

The JOURNAL

OF THE RUTGERS UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

VOLUME XLIX

JUNE 1987

NUMBER 1

VOLUNTARY FOREIGN AID: FORTY YEARS OF SERVING HUMAN NEED

BY LINDA GRIFFIN KEAN

Ms. Kean is the Director of Publications for the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs¹

IN THE aftermath of World War II many Americans felt called to help those in need overseas. The call to service reflected a longstanding tradition of American voluntarism, a tradition that very much impressed the young Frenchman, Alexis de Tocqueville, who described in detail in his eighteenth-century survey of life in the new world, *Democracy in America*, the American propensity for forming voluntary associations. This article offers a brief historical overview of American voluntary aid to those in need overseas since World War II. Any such effort is inherently sketchy because the record of American giving is long and involved; American voluntary foreign aid has taken the form not only of well-publicized relief and rehabilitation efforts to large populations or entire regions—like the massive programs in Europe after World War II, the extensive refugee resettlement programs in Indochina in the 1970s, or the recent famine-relief programs in Africa—but also of programs by small organizations or by individuals to pockets of people who may be the victims of a localized disaster and whose plight is unknown to most. Nonetheless a fairly accurate picture of the trials and triumphs of American voluntary foreign aid can be drawn from the records of one organization, the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service, which served from 1943 to 1984 as a coordinating and consultative body for the

¹ Ms. Kean previously served as research associate on a three-year research project into the role of religiously based voluntary organizations in refugee-relief programs overseas.

myriad of private voluntary agencies, large and small, through which the American people have attempted to alleviate the suffering of their brothers and sisters around the world.

The American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service (ACVAFS) was formed as World War II drew to a close to allow voluntary agencies to coordinate their postwar relief efforts among themselves, with the U.S. government, and with the various fledgling international bodies. The files of the American Council, as it came to be known, provide a unique view of postwar relief, rehabilitation, refugee and development programs because they record the day-to-day operations of these efforts—the priorities of the voluntary agencies in designing and carrying out a relief or development program, the role of the U.S. government, questions of funding and material resources, the logistical considerations (and problems), and, perhaps most important, a record of the people behind the assistance programs. In a sense the history of the American Council *is* the history of postwar American voluntary aid.

The American Council files have been painstakingly preserved by Elizabeth Clark Reiss and Ruth Larned, both longtime employees of the council; in October 1986 the files were donated to the Rutgers University Library in the name of Elizabeth Clark Reiss, historian of the American Council and formerly its acting Executive Director, who has drawn extensively on her own recollections of the council's history as well as on the physical record to write a history of the American Council.² I will attempt to tell the history of American voluntary foreign aid by highlighting particular assistance programs undertaken by the member agencies of the American Council on Voluntary Foreign Aid during the postwar years.³

I. Background: The Roots of Cooperative Voluntary Aid

Americans have long extended aid to the needy through voluntary associations largely religious in character and focus. Christian mission so-

² See Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *ACVAFS: Four Monographs* (New York: ACVAFS, 1985). This volume is available for \$10.00 from the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs, 170 East 64th Street, New York, NY 10021.

³ Most of the research for this article was undertaken during 1983 and 1984 while the author was the research associate for a project sponsored by the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs (formerly the Council on Religion and International Affairs) into the role of religiously based voluntary agencies in refugee-relief programs overseas. The author spent several months reading the record of these efforts contained in the American Council files, with Elizabeth Clark Reiss as navigator. She also relies extensively on Mrs. Reiss's history of the American Council cited above and on a book by Bruce Nichols, coordinator of the Carnegie Council project, *The Uneasy Alliance: Religion, U.S. Foreign Policy, and the Refugee Problem*, draft manuscript (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 1987).

cieties, established in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, combined religious witness with the provision of a broad range of social services domestically and internationally, operating schools, medical facilities, and refugee-resettlement agencies in American cities and establishing mission schools and hospitals in the American Indian nations (considered foreign territory) and throughout Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

Along with newly formed Jewish self-help organizations, set up in the early 1900s following the waves of Eastern European immigration, the mission societies first became involved in overseas humanitarian assistance following World War I. At that time, donations given by Americans to relieve the suffering of the victims of natural and man-made disasters were channeled through voluntary agencies, both religious and secular, and were targeted largely to groups of their coreligionists and conationals in Europe. This pattern reflected historical and cultural ties of American immigrant groups to their ancestral homelands and also reflected the partnerships and cooperative relationships American religious organizations had established with their European counterparts through international mission boards, denominational bodies, and councils of churches.

World War II was to usher in an entirely new form of American voluntary foreign aid. Relieving the suffering of the victims of World War II would require new avenues of partnership and cooperation. The almost total devastation and massive human need created by the war in Europe would call for a response not only far beyond the scale of most American voluntary agency programs but would also test the boundaries of American law: the Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917 called for regulation of overseas shipments of all kinds—commercial trade and humanitarian aid—to present and former enemy states, and under the Neutrality Act of 1939 the State Department regulated the activities of private Americans overseas in the effort to protect American neutrality. It was clear from the outset that the active participation and support of the U.S. government would be needed to overcome the political, strategic, and logistical demands of the large-scale post-World War II efforts. While American religious and secular voluntary agencies would continue to cooperate with groups of their coreligionists and conationals in Europe, they would need to expand vastly their networks of cooperation in order to collect, transport, and distribute donations from the American people and in order to petition the U.S. government to allow the humanitarian ideal to take precedence over the requirements of the military situation.

The concept of cooperation was not alien to the voluntary agency com-

munity. As the situation in Europe darkened in the 1930s, the voluntary agencies had built on the patterns of cooperation built during World War I. Officials of agencies including the American Christian Committee for Refugees, HIAS, the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and the Committee for Refugees of the National Catholic Welfare Conference had met together and with government officials to discuss the situation of the refugees caused by World War I and the growing problems of refugees from Hitler's Germany, particularly Jews. The involvement of private voluntary agencies in the Spanish Civil War had forged new working ties among such agencies as the American Friends Service Committee, the Mennonite Central Committee, the Federal Council of Churches, and the Brethren Service Committee, which formed a special Committee on Spain.⁴ In addition, those working for one agency were often active with the programs of other private agencies in an administrative, advisory, or consultative capacity.

As the war drew to a close, voluntary agency officials met to plan post-war relief and rehabilitation programs. Such discussions had been ongoing since the attention of the country and of the world had been focused on the impending needs by President Roosevelt and by Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who addressed the problems in a speech broadcast worldwide on July 23, 1942:

With victory achieved our first concern must be for those whose sufferings have been almost beyond human endurance. When the armies of our enemies are beaten the people of many countries will be starved and without means of procuring food; homeless and without means of building shelter; their fields scorched; their cattle slaughtered; their tools gone; their factories and mines destroyed; their roads and transport wrecked. Unknown millions will be far from their homes—prisoners of war, inmates of concentration camps, forced laborers in alien lands; refugees from battle, from cruelty, from starvation. Disease and danger of disease will lurk everywhere. In some countries confusion and chaos will follow the cessation of hostilities. Victory must be followed by swift and effective action to meet these pressing human needs.⁵

At one such meeting of private agency representatives, on October 7, 1943, a formal agreement was ratified creating the first formal coordinating council of American private relief agencies, the American Council of

⁴ Bruce Nichols, *op. cit.*, draft manuscript, pp. 100-101.

⁵ Department of State, Division of Public Information, OFRRO, Washington, D.C., July 15, 1943, quoted in Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service. Ten private agencies ratified the charter, which described the purpose of the council as follows:

to provide a means for consultation and for action in the event action should appear necessary or advisable, for coordination and planning both among [the private services agencies] and with the appropriate government agencies, to the end that relief and reconstruction programs may be carried on in the most effective way to accomplish its purpose, the physical and social betterment of the people of the areas studied.⁶

The voluntary agencies working through the American Council not only became major players in immediate postwar relief programs in Europe and Asia, but they have continued to play a crucial role in private and official relief, refugee assistance, and rehabilitation and development programs. A brief look at the nature of those agencies is in order.

II. Voluntary Agencies: The Embodiment of Private Giving

During the forty years the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service was in operation—from its founding in 1943 until its dissolution in 1984—116 private voluntary agencies held membership. These agencies embodied the will and spirit of the American people, who were their constituents. Most agencies were organized by faith groups, and their motivations often sprung from their Judeo-Christian heritage. A unifying characteristic of the agencies represented in the American Council was their commitment not only to relief but to service, defined as self-help and social rehabilitation. The charter of the American Council limits membership to “private voluntary service agencies (non-governmental and non-profit) which engage actively in programs in foreign countries or for people coming from such countries . . .” According to Mrs. Elizabeth Clark Reiss, historian of the American Council, three major attributes historically defined an organization as a voluntary agency for the purpose of membership in the council: the agency must be broad-based and run by the constituency it represents (i.e., by an uncompensated board of directors); it must operate overseas programs; and it must be nondiscriminatory in determining the beneficiaries of its aid. Soon after its inception, the council’s membership grew to include many agencies organized by nationality groups, as these agencies began to operate overseas programs rather than engaging primarily in fund-raising activities.

A representative of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

⁶ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, op. cit., Appendix I.

described his agency as follows: "This Committee is a service agency. Whatever impact it may have made on the religious and social life of its time has been due almost entirely to acts of healing quality rendered without expectation of return or commendation."⁷ And a 1958 American Council paper entitled "Voluntary Agencies in Service Programs Abroad" stated, ". . . an act of assistance on the part of a voluntary agency is an act of faith."

In 1959, several people at the American Council prepared a series of questions and answers about the nature of American voluntary agencies for the American National Exhibition in Moscow. According to Mrs. Reiss, what began as a rather amusing assignment culminated in a fundamental, concise, and workable definition of a voluntary agency which later became an acceptable standard used not only by the council but by the U.S. government in determining what private organizations were eligible to participate in government aid programs. The Soviets were told that

An American voluntary agency is an organization established and governed by a group of private American citizens for a stated philanthropic purpose, and supported by the voluntary contributions of fellow Americans concerned in the realization of that purpose.

In recent years the term "voluntary agency" has become virtually synonymous with "private voluntary organization" (or "PVO"), a term which characterizes many nonprofit organizations which function overseas for a variety of purposes, including the operation of educational, political, and business- and trade-related programs. However, to the early members of the American Council, a voluntary agency was first and foremost an organization that served as a conduit for people-to-people assistance—an organization whose programs reflected the contributions and concerns of a constituent body of Americans.

When the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service held its first annual meeting in September 1944, 39 agencies were represented on the board of directors and 8 agencies were invited as associate members. A listing of these agencies offers an indication of the religious and nationality communities represented in the council: American Denmark Relief, American Bureau for Medical Aid to China, American Committee in Aid of Chinese Industrial Cooperatives, American Committee for Christian Refugees, American Field Service, American Friends Service Committee, American Jewish Joint Distribution Com-

⁷ Clarence Pickett, *For More Than Bread* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953).

mittee, American Relief for Czechoslovakia, American Relief for France, American Relief for Italy, American Relief for Norway, American ORT Federation, American Women's Hospitals, Belgian War Relief Society, Brethren Service Committee, China Aid Council, Congregational Christian Service Committee, Girl Scouts, Greek War Relief Association, Hadassah, Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, International Migration Service, International Rescue and Relief Committee, Labor League for Human Rights (A.F.L.), National CIO Relief Committee, Near East Foundation, Mennonite Central Committee, Paderewski Testimonial Fund, Polish War Relief, Queen Wilhelmina Fund, Salvation Army, Tolstoy Foundation, Unitarian Service Committee, United China Relief, United Yugoslav Relief Fund of America, War Relief Services—National Catholic Welfare Conference, World Student Service Fund, Young Men's Christian Association, Young Women's Christian Association.⁸

Of course many of these agencies later disbanded as the needs they answered diminished, and new agencies have been formed over the years, some in response to particular crises—civil wars, drought, famine, earthquakes, etc. And over the years, many such agencies found their ability to transmit assistance overseas was greatly aided by their ability to cooperate with other agencies and with the U.S. government and multinational bodies through the American Council.

III. War Relief: The "Trinity of Interests"

As World War II ended, American assistance was viewed by the voluntary agencies and by the U.S. government as a tool to assist in the transition from wartime to peacetime economic, social, and political systems in Europe. Reconstructing European economies and fostering long-term economic growth and stability were seen as the second and third facets of a program designed to prevent renewed outbreak of hostilities. But the need for relief supplies to meet the immediate problems of starvation and homelessness was paramount. The concern of the voluntary agencies for the relief needs of the war's victims was a direct reflection of the concern expressed by the constituents of the agencies—the American public. The scope of the voluntary agencies' programs had increased enormously during the war. While private donations for war relief had reached \$2.5 million in 1939, they had jumped to \$28.5 million in 1941.⁹ Yet it was clear

⁸ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part I, pp. 50-51.

⁹ Bruce Nichols, *op. cit.*, draft manuscript, p. 121.

to the agencies and the government that this was not enough. Relief workers in France, Belgium, and other European countries sent reports back telling of having to decide which hungry children to feed with their limited supplies, and the extent of the hunger and deprivation was daily becoming more apparent.

U.S. government officials recognized the unique ability of the agencies to respond to the crises in Europe: the agencies had practical experience in programs of self-help and rehabilitation, they had experienced personnel in the crisis areas, they had the ability to mobilize large sectors of the American public to make donations for humanitarian assistance, and the agencies had established networks of cooperation within the U.S. and abroad. The case for strengthening the connection between voluntary foreign aid and official U.S. foreign policy was strongly made by Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who advised President Roosevelt that the private agencies should also be conduits for government aid. Secretary Hull argued that official regulation of the private groups would assure a greater measure of success for the agencies' assistance programs and would prevent fraudulent agencies from soliciting the American public. In addition, he hoped official cooperation among the agencies and between the agencies and the government would help prevent duplication and inefficiency.¹⁰ In addition, the military occupation of Europe would necessitate that private relief supplies be shipped with the consent and cooperation of the occupying powers.

All signs pointed to greater governmental regulation and control during the remainder of the war and immediately after, yet the voluntary agencies felt that further regulation raised questions of the independence of the agencies' activities from those of the government. In discussions at the American Council, which was still taking shape, and in negotiations with government officials, representatives of the agencies sought guarantees that cooperation with the government would not compromise the people-to-people nature of their aid. The agencies—and the people they represented—wanted to guarantee their freedom to ship aid to the areas and people of their choosing. War relief shipments to Germany provided an early example of the problems, as two voluntary agency workers, Eileen Egan and Elizabeth Clark Reiss, explained:

The people of America, for example, hearing the horrendous reports of the sufferings of the German population, particularly the children, were ready with large amounts of help—clothing, food, medicines, funds. But they

¹⁰ Bruce Nichols, *op. cit.*, draft manuscript, pp. 123-124.

were powerless to help in any way because of the provisions of a law of their country, the Trading with the Enemy Act. Their only exchanges were to be in works of mercy—exchanges that transcended the concept of friend or enemy and dealt only with higher concepts of compassion and brotherhood. Their compassion was rendered totally ineffective by a cold and compassionless law which made no distinctions.

Certain leaders of the American people, chiefly leaders representing religious groups, began to exercise the right of petition of a sovereign people to their government. They explained that it was time to open the floodgates of American people-to-people help for a defeated enemy.

Aid to a mortally wounded enemy had no connection with the Trading with the Enemy Act, a law designed to prevent a powerful enemy from adding further to his strength. Many of these leaders believed literally in the command, "If your enemy be hungry give him to eat; if he thirst, give him to drink."¹¹

Many channels of communication between the voluntary agencies (still predominately religious in nature) and the government had been opened by private-public cooperation after World War I and in the early years of World War II. Such cooperation was formalized in 1939 when a revised version of the Neutrality Act (first passed in 1935) was passed by Congress. Under the act, all voluntary agencies that wished to solicit and collect donations for war relief overseas were required to register with the Department of State and submit reports of their contributions and shipments. In July 1942, following the U.S. entry into the war, the President's War Relief Control Board (PWRCB), a committee appointed by the President and given wartime powers, registered agencies and licensed wartime relief solicitations and shipments. Yet the aid distribution mechanisms in the U.S. government were fragmented: the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations (OFRRO), in the State Department, was given responsibility to study and administer aid for "pressing human needs"; the Foreign Economic Administration (FEA) carried out the work of OFRRO in the liberated areas; the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), a multilateral governmental aid agency, represented the concerns and administered aid donated by a number of sovereign governments; and the PWRCB served as liaison agency with the voluntary agencies. In an early meeting of the American Council

¹¹ Eileen Egan and Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *Transfigured Night: The CRALOG Experience* (New York: Livingston Publishing Co., 1964), pp. 16-17.

Service and one of those involved in discussions that led to the founding of the council, explained that "it was difficult to be definite in fixing the relation of private agencies with the OFRRO and government relief . . . since the situation is not clear to the government agencies."¹²

Through the American Council, the agencies made representations to the government and to UNRRA that their independence and the special abilities to each agency be respected and utilized.

In 1943, the PWRCB established the National War Fund to conduct a national appeal for contributions to war relief and to distribute the proceeds to PWRCB-registered and -approved welfare organizations and voluntary agencies. Registration with the PWRCB has become essential to any agency wishing to carry out programs overseas; PWRCB approval established the credibility of an agency and offered access to government funds (administered directly by the U.S. government or through UNRRA). But in turn, the PWRCB asked many agencies to add the word "American" to their name, and required that their programs overseas were conducted "purely in the American interest."¹³ The Board had authority over "all solicitations, sales or offers to sell merchandise or services, collections and distribution or disposal of funds and contributions in kind for the direct or implied purpose" of overseas assistance.¹⁴ The National War Fund resources were to be distributed through various government agencies, through UNRRA, and through the approved voluntary agencies.

The voluntary agencies reacted strongly against a program of standardized relief distribution. At an American Council meeting on the subject, one agency representative commented that "one of the primary purposes of our group of agencies is to lay before the people who think in terms of complete standardization the value of what might be called the personal approach to relief."¹⁵ The members of the council arranged meetings with UNRRA and the PWRCB to protest the plan. In preparation for these meetings and during the meetings themselves, the need became increasingly apparent for collaboration of the agencies through the American Council in order to be in a position to present their priorities with a unified voice to those organizations that would no doubt run any postwar relief program—the PWRCB, UNRRA, and the Allied military forces. The

¹² Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 11.

¹³ Harold J. Seymour, *Design for Giving: The Story of the National War Fund 1943-1947* (New York: Harper & Row, 1947), p. vii, quoted in Bruce Nichols, *op. cit.*, draft manuscript, p. 126.

¹⁴ Bruce Nichols, *op. cit.*, draft manuscript, p. 126.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 29.

council members worked to establish formal ties with the National War Fund and the Control Board, and the council continued to strengthen its relationship with UNRRA. It became clear to council members that expanding their ranks to include more agencies registered with the PWRCB and the National War Fund would give the council a stronger voice. Members discussed the subject of extending membership to some of the predominately fund-raising and national groups then registered with the Control Board, a possibility complicated by the council's charter which had limited membership to service agencies operating overseas. The suggestion was made that the fund-raising organizations might donate funds or staff to one or more service agencies operating programs abroad. The council members also founded committees to study the needs in particular areas to assist in assuring that relief programs could begin as soon as these areas were liberated.

At an American Council meeting in February 1944, the newly appointed deputy director of UNRRA in charge of Welfare, Miss Craig McGeachy, made clear that UNRRA intended to work closely with the agencies when she said

I would not undertake the job as head of the Welfare Division if I did not know that I would have the cooperation of the agencies which have had experience. I know that you realize, as I do, that every organization here has a role to play in that machinery. I feel that unless we manage to approach the emergency problems in one country after another as it is liberated, with both the attitude of mind of the official and the voluntary organizations, we cannot meet the problems.¹⁶

At that meeting arrangements were made to second 150 agency personnel to UNRRA for programs then getting underway in the Balkans. And the agency representatives amended the bylaws of the council to read that all agencies recommended by the President's War Relief Control Board be presumed to be qualified for membership in the council.

The methods and avenues of cooperation between the agencies, the government and UNRRA were falling into place. These cooperative arrangements would prove to outlast the war effort and, with little modification, serve for the next forty years. At that same February 1944 council meeting an UNRRA staff member noted the new ground that the war relief effort was breaking:

In relationship between public and private agencies in this country there has

¹⁶ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 40.

been a tendency to mark off areas as public and private. In this experience which we are about to undertake together, I see it as the experience of trying to work out a "trinity of interests" between the military, UNRRA, and the private agencies. I think this holds a promise of an approach never made before in the welfare field. . . . I think the term "trinity of effort" might also be used with reference to UNRRA, the President's War Relief Control Board, and the agencies. We should try to develop a formula for closest possible relationships between UNRRA and the agencies and the Board. . . . We are in the process of evolution.

IV. Postwar Relief

As the various countries of Europe were liberated, voluntary agency and UNRRA personnel moved in to begin relief and reconstruction. The President's War Relief Control Board and the National War Fund, being wartime agencies, were dissolved by July 1946. Since many of the agencies and the American Council itself had received much of their war relief funding from the National War Fund, financial considerations became increasingly important as the war ended. At the root of the funding problem was the very nature of the voluntary agencies. According to Elizabeth Reiss, "participation in the War Fund . . . had meant that those agencies established during the war had not been able to create a proper constituency; older agencies, such as the Near East Foundation, would find it necessary to rebuild theirs anew."¹⁷ In addition, the funding questions were related to the future purpose of the voluntary agencies. While most had been formed as service agencies, many found they had by all counts become relief agencies. In an American Council meeting in June 1945 this issue was discussed. Dr. Joseph C. Hyman, Executive Vice-Chairman of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, reported that the JDC was

for the first time faced with (this) problem. . . . We have always been a service agency primarily; we stimulated and coordinated and helped finance a good deal of work in the field. . . . When overseas agencies told us that money was not so important as material aid, medical supplies, foods, clothing, etc. we . . . found ourselves in a large scale business of organization, purchasing and distributing several million dollars' worth of supplies a year. We have had to readjust and completely change our structure. . . . For (many) organizations the problem is more difficult now than during the war;

¹⁷ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 57.

it is easier to raise money than to attempt to set up your own structure of service and supplies.¹⁸

Howard Brooks of the Unitarian Service Committee said that while his agency did not “look forward to being an agency dealing indefinitely with supplies,” he felt the emergency conditions meant that “the main problem (was) to keep people alive until more supplies (were) available on the continent,” and suggested that the agencies deal with the supply problem cooperatively.¹⁹ The discussions of financial considerations led to the establishment, in 1947, of a united fund-raising effort, American Overseas Aid. Although 26 agencies participated, the campaign failed, partly because of the participation of the United Nations Appeal for Children (UNICEF) (included at the request of the State Department), which led to confusion over whether the appeal was a private or governmental program. However, the effort succeeded in focusing national attention on the needs overseas and on the agencies then in operation, and thereby on agencies’ drives for donations of relief supplies.

The American Council spearheaded efforts to create coordinating councils of agencies overseas to facilitate cooperation in the field among the agencies and between the agencies and the occupying powers and UNRRA. For example, in 1945, the Rome council was established in Italy and the Cooperative Council of Voluntary Agencies was set up in France. Most of the councils were multinational and independent of the American Council, although many were patterned after the council, often relying on its constitution and by-laws in establishing their own structures. The most prominent of the overseas councils was the Council of Relief Agencies Licensed to Operate in Germany (CRALOG). Since Germany was a former enemy state, aid shipments were prohibited by the Trading with the Enemy Act, as mentioned earlier, although Germany was also the area of the most pressing needs. The voluntary agencies petitioned the government to relax the restrictions on aid and succeeded in facilitating the organization of CRALOG, which was formed with the explicit approval of President Truman after a survey team from the American Council reported on conditions there.²⁰ CRALOG eventually shipped massive amounts of food and clothing to the area soon after the close of the war through close coordination with the U.S. Military Administration of Germany under Gen-

¹⁸ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part III, p. 19.

¹⁹ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part III, p. 20.

²⁰ Bruce Nichols, *op. cit.*, draft manuscript, p. 156.

eral Lucius Clay. (UNRRA was prohibited from providing relief in the former enemy state.)

Even as the American Council was forming, the agencies had been concerned with the imminent food shortages in Europe. In early 1944, the Displaced Persons Committee of the council (the first council committee to be formed) recommended the establishment of a Committee on Material Resources to coordinate the transmittal of food and clothing to Europe. It was through the Material Resources Committee that many of the arrangements were made to coordinate shipments of supplies overseas. Given that the council was not an operating agency, the committee did not carry out relief programs, but instead allowed the agencies to meet together to discuss impending needs, possible cooperative ventures, and their roles in UNRRA and government programs. When it became known that surplus Army rations would become available, government officials called on the voluntary agencies to channel packages of food and supplies to Europe. Through the Material Resources Committee the agencies formed CARE (Cooperative Remittances to Europe) to channel the surplus rations, paid for by the contributions of individual Americans, to individuals and groups of the contributors' choosing. Twenty-two agencies participated in CARE, and its success again illustrated the unique role of people-to-people aid as an expression of American goodwill and humanitarianism. However, many eventually withdrew when the effort evolved to move away from the original people-to-people program to include undesignated shipments of government goods, and CARE eventually became an independent organization.

Many proposals were advanced to tap America's bounty for the relief efforts. One proposal discussed within the Material Resources Committee was to organize a cooperative fund-raising campaign targeted to rural and farm areas. A representative of the Brethren Service Committee advanced the idea of collecting farm products and equipment and shipping them to farmers overseas. Called CROP (Concerted Rural Overseas Program), the plan failed to generate sufficient support for the council to proceed, although three council member agencies—Church World Service, Lutheran World Relief, and the National Catholic Rural Life Conference—joined to sponsor the program under another name, Christian Rural Overseas Program. This episode again illustrated the value of people-to-people efforts: while the project failed to generate support when run by the large consortium of agencies in the council, three agencies with sizable rural constituencies were able to generate support for the same idea.

The postwar relief efforts of the agencies extended beyond Europe to the

Far East. Although the agencies operating in Asia did not predominately serve their own nationality or religious groups as in Europe, the voluntary agencies again relied on their contacts with Americans in the area to operate relief programs, and again the contacts of the voluntary agencies were largely formed through previous missionary efforts. An umbrella council of agencies was formed in 1946, which was patterned after CRALOG and was called LARA (Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia). Along with Catholic, Baptist, and other Protestant agencies, the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee operated in the area, relying not on contacts to former Jewish operations in the area, but responding to the needs of over 12,000 Jews who had fled from Russia to Southeast Asia. Along with the immediate needs in areas of Japanese war activities such as Northern Thailand and Burma, the agencies were ready by the late 1940s to deal with the dislocations and food shortages resulting from the growing resistance to French colonial rule in Vietnam.

Coordination of the agencies did not take place solely through the American Council. In fact, government regulation of the agencies' overseas activities continued into peacetime. At the termination of the President's War Relief Control Board in 1946, President Truman established the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid to "tie together the governmental and private programs in the field of foreign relief."²¹ The Advisory Committee was to serve as a liaison body between the voluntary agencies and the executive branch. Like the President's War Relief PWRCB, it was an independent body appointed by the President and was responsible for registering the voluntary agencies. And as under the Control Board, registration was to be "voluntary." Nevertheless, registration entailed certain obligations for the agencies that were very similar to those asked of agencies previously registered with the PWRCB and included

the obligation to record with the Committee, for public inspection, a quarterly financial statement, a monthly report of foreign money transfers and commodity exports, a periodic budget and public audit, and current operations at home and abroad.²²

The American Council member agencies continued their efforts to address the growing food shortages in Europe both through council efforts to publicize the growing needs and through petitions to the executive and legislative branches of government directly through the council and

²¹ Arthur C. Ringland, "The Organization of Voluntary Foreign Aid," *Department of State Bulletin*, 30, March 15, 1954, p. 386, quoted in Bruce Nichols, op. cit., p. 159.

²² Arthur Ringland, op. cit., quoted in Bruce Nichols, op. cit., p. 160.

through the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid. In 1947, Congress passed Public Law 48, appropriating \$350 million for general relief aid and \$5 million “to pay necessary expenses for the ocean transportation of supplies donated to or purchased by American voluntary and nonprofit relief agencies . . . in order to supplement the general relief assistance made available.”²³ The guarantee of ocean freight reimbursements expedited the voluntary agencies’ shipments of supplies already gathered, which had previously been transported through agreements with UNRRA, the U.S. military, or with the recipient governments. And the publicity attaching to passage of the law generated increased support among the American public for relief programs. Ocean freight was the first direct U.S. government appropriation for the voluntary agencies and was available only to those agencies registered with the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid. In later years, government funding for the agencies programs would grow, as would the importance of registration and the importance of the voluntary agencies as means to achieve overall U.S. foreign policy goals.

Soon after the war ended, then, the pieces were in place for the massive relief programs that saved the lives of thousands left homeless, destitute, and starving by the war. The “trinity of interests” between the U.S. government, the voluntary agencies, and intergovernmental bodies had been formalized by U.S. law into a workable system, a pipeline of assistance. The workability of that system was to be tested later in the 1940s by the Marshall Plan and the continuing efforts to resettle and repatriate the thousands of refugees of the war.

V. The Marshall Plan and the Displaced Persons Act

By 1948 the rehabilitation of the wartorn areas of Europe was still far from complete. Not only were food shortages still a threat, but thousands of refugees still remained in “displaced persons” camps throughout Europe—and more continued to stream into the camps from Soviet-occupied areas in Eastern Europe. Two major pieces of legislation were passed in 1948 to address these problems, and both provided integral and expanded roles for the voluntary agencies, continuing the expansion of cooperation between the agencies and the U.S. government that had started in the early days of the war.

In June 1948 Congress passed P.L. 774, the Displaced Persons (DP) Act, which provided for the resettlement of thousands of refugees to the

²³ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part III, p. 36.

U.S. outside of normal immigration quotas. For more than three years preceding passage of the bill, the American Council had surveyed the refugee problem, drawn up numerous proposals for moving beyond relief of those in the camps toward a more permanent solution, and submitted draft legislation to members of Congress. A new governmental body, the Displaced Persons Commission, was created to carry out the provisions of the law. The DP Commission relied on those agencies registered with the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid to continue the relief offered in the camps and to participate in the resettlement process. The agencies worked through the International Refugee Organization (IRO), the successor to UNRRA formed by the new United Nations, through the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, and through the Allied occupation forces to document, process, and move more than 160,000 people from the camps in Europe to be permanently resettled in the U.S. In addition, the agencies offered orientation and training programs to ready the DPs for their new lives in the U.S.²⁴ In 1950 the DP Act was amended to provide additional immigration visas for those fleeing the Communist-controlled areas of Eastern Europe, a program which became the U.S. Escapee Program.

The second piece of major legislation passed in 1948, the Marshall Plan, sought to rebuild the devastated farms, factories, and housing stock of Europe (and also contained some provisions for relief and reconstruction programs in the Far East). The concept for the program was first put forward by Secretary of State George C. Marshall and became law with the passage of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1948 (P.L. 472) after a year's study by a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee chaired by James G. Fulton of Pennsylvania. The study process involved agencies of the U.S. government and of governments of Europe and representatives of the American Council, many of whom had seen the extent of the damage firsthand. The report that came out of the study process, known as the Fulton Report, contained many of the suggestions made by the American Council concerning the role of the voluntary agencies in the program. The Fulton Report became the basis for many provisions of the Foreign Assistance Act and of later foreign aid programs.²⁵ The act, also known as the ERP (European Recovery Program), recognized the valuable role played by the voluntary agencies in mobilizing the support of the American public for foreign assistance and in collecting and distributing voluntary donations

²⁴ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 37.

²⁵ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part III, pp. 50-51.

and served to further formalize the relationship between the government and the agencies.

The ERP broadened the U.S. aid program from relief to reconstruction, and the agencies recommended to the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid that the regulations covering ocean freight reimbursements also be broadened to include shipping costs for reconstruction supplies. In a letter sent to the European Cooperation Administration Committee in Congress and to the Advisory Committee, the council agencies outlined their feelings about the relationship of relief and reconstruction:

The programs of American voluntary agencies abroad are based upon the concept of helping people to help themselves, and upon the emergency need to meet their basic wants until they and their countries are in a position to independently maintain themselves. . . . Relief and recovery are two sides of the same coin. . . . In fact relief is of little worth unless its aim be recovery and this is not possible without the maintenance of programs sufficiently diversified, flexible and broad to gain the end in view. . . . It is the [council's] hope that this analysis will be of assistance . . . in securing the most understanding cooperation in meeting agency requirements by governmental agencies concerned with voluntary relief such as Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Army and Economic Cooperation Administration.²⁶

The Marshall Plan also tightened the requirements covering the eligibility of agencies to receive government funding. Previously, registration with the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid had been voluntary, although in many ways it was essential for agencies that sought to participate in relief efforts. For example, ocean freight reimbursement was available only to registered agencies and CRALOG involved only registered and licensed agencies. Under the Marshall Plan registration became mandatory, and this necessitated creating formal procedures and official conditions for eligibility. All along registration had been a way to guarantee that voluntary agencies used American citizens' money—money donated voluntarily or raised through taxes and distributed through the government—for the purposes for which it had been given. Indeed, the American Council's membership requirements were in their own way an effort to create and maintain standards for the delivery of services and supplies through the voluntary agencies. The agencies had cooperated with

²⁶ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part III, p. 55.

registration under the National War Fund and under the Advisory Committee at the war's end in order to protect the reputation and integrity of the community of voluntary agencies as a whole, and they continued to cooperate with the new registration program under the Marshall Plan. The American Council submitted a memorandum to the Advisory Committee recommending that the criteria for eligibility of agencies be based on those for membership in the American Council and suggesting that while actual membership in the council should not be required, it would be desirable.²⁷ These suggestions were heeded, and the registration requirements eventually adopted were similar to those of the council.

However, the increasing control of the government over agencies' programs which was implied by tighter regulation worried many agencies. In one council meeting, Dr. Hyman of the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee echoed the sentiments of many when he said, "Regarding the relationship of governments and private agencies, I regard that government best that imposes the least restrictions on individuals or on well-intended organized groups."²⁸ In fact the agencies fought against several facets of the Marshall Plan's administration that they found onerous, and they were able to have the procedures changed. For example, the agencies fought a government proposal to ship voluntary supplies on Army-chartered vessels, feeling this would limit agency flexibility; the proposal was eventually dropped. Another instance concerned identification of the agencies' supplies. All government supplies sent under the Marshall Plan carried a government seal indicating that the shipments had been supplied by the United States, and all voluntary agency supplies shipped using government ocean freight funds were to have been labeled in the same way. The agencies wanted to distinguish private from government aid and made a proposal, which was accepted, that the following words be added around the government seal: "Voluntary Contributions from the American People."²⁹

In 1949 another piece of legislation was passed that further expanded the government subventions available to the voluntary agencies. The Agricultural Act of 1949 made growing surplus commodities owned by the Commodity Credit Corporation available to government agencies and private welfare agencies free of charge, although transportation costs were to be paid by the recipient agency. The commodities included milk, eggs,

²⁷ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part III, p. 52.

²⁸ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part III, p. 53.

²⁹ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part III, pp. 57-58.

and potatoes. (Later legislation provided government funding for inland transportation to the nearest port.)

The increased government funds and supplies available for the overseas programs of the voluntary agencies and the new registration procedures enacted to regulate the distribution of such subventions further formalized the relationship between the agencies and the government. This proved increasingly problematic for many of the agencies that felt being too closely tied to official programs would compromise their ability to be advocates for humanitarian causes and to carry out their programs as they saw fit. These issues became more salient as foreign aid increasingly reflected U.S. national security concerns, a process that began in the 1950s as the Communist threat became more visible and the American role in global economic and political affairs expanded.

VI. Mutual Security and Foreign Aid

Both the Marshall Plan and the DP Program came to a close in the early 1950s, but the refugee problem was far from solved. Increasing numbers of “escapees” moved into Western Europe from Communist-controlled areas in Eastern Europe and into Southeast Asia following the Communist victory in China in 1949. The American Council had met with members of the State Department’s U.S. Escapee Program before the DP Act expired to discuss future procedures for dealing with the refugees. The voluntary agencies’ concern was for new legislation to establish an overall immigration and refugee system to replace the series of ad hoc measures that had been enacted since the war and which were all based on the immigration quota system passed in 1924. The McCarren-Walter immigration bill (P.L. 414) was passed in 1952, and reflected Cold War concerns more than the humanitarian ideals at the root of the proposals submitted by the voluntary agencies. While the agencies were largely against the bill, they were split over whether to launch an all-out effort to prevent its passage or, in recognition of the need for new legislation, seek revisions as the plan was put into effect. It became clear that the agencies would be unable to affect government action unless they could present a unified front. As the representative of one council agency noted, “we wound up with nothing because our forces were divided. . . .”³⁰ The agencies submitted a report to the new administration of President-elect Eisenhower recommending various changes in the McCarren-Walter act to reflect the “American tradition of giving sanctuary to political refugees.”³¹ The agencies also

³⁰ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 56.

³¹ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 59.

raised their concern for the growing refugee problems caused by the India-Pakistan partition, the Communist takeover in China, and the growing conflict in Korea.

In 1953 new legislation was passed. The Refugee Relief Act of 1953 continued the escapee program, but expanded the program beyond Europe and set aside quotas for entry visas under three specific categories: refugees, expellees, and escapees. Yet again, the legislation primarily reflected security concerns and failed to address the problem of those DPs still remaining in camps in Europe, a priority of the voluntary agencies. The Refugee Relief Act also discontinued the practice of allowing the agencies to issue "blanket assurances" that the refugees would not become a "public charge" and that they would have adequate jobs and housing. Instead it required that American citizens provide such assurances for individual refugees or families of refugees. Agency representatives met with Secretary of State Dulles to work out that and other administrative problems that slowed the agencies' resettlement efforts. Secretary Dulles pushed through several measures which expedited the procedures. By the time the act expired at the end of 1956, more than 184,000 refugees had been resettled in the U.S.³²

The new refugee and immigration laws addressed only one part of the remaining problems of postwar rehabilitation. In his 1949 inaugural address President Truman presented his Point IV program for continuing the reconstruction begun by the Marshall Plan and for expanding the program to all underdeveloped areas of the world. The Act for International Development was passed in 1950, and the shift from reconstruction to development through technical assistance was natural not only for the government but for the voluntary agencies, which had long stressed the need to "help people help themselves." The voluntary agencies had played a major role in determining the nature of the act as passed, having begun soon after the President's inaugural to discuss plans to cooperate with the new government initiative and expressing their view through contacts with Congress and through the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid. A Technical Assistance and Projects Committee was formed within the American Council to serve as a clearing house for information, to provide liaison with the government, and to coordinate agency programs as required.³³ In the government, a Technical Cooperation Administration was formed in the State Department. Voluntary agencies were kept apprised of the requests of foreign governments for technical assistance proj-

³² Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 64-65.

³³ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part IV, p. 7.

ects and were invited to submit grant proposals for Point IV projects. This represented the beginning of official U.S. development assistance, and from the start many official aid projects were carried out by the agencies under government contract. However, like refugee and immigration programs, the new development work became increasingly subject to national security concerns.

In 1951, the Mutual Security Act (MSA) was passed, which incorporated existing U.S. foreign aid programs into the Mutual Security Agency, in order to “strengthen the mutual security and individual and collective defenses of the free world.”³⁴ (The Mutual Security Agency was under the Foreign Operations Administration, which had replaced the European Cooperation Administration at the end of the Marshall Plan.) Unlike previous legislation, which had discussed the role of the voluntary agencies in terms of humanitarian assistance to those in need, the new act specifically defined the agencies’ participation in terms of the security purposes of the law. The basic assumption of the Marshall Plan that no economic aid was to be diverted to military assistance had been abandoned. In fact, the MSA did not separate economic assistance from strategic assistance; rather the overall purpose of the act was to “maintain the security and promote the foreign policy and provide for the general welfare of the United States by furnishing assistance to friendly nations in the interest of international peace and security.”³⁵ The MSA also moved the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid into the Mutual Security Agency from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (where it had been moved from the White House in 1949). These moves reflected the growing identification of voluntary foreign aid with official U.S. foreign policy. The Advisory Committee was again moved in 1953 under the Foreign Operations Administration. At that time the head of the committee, which had been originally established as an independent liaison committee between the agencies and the government, became the head also of the FOA’s voluntary agencies division—responsible for supervising and evaluating the agencies he was to represent. Many voluntary agencies felt their ability to advocate their positions vis-à-vis government aid programs was severely compromised.

The Mutual Security Act also tightened regulation of agencies by becoming more directly involved in the administration of their projects overseas. Personnel of agencies “working for the government” in the sense

³⁴ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part III, p. 72.

³⁵ P.L. 165, 82d Congress, 1951.

of operating under government contract were required to gain security clearance from the FBI. This represented a direct intrusion into the private nature of the agencies, but again reflected concerns of the government to guarantee that its foreign aid funds were spent as appropriated. In fact, the security clearance held up the American Council's technical assistance program for months as its new director was investigated by the FBI.³⁶ The American Friends Service Committee later withdrew from government-funded programs after several of its employees were required to sign oaths of loyalty to the U.S. government.³⁷ Security clearances were not discontinued until the early 1960s.

While the "trinity of interests" appeared to be in rapid decline, the Korean war occasioned a new relief effort reminiscent of the immediate post-war period. A coordinating council, American Relief for Korea (ARK), was formed along the lines of CRALOG in 1950 by the American Council to plan assistance to Korea and to gather funds and supplies.

By the end of the Korean War in 1953, American food stocks had built up again. The Foreign Operations Administration sponsored a Christmas program to deliver surplus food to various parts of the world. Called "Operation Reindeer," the program was organized along the lines of CARE, with food packages to be people-to-people Christmas gifts from American citizens. While the agencies protested the emphasis on Christmas for religious and distributional reasons (they felt there would be problems shipping the packages to Asia in time), the plan went ahead. Only three agencies participated—CARE, American Middle East Relief, and Hadassah—where there was once nearly universal participation of the agencies in such government-sponsored programs. One reason for the limited participation lay in the fact that Operation Reindeer had been planned almost totally by the government, with little input from the agencies. The lesson was not lost on either the agencies or the government. In 1954, the Christmas program was repeated, this time called "Operation Pointsettia," but it was planned with greater input from the agencies and 22 agencies participated, distributing six million 13-pound packages.³⁸

The two Christmas operations were the beginning of a surplus-commodity distribution program that was formalized with the passage of P.L. 480, the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954. The plan, which became known as "Food for Peace," was initially planned

³⁶ Nichols, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

³⁷ Nichols, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-209.

³⁸ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part III, p. 80.

with little or no previous consultation with the agencies. As the pending legislation made its way through Congress the discussion in the American Council focused on

the problem presented by the government-declared unprecedented volume of surplus commodities (available) for use abroad; the effect on the voluntary agencies—their principles of operation and program planning; [and] discussion of responsibility of voluntarism in plans for distribution of surpluses.³⁹

The agencies discussed whether it would be a mistake to participate in a government program that could potentially dwarf the size of their current programs, and ultimately recommended that the issue be raised with the authorities in Washington, particularly with regard to establishing a quasi-governmental agency—to be advised by the agencies—to oversee distribution of the surplus.

The agencies of the American council prepared a document entitled the “Moral Challenge of American Abundance,” and presented it to congressional hearings on the legislation. The statement described the nature and past work of the agencies, their cooperation through the American Council, the role of surplus food as a supplement to their long-range programs, and estimated that over three years, the agencies could distribute \$1 billion worth of food. It said, “Just as there are no ‘surplus people’ in the world, so there is really no surplus food in the world in relation to the needs of people.”⁴⁰ The act as passed included a specific role for the voluntary agencies in two of its three titles. The agencies later testified for extension of the act after its expiration in 1957 and submitted another policy statement entitled “The Continuing Challenge of American Abundance.”

The Food for Peace Program and the accompanying freight reimbursements represented yet another new source of government aid to the work of the voluntary agencies and represented a channel through which the government could further integrate voluntary programs with the priorities of the government. For many agencies the surplus food accounted for a significant portion of their budgets, raising questions within some agencies and within the American Council about the proper role of government funding in an agency’s program and the possibility that close cooperation with the government could affect an agency’s flexibility.

In 1956 several crises around the world presented new challenges to the

³⁹ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part III, p. 82.

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part III, p. 88.

agencies: the popular uprising in Hungary and its subsequent quelling by the Red Army led thousands to flee; the Egyptian seizure of the Suez Canal, and the brief war between Egypt, France, Israel, and Great Britain, led to displacement and dislocation; hundreds of thousands of refugees fled from North to South Vietnam; and Chinese refugees continued to flee to Hong Kong. The response to the Hungarian crisis, in particular, called upon many of the relief and assistance mechanisms established immediately after the war (although the International Refugee Organization had been replaced by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] in 1951). Once again, a special Presidential committee was appointed to oversee the relief efforts, and its members included representatives of the government, labor organizations, and voluntary agencies. President Eisenhower facilitated the work of the voluntary agencies in resettling the refugees by calling on state and local officials to support the agencies' work in their areas. While the cooperative efforts between the government, the UNHCR, and the agencies recalled the earlier "trinity of interests," it should be noted that the nature of the refugee problem fit closely with the anti-Communist provisions of the current refugee and immigration legislation, and while the scope and success of the relief and resettlement operations attested to the humanitarian motives at their root, there remained thousands of DPs still unresettled from World War II. The agencies continued to advocate for a final solution for those refugees caught in the "pipeline" by the various immigration bills passed since the war's end. The passage in 1957 of a bill sponsored by Senator John F. Kennedy finally contained some provisions that allowed the agencies to aid those still displaced.⁴¹

VII. Conclusion: The Vietnam War and the Demise of Consensus

The 1950s wrought many changes in the partnership arrangements formulated in the immediate postwar years between the voluntary agencies and the U.S. government. These changes laid the groundwork for a U.S. foreign aid program that has remained much the same since that period. Official foreign aid programs proliferated as the U.S. global role continued to expand, and the focus of foreign aid was increasingly on development as a means of guaranteeing U.S. trade and economic relations and world peace and stability. As the voluntary agencies were increasingly viewed as an integral part of the U.S. presence overseas, government resources became available to the private voluntary agencies through a num-

⁴¹ Elizabeth Clark Reiss, *op. cit.*, Part II, p. 79.

ber of mechanisms, including technical assistance grants, Food for Peace commodities, and expanded refugee and immigration programs. National security concerns replaced humanitarian objectives as the official motivation for American foreign assistance, although emergency relief programs continued to draw on the best motives of the government, the agencies, and the public.

The fundamental changes in the rules of the game affected the many voluntary agencies in different ways, and therefore affected the character and role of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service. For some agencies, using the increased government funding was seen as a way to expand worthwhile programs to assist those in need. For others, the increased government regulation that attended increased aid was seen to endanger the very nature of the private, voluntary operations. The growing differences among the agencies, particularly with regard to participation in government-sponsored programs, meant that the American Council was increasingly unable to speak for the private voluntary community as a whole, and as consensus within the council waned, so did the council's ability to influence the priorities and programs of the government in foreign assistance. The government's aid agencies—which gradually expanded with the passage of new foreign assistance measures in the 1960s and 1970s—became a new forum for the voluntary agencies, in a sense competing with the American Council, as the agencies became more involved with government aid programs and therefore had greater contacts with the official government aid organizations.

These changes were slow to come about, however, and throughout the 1960s and 1970s the agencies continued to cooperate through the American Council and worked with and through government and intergovernmental agencies. In fact, during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, many of the restrictive security provisions of the Mutual Security era were repealed, and the voluntary agencies found that official aid programs again reflected many of their own priorities. Under the direction of former Senator George McGovern, a longtime supporter of the voluntary agencies' work, the Food for Peace program was expanded and the humanitarian aspects of the food distributions were emphasized above considerations of disposing of American surplus food stocks. Later, a former voluntary agency executive, Richard Reuter of CARE, was appointed to run the Food for Peace program. The Cuban refugee program of the early 1960s was again a cooperative effort between the government—local, state, and federal—and the agencies. The Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961 (which remains the principle foreign aid law) for the first time

provided a legal mandate for the role of “private voluntary organizations” in the overall U.S. foreign aid program. The FAA also established the Agency for International Development (AID) in the State Department, which remains the official foreign assistance body. The founding of the Peace Corps in 1961 also put a renewed emphasis on the role of voluntarism in U.S. foreign assistance, and although the role of the agencies in the Peace Corps was not as large as originally conceived—owing in large part to public outcries against direct funding of religious voluntary agencies⁴²—the program did provide a new source of government contracts for development work around the world.

As the avenues for direct cooperation between the private voluntary agencies and the U.S. government were expanding, however, the nature of the voluntary community itself was shifting. Many of the old nationality agencies had been restructured or became more involved in political activities.⁴³ They participated less in traditional service and rehabilitation programs, and many were no longer members of the American Council. Evangelical Protestant agencies began to play a more prominent role in overseas programs, as did many secular agencies that were founded since World War II primarily for development purposes. The secular agencies, for the most part, did not have the commitment to service which had defined older private organizations as voluntary agencies—a commitment that, for many of the older agencies, had been firmly rooted in their religious heritage. Many of the newer agencies, both religious and secular, became members of the American Council, yet they lacked the extensive cooperative networks that older agencies had developed during and after World War II. In addition, some of the older agencies that had become wary of increasing the proportion of their budgets that came directly from government funding had cut back the scale of their programs overseas or, at a minimum, failed to match the growth of other agencies that had accepted increasing levels of government assistance.

The Vietnam War in many ways represented the end of the consensus among the voluntary agencies on matters of public policy and the priorities of private, voluntary foreign assistance. In a very real way, the Vietnam War signaled a new era in the cooperative partnership between the government and the agencies; although the private voluntary organizations have continued to participate in many aspects of American foreign aid programs, during the Vietnam War period the role of voluntary foreign assistance was made an integral part of U.S. foreign and military policy,

⁴² Nichols, *op. cit.*, pp. 226-229.

⁴³ Nichols, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

further limiting the flexibility of the agencies to carry out programs in areas and for purposes of their own choosing.

As American involvement in Vietnam grew after the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1964, the government used a number of measures to bring the foreign assistance programs under the overall umbrella of the U.S. foreign and military policy apparatus, as it had done during other wartime situations. But this time the coordination required by the war situation was not provided by temporary committees or commissions within the executive branch, but by permanent shifts of the foreign assistance bodies within the bureaucracy of the State Department. The Food for Peace Office, for instance, was moved from the White House to the State Department, where the dispersal of surplus commodities became subject to short-term foreign policy considerations.

Disagreement over the U.S. role in Vietnam spread through the voluntary community as it spread through the American public. The voluntary agencies were divided as to what their role should be vis-à-vis official U.S. policy. Some agencies that viewed the war as unjust and inhumane sought to assist the war's victims in a neutral manner; other agencies had fewer reservations about the goals and methods of the war and worked with the government and the military, even in certain strategic relief programs, such as the village pacification programs. Early attempts by the American Council to bring an umbrella group of international agencies to provide neutral assistance to the refugees in both North and South Vietnam were rebuffed by the American authorities.⁴⁴ (The UNHCR had no mandate to aid the refugees, because they were internally displaced and had crossed no international border.) This left each agency, or groups of several agencies, to carry out their own programs. Although the agencies established a Council of Voluntary Agencies in Vietnam (CVAV), the agencies had very separate roles in the relief effort, determined largely by their willingness to work closely with the U.S. authorities and the amount of assistance they were willing to take from the government, which in turn determined the size of their programs. Only 10 of the 22 agencies in CVAV received program support from the government (although all received ocean freight reimbursements).⁴⁵ The growing protest movements within the U.S. made raising money and in-kind contributions for war relief difficult, and as American involvement declined, so did official government aid. For example, in 1970 AID cancelled all shipments of Food for Peace commodities, citing misuse of the resources by some agencies and the logistical problems of the military situation. The agencies also

⁴⁴ Nichols, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

⁴⁵ Nichols, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

learned that outspokenness about U.S. policies in Vietnam could cost them their government contracts.⁴⁶

For the first time since the partnership of private and public assistance organizations had been formed after the war, a good number of the voluntary agencies had adversarial relationships with the U.S. government. In addition, consensus within the voluntary community declined, making the efforts of the agencies to affect national policy less effective. The 1970s witnessed a number of cooperative efforts among the agencies and between the government and agencies, but again political differences over U.S. foreign aid policies were a prominent feature of many such efforts, including relief programs for victims of Nigeria's civil war, where the agencies were split over the issue of support for the Biafran secessionists; the Indochinese refugee resettlement efforts; and relief programs for Cambodians following the overthrow of the brutal Pol Pot regime by Vietnamese forces.

By the early 1980s, the number of private voluntary aid organizations had risen dramatically; many of these new agencies had no constituency, and some relied on government aid for almost their total budget. Discussion in the American Council often focused on membership questions in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Since many of the new private voluntary organizations were not eligible for membership under the existing by-laws, the American Council became less and less representative of the voluntary community and therefore less influential. By 1984 the decision had been made to dissolve the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service, and to establish new forums for cooperation of the now diverse group of private agencies involved in overseas relief and development programs.

For over forty years, the voluntary agencies represented in the American Council embodied the spirit and the will of the American people in their efforts to extend a helping hand around the world. Much of the work carried out by the agencies through the council had occurred with the direct participation of the U.S. government, foreign governments, and other international bodies. The record of these efforts as provided by the minutes, reports, recommendations, and working files of the American Council provide a unique view of the nature of voluntary foreign assistance and of the history of the postwar period.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Nichols, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-251.

⁴⁷ For a description of the archives of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service in Rutgers' Special Collections, see "Manuscripts Acquisitions" in the back of this issue.