



## UNICEF: guilty as charged

*For years UNICEF spokesmen denied promoting contraception or abortion. Now the records reveal the truth: step by step over a 30-year period UNICEF has tied itself to the population controllers and to the anti-life, anti-family attitudes of such organizations as the International Planned Parenthood Federation.*

By Winifride Prestwich

### Introduction

*For over two decades, UNICEF officials have consistently denied that their organization plays any part in distributing contraceptives (most of which are abortifacient), or in promoting abortion or sterilization. Official records, however, tell a different story, and the history of UNICEF's changes in policy outlined below shows just how far it has departed from its original mandate. UNICEF, unwillingly at first, has been carried along by the tide of change that has seen many nations of the world rewrite or discard their centuries-old codes of morality and fundamental values.*

*To forestall any charge that UNICEF is being attacked unjustly, it is necessary to make clear that the sources of information used here are UNICEF itself, other United Nations organizations, and pro-abortion groups such as the International Planned Parenthood Federation. One source which deals with UNICEF's involvement in the population debate is Maggie Black's **The Children and the Nations: the Story of Unicef**, published for UNICEF in 1986.*

The term UNICEF comes from the initials of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, an early name for what is officially the United Nations Children's Fund. UNICEF is a United Nations organization and is financed by voluntary contributions from governments and from the public. Canada's contribution in 1992-93 was \$21 million. The United States' budget for UNICEF for the fiscal year of 1992 was \$55 million and for the fiscal year of 1993 \$60 million. UNICEF's work is "carried out in co-operation with the relevant technical members of the United Nations."

### Part I

#### UNICEF: From 1947-1970

The aftermath of World War II left many children across the world in dire straits, and UNICEF was called into being to deal with this emergency. This task UNICEF performed to world acclaim, as children (otherwise helpless) were provided with food, clean water, shelter and

medical care. In 1950, the United Nations (UN) asked UNICEF to extend its work beyond emergency relief to the long-range needs of children. In 1953 the name was changed to the United Nations Children's Fund, but the term "UNICEF" was retained. Until the mid-1960s UNICEF carried on its great work without change. Nevertheless the world and the United Nations were changing, and UNICEF did not escape.

### **Forces of change**

The 1960s saw the resurrection of the old Malthusian theory of overpopulation leading to world doom. Within the United Nations, there were references to a "new menace" which was blighting "the prospects of social and economic development in the Third World."<sup>1</sup> Life expectancy in the Third World had risen with the cure, control or elimination of diseases such as malaria, small pox and yaws. Moreover, improved methods of communication and rapid transportation were cutting the death toll in disaster areas.

This same period saw the development of new methods of fertility control: the "birth control pill," various IUDs (intra-uterine devices) and sterilization.

The policy of fertility control sparked controversy within the United Nations; delegates from the developing world said that no Western nations had a government policy for reducing the birthrate; socialists suspected the programs were designed to deal with the poor; Roman Catholic countries, especially in South America, were opposed to any program.<sup>2</sup>

Two groups, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, were reluctant to join in the growing debate on fertility restraint. WHO's reluctance was based on lack of knowledge about the health effects of the "pill" and IUDs. UNICEF did not want to act before WHO, and was concerned with loss of financial support from its donors. However, the Bureau of Social Affairs within the UN was "behind the scenes" and "constantly trying to push both WHO and UNICEF in the family planning business." Moreover, there was pressure within UNICEF itself. The Swedish delegation (especially leader Nils Thedin) had been pushing for population control since 1959, and India and Pakistan wanted help from UNICEF for their national family planning programmes. By 1965, pressure was also coming from the United States.<sup>3</sup>

### **Bitter controversies: 1966-70**

In May 1966, Labouisse put forward proposals to the Executive Board, on the basis of his own report entitled "Possible Role of UNICEF in Family Planning." He proposed that multilateral funds be spent on providing women with access to family planning on request by governments, but UNICEF would not offer any advice on techniques nor would it provide contraceptive supplies or equipment to make them."<sup>4,5,6</sup>

These proposals resulted in a bitter and explosive confrontation which split the Board. Delegates from Sweden, India and Pakistan were obviously supportive, but there were many arguments for the opposition: Roman Catholic countries were opposed on religious grounds; African nations (except Nigeria) believed it to be a racist program; socialist countries suspected a capitalist plot; one view was that "it would be wrong for UNICEF to depart from its mandate of saving children to engage in activities to prevent them from being born"; some delegates found it would be unwise to act before WHO; Roman Catholic countries said that education in family planning would endorse the use of condoms, birth control pills and IUDs implied in the UNICEF programs.

The rift in the Executive Board is well shown by comparing the positions of Nigeria and

Belgium. Nigeria condemned the countries which objected to the proposals for religious reasons, saying that it was against the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to impose their beliefs on India and Pakistan by withholding financial assistance for their population programs.

Belgium's delegate Hilaire Willot was one of the strongest opponents. He said that the proposals were so far from the original purpose of UNICEF that his and many other nations would consider they were freed from any obligation to the organization if it lent its support to Indian family planning programs which offered incentives to sterilization.

In the face of this opposition, and to avoid a complete split, the proposals were withdrawn, the issue delayed for a year, and advice sought from the UNICEF-WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy on the "best way in which UNICEF might participate in programs of family planning, with particular reference to the technical aspects."<sup>7</sup>

### **New approach: introducing subversive phrases**

The recommendations made by the Joint Committee used a new line of approach.<sup>8,9</sup> Political arguments for birth control as a government policy for social and economic reasons were replaced by WHO's medical advice that birth spacing was a health service for both mother and child. Family planning programs supported by UNICEF should be "an integral part of comprehensive health services for mothers and children." The report also stressed that "The need for rapid expansion of health services to provide scope for family planning as an integral part of them should be recognized." However, the terms used were understood specifically to exclude contraceptives and the equipment to manufacture contraceptives.

The Joint Committee's Report was discussed by the Executive Board of UNICEF in June 1967 and accepted, but not without opposition. Some delegates (including the Soviet's) wanted UNICEF to stick to its mandate, while others—especially India's—felt the policy did not go far enough.

Maggie Black in her Story of UNICEF says that the decision might appear to amount to little beyond increased support for mother and child health services and that "progress in policy evolution was minute"; nevertheless, she states, "symbolically a major step had been taken; **the phrases 'family planning' and 'UNICEF co-operation' had been joined.**" (my emphasis)

In discussing the events of 1966 and 1967 it is important to remember that UNICEF is an organization within the United Nations and therefore was strongly influenced by the changing policies of the UN itself and other UN organizations. Thus, for example, the UN General Assembly, by an unanimous vote in 1966, passed a resolution (Population Growth and Economic Development) calling for support for governments with population control programs.<sup>11</sup> Maggie Black wrote: "Unicef had made a very tentative attempt to align itself with the growing body of opinion which saw population growth as one reason why poor people stayed poor and deprived children stayed deprived. It had wanted to enlist the new contraceptive technology actively on their behalf."

Meanwhile WHO (UNICEF's partner on the Joint Committee for Health Policy) increasingly stressed that "any measure for **preventing or interrupting pregnancy** must be integrated with material and child health service supervised by the same professional personnel."<sup>12</sup>

### **The decision to supply contraceptives**

It was, therefore, almost inevitable that once UNICEF had taken the first step the second soon followed. Three years later, in 1970, Labouisse, in his General Report of the Executive

Director, stated:

Contraceptives are not so readily available from other sources (as the Executive Director had supposed in 1966) and some Governments have indicated their preference to receive them from UNICEF as part of the overall aid to their [maternal and child health] family planning projects. The exclusion of contraceptives from UNICEF assistance has also been a complication to our discussions with United Nations Fund for Population Activities when Governments' requests have included contraceptives. WHO, our chief technical partner in connection with family planning, considers that UNICEF should be able to provide contraceptives along with other supplies and equipment.<sup>13</sup>

Accordingly, Labouisse recommended that the Board "authorize UNICEF to include contraceptives in the supplies which can be provided on governmental request."

This recommendation was adopted, but not without further confrontation. The Soviet Union strenuously objected and said that "UNICEF's role was to protect the interests of children and to make provision for their health and nutrition. Family planning was not part of its responsibilities."

When the French representative stated that as a condition for approval, "It was necessary to ensure that governments respected the complete freedom of choice of the family in the matter of family planning," Labouisse said, "The complete freedom of individuals to use family planning methods or not to use them was a question for governments, not for UNICEF."

Labouisse's answer shows a blatant disregard for the fundamental freedoms expressed in the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Individuals were to be left defenceless against any government that would force contraceptives provided by UNICEF on unwilling citizens.

The Executive Director refused a request to defer a decision on the issue, and his recommendation was passed. UNICEF now had a policy to supply contraceptives.<sup>14, 15</sup>

### **Contraceptives as abortifacients**

Much controversy over UNICEF stems from the fact that many contraceptives are, in reality, abortifacients whose sole or main effect is to prevent the newly-fertilized ovum from implanting in the womb. Thus a new human life, which has already begun at conception, is destroyed.

For example, in May 1979, the Catholic Doctors' Guild of Toronto, Canada, issued a "Statement on Abortion" which included the following passage:

"It follows that no person may deliberately abort the human being at any stage. Some of the newer low-dose estrogen birth control pills and the intra-uterine devices act by preventing implanting of the already fertilized ovum, and are, therefore, abortifacient, and are to be condemned. A similar action is ascribed to high-dose estrogen, the so-called 'morning-after pill.' The use of any or all agents which act in this fashion is morally wrong."

A resolution of the American National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guild, October 1978, is also on record:

Whereas the contraceptive pill is a proven abortifacient . . . and whereas the IUD is also a proven abortifacient, now therefore be it resolved that the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds condemn their use, if for no other reason than that they function by destroying early pregnancy.

A report from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (Second Report on Intrauterine Contraceptive Devices, Washington, 1979) explains that an inflammatory response to the presence of an IUD always develops in the endometrium (uterine lining) and it is believed that the body's defence cells either destroy the fertilized ovum, or prevent its implantation because of alteration in the endometrium.

These so-called "contraceptives" which UNICEF distributed are agents designed to destroy new human beings in their earliest stage, and thus cause very early abortions.

### **Decision made for political reasons**

It is important, in justice, to remember that these changes were made at the United Nations level by delegates—political appointees from member states—and not by those responsible for fundraising or by workers in the poorest areas in the world. Whilst the Executive Board members talked, others were continuing the work of the UNICEF's mandate: providing food, shelter, medical care and hope to the world's most needy children.

## **Part II**

### **UNICEF 1970-1990 UN Fund for Population Activities**

In 1966 the controversy concerning UNICEF's collaboration in population control threatened to split apart not only that organization but the United Nations itself. At the instigation of Sweden and the United States and as a compromise solution, the UN created a new fund especially for population-control activities, but one to which nations contributed only if they wished. In 1967 UN Secretary General U Thant announced the creation of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA).<sup>16</sup>

By the early 1970s large grants from UNFPA were funding UNICEF's "expanded mandate" [providing contraceptives]. In a major statement during the World Population Year, 1974, Labouisse stressed the growing cooperation between UNICEF and UNFPA:

At the 1970 Executive Board Session it was also agreed that UNICEF might, in consultation with WHO, provide contraceptives if a government so wished . . . It is obvious that, in order for UNICEF to implement its expanded mandated . . . greatly increased resources are and will be required.

In 1966, UNICEF allocated approximately \$700,000 to two countries for activities specifically related to family planning. In 1971, that figure rose to \$2.4 million, and in 1973 it reached \$4.2 million, covering assistance to almost 30 countries. Much of that increase was made possible by grants from the UN Fund for Population Activities, and it is likely that co-operation between the two organizations will grow.<sup>17</sup>

The co-operation did grow, and soon it was extended to other organizations including International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).

### **Expanding "family planning"**

Meanwhile, in 1972, the WHO-UNICEF Joint Committee on Health Policy met in Geneva and discussed ways of accelerating the expansion of family planning served to reach more people. WHO was asked to examine the alternative health systems which were developing, using local village women to deliver simple drugs and contraceptives. In one such system, Dr. Zafrulla Chowdbury of Bangladesh had even trained "semiliterate village girls to carry out female sterilization," apparently successfully!

Most members of the medical profession were appalled by the potential dangers in having semi-literate, semi-trained villagers handing out antibiotics and oral contraceptives, or inserting IUDs (not to mention female sterilizations). The lack of medical back-up made for even greater danger.

Eventually, WHO recommended a modified type of alternative health system, using village workers but under some supervision. In 1976 WHO's recommendations were adopted by the World Health Assembly and UNICEF's Executive Board.

During the World Population Conference in Bucharest in 1974, both UNICEF and WHO stressed that their interest and activities in promoting birth control (along with contraceptives) were to benefit maternal and child health. But by 1974, the Pakistan experience told a different story.<sup>18</sup>

### **A case study: Pakistan 1965-1974**

Pakistan instituted "an all-out national family planning (FP) program" in 1965, and thus had a strong financial stake in pushing for UNICEF's involvement in FP and providing contraceptives. In December 1966 the Executive Director of UNICEF visited Pakistan where (according to Maggie Black) he was told by President Ayub Khan that population control was the nation's number one priority. The target was: "Everyone of the country's twenty million fertile couples was to be reached, preferably with an IUD."

Women doctors, health inspectors and traditional midwives were taught how to insert IUDs. All those who, in any way, participated received financial rewards. It was when the campaign was extended to the many parts of the country where there were no mother-child health centres that the "family planners" really ran off track. Maggie Black writes that the campaign took on the atmosphere "of a travelling circus," with "teams of family planners and tented camps," and with all the media possible persuading women "to line up and get their IUD inserted immediately."

Girls and women were completely unaware of any potential dangers, and when health problems arose—acute pain, bleeding, infection—there was no medical backup. Many women were rendered sterile, others suffered serious and dangerous internal injuries.

As time went on and the health problems caused by IUDs became more widely known, the government's campaign ran into increasingly stiff resistance. By 1973/74 it was running out of steam, but by then the lives of thousands of girls and women were beyond repair.<sup>19</sup>

So much for family planning using IUDs as a benefit to women's health.

## UNICEF's activities in population control

### A) Contraceptives and sterilizations, 1970-1980

Clear evidence of UNICEF's involvement with population control in the 1970s comes from the Population Information Program which was the responsibility of George Washington University Medical Centre in Washington, D.C., until July 1, 1978, and later of John Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. The universities published *The Population Reports*, which are both in-depth scientific monographs on the latest methods of fertility control, and guides to governments, and others, seeking information concerning organizations which will provide funds, assistance and supplies for population programs.

UNICEF is named as an organization which assists in population programs in the following issues:

(a) **Population Report. Oral Contraceptives**, April 1974.

Series A, Number R1. George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

Quoting UNICEF as the source of information, the Report said: "The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also supplied tables and raw materials equivalent to more than five million cycles."

(b) **Population Report. Oral contraceptives, update on usage, safety and side effects**, Series A, No. 5, January 1979, p. 139, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland.

"Within the U.N. System, about 80 per cent of the contraceptives (oral) funded by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, are purchased by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and 20 per cent by the World Health Organization (WHO)."

(c) **Population report, Family planning programs. Guide to Sources of Family Planning Program Assistance**, March 1977, Series J, No. 15, George Washington University.

Table 1 — Sources of Funding for Selected Family Planning Supplies and Services lists UNICEF as a source of assistance for: oral contraceptives, IUDs, condoms, diaphragms, injectibles and spermicides.

(d) **Population report. Intra-uterine devices**, May 1979. Series B, No. 3, p. B53. John Hopkins University.

"The UNFPA is also funding the purchase of an increasing number of IUDs for developing country programs, with the actual procurement undertaken by UNICEF, (about 97 per cent) and WHO (about 3 per cent). Between 1974 and 1978 UNFPA has funded purchases (or shipments from the stockpiles) of nearly 5 million IUDs for UNICEF and WHO of which 1.8 million were in 1975."

(e) **Population report. Special Topic Monograph No. 1. Guide to equipment selection for M/F sterilization procedures. September 1977, pp. M3 and M23-M24).**

In listing agencies which provide support for sterilization programs the Report states:

"Finally the United Nations (UN) agencies—the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) can be a source of equipment assistance

directly to government sponsored programs. Request for such aid must be approved by the government of the recipient country.”

This Report has two other references to UNICEF. The first one concerns surgical kits for sterilization by mini-laparotomy and reads:

“UNICEF in collaboration with UNFPA and WHO compiled the following kit.” A list of some thirty items follows: forceps, clamps, retractors, etc.

The second mention of UNICEF reads: “This instrument kit for sterilization by colpotomy was developed by UNICEF in co-operation with UNFPA and WHO.

### **The ANM and contraceptive promotion**

It is worth noting that UNICEF’s own publications contain evidence that the agency does in fact promote contraception (abortifacients). As one example, the UNICEF News, December 1972 - January 1973, contains an article about Rajyalkshmi, a young auxiliary-nurse-midwife (ANM) in India. The author is a “Public Information Officer in UNICEF’s Regional Office for South Central Asia.”<sup>20</sup>

Rajyalkshmi, a young woman with Grade 8 education, was trained by the Government of India, “with assistance from the World Health Organization and UNICEF,” to work as an ANM to bring health to village families. Although she faced great difficulties, was inexperienced and badly paid, much of her work was praiseworthy. She gave simple health care, and she taught the village women about hygiene, nutrition and the dangers of infection. But a major part of her work was family planning:

“With the aid of flipcharts and diagrammatic modes [she] told them about the loop [IUD], the Pill and other forms of contraception and how, if they would limit the number of their children, they would be also able to take better care of those they already had.” For the writer it was a sign of progress “that, in a village of 300 people she [Rajyalkshmi] can point to fifteen or twenty young women who have now accepted the loop.”

The same UNICEF News had an item “Special Contributions to UNICEF make ANM Project Possible.” The Canadian UNICEF Committee, in cooperation with the Canadian International Development Agency, contributed \$129,703. American figures are not available.

### **B) Contraceptives & sterilization, 1980-1990s**

The information in this section comes from the UNFPA, Inventory of Population Projects in Developing Countries Around the World. The inventories are published annually and they list the countries receiving aid, the projects, sources of funding and the agencies involved. Examples quoted here are a minute fraction of the whole story and are just a random sample of UNICEF’s activities.<sup>21</sup>

#### **Nepal—1987-88**

The inventory reported that UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA were cooperating in a project “to organize, expand and improve the quality of sterilization in mobile units country-wide and in regular health institutions in non-integrated districts.”

UNICEF’s budget for this project in 1988 was \$795,569.

**Malawi—1990**

The World Bank, UNICEF, UNFPA and the Malawi Government’s objective was “to assist the development of surgical contraception services.”

Total cost \$22.9 million, of which UNICEF’s share was \$1.3 million.

**Jamaica—1987-88**

“The purchase of contraceptives for the National Family Planning Programme.”

Budget: UNFPA \$478,869; UNICEF \$720,684

**Burundi—1990**

Strengthening family planning “to increase contraceptive prevalence up to 14 per cent by 1992.”

Total project \$18.7 million. World Bank credit: \$14.4 million; UNICEF: \$1.8 million.

**Kenya—1987-88**

(1) This was a World Bank project with UNICEF’s assistance of \$0.7 million.

“In order to increase the project’s impact on fertility the project was amended in November 1985 to include the establishment of surgical contraceptive facilities in 13 district hospitals and five family planning clinics in urban areas.”

**Kenya—1989-90**

(2) Agencies: UNICEF, UN, ILO, WHO, UNESCO and UNFPA.

Projects include (i) outpatient **minilaparotomy** at three hospitals; (ii) **vasectomy** at numerous others.

**Cape Verde—1988-89**

UNICEF and UNFPA are named as agencies “to provide for the purchase of a supply of contraceptives for an on-going MCW/FP [mother/child-health/family planning] project being funded by the Swedish Government.”

UNICEF \$59,718, UNFPA \$119,267.

**Tanzania—1987-88**

The national child-spacing program includes “the procurement and delivery of contraceptives,” UNICEF, UNFPA and the Government of Tanzania.

**China —1989-90**

Agencies: UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA

Project: to improve MCH/FP (mother-child-health/family planning units) and extend their coverage.

<u>Budget</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>
UNICEF	\$2,098,500	\$4,903,200
WHO	56,000	49,200

We reiterate that all the information in the 1980-90’s section comes from UNFPA’s

official reports. We note, too, that over seven million U.S. dollars were spent on China's family planning program—which is notorious—and not on feeding hungry children.

After years of working in collaboration with WHO, the World Bank, UNFPA, etc., UNICEF was ready for its "third step" in 1987.

### **C) 1987: UNICEF endorses abortion**

In 1987 an International Conference on Better Health for Women and Children through Family Planning was held in Nairobi, Kenya, under the sponsorship of UNICEF and six other agencies or organizations. The other six organizations were UNFPA, World Bank, WHO, UN Development Program, The Population Council and the International Planned Parenthood Federation. All are openly and strongly pro-abortion.

All seven organizations—including UNICEF—endorsed a number of Recommendations for Action. One of these reads:

"Where legal, good quality abortion services should be made easily accessible to all women."<sup>22</sup>

And by 1992 some nations in UNICEF were pressing for abortion in countries where it is still illegal.

## **Part III UNICEF: Towards the Year 2000**

### **UNICEF's collaborators**

The 1987 Kenya Conference is significant because not only did it highlight UNICEF's close cooperation with the world's leading pro-abortion organizations, but it made clear that the UNICEF of 1987 was different from the UNICEF of 1966 and 1967. Twenty years earlier UNICEF had categorically rejected any connection with contraceptives; in 1987 it joined its collaborators in endorsing the "**Resolution for Action**" which included the following:<sup>23</sup>

- "ensuring easy access to health and family planning services, including the **widest possible range of contraceptive methods**, with appropriate counselling to ensure a free and informed choice."

- "**Public and private investment in contraceptive research and development** should be increased substantially in order to improve safety and effectiveness of existing methods and follow promising research for potentially more effective new methods, including male methods."

- Community education programs should emphasize the risks involved in pregnancy and child birth in order to **ensure social support of contraceptive practice.**"

- "Unwanted pregnancy should be regarded as specific health risk for women and their families. **Regardless of the legal status**, humane treatment of septic and incomplete abortion and **post-abortion contraceptive advice** and services should be made available . . . **Where legal, good quality abortion services should be made easily accessible to all women.**" (our emphasis).

- The final Recommendation was for the "sponsoring organizations to further extend their collaboration at a national level."<sup>24</sup> Four of UNICEF's joint sponsors are well-known for their anti-life activities: the World Bank, the World Health Organization, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. The other two, the Population Council and the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), are perhaps less well-

known.

### **The Population Council**

The Population Council was established in New York in 1952 as a professional organization to study all aspects of population problems: political, legal, medical and technical. It is credited with the development of an IUD, the Lippes Loop.

In 1976 a new president, George Zeidenstein, recommended changes in policy. These included:

- that the Council's purpose should be to "stimulate, encourage, promote, conduct, support . . . abortion."
- that its Bio-Medical Centre engage in "mission-oriented research" on abortion technology.
- that the organization add abortion to the "range of services" it provides.<sup>25</sup>

Between the years 1987 to 1991 (according to the UNFPA Inventories) the Population Council, together with the government of China, was involved in trials of Norplant. This long-lasting, under-the-skin contraceptive, whose safety and side-effects were still under study and unknown (as were long-term effects) was "tried out" on Chinese women.

### **The United Nations Development Program (UNDP)**

One of the functions of the UNDP appears to be the co-ordination of expenditures by the various UN agencies involved in population control. Thus a UNDP inventory has this report:

"At its thirty-sixth session in June 1989 the UNDP Governing Council approved UNFPA's third program of assistance to the Government [China] to the amount of \$57 million for five years to support a national population programme."

The evils of this program are well known: forced abortion up to the ninth months; one-child families; permission needed to have a child; and menstrual extraction.

From 1987 onwards, therefore, UNICEF endorsed not only abortion, but also an increased collaboration with agencies whose agendas included contraceptives, sterilizations and abortion (often under political coercion).

### **The Vatican and UNICEF, April 1990**

There was increasing pressure also within UNICEF itself of a greater role in providing a wider access to abortion services. At the opening general debate at the UNICEF Executive Board meeting in New York, April 16, 1990, not only were member states agitating for a more active campaign to support abortion, but some European countries were even proposing that UNICEF should "become an advocate for abortion in countries where sovereign legislation does not allow it." Archbishop Renato R. Martin, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, and his staff acted quickly. That evening they drafted a response to these proposals and sent it to Rome for approval. The next evening, April 17, 1990, Archbishop Martino addressed this issue in his speech to the Executive Board. His statement said:

...the Holy See views with great alarm some repeated proposals that this United Nations agency, established for the well-being of children, become involved in the destruction of existing human life, even to the point of suggesting that UNICEF become an advocate for

abortion in countries whose sovereign legislation does not allow it. The Holy See firmly opposes such proposals not only on moral grounds, but also because they would bring a totally unacceptable deviation from the stated Purpose of UNICEF in favour of children. Moreover, such proposals appear to reveal a dangerous form of neocolonialism—to which the developing countries are justifiably sensitive—where the mighty will try to impose on the less powerful the adoption of practices contrary to those cultural, social, moral and religious values which have historically formed their heritage and have sustained them in their difficult path to independence and development.<sup>26</sup>

The next day, April 18, 1990, Msgr. Dominic J. Bottino, who had been present during the debate, said in an interview with CNS: “We see the beginnings of an aggressive plan to put this idea of becoming a conduit of abortion services in the agenda of UNICEF.” He added that some government representatives spoke openly and directly in favour of an active abortion campaign, but others used only “code-words” in relation to family planning.<sup>27</sup>

### **Abortion and deception by code-words**

The use of code-words in discussing abortion is not new. In 1980, Donald D. Warwick, and Institute Fellow of the Harvard Institute for International Development, said that agencies used code-words when discussing their “clandestine” activities in providing abortion services.<sup>28</sup> In his article “Foreign Aid for Abortion” in the Hastings Center Report, April 1980, Warwick explained that not only was abortion illegal in many countries but in the United States it was also against the 1973 Helms Amendment, which forbade the use of aid funds for the direct support of abortion. Data on international aid for abortion “were typically not reported at all” or “buried under such generic names and euphemisms as ‘surgical methods of family planning’ or ‘menstrual regulation.’”

The most common procedure, uterine aspiration (in which the womb is emptied), went under various code-phrases, especially “menstrual regulation” and “menstrual induction.” “Almost all the organizations active overseas distribute kits for this purpose,” he stated. There are no records of these abortions and the agencies claimed to be lily-white.

One activist pro-abortion agency was at least honest. The Pathfinder Fund of Boston (founded by Dr. Clarence Gamble in 1929 to fund new methods of birth control) was busily promoting abortion and the uterine aspirator in the 1970s. A Pathfinder flyer, issued around 1975, states:

“Pathfinder is encouraging the establishment of abortion as a woman’s right. We are promoting the early abortion procedure known as ‘menstrual induction’ through publications, distribution of instruments and direct grants.”<sup>29</sup>

Code-phrases were also used to camouflage the strictly illegal importation of abortive devices into the Philippines. The Family Planning Organization of the Philippines—an affiliate of IPPF—distributed menstrual-regulation kits which “were brought into the country as ‘medical instruments’ to obtain ‘sample tissue for examination.’”<sup>30</sup>

It is important to note that the Hastings Center is far from being a pro-life hot bed, and that the article was intended to highlight the misuse of USAID funds for covert abortion practices. It helps to explain how well-meaning people are misled.

### **An increased push for contraceptives**

Evidence of UNICEF's involvement in contraceptives continues to mount. The 1988 UNFPA Annual Report noted that UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA were collaborating in a "strategy for action in the reproductive health of adolescents." For its part, UNICEF published *Facts for Life* (1988), a booklet promoting birth control.

The booklet makes no mention of abstinence, nor does it mention Natural Family Planning, but it does stress contraception, and repeatedly:

- "Most health services can provide several methods of safe, effective contraception. No one method of contraception is suitable for, or acceptable to every individual . . ."
- "By using contraception to space births . . ."
- "Contraceptives give couples the choice of when to begin having babies, how many to have, how far apart to have them, and when to stop."

The last quotation was repeated as one of the four Prime Messages of this UNICEF booklet.<sup>31</sup> Despite this official UNICEF publication (1988), a letter from James P. Grant, the executive director of UNICEF, assured Archbishop Martino in November 1989, that the agency does not advocate any "specific method for child-spacing."<sup>32</sup>

*Facts for Life* omits to mention that most contraceptives are, in reality, abortifacients, and may well cause sterility.

In its annual reports, the State of the World's Children, 1991 and 1992, UNICEF has stressed that its goal is family planning and service for all, by the year 2000. Apart from breast-feeding, Natural Family Planning is not mentioned, but, by contrast, there is strong emphasis on the importance of the "availability of contraceptives" for population control. The 1992 report concludes: ". . . that an effort now be made, on an entirely new scale, to put the knowledge **and the means of family planning** at the disposal of every couple of childbearing age before the end of this present century." (our emphasis)

### Some final comments

It is a mistake to think of UNICEF as a charity, like Easter Seals or Operation Eyesight which are run by people with a personal interest in the cause. By contrast, UNICEF is an international government organization controlled by an Executive Board of UN representatives from 41 nations, all with their own agendas. The fund raisers and those who work to feed and clothe the impoverished children are not involved.

There need be no confusion or doubt about UNICEF's policies and activities. UNICEF is a government organization and its proceedings and finances are a matter of public record. Just as Hansard records debates in Parliament, and the Congressional Record the proceedings in the U.S. Congress, so, too, the UN Documents record the meetings of UNICEF's Executive Board. Thus the Executive Board's approval of a recommendation to "authorize UNICEF to include contraceptives in the supplies which can be provided on governmental request" can be found in UN Doc E/ICEF/SR 404 (1970). Indeed, the whole debate of the 395th to 404th meeting in 1970 is reported in: UN Docs. E/ICEF/SR 395-4308 (1970).

In the same way the UNFPA's Inventories of Population Projects in Developing Countries Around the World are annual government accounts of the budget and expenditures of UN agencies in the population control program. These are UN official records of UNICEF's financial dealings in contraceptives and sterilization, and they are all in the public domain.

In the 1966 debate one delegate said: "It would be wrong for UNICEF to depart from its mandate of saving children to engage in activities to prevent them from being born." The pity is

that he was not heeded.

### **Endnotes**

1. Black, Maggie. *The Children and the Nations. The Story of Unicef*. 1986. Sydney, Australia, p. 241
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 245-246
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 246-247
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 249-253
5. UNICEF Executive Board Meeting in Addis Ababa, May 1966. UN Doc. E/ICEDFL 1259 (1966)
6. Partan, Daniel G. *Population in the United Nations System*. Durham N.C., 1973, pp. 127-128
7. Discussion of the Executive Director's Report, May 24, 25, 1966. UN Docs E/ICEF/SR 346-349 (1966)
8. Report of UNICEF-WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy. UN Doc E/ICEF/356 para. 10, pp. 13-15 (1967)
9. Partan, *op.cit.*, note 6, pp. 128-130
10. Black, *op. Cit.*, note 1, p. 253
11. *Ibid.*, p. 254
12. *Ibid.*, p. 254
13. UNICEF, General Progress Report of the Executive Director. UN Doc E/ICEF/602 para. 73, p. 27 (1970)
14. The General Progress Report, *supra*, note 12, was continued through a lengthy debate during the 395th to 404th meetings, reported in UN Docs E/ICEF/SR 395-404 (1970)
15. Parton, *op. cit.*, note 6, pp. 131-133
16. Black, *op. cit.*, note 1, pp. 254-255
17. Labouisse, H. *Children Suffer Most*. Paper given in World Population Year 1974, pub. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
18. Black, *supra*, note 1, pp. 330-331 and 338-341
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 256-257
20. Kankalil M.S. "The Woman in White," UNICEF News, December 1972, January 1973.
21. Inventory....
22. *The Recommendations for Action, The International Conference on Better Health for Women and Children through Family Planning, Nairobi, Kenya. October 1987.*
23. *Ibid.*, Recommendations Nos. 8, 9, 3 and 4.
24. *Ibid.*, No. 15
25. George Zeidenstein, *Future Directions of the Population Council*. Report prepared for the meeting of the Board of Trustees for the Population Council, June 8, 9, 1976, quoted in "Foreign Aid for Abortion" by D. J. Warwick. (See note number 28.)
26. Martino, H.E., Archbishop Renato R. Statement of H.E. Archbishop Renato R. Martino, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations at the Meeting of the Executive Board of UNICEF, New York, Tuesday, 17 April, 1990
27. Early Tracy "Church opposes UNICEF as an abortion advocate," CNS report, April 18, 1990
28. Warwick, Donald P., *The Hastings Center Report*, Vol. 10, No. 2, April 1980
29. The Pathfinder Fund, *Pathways in Population Planning*. Promotional flyer issued circa 1975. Quoted by D. Warwick, see *supra*, note 28, p. 33

30. Warwick, op. Cit., note 28, p. 33
31. Facts for Life—UNICEF, New York, 1988
32. Tracy Early, CNS news release, November 20, 1989

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