief and rehabilitation efforts throughout the developing world. But in light of UNICEF's increasing involvement in monitoring (the Infant Formula Marketing Code, which the U.S. government has opposed, and WHO's "Essential Drug Program") and the growing trend toward politicizing the UNICEF agenda, the U.S. must consider more carefully the effectiveness of UNICEF programs and the benefit to the United States of continuing to support them.

UNICEF AND NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

The UNICEF Executive Board confirms that it has developed close working relationships with Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) whose work claims to bear "on the situation of children." The Board notes that:

NGOs provide an important channel for advocacy and influencing public opinion on behalf of children in developing and industrialized countries, and increasing public understanding of UNICEF's work both generally and in specific fields.²⁷

Some of UNICEF's involvement with NGOs has been in the area of emergency relief, in which UNICEF has worked closely with such organizations as the Committee of the Red Cross. Other work has been done for children in the developing countries, where UNICEF has worked with such organizations as CARE, Save the Children Fund, CARITAS, Church World Services, and Catholic Relief Services. Increasingly, however, UNICEF's relationships with NGOs, particularly those which have gained "consultative status" with UNICEF,²⁸ have been in the areas of consumer protection and advocacy. UNICEF has also channeled funds to several NGOs to provide them with the capability to indirectly monitor corporate compliance with the various codes and regulations of the U.N. and its agencies, most notably the Infant Formula Code.

UNICEF has developed strong ties with such NGOs as Health Action International (HAI), Oxfam, Infant Formula Action Coalition

²⁷ E/ICEF/670/Rev.2, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

²⁸ Consultative status gives NGOs the privilege of being seated in Executive Board and Program Committee sessions, circulating statements, and with the agreement of the Chairman of the Executive Board, making oral statements. Such "agreement" is almost always made, and the NGO "statements" that are circulated, not only in UNICEF, but in other U.N. organizations, often find their way into official U.N. documents.

(INFACT), International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), and Consumer Interpol.²⁹ UNICEF has developed particularly strong ties to one of the largest, most active, and avowedly anti-free market NGOs with consultative status at the U.N.--the International Organization of Consumer Unions (IOCU). UNICEF's relationship with the IOCU appears to be developing into something far cozier than "consultative." It is doubtful that such close ties with IOCU will benefit either UNICEF or the 1.3 billion children in 112 countries whom UNICEF ostensibly serves.

Led by stridently anti-Western Anwar Fazal, IOCU describes itself as an independent, nonprofit, and nonpolitical foundation, which promotes worldwide cooperation in the comparative testing of consumer goods and services and other aspects of consumer information, education, and protection.³⁰ In reality, however, the IOCU is forging a new and radical coalition of groups that claim to work on behalf of consumers. A favorite target of IOCU is the multinational corporations. The nature of UNICEF's relationship with NGOs is demonstrated in UNICEF's activities in monitoring the Infant Formula Code.

In mid-1982, there were reports that UNICEF was working on the basis of a legal contract with the IOCU and other consumer groups in order to "hire" these activist groups to monitor corporate compliance with the Infant Formula Code. A formal contract for these services would have meant that UNICEF was paying these groups out of regular UNICEF funds.³¹ Although UNICEF changed its mind and did not hire the IOCU and other groups to help monitor the Infant Formula Code's implementation, it approved a proposal submitted by the IOCU for jointly holding seven subregional workshops on Breastfeeding and Implementation of the Infant Formula Code through 1984. Instead of confining itself to the training of health workers for working with mothers and their infants in developing countries to improve breastfeeding habits, the IOCU has used the workshops to espouse their anti-business, anti-free market rhetoric against the largest infant formula producers. In the first Regional Seminar on the Promotion of Breastfeeding, held in Manila from September 27 to 30, 1982, 31 participants from

²⁹ An NGO Committee on UNICEF has been in existence for many years. Following the International Year of the Child in 1979, the Committee began its outreach to the larger NGO community, and has expanded its mailing list by over 300 organizations, including many of which had never before been in regular contact with UNICEF. See: UNICEF Doc., E/ICEF/670. Rev.2., op. cit., p. 15.

³⁰ For a detailed discussion of IOCU activities in the consumerist movement, see Roger A. Brooks, "Multinationals: First Victim of the U.S. War on Free Enterprise," Heritage Foundation Backgrounder No. 227, November 16, 1982, pp. 19-22.

³¹ United Nations International Business Council, Letter to Executive Members, SUBJECT: U.N. Cooperation with the International Organization of Consumers Unions, September 13, 1982, p. 1.

twelve countries participated in seven workshops, only two of which dealt with the promotion of breastfeeding. The topics of the other five workshops were: Coalition Building, Monitoring Compliance with the International Code, Code Drafting and Analysis, Code Advocacy Campaigns, and Company Campaigns.

While the Preamble of the WHO/UNICEF Infant Formula Code maintains that the NGOs have a special role to play in the protection and promotion of breastfeeding, the Code also stipulates that governments alone will have the responsibility of monitoring the application of the Code. UNICEF should not be providing the financial and technical means to NGOs, such as the IOCU, to pursue their own objectives which do not serve the goal of reducing child mortality and morbidity in the developing world. They also fail, incidentally, to serve the interests of UNICEF's largest contributor, the United States.

Funding for U.N. agencies comes from their member states for the purpose of executing the approved work program. In the case of UNICEF, a voluntary agency, programs are still approved by its Executive Board, of which the United States has always been a member. The U.S. Congress should investigate the role of nongovernmental organizations in the U.N. that seem to be supported indirectly by the American taxpayer.

CONCLUSION

Among U.N. agencies, voluntary and specialized, UNICEF has two unique assets. Its goals can be supported by almost all members of the United Nations, as well as by private citizens and groups throughout the world. And it alone of U.N. agencies can muster consensus among nations to improve and even reverse the poor nutrition, deficient sanitation, or dread disease afflicting many of the world's children through technical and administrative expertise properly applied. UNICEF can do this only if the organization remains true to the specific humanitarian task for which it was established. It cannot do this if it becomes politicized by the kind of anti-Western, anti-free market rhetoric and ideology that have limited and, in some cases, destroyed other organizations within the U.N.

UNICEF has sought primarily to focus the world's attention on the critical, basic needs of poor children and mothers in developing countries and to devise concrete ways of meeting those needs. In many areas in which it is now working--in monitoring the WHO/UNICEF Infant Formula Code and in helping to foster a radical consumerist movement through a UNICEF-NGO network--UNICEF is violating the spirit and perhaps the letter of its charter. It must not squander its resources on dubious political crusades. To do so will only exacerbate the enormous tragedy of 40,000 daily infant and child deaths in the developing world.

The U.S. Congress should look closely and carefully at any UNICEF expenditures for purposes other than those stated in its

mandate. Congress specifically should seek a detailed account of UNICEF's financial and administrative relationships with nongovernmental organizations. Congress also should seek detailed information on the use of UNICEF funds for the publication of political materials and for instruction in political agenda, such as the "Peace Education Kits." Diverting its limited funds for these purposes could dangerously change the UNICEF course from the one that, in the words of its own Director, could provide "new hope in dark times."

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