# Constructing Americans' Responsibility to Give: Shifting Debates about Foreign and Humanitarian Aid to Child Refugees, 1945–1989

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## Dedication

To my family

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## Introduction:

This dissertation takes a historical perspective to consider Americans' responses to refugees during the post-World War II years, as well as the power of the child figure to prompt debates about national and geopolitical priorities. It examines shifting attitudes among policymakers and the American public toward foreign aid and refugee assistance between 1945 and 1989, particularly the visibility of children as aid recipients in the appeals on behalf of aid and resettlement programs—or on the other hand, to cut or set limits to such programs. To analyze the changes *and* the continuities in American attitudes toward refugee assistance throughout the Cold War years, I focus on two refugee groups after two wars in which the U.S. was explicitly involved—European Jewish refugees after World War II and Southeast Asian refugees after the Vietnam War.

As the following chapters will argue, humanitarian aid to child refugees served several purposes for different American stakeholders during the Cold War period. On both the international and domestic fronts, politicians and diplomats attempted to use humanitarian aid, or at least the display of sending aid abroad, to resolve foreign policy issues, whether it was to establish the position of the U.S. as a global power or to compensate for foreign policy failures. While these may have served as the intended goals, this dissertation will address the question of who actually shapes refugee policy at the level of policy and on the ground. First, taxpayers used the issue of aid as a rhetorical mechanism to clarify the lines between citizens and non-citizens and to indicate which refugees had the potential to belong in the U.S. Secondly, in response to the needs of child and youth refugees and the reactions of the American public, policymakers and social agencies had to modify refugee, immigration, and welfare policy. In particular,

they recreated and redefined the category of unaccompanied minors, as well as the broader status of the refugee in U.S. policy. This dissertation thus aims to highlight the roles of taxpayers and refugees' agency in setting the agenda for policy-level debates about refugees, immigration, and social welfare.

## Why These Two Case Studies?

The aftermaths of World War II and the Vietnam War serve as a lens for viewing the changes in U.S. policies and cultural understandings of aid to refugee children and families throughout this Cold War period. Other refugee crises played key roles in defining refugee policy, such as the Korean War refugees in the 1950s and the Cuban refugee crisis in the 1960s. In particular, the Korean War case was a key moment in the history of transnational adoption, while the Cuban refugee program established precedents for making social services available to refugees in the U.S.[1] In fact, legislators in the 1970s and 1980s referred to the latter case as a model to follow or to avoid making the same mistakes, since they considered the Cuban refugee program too costly and to have "dragged on" for too long. When discussing the possibilities for the Southeast Asian refugee program, policymakers took these factors into consideration when debating the amount and duration of funding for refugee services.[2]

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[1] Brad Whorton, *The Transformation of Refugee Policy: Race, Welfare, and American Political Culture, 1959-1997* (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 1997). The Cuban refugee program also marked the first time federal assistance became involved in the resettlement program. See: Description of the Indochinese Resettlement Office, January 28, 1980, State Plan for Refugees 1979, 128.E.7.9B, Public Welfare Department, Refugee Program Office records, Box 3: Program History Files, Administrative Files A-ca, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

[2] Norman L. Zucker, "Refugee Resettlement in the United States: Policy and Problems," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 467, The Global Refugee Problem: U. S. and World Response (May, 1983): 172–186, at 175.

Yet the juxtaposition of World War II and the Vietnam War offers an opportunity to examine American responses to refugees in two starkly different postwar contexts, though both cases reflect key moments when American policymakers were trying to redefine foreign policy and the global position of the U.S. during the Cold War. After World War II, the efforts to help refugee children and families emerged out of an Allied victory and a position of global economic and diplomatic power. American politicians' geopolitical interests included rebuilding Europe for the next generation of citizens and leaders, while maintaining relations with "friendly" nations that might otherwise have been susceptible to Communist influence (according to politicians and diplomats). The visibility of U.S. humanitarian and resettlement aid and the commitment to investing in "the children of Europe," especially Jewish child refugees, thus provided an opportunity to advertise the U.S. as a generous nation during the early postwar period.

The first case with Jewish displaced persons (DPs) is well-known among scholars and the general public, and this early postwar moment—a time of prosperity for the U.S. and of policymakers stressing the responsibilities of an emerging global power—set the foundation for programs and policies for approaching large-scale refugee migration to the U.S. in subsequent years. The Displaced Persons program, along with the Marshall Plan as an aid program between governments, was generally considered a success that allowed Americans to build an image of the US as a "giving nation" and of American donors as part of a larger global community. These programs and narratives enabled the expansion of humanitarian services and channels of foreign aid to other regions in need, not just Europe, but also in Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East throughout the 1950s.

Widespread American support for aid also continued after subsequent wars and political crises, including assistance to Hungarian, Cuban, and Haitian refugees.

Congressional and public debates about Jewish DPs during the early postwar years also established a working template for refugee policies and the vocabulary for discussing refugee needs. Policymakers and social agencies would look back to this early postwar case when debating the need to modify non-quota categories for displaced persons, asylum seekers, and unaccompanied children in immigration policy, or when pointing out the outpour of donations from Americans as an exemplar. When discussing the urgency of sending food aid abroad, the media and policymakers referred to images of famished children and adults from concentration camps as the ultimate example of hunger and starvation that Americans could help alleviate. Furthermore, social agencies and policymakers identified the integration of Western and Eastern European refugees as a reference point, or as a success story, when debating the challenges of cultural assimilation and adoption practices.

The global image of the U.S. during the post-Vietnam years was on the opposite end of the spectrum, or at least was more controversial than the post-World War II case. The mission to "save" peoples from Communist influence became problematic in Southeast Asia, since "humanitarianism" not only took the form of sending food and aid abroad, but also military forces and a presence that destroyed homes and livelihoods. The televised (and now iconic) images of children running with napalm on their bodies helped raise Americans' awareness of the war's effects and prompted questions about how "humanitarian" the U.S. presence was in Southeast Asia. As a result, the U.S. faced the challenge of restoring its image, both internationally and domestically, after its

withdrawal from South Vietnam in 1973. Humanitarian aid seemed to offer one way to do this, by displaying American benevolence and by claiming responsibility for the civilians who lost their homes as a result of this U.S.-funded "war for democracy." But the issue of benevolence was less clear, and was even coercive at times. Within this context, the visibility of Southeast Asian families and orphans only enhanced Americans' ambivalence about the war.

In addition to highlighting the different positions of the U.S. on the global stage, these two case studies illustrate the shifts in Americans' willingness, or at least their confidence, to support aid programs throughout the Cold War period. I selected these two cases to illustrate the changes happening at home before and after the late 1960s and early 1970s because, as I argue, we need to look at what was going on at home in order to fully understand Americans' move away from supporting foreign and humanitarian aid in the 1970s and 1980s. By this point, Americans understood the role of the U.S. on the global stage in a different way: the victory culture was now shattered, and the "discovery" of hungry children's needs in the U.S. prompted the realization that poverty had been "hidden"—or more accurately, neglected and unaddressed—in earlier policy debates. Americans' views of foreign and domestic aid were thus changing, with the priorities of the U.S. very different and its position in the world tarnished. The families were just as distressed and needy, but the roles of the U.S. in both wars and refugee crises were drastically different, with labels of "the victorious war" and "the failed war." Refugees, especially child refugees, embodied the lingering effects of the wars.

Furthermore, the comparison of these two cases highlights the modifications in immigration policy and how these changes affected Americans' reception of different

refugee groups, both at the level of policy and on the ground. The two refugee groups benefitted from major U.S. resettlement programs and legislation: the 1948 Displaced Persons Act, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, and the 1980 Refugee Act. The first case study focuses on the assistance to and the resettlement of European Jewish child refugees in the U.S. between 1945 and 1953. The 1948 Act enabled the entry of displaced persons on a non-quota basis that was intended to circumvent the national-origins quota system. However, there were still limitations to this legislation, and the quota system created problems for European refugees waiting for visas based on a country that no longer existed or to which they no longer belonged, either legally or emotionally. By 1953, nearly all DP camps had closed, and this year also marked the passage of the Refugee Relief Act, which enabled the admission of 4000 children into the U.S. on a non-quota basis.

After 1965, the demographics of immigrants to the U.S. shifted, which included Southeast Asian refugees who were entering as immigrants. The 1965 Act replaced the national origins quota system with a system that allocated visas based on hemispheres, employability, and family ties. The 1980 Act also facilitated the entry of Southeast Asian refugees into the U.S. among other refugee groups and continued to place emphasis on family ties, employability, and former relations with the U.S. government. With these two pieces of legislation, the shift in the racial and ethnic composition of the migrant population influenced the American public's response to the influx of immigrants and refugees, as the public had to face new challenges of integrating the newcomers into their communities, and assumptions about ethnic and cultural differences surfaced in debates

about immigration policy.[3] The second case thus focuses on the debates about Southeast Asian unaccompanied minors as well as families with children from 1975, with the first large-scale migration of refugees to the U.S., to 1989, after the last wave of migrants and the passage of more than a decade, which enabled policymakers and voluntary agencies to assess the refugees' level of integration into American society.

**Historiographical Interventions**:

Although this dissertation examines the formation and modification of refugee policy, my emphasis is not so much on refugee policy as it is on the narratives surrounding the policies. I aim to enter multiple scholarly conversations that analyze the construction of narratives about refugees, and my goal is to draw connections between these different conversations, though they may seem unrelated. For the first case study during the early Cold War period, scholars such as Tara Zahra and Sara Fieldston have discussed the political uses of child welfare and family life in international discourses after World War II. In particular, Zahra has explored how the child figure played a role in European and American policymakers' and humanitarian workers' visions of rebuilding Europe during the Cold War, as well as how real children were caught up in a geopolitical struggle. International organizations, social workers, and politicians strove to figure out where children would go, according to their specific geopolitical agendas: the "reclaiming" and repatriation of children along nationalist lines, the repopulation of nation-states, and the molding of the next generation of citizens.

[3] See: Monica Boyd, "The Changing Nature of Central and Southeast Asian Immigration to the United States: 1961-1972," *International Migration Review* 8.4 (Winter, 1974): 507-519; Vernon M. Briggs, Jr., "Immigration Policy and the U.S. Economy: An Institutional Perspective," *Journal of Economic Issues* 30, no. 2 (June, 1996): 370-389.

While Zahra has focused on the competing visions of postwar reconstruction, such as internationalist vs. nationalist goals or Western individualist ideals vs. Central/Eastern European collectivist, Sara Fieldston has examined the efforts of child welfare specialists and voluntary agencies in globalizing American childrearing practices and ideas about the family. In particular, American policymakers and child care agencies approached children as key players in the Cold War context: "children themselves were both innocents to be shielded from politics and little cold warriors essential to the United States' victory over communism."[4]As Fieldston has stated, Americans' "support for needy foreign children fit fairly seamlessly with official U.S. foreign policy and international development objectives."[5] Both scholars have noted the intended outcomes of this emphasis on needy children: the building of an international humanitarian regime for the postwar period and the efforts to bolster geopolitical power through the molding of children and nations.

I aim to build upon similar themes, especially the various definitions of "children's best interests" and the goals of redefining national and geopolitical identities via child welfare. However, since other scholars have already analyzed the rhetorical uses of children in foreign policy, especially in the aftermath of World War II, the analysis of the child figure in public and political discourse is not my primary contribution to the literature on Cold War politics, refugee policy, and childhood studies. Rather, my goal is to highlight how Americans' attitudes toward refugee and immigration policy changed according to their understandings of the domestic political and geopolitical atmospheres.

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[4] Sara Fieldston, "Little Cold Warriors: Child Sponsorship and International Affairs," *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 2 (2014): 240-250, at 250.
[5] Fieldston, *Raising the World: Child Welfare in the American Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 188.

While Zahra has included the voices of refugee children and Fieldston has considered American policymakers and social workers' visions for their investments in children abroad, which I also intend to incorporate in this dissertation, their works have not closely examined how domestic politics—especially the politics around welfare—changed American debates and policies toward refugees and displaced persons. In addition to the perspectives of policymakers, diplomats, social workers, and refugees themselves, it is important to consider the donors' perspectives and what they believed they were investing in, since they were the ones who financially supported and held the power to change policies by withdrawing support, prodding their U.S. representatives, or receiving the refugees with open or closed arms.

My work also places the debates about refugees during this early post-World War II period in conversation with the debates in later Cold War years. Historians such as Natasha Zaretsky, Jeremi Suri, and Lawrence Allen Eldridge have already highlighted the late 1960s and 1970s as a shifting moment in international and domestic politics.[6] In terms of public opinion, scholars have observed that the American public became disillusioned with foreign policy, amidst the backdrop of the recession, the oil crisis, political protests on the domestic front that prompted shifts in U.S. foreign policy, and the challenges faced by various administrations (Johnson, Nixon, and Ford) of how to pay for the war abroad, foreign aid programs, *and* domestic social programs. As Americans withdrew from the public sphere, they were less willing to support aid

[6] Natasha Zaretsky, *No Direction Home: The American Family and the Fear of National Decline, 1968-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press); Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Detente* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); Lawrence Allen Eldridge, *Chronicles of a Two-Front War: Civil Rights and Vietnam in the African American Press* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011); Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines, *"Takin' It To The Streets": A Sixties Reader*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

programs starting in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Likewise, media scholars such as Barbie Zelizer and Susan D. Moeller have noted a sense of public apathy toward humanitarian aid, and they primarily attribute this "compassion fatigue" to the formulaic and sensationalistic representations of international crises in the mainstream media.[7]

This dissertation contributes to existing understandings of this turbulent period by revealing what Americans thought were at stake and how they articulated these concerns and interests through the figures of the child and the refugee. As two vulnerable groups, children and refugees stirred conflicting feelings and responses in the American public. As it became clear to the American public that the war was being prioritized, American taxpayers began to call for a shift in priorities to direct resources toward domestic welfare recipients, not foreigners or non-citizens. As I emphasize in my work, the images and stories of American children helped these critics drive home their points, and the child figure served as a filter for Americans to articulate their priorities in the domestic and international spheres.

As for the second case study, I am intervening in the literature on immigration studies and Southeast Asian migration by bringing refugee children to the forefront. Scholars have closely analyzed American refugee and welfare policies toward Southeast Asian migrants and the experiences of refugee communities in the U.S. However, most of the studies have focused on oral history interviews, including the accounts of Amerasian children, or the long-lasting effects of resettlement policy from a contemporary or

[7] Barbie Zelizer, *About to Die: How News Images Move the Public* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Susan D. Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue: How The Media Sell Disease, Famine, War, and Death* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

sociological perspective, often with an emphasis on quantitative methods. There are fewer works that take an in-depth historical perspective and explore how changes in the domestic political atmosphere and public discourse, especially Americans' attitudes toward Southeast Asian refugees, shaped refugee and resettlement policy,[8] though there are recently completed dissertations and books-in-progress on this topic.[9] For example, historian Sam Vong has already raised questions about "compassionate politics" and the "transnational politics of care" in his dissertation on the international response to Southeast Asian refugees within a Cold War context and the resettlement of refugees in the U.S. and other countries.[10] My dissertation aims to build upon Vong's work on the discursive work around refugee assistance, such as the shift he notes in the rhetoric from a focus on anti-Communism to the language of humanitarianism, and the efforts of non-governmental organizations to assist Southeast Asian migrants. But my work focuses on how Americans' understandings of childhood and family shaped these responses to the refugees, and places the images and experiences of children at the center.

I also look beyond the resettlement process to examine multiple arenas where these tensions between the policies and Americans' sentiments took place, including food

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[8] But the policies toward refugees as immigrants have been addressed in major historical works on U.S. immigration policy and the experiences of migrant families. See: Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Erika Lee and Judy Yung. *Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[9] James M. Freeman and Nguyen Dinh Huu, *Voices from the Camps: Vietnamese Children Seeking Asylum* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003); James M. Freeman, *Changing Identities: Vietnamese Americans 1975-1995* (Needham Heights, MA: Pearson, 1996); Steven DeBonis, *Children of the Enemy: Oral Histories of Vietnamese Amerasians and Their Mothers* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1995); Trin Yarborough, *Surviving Twice: Amerasian Children of the Vietnam War* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2005); Brad Whorton*, The Transformation of Refugee Policy: Race, Welfare, and American Political Culture, 1959-1997* (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 1997); Saengmany Ratsabout, *Documenting Hmong and Lao Refugee Resettlement: A Tale of Two Contrasting Communities* (MA diss., University of Minnesota, 2015).

[10] Sam C. Vong, *Compassionate Politics: The History of Indochinese Refugee Migration and the Transnational Politics of Care, 1975-1994* (PhD diss., Yale University, 2013).

aid, welfare assistance, and educational assistance. Much of the public's responses to refugees stemmed from existing ideas and attitudes toward welfare and immigration.[11] I place these debates in a global context, exploring the understudied links between domestic and international social work as refugees transitioned from aid recipients abroad to immigrants and welfare recipients in the U.S. This dissertation thus aims to analyze the intersections of refugee, immigration, and welfare policies, as well as the connections Americans were making between foreign aid and refugee policy.

## Why Children?: Embodiments of Hunger, Displacement, and the Nation

Despite the differences in political contexts and interests between these two cases, the questions around refugee children and youth remained consistent. In discussions about the resettlement and integration of refugees in the U.S., legislators saw children and youth as both the problem and the solution to the refugee crises. While children did not necessarily comprise the largest group within the refugee populations, the policymakers' and social agencies' emphasis on children as exceptional cases helps us understand how they approached the "unexceptional" cases, or the adults who were subject to more stringent criteria. Thus, we cannot understand the debates, controversies, and outcomes of U.S. refugee policies during the twentieth century without understanding how the U.S. strove to absorb refugee children. In particular, at the center of these debates was the question of age that helped determined which refugees—both adult and child—were

[11] Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Cybelle Fox, *Three Worlds of Relief: Race, Immigration, and the American Welfare State from the Progressive Era to the New Deal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

deserving of aid, based on their countries of birth and whether they could return to their home countries.

In contested debates about refugee assistance, legislators considered children to be the solution because children were expected to assimilate quickly and become good citizens. But the following chapters will also consider examples when children were *not* always at the center of the debates, though the child figure played a key role in prompting the initial debates or shifts in public opinion about foreign and humanitarian aid. Once other interests—economic, political, and geopolitical—entered the picture, those who were involved in the debates stopped focusing on the children. Rather, the contestations over whether or not the refugees "deserved" aid came to the forefront. The inconsistency in the visibility of children illustrates how these appeals may have used the child figure, but they were not always *really* about children. Rather, the child was one of many symbols and terms that were frequently used to make the case for or against aid.

Dependency was one of these double-edged terms. In these two case studies, American debates about refugee programs were characterized by a long-running concern about refugees becoming aid recipients and "public charges" for the long term. Refugee crises were described as urgent and temporary emergencies that required immediate responses, but were expected to eventually end, as refugees found jobs, became self-supporting, and if they received assistance, did not rely on welfare for too long. Although the refugees' helplessness and dependency were key to making the case that they deserved aid or that Americans should send more aid, dependency was the very issue that make refugee assistance, or their presence in the U.S, a problem. These issues became particularly important in the second case throughout the 1970s and 1980s, when

American policymakers and taxpayers most strongly articulated their concerns about the availability of resources to assist incoming refugees amidst existing domestic funding challenges.

Yet children and youth complicate these questions about dependency. On one hand, the focus on children served as one way to overcome these concerns in debates about funding, or at least to make exceptions for young refugees. Due to their understandings of children's vulnerability and malleability, policymakers and social agencies were willing to make more exceptions for child migrants, especially unaccompanied minors and orphans, to cross national borders. Refugee legislation also included specific provisions to grant exemptions in welfare policy, precisely because they were economic dependents. However, this priority status became more complicated for older youth who were not quite children and not quite adults. For those who were on the borderline, social workers and immigration officials decided whether to process their legal status as a child or an adult, which determined the resources to which these refugees would have access. In this sense, age-based categories in refugee policy clarified *which* refugees held (or should hold) priority status in immigration policy and welfare benefits. Refugee legislation after World War II redefined the category of the "unaccompanied child" based on American policymakers' and social workers' understandings of immigrant families as socioeconomic units and children's roles as dependents within family units. In turn, this category was continually redefined with subsequent influxes of refugee groups.

With this lens of children, combined with the demographics and the different geopolitical contexts of these two cases, the following chapters will highlight three key

areas that reflect changes and continuities in how American donors, humanitarian workers, and policymakers approached refugee children and youth: (1) age categories and the definition of children, (2) the role of family ties in refugee policy, and (3) issues of race and ethnicity within the respective resettlement programs. Age categories and the emphasis on family units were both linked to ideas about financial self-sufficiency, since families were expected to be self-supporting and to take care of child dependents. Race and ethnicity also played a role in determining where to place unattached children and youth, as well as raising questions about the refugees' ability to assimilate into American society. The integration of refugee children into American society was a key component in the narratives about American humanitarianism and refugee programs, since it indicated to policymakers and the American public whether the refugees' presence in the U.S. was a challenge or a success. When placing the policies toward these two refugee communities in conversation with each other and comparing legislation with casework, we can see a tension within Americans' responses to refugee children and families: between humanitarian impulses, which could align with geopolitical interests, on one hand, and on the other hand, concerns about the costs of these humanitarian moves for Americans and who would bear these costs.

**Research Objectives**:

My first goal is to show the construction of these historically contingent discourses about humanitarianism and foreign aid in the U.S. Americans often refer proudly to their historical tradition of being a humanitarian nation and a nation of refuge. While this statement is true in many aspects, it also glosses over the incidents and

comments that were not so welcoming and compassionate toward people in need, both domestically and internationally. It is important to see how this narrative was constructed, not necessarily because American policies and actions did not meet the purported standards upon which the U.S. global image was supposedly built, but rather because narratives about humanitarianism have the power to shape historical narratives about wars. As the following chapters will indicate, the popular perception of World War II as a "victory war" and a success story of American humanitarianism mattered in later Cold War years, and humanitarian aid served as one way to rescue not only the victims of war, but also America's global reputation.

My second goal is to break down this narrative and to demonstrate how the images of children served as a vehicle for constructing and disrupting these narratives. I aim to complicate the narratives about, as well as the expectations for, postwar aid to child refugees in two ways. First, the distribution of resettlement assistance on the ground challenged the U.S. postwar project of rebuilding nation-states within an international context, as social agencies and policymakers tried to figure out which refugees (and which children) could make their homes in the U.S. This challenging task was where foreign policy intersected directly with domestic policy, especially welfare policy, and the question of resettlement touched upon a thorny issue about refugees' potential long-term reliance on U.S. aid and taxpayer dollars. Secondly, the perspectives of refugee children themselves, documented in the files of social workers and oral history interviews, can both confirm and undermine the policy-level claims about humanitarianism and resettlement policy. In particular, letters, interviews, and

questionnaires offer glimpses and excerpts of children speaking back against the publicized narratives about U.S. aid resolving issues of displacement and homelessness.

My third goal is to raise questions about the terms and rhetoric that were tossed around in these public and policy-level debates: the child, rights, responsibility, dependency, citizenship, home, family, and the domestic/foreign. Although these terms were referred to as constants and absolutes, they were clearly adapted for various political ends. The malleability of these terms, which could be both in favor of *and* against aid programs, helped justify donors' and policymakers' responses (or inaction) to refugee crises. The flexibility or contradictory uses of these concepts, especially the concept of rights and responsibility, reveal some of the paradoxical criteria built into refugee policies, though social workers and policymakers strove to create consistency across the piecemeal policies and programs.

By exploring the shifting visibility of children, or *which* children are visible and when, this dissertation highlights the rhetorical uses of both children and refugees to clarify national and geopolitical priorities, as well as to articulate the boundaries between citizens/non-citizens and between the domestic/the foreign. As the dissertation chapters will demonstrate, the debates about funding for refugee and welfare programs were not zero-sum games as these terms implied. Nevertheless, such rhetoric had the potential to influence actual policy, for the availability of resources and the institutions that offered to help needy refugee children were contingent upon Americans' assessment of the domestic and foreign circumstances. Furthermore, these terms enabled Americans to establish, constrict, and modify boundaries—between the insider/outsider, citizen/non-

citizen, and who was within their domestic and international communities—according to different agendas and convictions.

The fourth and final goal of this dissertation is to highlight the power of American taxpayers to shape refugee and domestic social policies. As sociologist Brad Whorton points out, geopolitical theory is not enough to explain the shifts in U.S. refugee policy. Rather, Whorton argues, domestic politics, especially racial politics, was central to changing refugee policy. Focusing on the Cuban refugees who arrived in the U.S. in the 1960s and the Cuban and Vietnamese refugees who arrived in the late 1970s and 1980s, Whorton describes the Kennedy administration's Cuban refugee program as an effort to redefine welfare for all disadvantaged Americans, not just refugees. However, conservative discourses from the late 1960s to the Reagan era in the 1980s aimed to reshape these debates about welfare policy. These conservative arguments also had implications for refugee assistance, especially the language of "public charges" and dependency that was taken from the debates about domestic welfare and applied to the refugee assistance programs.[12]

I argue that it was not just conservative discourses that prompted these changes in political debates about welfare and refugee policies; it was also taxpayers' consolidating notion of their "right" to have a say in determining where to apply federal funds in the domestic and international spheres. Their potential to change the direction of refugee policy not only took the form of U.S. representatives and Senators paying attention to their taxpaying constituents; Americans also provided an important source of money

[12] Brad Whorton, *The Transformation of Refugee Policy: Race, Welfare, and American Political Culture, 1959-1997* (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 1997); Also see Cybelle Fox, *Three Worlds of Relief: Race, Immigration, and the American Welfare State from the Progressive Era to the New Deal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

through both taxes and voluntary contributions to international and domestic agencies and private organizations. As voluntary agencies struggled to keep a consistent flow of private funds coming in during the later Cold War years, they needed to request increased federal support. In this way, the tightening of funds shaped the criteria for refugee assistance.

However, some taxpayers' voices were louder, or more readily heard, than others. My final goal is to spotlight the voices of those who were often silenced, though their very fates and livelihoods were being decided in these debates. Policymakers, social workers, and media outlets spoke for or on behalf of children, refugees, and welfare recipients, and these sources and perspectives are the ones that have made it into the historical records. My goal is to emphasize the voices that did not have a chance to be heard in public and legislative debates, mostly the voices of welfare recipients and refugees who were interviewed by social workers. Their voices have the potential to alter the story we have about the formation of refugee and social welfare policy during this period.

## **Sources and Methodology**:

### ***Visual and Rhetorical Imagery of the Child Figure:***

In order to analyze the strategies to convince the American public to financially and emotionally support foreign aid programs, I examine the images and stories of displaced children as war victims and aid recipients that were circulated in news media and publicity materials of relief agencies. For the first case study, I have consulted social welfare archives at the Center for Jewish History, the New York Public Library, and the

collections of international organizations and agencies such as UNESCO, records of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Germany at the National Archives College Park, the German Central Institute for Social Issues, and U.S.-based organizations working in the Federal Republic of Germany (German Federal Archives). For the second case study, I have visited the California Social Welfare Archives, the Minnesota State Archives, and the Social Welfare History Archive. These archives hold the publicity materials of relief agencies and organizations such as UNICEF, American Overseas Aid, and the American Friends Service Committee, as well as the papers of social workers and the press releases of officials and political figures speaking out on behalf of postwar aid programs, from 1945 until the early 1990s. For both case studies, Congressional and Senate Committee hearings from 1945–1989 provide another rich source for exploring how policymakers deployed the child figure to convey the geopolitical significance of providing U.S. aid or to support refugee legislation.

In analyzing the representations of children and refugees, I draw upon the approaches of Robert Hariman, John Louis Lucaites, and Barbie Zelizer to the cultural and political uses of photography. According to Hariman and Lucaites, iconic photographs "provide an accessible and centrally positioned set of images for exploring how political action (and inaction) can be constituted and controlled through visual media."[13] First, the press or "political advocates" can strategically use a photo and mobilize its audience "because of the social knowledge being communicated."[14]

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[13] Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 5.
[14] Hariman and Lucaites, *No Caption Needed*, 10.

Secondly, a "particular photo equips the viewer to act as a citizen, or expand one's conception of citizenship, or otherwise redefine one's relationship to the political community."[15] I will apply both of these approaches to my analysis of children's images. First, American policymakers, social agencies, and the press strategically deployed visual and rhetorical representations of children to communicate ideas about childhood dependency and the family while tapping into concerns about geopolitical and domestic issues. These narratives worked because of existing ideas Americans held about the family unit as the center of American society, childhood as a particular set of experiences, and welfare assistance as encouraging certain types of behaviors and lifestyles. Secondly, Americans responded to the images of children as hungry aid recipients, victims, and refugees as a filter for interpreting their own roles as citizens and as members of an international community—interpretations that were in flux during the Cold War period.

The representations of hungry children in the media and policy-level debates also raise questions about what kinds of visual markers—geographic, racialized, gendered, and age-based—were associated with hunger, poverty, vulnerability, and the effects of war. Images have the potential to reinforce these visual markers and the identities of aid recipients (racial, gendered, and national)—or to challenge viewers' assumptions about these issues. Images of poor children—especially children from predominantly African American, Latino, American Indian, and migrant communities, who were supposed to serve as representatives of the conditions in which their families lived—often came to the forefront of these narratives. Likewise, as Barbie Zelizer has argued in her work on

[15] Hariman and Lucaites, *No Caption Needed*, 18.

journalistic representations of atrocity, visual imagery encourages audiences to imagine a sequence of events preceding or following the presented scenes; individuals also stand in as iconic figures, such as the "starving Ethiopian" or "Rwandan refugee."[16]

As Susan D. Moeller has further argued in her book on "compassion fatigue" and the media's representations of international crises, these types of images of children, hunger, and war became prevalent and normalized by the 1990s. Moeller criticizes the mainstream media for presenting these issues in such a formulaic way that enabled the American public to "care less and less about the world around us," despite "the haunting nature of many of these images."[17] But Moeller primarily analyzes the representations of events and crises from the 1990s, with a few examples from the 1980s. My work goes back to previous years to consider how these formulas and practices became widely used.[18] Drawing upon Zelizer's and Moeller's frameworks, this dissertation will examine the visual and rhetorical uses of the child figure to construct or undermine a national identity for postwar America as a benevolent, generous global power that was able, and expected, to relieve the suffering of children, whether they were refugees in need of homes or hungry children at home in the U.S.

***Voices of Refugee Children, Social Professionals, and Stakeholders:***

The administrative records of relief agencies and social welfare organizations provide an opportunity to complicate the narratives about humanitarian aid propagated in

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[16] Barbie Zelizer, *About to Die: How News Images Move the Public* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
[17] Susan D. Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue: How The Media Sell Disease, Famine, War, and Death* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 4.
[18] Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue,* 8.

the publicity materials. Case files reveal discrepancies between the publicized information about displaced children and the actual conditions on the ground, while the correspondence between agencies indicate an emphasis on clarifying *who* was responsible for the children's care at different stages of their transition from wartime to postwar life. For the first case study, I have consulted both international agencies (mentioned earlier) and American Jewish child care organizations, such as the German-Jewish Children's Aid and Rescue Children, Inc. For the second case study, my sources are from the resettlement and social welfare organizations that worked both nationally and locally in California, New York, and Minnesota in the 1970s and 1980s, as well as academic studies conducted by social professionals from the University of Minnesota's Refugee Studies Center in an effort to evaluate and improve refugee programs.

With the goal of highlighting narratives constructed *about* and *by* refugees, this dissertation also incorporates the voices of child refugees and social workers. Children's letters to family members and donors and questionnaires offer glimpses of child refugees' reactions, though adults often supervised, edited, or reinterpreted children's words. In addition, these sources reveal social workers' assumptions about refugee needs, through the phrasing of questions or the stories they decided to quote in their reports. I also analyze oral history interviews with child refugees from both case studies. Although these retrospective accounts have been shaped by the unreliability of memory and the interviewed subjects' selectiveness in what they shared with the interviewers, they offer insights into how humanitarian work has been *narrated* throughout the postwar period.

Finally, my work incorporates public opinion polls (with random samples) and letters from newspaper-reading members of the public. As Claudia Strauss points out,

survey and poll respondents often provide contradictory responses, even within the same poll or questionnaire response. Yet the discourses and narratives Strauss has identified and categorized in contemporary debates about immigration and welfare programs—including the "work ethic," the "unwed mothers and deadbeat dads," the "benefits only for contributors," the "foreigners taking our jobs," and the "help our own first" arguments—have nonetheless been useful. Strauss argues that these narratives do not necessarily reflect ideological positions and values, but rather the conventional frameworks and familiar narratives Americans draw from their surroundings to talk about these topics. Similarly, I approach these surveys and polls not as direct reflections of Americans' thoughts, but rather as the general vocabulary that policymakers, the public, and refugees themselves employed or responded to, as they tried to make sense of these debates about refugees as immigrants and welfare recipients.[19]

My goal is to include a variety of perspectives: policymakers, social professionals, the donors, and the recipients. At times, the interactions of these historical actors can reveal the tensions between the genuine humanitarian efforts to respond to the children's needs and the limitations of the policies designed to help figure out where refugee children and youth belonged. Although they were not constantly or intentionally seeking opportunistic ends, the multiple players had the opportunity to benefit from refugee crises for their individual goals. For policymakers, investing in the refugee children's futures could further the aims of the U.S. in the Cold War as a humanitarian and benevolent country. Social workers, while working strenuously on behalf of children, gained legitimacy in the policymaking arena, both domestically and internationally.

[19] Claudia Strauss, *Making Sense of Public Opinion: American Discourses About Immigration and Social Programs* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 34-39.

Families and donors could also fulfill their own visions of a family unit or their participation in an "international family" by sending money to help needy children. Therefore, these multiple voices offer a broader understanding of postwar aid, the transnational migration of people and funds, and shifting international relations that—at least in the eyes of American policymakers, social workers, and the media—seemed to center on U.S. dollars and intervention.

**Chapter Summaries:**

The first three chapters focus on the first case study with Jewish child refugees. ***Chapter 1*** reveals a moment when the American public and policymakers began to think of themselves as part of an increasingly interdependent global community. As part this process of developing Americans' sense of global participation, child-centered appeals to American donors encouraged them to participate in sending and distributing humanitarian aid overseas to displaced persons and refugees. These appeals show the involvement of policymakers and social workers in producing these narratives about the work that humanitarian aid would achieve in war-torn Europe: the restoration of the war-afflicted children's health, the rehabilitation of child refugees and their reeducation in democratic values, and their resettlement in new homes with the assistance of multilateral international agencies (largely funded by the U.S.). Images of Jewish refugees—as stateless, homeless, and even as "children"—were useful in this regard, precisely because their legal and geopolitical status was ambiguous and did not fit neatly into existing categories.

The next two chapters aim to complicate this narrative of U.S. aid "resolving" postwar dilemmas in two ways: by showing what happened as social agencies encountered refugees on the ground and by bringing in the perspectives of child refugees themselves. ***Chapter 2*** analyzes the tensions between the "universalist" discourses and the policy-level decisions that indicate that the distribution of U.S. aid was not universalist or simply humanitarian. As agency case files reveal, not every refugee child was considered equally eligible to benefit from DP legislation. Nor were refugee children equally served by social agencies, whether the obstacles to receiving assistance were due to Cold War interests, financial interests, or visions of who could become residents and citizens in the U.S. This chapter compares displaced persons legislation with the case files of social agencies to reveal the complications that arose when refugees did not fit into the age-, nationality-, and kin-based categories established by policymakers and social workers. The realities of placing children in homes pushed policymakers and social workers to adapt refugee and resettlement policies and to meet the needs of the children and youth they encountered.

While Chapter 2 considers the interactions between policies and the deliberate choices made by refugees and social workers, ***Chapter 3*** compares refugee narratives with those of social workers. This chapter highlights the agency of refugee children and youth, as their actions and responses (documented in letters, case files, and oral histories) pushed social workers to adapt to their feedback. In addition to reflecting the intentions of social workers, these sources offer insights into refugee children's responses to social workers' expectations and agendas, especially the project of making new American citizens out of young refugees. Because social workers took these responses into account,

this chapter argues that the negotiations between refugees and social agencies contributed to the formation of refugee policy.

With ***Chapter 4*** as a turning point and a transition between the two case studies, this chapter analyzes the changing domestic political debates about welfare and foreign policy from the late 1950s to the early 1970s. Policymakers and taxpayers alike grew concerned with the costs and duration of aid, especially as the war and the fiscal crisis of the 1970s ensued, and as the visibility of American children in poverty prompted calls for pouring taxpayers' dollars into domestic social programs for citizens, not programs for foreigners or non-citizens. The contested debates about foreign and humanitarian aid—especially with the focus on domestic *and* foreign children as the aid recipients who could lose out from funding cuts—served as one way for American taxpayers and community members to critique foreign policy as well as domestic social policy. In addition to revealing a stronger articulation of taxpayers' right to decide how their dollars should be spent, or which group of needy children deserved their dollars, these debates also reflect Americans' attempts to clarify the boundaries of citizenship based on the marginal status of low-income, minority citizens and refugees.

These sentiments shifted the debate on foreign and humanitarian aid, as well as the reception of incoming refugees. Americans' concerns about the domestic and geopolitical atmospheres prompted them to redefine their "global responsibilities" to help refugees, and even to question whether they had a responsibility to refugees because they were non-citizens. ***Chapter 5*** explores the political and socioeconomic implications of these debates for one refugee group: refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos who had been displaced by the Vietnam War, for which the U.S. was largely responsible. The

shifts in public opinion and different interpretations of American responsibilities abroad, instigated by both the images of Southeast Asian children and youth as war victims and the debates discussed in the previous chapter, encouraged policymakers and taxpayers to redefine Americans' obligations to respond to refugee crises. The American public's reactions to the incoming refugees also highlights the *perceived* tensions between U.S. foreign and domestic aid programs, a concern that existed early on but manifested itself most potently during the debates over the limited resources, or the competition for resources, to assist those in need after the Vietnam War.

The final chapter, ***Chapter 6*****,** examines the reception and experiences of refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, as they became neighbors, welfare recipients, and community members sharing resources. As this chapter demonstrates, those lines between citizen and non-citizens were blurred once refugees were resettled in the U.S. But the availability of social welfare services to Southeast Asian refugee families with children in the U.S. depended on how policymakers and the American public perceived refugee families and children. More specifically, the public perception of refugees as potential competitors for taxpayers' money shaped policy and actions on the ground. The role of race and ethnicity in shaping Americans' reactions to refugees as welfare recipients was also more sharply articulated in public debates about refugee assistance. Finally, this chapter illuminates the tensions between the public narratives *about* refugee children and youth and the refugees' own narratives: policymakers and the media upheld the Southeast Asian child figure as the promising exception in the refugee family who could integrate quickly into American society, yet they overlooked the struggles faced by young refugees *because* they were categorized as children.

The overall project aims to historicize post-World War II narratives about U.S. humanitarianism and refugee assistance that were constructed, and continue to circulate, in American debates. It is important to understand the construction of these narratives because they continue to be circulated and referenced, serving as a framework for discussing subsequent refugee crises. In particular, this project aims to explore the interactions between ideas about American humanitarianism, foreign aid, and domestic social policy, not only from the perspectives of policymakers and social workers but also from the perspectives of donors and refugees themselves. The voices of those who were involved in the shaping of humanitarian discourse can help us more fully understand the multiple actors and interactions involved in the evolution of U.S. refugee policy.

## Chapter 1

## A "Person-to-Person Marshall Plan": Narratives about American Humanitarianism and Aid to European Child Refugees after World War II, 1945–1953

> "War seems always to accentuate the importance of childhood, for to wage war means to sacrifice the present for the future, and children *are* the future." – "Children and the Future" in *Child Guidance* [Methodist Church publication], August 1944

### Introduction:

In 1946, the United Jewish Appeal Campaign, American Joint Distribution Committee, United Palestine Appeal, and United Service for New Americans released a March of Time documentary *Seeds of Destiny,* which aimed to illustrate the postwar conditions in Europe by depicting children as "Each nation's preview in flesh and blood of its future." The film presented individual children who represented the "pillars of the brave new world" and would serve as the "human raw material" for building the postwar world, identifying them by age and wartime stories rather than by name: "Age 8: mother, father, sister and brother, killed all around in a deliberate shellfire because they refused to leave the shelter of a ravine. Himself wounded. Age 8: She didn't know her strange new toy was a grenade. Ages 10-14, age 3: Stunted and warped by nutritional deficiencies…separated from parents whose names they don't even remember." The narrator then highlighted the implications of leaving these circumstances as they were: as the "new leaders who also bear the burden of keeping the peace together," their start in life—"Roaming like wolf packs, stealing, begging, education neglected. All normal influence gone, living in filth"—did not seem so promising. The film ended by warning: "If we permit this [the body of a malnourished infant] to be the face of the future, then

truly there will be only one place on which to rest the full burden of blame: on ourselves."[20]

***Figure 1:*** *Scenes from Seeds of Destiny. Left image: "Age 8, she didn't know her strange new toy was a grenade." Center image: "All normal influence gone, living in filth." Right image: "Is this to be… THE END."*

The film won critical acclaim as well as public support, receiving the Academy Award for Best Documentary Short Film in 1947 and raising over $200 million for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Association (UNRRA), a branch of the United Nations (U.N.) that provided humanitarian relief to displaced persons and was largely funded by American sources. Along with other postwar films, often endorsed by U.S. politicians and the War Department, this film urged Americans to send donations to UNRRA and relief organizations. It also reminded its viewers that Americans were in a landscape relatively unscathed by the war and thus had the resources to help their less fortunate neighbors. By maintaining stability in postwar Europe, their contributions would help prevent another war.[21]

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[20] *Seeds of Destiny,* Defense Department, United States Department of War, dir. David Miller and Gene Fowler, Jr., January 1946.

[21] *Shadows of Hate* [March Of Time Film advertising United Jewish Appeal Campaign, for United Jewish Appeal for refugees, overseas needs, and Palestine on behalf of Joint Distribution Committee, United Palestine Appeal, and United Service for New Americans], 1947, RG-60.1319, Film ID 2923, Julian B.

This chapter analyzes similar publicity materials in order to historicize the trend of circulating (and normalizing) images of children when discussing the effects of war and the need for U.S. foreign and humanitarian aid to refugees. These films are particularly illustrative of the collaboration among social agencies, media outlets, and policymakers to garner public support for aid to child refugees. Why were the producers of these narratives, including the U.S. State Department, so invested in a humanitarian discourse about American taxpayers coming to the assistance of children? What expectations did the various stakeholders—policymakers, social workers, donors, and adopting families—have for relief, rehabilitation, and resettlement programs that targeted children and orphans as aid recipients?

Focusing on the immediate post-World War II years as a case study, this chapter analyzes similar uses of the child figure to articulate the geopolitical significance of sending aid to European refugees, especially those who remained in the Western zones of occupation: by visualizing their homelessness and their lack, by highlighting their suffering during the war, and by speculating on their futures as citizens, workers, and global actors. The refugees' wartime and postwar family stories were key to these appeals, aiming to humanize and sentimentalize the refugee experience and to enable American audiences to relate to the recipients. By urging Americans to intervene during an important, transitional moment—in terms of the transition from "war time" to "peace time" and in terms of children's life stages— such narratives mobilized ideas about childhood, family, and dependency to establish donor-recipient relationships and a sense of global obligation for Americans audiences. With emphasis on three forms of aid

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Venezky Collection, Steven Spielberg Film and Video Archive, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

distribution—care packages sent abroad, sponsorship, and resettlement assistance—I examine how these organizations deployed the rhetoric of family and home, both in terms of the "international family" and the blurring of lines between the public and private spheres through financial or legal adoption.

This chapter will first discuss the political and geopolitical interests of policymakers, social workers, and the mainstream press in constructing a narrative about American humanitarianism, particularly the role of the U.S. as a donor nation and global power during the Cold War. It will then analyze how policymakers and aid organizations drew upon their own understandings of child development—especially the importance of enabling children and youth to reach the next stage of growth—to justify the need for sending aid abroad. This concept of development through stages also applied to narratives about the expected outcomes and trajectories for the refugees, as they transitioned from Displaced Persons (DP) camps to being resettled in temporary or permanent homes; from dependency to self-sufficiency; and from their status as aid recipients to global actors who actively participated in the development of the postwar world.

This chapter also highlights the role of voluntary agencies and private relief organizations in producing and circulating these narratives. Private contributions from American families, corporations, religious groups, and youth groups were key to maintaining these transnational ties and networks. These appeals worked effectively not only by highlighting the geopolitical significance of U.S. aid and creating a sense of personalized connections to the recipients, but also by emphasizing the *voluntary* nature of this obligation to displaced persons and needy peoples, which will be an important

point of comparison for the discourses of humanitarianism in the second case study. But this rhetoric was still working within, or perhaps was effective *because* it was working within, the framework of a capitalist system: Americans' contributions were not merely free gifts, but rather investments with payoffs, and policymakers were still talking about refugees, including children, in terms of the movement of capital and labor.

**Historiography: Politicizing U.S. Aid to Displaced Persons after Twentieth-Century Wars**

This chapter focuses on the early postwar period, from 1945–1953, when most DP camps had closed down and child care agencies considered a majority of the refugee children they were assisting to be "resettled" (and cases closed).[22] Yet this analysis in fact illuminates an ongoing trend throughout the twentieth century of using the child figure to call for humanitarian aid to war refugees and displaced persons.[23] Scholars such as Julia Irwin and Dominique Marshall have discussed international child welfare initiatives (and the notion of "children's rights") during World War I and the interwar period, which saw the founding of organizations such as the Save the Children Fund and the American Red

[22] As scholars such as Daniel Cohen have argued, the case of U.S. aid to European refugees after World War II marked a turning point and set the standards for the postwar period by establishing (or refining) the legal category of "Displaced Persons." See Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[23] Ethel C. Ince, "American Children Share With Those In War-Torn Land," *The Christian Science Monitor,* December 8, 1945, 16. Wartime narratives about arranging packages and sending relief abroad also targeted young audiences. As implied by these pamphlets, the children's participation reflected their performance of good American citizens and global partners who were sustaining the political ties between "free nations." See: "Chesty and His Helpers" comic 1943, Comic Books 1941-1943, 741.5 D612C, Collection of Walt Disney Productions and Walt Disney ephemera, Collection no. 0304, Special Collections, University of Southern California Libraries, Los Angeles; Ross F. Collins, *Children, War and Propaganda* (New York: Peter Lang, 2011); William M. Tuttle, Jr., *"Daddy's Gone to War": The Second World War in the Lives of America's Children* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

Cross.[24] During World War II, organizations such as the Red Cross continued to emphasize the need to send food and supplies to sister organizations abroad,[25] or to organize war relief drives at home and arrange "American havens" for refugee children.[26] The U.S. was involved in both the construction and consumption of these narratives about a shared global responsibility, emphasizing children as the recipients of aid and the need for the U.S. government and donors to extend hospitality to their foreign neighbors.

The postwar period encountered new challenges of shifting national boundaries with the processes of decolonization, changing geopolitical affiliations in Cold War politics, and the massive scale of the DP problem. Amidst these changes, foreign and humanitarian aid continued to serve as a platform for the U.S. to present itself as a global partner. This move was facilitated with the establishment of large-scale international institutions and structures, such as United Nations agencies and the International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). Along with the work of U.S.-based and private

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[24] Dominique Marshall, "Children's Rights and Children's Action in International Relief and Domestic Welfare: The Work of Herbert Hoover Between 1914 and 1950," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1, no. 3 (2008): 351-388; Julia Irwin, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Tara Zahra, "'The Psychological Marshall Plan': Displacement, Gender, and Human Rights after World War II," *Central European History* 44 (2011): 37–62, at 38.

[25] According to an American Red Cross pamphlet, the recipients included the following: Great Britain, Russia (including 500,000 garments for war orphans and $10,000 from the National Children's Fund of the American Junior Red Cross to supply shoes for orphans), Greece, Poland, east China, Yugoslavia, France, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Finland, Spain, Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Libya, Cyprus, and French islands and territories. See: The U.S. American National Red Cross, *Foreign War Relief: September 1, 1939 – December 31, 1942* (Washington, D.C.: February 1943).

[26] Along the lines of providing temporary refuge, Eleanor Roosevelt urged the American public in 1940 to support an increase in the number of European refugee children admitted into the U.S. in her public address over the Columbia Broadcasting System. Pointing out that "under present immigration regulations only a few hundred children can be admitted each week," she called for modifications or temporary exceptions in immigration policy to accommodate the entry of these children. Marshall Field, the president of the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children, also initiated a nation-wide endeavor to "co-ordinate child-placing activities in every section of the nation," starting with the formation of the National Child Refugee Committee and local committees represented by "American leaders in many walks of life," which would facilitate the "flow of 'Good Samaritan' dollars" to needy child refugees. See: The U.S. American National Red Cross, *Foreign War Relief* (1943).

nonprofit organizations, these multilateral institutions varied in function and carried out the work that underlay the humanitarian discourses: some organized fundraising campaigns, while others supplied or distributed food and packages.[27]

Scholars such as Atina Grossmann, Alice Weinreb, and Tara Zahra have already examined the politicization of food and humanitarian aid after World War II among European policymakers and multilateral organizations.[28] Grossmann has analyzed the experiences of German Jewish refugees in the American zones of occupied Germany, particularly the complicated, gendered entanglement of United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) officials, American military personnel, and survivors in DP camps, while Weinreb has explored the political, psychological, and emotional significance of food distribution among German civilians in divided Germany.[29] Within this postwar context, Zahra has historicized the programs to resettle (or "reclaim") children along national lines, respectively from a Central/Eastern European and an American perspective. As Zahra has shown, both policymakers and relief agencies "simultaneously upheld two collectives—the family and the nation—as the very basis for

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[27] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Voluntary Foreign Aid: The Nature and Scope of Postwar Private American Assistance Abroad, With Special Reference to Europe [The Fulton Report], A Study by a Special Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, 1947,* 80th Cong., Second Session (1948); U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Displaced Persons and the International Refugee Organization, Report of a Special Subcommittee of the Committee On Foreign Affairs, for the use of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on the Judiciary*, 80th Cong., First Session (1947), 49-52. For multilateral/international organizations, see: UNESCO, "Children of Europe," Publication No. 403 (Paris: UNESCO, 1949).

[28] For more on the intersections of foreign policy and food politics, see: Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Nick Cullather, "The Foreign Policy of the Calorie," *American Historical Review* 122, no. 2 (April 2007): 337-364. For more on soft policy and selling U.S. culture abroad, see: Justin Hart, *Empire of Ideas: The Origins of Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[29] Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Alice Weinreb, "For the Hungry Have No Past nor Do They Belong to a Political Party": Debates over German Hunger after World War II," *Central European History* 45, no. 1 (March 2012): 50-78.

European reconstruction and as the recipe for individual psychological rehabilitation." Humanitarian workers approached the needs and rights of displaced persons with "gender-specific, nationalist, and familialist" frameworks: DPs were not "abstract individuals," but rather "children or adults, boys or girls, Jews, Germans, or Poles."[30]

While these scholars have focused on the perspectives of Europeans, this chapter builds upon their works by focusing on the perspectives of Americans who were involved in the expansion of this postwar "humanitarian industry," especially how they saw child refugees as dependents and future citizens who were always connected to family and national structures. The sense of urgency to place children in the nation-state and home settings to which they belonged (determined by the national affiliations of birth or adopting parents) further reinforced the international boundaries that were being redrawn during the Cold War. This held particular importance for Jewish child refugees and orphans, whose legal and geopolitical status—as stateless, homeless, and even as "children"—was ambiguous and did not fit neatly into existing categories. While children generally served as visible symbols of war's destruction, broken families, and the prospects of reconstruction, the role of Jewish children and youth as the next generation carried significance in light of the Holocaust and the survival of Jewish communities in Europe.

The emphasis on refugee children's dependency also aimed to establish a narrative about Americans having a larger, global responsibility to those outside of their domestic community. Although publicity materials stressed the connections between the U.S. and the international community, the appeals for why Americans should send aid

[30] Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011); Tara Zahra, "Lost Children: Displacement, Family, and Nation in Postwar Europe," *The Journal of Modern History* 81 (March 2009): 45–86; Sara Fieldston, *Raising the World: Child Welfare in the American Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

were premised on perceived gaps: between the "American" audience/donor and the "European" recipient, as well as between the "adult donor" and the "child aid recipient" (or in the case of American children involved in these campaigns, between the privileged child and the less privileged child).[31] Of course, these lines were not always clear-cut, for European émigrés living in the U.S. might have identified as both, and many Americans had family members abroad—and these very family ties were brought to the forefront in public appeals as a reason to send aid.[32] Yet public discourses often simplified these distinctions by locale and nationality. Frequently referring to the prosperity at home, including suburban development, expanding markets, and the "American childhood" that was *not* devastated by war and scarcity, these narratives pointed out that Americans currently had the resources to help their overseas neighbors.[33] Likewise, one UNRRA representative argued that visual or rhetorical evidence of the conditions in Europe and *who* was suffering was necessary for an American audience who had difficulty imagining

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[31] For example, in advocating for the admission of more DPs into the U.S., the Displaced Persons Commission compared the refugee children's "lost childhoods" with the "typical" American childhood: while American boys were "struggling with their A.B.C's, playing baseball, and attending cowboy movies," European refugees had spent their childhoods "in concentration camps doing forced labor." By stressing the amount of humanitarian and emotional work that needed to be accomplished—not only in terms of restoring the children's health and building their skills for "self-sufficiency," but also their ability to play and "laugh again"— the Commission portrayed resettlement and rehabilitation programs as having the power to transform the "absent ones" into individuals who could "begin to live as human beings" and as children. See: U.S. Displaced Persons Commission, "DP's in U.S. Uniforms Fighting for their New Found Freedom," Box 305: Articles, Speeches, Related Material, Nov-Dec 1951, Fred K. Hoehler Collection, Social Welfare History Archive, University of Minnesota Special (UMN) Collections, Minneapolis.

[32] The U.S. American National Red Cross, *Foreign War Relief* (1943), 1; also mentioned in Fred K. Hoehler, "Problems of Europe and their Challenge to International Social Work," found with materials dated October 22, 1947, Fred K. Hoehler papers, Social Welfare History Archive, UMN Special Collections. See also: Oral history interviews with émigré social workers, Joachim Wieler papers, German Central Institute for Social Issues, Berlin.

[33] *Shadows of Hate* [March Of Time Film Advertising United Jewish Appeal Campaign], 1947, RG-60.1319, Film ID 2923, Julian B. Venezky Collection, Steven Spielberg Film and Video Archive, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.; Reverend Harold C. Gardiner, "Continued Need for CARE Cited in 'America' Article," *America* [national Catholic weekly], November 12, 1949, for release to the Catholic Press with reprint from America," CARE Records, News Releases, 9/49-12/49, New York Public Library (NYPL) Special Collections, New York.

"Human existence and especially family life [that] are so different from our experience in America."[34] Yet an implicit (and often explicit) warning underlay these narratives: that "geography is no bar to tragedy," and that the U.S. would inevitably be affected by the instability in other parts of the world.[35] Breaking down these rhetorical moves, especially the campaigns that portrayed investments in Europe's children and youth as the most promising and feasible route to geopolitical stability, thus provides a fuller understanding of how American policymakers and humanitarian workers envisioned the U.S. as a key actor in the international project of rebuilding Europe.

**Selling Child Welfare as Foreign Policy: Narrating the Long-term Payoffs of U.S. Aid**

As international aid networks expanded after the war, the discourse of humanitarianism gained geopolitical traction as well, framed by diplomats and politicians as an important branch of U.S. foreign policy and Cold War interests.[36] The Truman Administration expressed its commitment to assisting the economic recovery of Western Europe by providing military and financial aid with the Truman Doctrine (1947) and the Marshall Plan (or the Economic Recovery Act [ERP], 1948-1951).[37] As Sir Oliver Franks (Chairman of the CEEC Washington Delegation) explained to Robert A. Lovett (the Under Secretary of State from 1947-1949), the Marshall Plan served the purpose of

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[34] Fred K. Hoehler, "Problems of Europe and their Challenge to International Social Work," found with materials dated October 22, 1947, Fred K. Hoehler papers, Social Welfare History Archive, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[35] *Shadows of Hate*, 1947; Reverend Harold C. Gardiner, "Continued Need for CARE Cited in 'America' Article," *America,* November 12, 1949.

[36] Stephen Halsey argues that the elite press also played a key role in "making" the Marshall Plan by prodding the Truman administration to revise its foreign policy. See: Stephen Halsey, "Toward the Marshall Plan: Dialogue Between the Truman Administration and the Elite Press," *The Fletcher Forum for World Affairs* 22, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 1998): 107-129.

[37] President Harry S. Truman's Address before a Joint Session of Congress, March 12, 1947, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/trudoc.asp.

instilling "a new hope in men's minds in Europe" and supporting the reconstruction of European economic and political structures. The assistance program had the additional purpose of helping Europeans "lead a way of life" that was "broadly similar to the way of life followed and enjoyed by the people of the United States."[38]

In addition to the Marshall Plan, the Truman administration joined multilateral efforts to specifically address the needs of malnourished children. The U.S. signed onto the International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), which was established in 1946 under the auspices of the United Nations with the purpose of distributing clothing, shoes, and supplies to children in war-devastated areas.[39] The U.S. funded approximately 72% of UNICEF's finances and 50-60% of the International Refugee Organization; Truman later signed off on provisions in the U.S. Foreign Economic Assistance Act of 1950 and the Foreign Aid Bill that further supported international child welfare[40] and met urgent needs during this emergency postwar period.

However, not everyone in Congress and the public was on board with the outpour of U.S. aid, at least not without a few conditions and the assurance that these "emergency"[41] funds were only for a temporary period. Throughout the postwar years,

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[38] Unofficial Aide-Memoire from The Chairman of the CEEC Washington Delegation (Sir Oliver Franks) to the Under Secretary of State (Robert A. Lovett), Lot 122, Box 19B, The Marshall Plan, Foreign Relations, 1947, Vol. III, 446, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library Online Collection: Marshall Plan Documents.

[39] Present at this conference were representatives from Czechoslovakia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, China, Albania, Austria, and Yugoslavia.

[40] John P. Hubbard, M.D., "Trends: The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund," *Pediatrics* 6, no. 2 (1950): 317-18.

[41] During the war, the president of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds pushed back against the rhetoric of a temporary "emergency" that informed legislative debates about aid, pointing out that: "It would be simple to talk of 'crisis' and 'emergency' in referring to the conditions at home and abroad but both words have all but lost their meaning. We know now that there is nothing temporary—in the ordinary sense—about the plight of five million Jews in Europe and certainly no emergency character to the political, economic and social disorganization which has caught so much of the world in its grip." Katharine F. Lenroot of the Children's Bureau also hoped for more permanent and large-scale programs

American policymakers and diplomats consistently expressed reservations about the duration of assistance programs and their possibility of becoming a long-term drainage of taxpayer dollars.[42] In response to these concerns, representatives of UNRRA and voluntary organizations (VOLAGs) stressed the implications of *not* giving. Fred Hoehler, the director of the Displaced Persons Division of UNRRA in Germany and Austria (1944-1945), argued that "the cost under the Marshall Plan and the United Nations, even though it looks large at the moment, will be much less than would result from our complete neglect of our former allies."[43] As Hoehler implied, the potential costs were not only financial, but also geopolitical in that such neglect could push hungry, suffering peoples away from a democratic "way of life" toward Communist or fascist alternatives. The U.S. State Department had a similar rationale, reporting in internal memos that the majority of Western Europeans did not support totalitarianism, but they still needed the physical and moral strength to "withstand the militant communist campaign." It was thus necessary "that they be enabled, by further aid from us."[44]

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that would address the needs of war-afflicted children for the long term. See: Letter from Sidney Hollander (president of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds) to William F. Fuerst (Secretary of the New York Foundation), December 4, 1940, New York Foundation records, Box 89 f.2 Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds #366, 1959-1968, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[42] U.S. Congress, Senate, *United States Relations With International Organizations: III. The International Refugee Organization, Report of the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments Pursuant to Public Law 601, 79th Congress, (Section 102 (1)(g)(2)(D) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946), June 8 (legislative day, June 2),* S. Report 476, 81st Cong., 1st Session (1949); U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Rules, *Providing for Membership and Participation by the United States in the International Refugee Organization and Authorizing an Appropriation Therefore*, H.J. Res. 207 (May 29, 1947); U.S. Congress, House, *Committee on Foreign Affairs, Voluntary Foreign Aid: The Nature and Scope of Postwar Private American Assistance Abroad, With Special Reference to Europe [The Fulton Report], A Study by a Special Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, 1947,* 80th Cong., Second Session (1948).

[43] Letter from Fred K. Hoehler to Stanley L. Sommer, U.S. Foreign Relief Mission, March 1, 1948, Fred K. Hoehler papers, Box 4: Correspondence and Papers, General, March 1948-January 1949, Folder 42, Social Welfare History Archive, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[44] "The Immediate Need for Emergency Aid to Europe," September 29, 1947 [declassified on Aug. 9, 1973], President's Secretary's Files, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library Online Collection: Marshall Plan Documents, http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/marshall/large/index.php

Along these lines, the Truman administration called for contributions from individuals and corporations (via VOLAGs) to supplement governmental funds and multilateral mechanisms of sending aid to children abroad.[45] In a letter of endorsement for the UN Appeal for Children and American Overseas Aid in 1947, President Harry Truman highlighted individuals' gifts as a form of displaying their "traditional humanitarian concern for the welfare of people in distress." Expressing confidence in the American people's willingness to ensure that "the world's children shall have at least a chance to survive," Truman stated that there was "no better way of transforming that determination into action than by supporting these organizations."[46] After all, donors who recognized "that peace and security cannot be built on want and privation" could consider their donations "an example of our democracy in action."[47] Political figures such as General Eisenhower and Secretary of State George C. Marshall, NGO directors such as Paul Comly French, and social activists such as Reverend Harold C. Gardiner also framed donations as long-term investments in global peace[48] and the next generation of

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[45] The U.S. State Department planned to match private contributions with federal funds, as discussed in U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Providing for Further Contributions to the International Children's Emergency Fund, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, on H.R. 2785 and H.R. 4488: Bills to Provide for Further Contributions to the International Children's Emergency Fund, May 4 and 5, 1949,* 81st Cong., First Session (1949), 25.

[46] Despite the Truman administration's expressions of humanitarian concern and support on behalf of DPs, Gerard Daniel Cohen points out that the DP problem was not initially a priority on the administration's list; rather, it was pushed to the top by the prodding of Eleanor Roosevelt and humanitarian activists. See Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[47] Letter to Lee Marshall from Harry Truman, November 6, 1947, American Overseas Aid and UN Appeal for Children (AOA-UNAC) collection, Social Welfare History Archive, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[48] In a letter to Ralph Blanchard [Executive Director of Community Chests and Councils, Inc.] on July 11, 1946, the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid stated: "The value of voluntary foreign relief is more than material evidence of the generosity of the American people," for it had the potential to build diplomatic relations and relieve "tension between people at home and the people of the war-stricken areas and particularly the many sufferers with kinsfolk in America." See: Letter from the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid to Ralph Blanchard, Executive Director of Community Chests and Councils, Inc., July 11, 1946, Social Welfare History Archive, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

European leaders, referring to the contributions from the American people as a "Person-to-Person ERP [Economic Recovery Plan]" that would serve as a counterpart to the government-to-government Marshall Plan.[49]

As scholars Christina Klein and Sara Fieldston have noted, American policymakers and diplomats viewed foreign, humanitarian, and developmental aid (especially in Asia) as part of the "policy of integration" that complemented the U.S. "policy of containment."[50] Klein focuses on the circulation of East and Southeast Asian children's images in middlebrow Americans' literature and media. As implied by the ads depicting orphaned children in need, readers could perform being "good Americans" by donating and contributing to the "soft diplomatic" efforts in the war against communism and the fight for democracy on the world stage. Sara Fieldston has also argued that voluntary agencies helped establish child sponsorship as a geopolitical weapon, enabling private citizens and ordinary American families to participate in "the mission to protect the free world." The role of transnational adoption, sponsorship, and fundraising in producing "culture of global integration" during the Cold War, as analyzed in these two works, provides the framework for the images and stories discussed in this chapter. The Truman administration's and NGOs' appeals for Americans' participation in the Cold

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[49] "Americans Fail to Understand European Recovery Program, 'CARE' Director Claims, Asking More Private Aid Now," news release, July 8, CARE Records, News Releases 4/48–7/26/48; "CARE Package Reduced to $10 Commended by Gen. Eisenhower," release for JDC Bulletin, CARE Records, Press Releases, vol. 2, 10/11/46-10/24/46; Reverend Harold C. Gardiner, "Person-to-Person ERP still needed," *America,* November 12, 1949; also mentioned by the U.S. ambassador to Greece, "Ambassador Says Food and Clothing Urgently Needed in Greece," translated for the Greek Press, news release, CARE records, News Releases, 9/49-12/49, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[50] Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945–1961* (Berkeley, 2003); also see Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010) and "The Foreign Policy of the Calorie," *American Historical Review* 122, no. 2 (April 2007): 337-364.

War project of spreading "democracy in action" similarly called for private citizens to take on their roles as "de facto diplomats."[51]

In making the case that supplementary aid channels to the ERP were necessary, Reverend Gardiner visited war-devastated countries throughout Western and Southern Europe in 1949 and described his impressions for an American audience (especially American Catholics). With a section directly referencing Jacob A. Riis' *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York* (1890),[52] the article drew a "picture of how the ordinary European lives," focusing on the Marshall Plan's effects (or lack thereof) on "the European little man whom the U.S. tourist did not see." Gardiner reported that more than 3.5 million people were on direct relief, and an additional 1.5 million received supplementary meals. While the average American consumed 3400 calories, an Austrian citizen received an average of 1400 calories. In Greece, the strain was exacerbated by the civil war that created more refugees in need. Coming to the conclusion that the ERP did not "[reach the European little man's] table, his children,"[53] Reverend Gardiner urged the American Catholic community to support more relief work

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[51] Sara Fieldston, "Little Cold Warriors: Child Sponsorship and International Affairs," *Diplomatic History* 38, no .2 (2014): 240-250, at 243.

[52] Riis' publication used photographs, statistics, and sensationalist language to document and shed light on the impoverished living conditions of New York's Lower East Side tenement district. Although it reflects his own class-based prejudices and assumptions about the residents, his text and photographs helped spark a social reform movement. He also included a chapter on "The Problem of the Children." See: Jacob A. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890).

[53] Paul Comly French made a similar argument in the press releases from his relief organization: "The people of the United States do not understand the function of the Marshall Plan. There is widespread belief that the Economic Cooperation Administration program just passed by Congress will immediately solve all Europe's troubles. Nothing is further from the truth. ECA's long-range program for economic rehabilitation will not mean more food on family tables for from eighteen months to two years." See: "Americans Fail to Understand European Recovery Program, 'CARE' Director Claims, Asking More Private Aid Now," news release, July 8, CARE records, News Releases 4/48–7/26/48, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

(such as that of CARE and NCWC-Bishops' War Relief Service) in Europe.[54] In addition to using numbers to reveal this gap and the need for private contributions, Gardiner drew upon well-known American poverty literature and images as a frame of reference for understanding the conditions in Europe.

Child-centered relief also provided a common reference point and an opportunity for "tangible people-to-people expression[s] of international brotherhood" within the world of diplomacy.[55] As Congresswoman France P. Bolton (R-Ohio) remarked before the Committee on Foreign Affairs regarding the possibility of increasing U.S. funding for the International Children's Emergency Fund in 1949, "if the people of one country help the children of another country, and in many instances the children of one country help the children of another country through various means, there would be built something that would be of far more value than government gifts, because it would be deeply rooted in the hearts of the people themselves."[56] Congresswoman Bolton's appeals reflect a common stance among social workers and policymakers regarding international social work: that child welfare was an *apolitical* issue that could transcend geopolitical tensions, allowing political actors to "talk a common language" and share "a common yardstick of values."[57]

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[54] Reverend Harold C. Gardiner, "Continued Need for CARE Cited in 'America' Article," *America,* November 12, 1949, CARE records, News Releases 4/48–7/26/48, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[55] "CARE Package Reduced to $10 Commended by Gen. Eisenhower," news release for JDC Bulletin, CARE records, Press Releases, vol. 2, 10/11/46-10/24/46, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[56] U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Providing for Further Contributions to the International Children's Emergency Fund, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, on H.R. 2785 and H.R. 4488: Bills to Provide for Further Contributions to the International Children's Emergency Fund, May 4 and 5, 1949,* 81st Cong., First Session (Washington, D.C.: 1949), 24.
[57] Katharine F. Lenroot, "Address of Welcome" at the Fifth International Congress of Pediatrics in New York, July 15, 1947, Katharine F. Lenroot papers, Columbia University Rare Book & Manuscript Library, New York.

Yet U.S. aid to children was clearly embedded in political and economic interests, in terms of both government-to-government aid and person-to-person aid. As Katherine Lenroot, the Chief of the U.S. Department of Labor's Children's Bureau and later the U.S. Representative of UNICEF, stated in a speech before the International Labour Organization Conference (ILO) in 1945, sending help to "Hundreds of Europe's children" who would otherwise die of hunger and scarcity was "not to play Santa Claus." Rather, such help was directly tied to foreign policy, "the only foreign policy that has a chance to save our own country and the world from utter destruction and to lay the foundation for peace, order, and justice."[58] As Lenroot and other child specialists argued, this connection was the reason why it was necessary to prioritize the next generation's needs in the first postwar ILO conference, and why they needed to make the profession of social work an integral part of international and domestic policymaking.[59]

One agency, American Overseas Aid and the UN Appeal for Children (AOA-UNAC), similarly emphasized the long-term payoffs of investing in European children as future economic partners. One of its 1947 advertisements reminded American corporations that they had a stake in the future of other countries "whose economic well-being is vital to our own stability," and especially in "the survival of [European]

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[58] Quote from Lenroot's speech at the International Labor Conference in Paris from 5 October–5 November 1945, released on December 2, 1945, German-Jewish Children's Aid (GJCA) records, File 239, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[59] Before the end of the war, Lenroot had anticipated child welfare to be "the most important post-war issue." She argued that the investments in both the children at home and abroad were essential to foreign and domestic politics: "Our stake in what happens to all children, everywhere: The philosophy of isolationism is as dangerous when applied to domestic affairs as when governing relations between countries." See: Katharine F. Lenroot (at the time, as Chief of the Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor), "Children and their Future: The National View," New York State Conference of Social Work, Child Care Section, Rochester, NY, November 15, 1944, Box 5, Folder 8, Series I: Writings and Speeches, Indexed Speeches, Articles and Radio, 1920-1951; Katharine F. Lenroot, "International Cooperation in the Development of Social Welfare Services," Commission to Study the Organization of Peace [prepared in collaboration with Martha Branscombe of the Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor], May 16, 1944, Box 5, Folder 1, Series 1.1 (#MS0767).

children" who would become the next generation of workers and actors in the global economy. The ad argued that $60 million was needed for the next fiscal year, but government economic assistance was not sufficient to meet that amount. By providing the remainder of the funds, businesses could help "translate" the "abundance of the American life…into immediate help," and serve as "an effective salesman" or "a guiding beacon in a world torn by doubt and anxiety" to demonstrate that "America has what it takes."[60]

**Who Deserves U.S. Aid?: Children and Jewish Refugees as Recipients**

In addition to portraying financial contributions from the American public as practical investments in the restoration of Europe, relief organizations aimed to evoke emotional responses to the refugees' wartime and family stories. The identities of refugees as dependents and war victims were central to these narratives about Americans' obligation to respond to refugee children, especially child orphans, whom one American UNRRA worker described as "the world's charges."[61] Relief workers had their own strong responses to the plight of child refugees. In a letter to an UNRRA team member in December 1945, one American UNRRA worker in Kloster-Indersdorf, Germany, described the children she had seen in the DP camps as "pathetically undernourished," though she still thought they were "most beautiful" and deplored the war's effects on them: "One looks at them, and one wonders what chance, if any, they will have in tomorrow's world. Some are nameless. Many are stateless." The UNRRA worker

[60] "No Time to Strike Out!", American Overseas Aid and UN Appeal for Children (AOA-UNAC) campaign, American Overseas Aid and UN Appeal for Children (AOA-UNAC) collection, Folder 54.2, Social Welfare History Archive, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.
[61] Letter to Cynthia (UNRRA Team 182) from Lillian (Kloster-Andorsdorf, Germany), December, 1945, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 6: Papers on Refugee Children, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

criticized the U.S. for not doing enough compared to other countries, and for not living up to its presumed position as an emerging global power:

> I am very distressed that, thus far, only England and Switzerland have volunteered care for displaced orphans. An invitation is pending from Sweden, and where is the U.S.A.? The settlements must help to open our doors. Those of us in UNRRA who are American are a bit ashamed that we who have more than any country in the world should not be the first to extend a hand – at least to the children. And we owe a debt to other survivors too. I can't make this plea too strongly.[62]

Relief workers felt a particular responsibility to Jewish refugees, which was part of their broader understanding of both adult and child refugees' suffering and loss of family members during the war and the Holocaust. In a forum commentary published in the *Herald-Tribune*, Fred Hoehler, the director of UNRRA in Germany and Austria, expressed his concern about the impact of genocide on Jewish communities in Germany and the small numbers of young children who had survived the war.[63] Not only did these refugees (or the "absent ones," as he called them) lose their homes and resources, but they also "frequently had to witness the willful murder of their families." Because "Hitler singled out these people for his own special attention," Hoehler believed that "we can

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[62] Letter to Cynthia (UNRRA Team 182) from Lillian (Kloster-Andorsdorf, Germany), December, 1945; Katharine F. Lenroot also visited DP camps and child centers throughout Germany and made a similar case in "Europe's Children Need Help Now," Louisville, KY, January 25, 1946, Katharine F. Lenroot Papers, Box 5, Folder 8, Series I, Columbia University Rare Book & Manuscript Library, New York.

[63] Papanek recognized that this was a controversial topic among social workers, and in his writings he briefly addressed the question of whether Jewish children and youth were in a "peculiar situation." He recognized that non-Jewish children and youth were traumatized as well, but he argued that social workers should recognize the "psychic trends more or less characteristic of Jewish youth of today" and the particularities of the targeted persecution they experienced. He argued that the attention to those trends were "of great importance for the future of the whole group and its individual members." See: Ernst Papanek, "Project for Establishing Training Homes for Refugee Children," Ernst Papanek Papers, Box 8, Folder 1, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

make *no* practical demonstration of our belief in the dignity of man than to give *our own* kind of 'special attention' to the needs of these homeless Jews."[64]

But not all calls for attention to Jewish refugees mentioned the inadequate U.S. assistance offered *during* the war. Critics from within the American Jewish community did recall the closing of doors to Jewish displaced persons seeking refuge in the U.S. and Great Britain,[65] and some implied that the postwar moment offered an opportunity to compensate for the failure to respond during the war. As one rabbi argued in his criticism of refugee policies and aid programs, the plight of Jewish refugees was no longer solely an issue of Nazi policy, but also a result "of a callous, befogged policy, or lack of policy of our democracies." He thus called upon the leaders of the Allied countries, namely the U.S. and Britain, to provide a refuge for the refugees and to put "an end to this travesty of justice and humanity," arguing that "If there is any bit of conscience left among our leaders they should not rest until the tortured men, women and children are taken to a place of safety."[66]

Social workers recognized the urgency of restoring the physical and emotional health of Jewish children after their wartime experiences.[67] One organization, Rescue

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[64]Fred Hoehler, "Displaced Persons," Herald-Tribune Forum (Mrs. Ogden Reid), New York, Oct. 30, 1945, Fred Hoehler papers, Articles, Speeches, and Related Material, April 1947-1948, Box 27, Folder 279, Social Welfare History Archives, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[65] See David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment Of The Jews: America and the Holocaust* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984); Robert N. Rosen, *Saving the Jews: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Holocaust* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2006); Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: European Refugees in the Postwar Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[66] Letter to Fred K. Hoehler [Chief of the Displaced Persons Division of UNRRA's Displaced Persons Branch at SHAEF in France, as of April 25, 1945] from James G. Heller [Rabbi at the Isaac M. Wise Temple], Jan. 9, 1946, Fred K. Hoehler papers, Box 2, Folder 11, Social Welfare History Archives, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[67] Social workers from Germany and Austria (Ernst Papanek, Gisela Knopka, Elsa Leichter, Kurt Reichert, among others) also felt personal connections to the refugees because they had been in a similar position themselves as German and Austrian Jewish refugees. Their positions as former refugees and émigrés further challenge the categories established along national lines. See: Ernst Papanek, *Out of the Fire,* ed.

Children, Inc., explained that they were concentrating on Jewish children because "they are the saddest things left in Europe." Stateless Jewish children either had no homes and relatives to return to, or if their parent(s) were still alive, were returning to guardians who could not take care of the children due to poor health. Others were placed temporarily with non-Jewish families or institutions, and social agencies now faced the challenges of reuniting them with their families.[68] As Rescue Children, Inc., reminded potential donors and adopting families: "Those children, unfortunately, are the citizens of tomorrow. They have to be rehabilitated."[69]

American child specialists weighing in on the subject stressed the urgency of restoring "lost childhoods," or whatever remained of child refugees' experiences as *children*. In the July 1946 issue of *The Child,* one doctor described refugee children as having been deprived of the security and opportunities they should have had in their childhoods: an education, stable family life and emotional support, the time and space for play, and a time when they could be dependent on adults while gradually learning how to be independent. During the war, they were living "a life few adults here [in the U.S.] have ever experienced" during their "tender years" and knew of things that only an American soldier on the front line might know: "privations, horrors, tortures and death," as well as "sacrifices for their friends, courage, generosity, and unselfishness in wartime circumstances." As a result, the doctor observed, child refugees had been forced to act

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Edward Linn (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1975); Ernst Papanek papers, NYPL Special Collections; Oral history interviews with émigré social workers, Joachim Wieler papers, German Central Institute for Social Issues, Berlin; Gisela Knopka papers, Social Welfare History Archives, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[68] Denise Levitte and Riva Grinberg, "Jewish Children in France" [translated from French], November 8, 1945, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 6: Papers on Refugee Children, NYPL Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[69] Mary Braggiotti, "The Saddest Things Left in Europe Are These Children," *New York Post* [Daily Magazine and Comic Section], July 11, 1947, Rescue Children, Inc. collection, Box 13, Folder 21, Yeshiva University Special Collections, New York.

"independent and grownup," but still possessed "many immature traits" and needed adult guidance.[70] Along similar lines, a bulletin circulated by the OSE (*Oeuvre de Secours Aux Enfants*, or Children's Aid Society), a French Jewish organization that established children's homes for orphans, reported that its residents yearned to "catch up with the lost time." The refugees, who had arrived from Buchenwald, were diligently studying French and English, for they realized that they had been deprived of many opportunities during the war.[71] With the support of American funding for such programs, the OSE bulletin implied, these children would have the opportunity to get back on track with the expected trajectory of childhood and youth development.[72]

Polish photojournalist David Seymour also deployed the narrative of a "lost childhood" in his publications, describing both Jewish and non-Jewish refugee children as "children without ever having been young."[73] In 1948, *LIFE* magazine and UNESCO

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[70] Dr. Curt Bondy, quoted in *The Child*, July 1946, 13. These concerns were also expressed in Fred K. Hoehler, "Problems of Europe and their Challenge to International Social Work," found with materials dated October 22, 1947; Fred K. Hoehler, "Displaced Persons," *Herald-Tribune Forum* (Mrs. Ogden Reid), New York, Oct. 30, 1945, Fred Hoehler papers, Articles, Speeches, and Related Material, April 1947-1948, Box 27, Folder 279, Social Welfare History Archive, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis. See also: Tara Zahra, "'The Psychological Marshall Plan': Displacement, Gender, and Human Rights after World War II," *Central European History* 44 (2011): 37–62, at 38.

[71] "The Children from Buchenwald, the First Arithmetic Lesson in Ecouis," *Bulletin "OSE,"* no. 13, Sept. 1, 1945, 5, translated from French, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 5: Refugee Children, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[72] Or for the children to make up for "the lost years." Mrs. Irving M. Engel (Chairman of the Board) and Edwin Rosenberg (President), "Programs for 1948 – Year of Hope," *Reports to the Annual Meeting of the United Service for New Americans, Inc.,* New York City, January 10-11, 1948, United Service for New Americans (USNA) records, File 16, MKM 24.1, American Jewish Historical Society, Center for Jewish History.

[73] "Children of Europe," Publication No. 403 (Paris: UNESCO, 1949), 12, UNESCO Archives, Paris; also used in a fundraising WQXR radio program: "WQXR Presents in 'I Have Seen the Children' by Morton Wishengrad, a radio drama based upon 'Children Who Have Known No Childhood,' by Gertrude Samuels," *The New York Times Magazine,* March 9, 1947, NY Times Records, A.H. Sulzberger Papers, European Children folder, 164.4, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

(United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization[74]) commissioned Seymour to travel around Europe after World War II and document the conditions he witnessed, as well as the results of international humanitarian work. As the *LIFE* article explained to American audiences in its introductory blurb, Seymour did not select the scenes that were "necessarily typical," but rather the ones that "best dramatize the enormous task [at hand]."[75] He focused on images of children who were psychologically, emotionally, and physically marred by the war, such as a "frantic girl in a Polish institute" and an "armless, blind boy in an Italian home" who "[spoke] for millions who are only unhappy" and "cry for help because they cannot help themselves."[76]

Seymour's 1949 UNESCO publication, *Children of Europe,* targeted a larger, international audience, using a child's voice to write a "letter to a grown-up." Once again speaking on behalf of the 13 million "abandoned children," the child narrator asked readers to take on the role of European children's absent family and national community, and to assume the responsibility of "[making] men of us… help us to make up for lost time." By describing child refugees as "homeless children [who] have our neighbors for a family" and addressing the readers as "you 'grown-ups' as our country," the publication reinforced the discourse of a "global family" that crossed national lines.[77] The publication further argued that the actions taken by adults *after* the war would shape how the children understood the purpose of the war itself. While "all of us war handicapped children can

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[74] UNESCO was established in 1945 as part of the U.N., with emphasis on encouraging peace through educational programs. Their early postwar programs and pamphlets highlighted the needs of children and youth.
[75] "Children of Europe: Christmas Finds Many of Them Still in Great Need of Help," *LIFE* 25, no. 26, December 27, 1948, 13-19, at 13.
[76] "Children of Europe," *LIFE*, 25, no. 26, December 27, 1948, 13-19.
[77] The emphasis on the children's absence of parents/guardians also invoked the legal responsibilities of family members to provide financially for children and called upon the refugees' international neighbors to assume the duties usually assumed by relatives.

still forget what we have witnessed, what you made us witness," the narrator warned that "We ourselves shall be 'grown-ups' in a few years and, if we then see that millions of us have been abandoned a second time, we certainly shall lose faith in that ideal [of freedom and democracy] for which you fought."[78] As this statement implied, the children were potential "witnesses" to the violence of inaction after the war, as well as the violence of the war itself.

In addition to highlighting the role of journalists and the refugee child as witnesses, this publication exemplifies the use of the child figure to stand in as an "apolitical" symbol (though circulated for political purposes) of Europe's path to recovery, in which the American government and people should invest. Likewise, one 1947 advertisement for "The Brotherhood of Children" by the Foster Parents' Plan for War Children, Inc. drew the following image of the refugee child for its audience: "with his little bundle and his wooley toy [the refugee child] became an all too familiar sight everywhere in the world." The organization's Executive Secretary, Eric Muggeridge, shared his own reactions to such images: "I shall never forget the eyes of these children. [T]hey are the same in every country in Europe. They plead, they accuse—and they question, as if to say…'you will help me.'" Therefore, the goal of his organization was to "give these children some feeling of being wanted and loved. Europe's children must all learn to smile again."[79]

**Narrating the Results of U.S. Aid Distribution:**

[78] "Children of Europe," Publication No. 403 (Paris: UNESCO, 1949), 12.
[79] Foster Parents' Plan for War Children, Inc., "The Brotherhood of Children," Ernst Papanek papers, Box 6: Papers on Refugee Children, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

Now that I have considered the reasoning behind and various motivations for American donors and policymakers to intervene on behalf of European child refugees, this section will provide examples of how ideas about child development shaped understandings of the distribution of aid and its effects on the refugees' lives. I will outline the various forms and stages of assistance distributed as child refugees transitioned from the DP camps to children's homes or their new homes in the U.S., including the provision of food, clothing, and medical services in the DP camps, family tracing and reunification services, and resettlement assistance. By looking at both the publicized materials and internal reports within aid organizations, this section will analyze the results and refugees' trajectories *expected* by donors and aid workers alike.

### *Narrating the Results of U.S. Aid Distribution: "Carefully Chosen" Packages and Recipients*

The first stage was to restore the child refugees' health and nourishment in order to make them "children again." One way in which Americans could help transform European children from being "pale, thin, and obviously undernourished" to exhibiting "laughter and happiness"[80] was to send CARE (Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe) parcels to homes and DP camps abroad. Images of children happily opening food and clothing packages were well-publicized (and some have become iconic images, as shown below). This postwar program operated through contracts with the War Assets Administration, which sold food packages to CARE, and international agreements with European governments that allowed CARE to operate in their countries with an American

[80] "Unitarians Distribute CARE Parcels to Undernourished Peoples in Vienna," October 22, 1946, CARE records, Press Records vol. 2, 10/11/46-10/24/46, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

staff.[81] CARE also worked in conjunction with other voluntary agencies, such as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC), to distribute the packages.[82] In 1949, nearly 84 million dollars from individual American contributions enabled the overseas delivery of 8,719,386 packages. Germany received two-thirds of that amount (64.2%), while 9.3% went to Austria and 2.7% to Poland.[83] The packages were already stored and ready to ship in order to guarantee speedy delivery once the CARE field offices received an order. The standard package contained the essentials (food, blankets, clothes, etc.[84]) to meet the material needs of both refugees in DP camps and civilians in areas that were physically and economically destroyed by the war.


***Figure 2:*** *Austrian child with shoes (1947) republished in 1957 by the Los Angeles Times as one of "The Ten Most Memorable News Pictures Of Our Time." The caption explains: "In capturing the rapturous expression of a six-year-old clutching to his breast a pair of*

[81] "Lowered Price of CARE Food Parcels Suggests Christmas Gifts to Friends Abroad," news release, October 11, 1946, CARE records, Box 899, Press Releases Vol. 2, 10/11/46—10/24/46, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[82] "'U-Boat Association' Jews in Vienna Ask for CARE Food from America," news release translated into Yiddish for the Yiddish press in the U.S., October 14, 1946, CARE records, Box 899, Press Releases Vol. 2, 10/11/46—10/24/46, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[83] CARE ended services but previously sent packages to Bulgaria (.2%), Cyprus (.1%), Hungary (.6%), and Rumania/Romania (.7%). Other recipients included: Belgium (.4%), Czechoslovakia (1.8%), Ireland (.1%), Finland (0.7%), Greece (1%), Italy (3.2%), Japan (.6%), Netherlands (1.1%), Norway (.1%), and Scotland and Northern Ireland (.8%). See: "For Immediate Release, Translated for the German-Austrian Press," CARE records, News Releases, 9/49-12/49, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[84] CARE packages included 4,844,000 standard food, 430,000 British food, 340,000 Lard, 235,000 blanket, and 225,000 woolen suiting packages. There were also designated packages to meet specific needs: a Baby Food package, Household Linen package, a special 'Thrift' Food package, and a special Holiday Package—with a special holiday-themed fundraising campaign—with a steam-packed turkey large enough to feed 10-12 people.

*new shoes presented by the American Junior Red Cross, photographer Gerald Waller succeeded in a difficult assignment: He was able to photograph joy and measure charity."*

***Figure 3:*** *Opening a CARE Package (1948).*[85]

Initially, CARE policy only permitted personalized packages and prioritized family ties by encouraging Americans to send food packages to their relatives, though in later years CARE allowed donors to send gifts anonymously to non-relatives.[86] In cases where donors mailed packages to non-relatives, the donors acquired the addresses of their friends or designated the package to be sent to "the neediest families in the area" or "a worthy recipient," often selected by CARE workers.[87] For example, the National CIO Community Services Committee corresponded with a labor union in France (Confederation Generale du Travail) to designate packages to unionists and their families.[88] In a 1946 press release, CARE publicists highlighted the story of Mrs. L., a

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[85] Beaumont Newhall, "The Ten Most Memorable News Pictures Of Our Time: How Many Of These Great Pictures Do You Remember?" *Los Angeles Times*, August 4, 1957; Opening a CARE Package (1948), photo by Hanns Hubmann, German History in Documents and Images, http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/.

[86] In 1946, CARE expanded the program to enable packages to enter the British zone in Germany, and also extended the program's reach to non-European regions (including China, Pakistan, etc.). See: "For Immediate Release, Translated for the German-Austrian Press," CARE records, News Releases, 9/49-12/49, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[87] "CARE Food Deliveries Rushed to Needy Families in Greece" [translated into Greek and sent to the Greek press in the U.S.], news release, October 22, 1946, CARE records, Press Releases vol. 2, 10/11/46-10/24/46; "Unitarians Distribute CARE Parcels to Undernourished Peoples in Vienna," October 22, 1946, CARE records, Press Records, vol. 2, 10/11/46-10/24/46; "CIO sends 6750 CARE Food Packages to Needy Unionists in France, Poland," CARE records, Press Releases vol. 2, 10/11/46-10/24/46, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[88] The CIO played a prominent role in collecting and sustaining contributions to support European trade unionists and their families. James B. Carey, CIO secretary-treasurer and member of the 12-man advisory board of the Economic Cooperation Administration, campaigned ("in every CIO shop, office and union hall") on behalf of CIO-CARE aid to send packages to trade union families abroad and was able to distribute more than 50,000 packages in 1948. As Carey reminded fellow unionists, the National CIO Community Services Committee had helped "seal the victory" during World War II by sending aid abroad. He urged them to continue their support after the war and contribute to "the work of rebuilding democratic unions." Echoing the remarks of politicians and NGOs, he urged his audience not to "regard long-range Marshall Plan aid to European governments as a signal for the immediate end of day-to-day help that Americans have been sending to hungry European families." See: "Carey Stresses Need to Keep Sending CIO-CARE Aid Abroad," news release, 1948, CARE records, Series 4: Public & Donor Relations,

widowed mother of eight children whose unionist husband was killed during the Nazi occupation for his involvement in underground operations. Mrs. L., along with other families in postwar France, struggled to get by with inflated food prices. One day, she opened the door to find a CARE representative who handed her a 49-lb food package. With tears in her eyes, she asked, "[H]ow did you get my name? Who sent it to me?" Apparently, her husband's union had recommended her family as "a worthy recipient of this gift from American workers to the workers of France."[89]

CARE circulated similar stories about needy (and "deserving") families and children in multiple locations (from Vienna and Poland to Greece and Italy) who received the "carefully chosen" packages.[90] In a press release to the American public, General Geoffrey P. Baldwin, the Chief of CARE's unit in Italy, urged Americans to help the malnourished children who were suffering from "slow starvation" during and after the war. Their typical diets, which consisted of "a little watered milk," "a bit of black bread, and the water in which a few vegetables has been cooked," had turned their bodies into "wasted and deformed small bodies and limbs." Baldwin clarified that he was not trying to sensationalize these reports, for he was "certainly not a sentimentalist," but rather that he was "report[ing] what I see." But he did mention how residents requested "appeal cards" to ask their friends and relatives in the U.S. to send them packages, as well as Sicilian residents who asked—or as Baldwin put it, competed—for their photographs to be taken in order to *show* Americans the state of their health and their need for help. As

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Subseries 4.2: Directors' Files, Press Releases: 1946-1985, Vol. 1, 2, 4-7, Box 899, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[89] "CIO sends 6750 CARE Food Packages to Needy Unionists in France, Poland," news release, CARE records, Press Releases vol. 2, 10/11/46-10/24/46, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[90] "Unitarians Distribute CARE Parcels to Undernourished Peoples in Vienna," October 22, 1946, CARE records, Press Records vol. 2, 10/11/46-10/24/46, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

one mother with a baby called out, "Take [my photograph]… see my baby is sick."[91]

While these aid recipients received packages on behalf of their family members, other press releases highlighted orphanages and children's homes as recipients of CARE packages. One report released to the English- and Yiddish-speaking press described the situation of orphanages in Ostia, Via Cassia, and Rome, which housed children (ages 3-9, 8-10, and 9-16, respectively) who had lost their relatives in Dachau and Buchenwald. As one of the orphanage directors explained, "Most of these orphans have had a similar tragedy. Almost every child has had his father, or mother, or both murdered or deported by the Germans." The orphanages were just scraping by to keep the young residents fed and clothed, for they had run out of the initial funds provided by donors. The children were already undernourished when they had entered the orphanage, and many were too weak to move around and would sit quietly instead of playing with other children. According to the press release, the orphans' hunger would be satiated, at least temporarily, with the 25 packages sent by American friends. They would receive "a good dinner today… one of their first good dinners in many years" with 550 lbs. of nourishing food.[92] Furthermore, the restoration of these children's health would offer visible evidence of the work that American donations were doing abroad.

While emphasizing the dire needs of children were central to these appeals circulated by CARE, other social agencies wanted to make sure that the recipients looked "child-like," either because social workers assumed that Americans needed such images

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[91] "Deprivation and Destitution Are Real in Sicily," news release translated into Italian and sent to the Italian press in the U.S., October 15, 1946, CARE records, Box 899, Press Releases Vol. 2, 10/11/46—10/24/46, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[92] "Jewish Orphans in Italy Receive 'CARE' Packages," March 24, 1948, news release to the Anglo-Jewish Press and translated for the Yiddish press, CARE records, Box 899, News Releases 2/48—3/25/48, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

to trigger their empathy and maternal/paternal instincts, or because they wanted to present evidence of the children's progress in health as a result of American aid. For example, Lt. Bishop Marshall visited a children's home in France with the intention of photographing the residents for the Foster Parents' Plan for War Children, an organization that enabled American donors to financially "adopt" a child in Europe. Marshall decided to wait until his next visit to take the photos, when he expected them to appear more "presentable" and "look a little more like children."[93] These organizations aimed to balance the children's dependency while not allowing them appear "too ill," as if they could not be restored to being children—or in other words, as if the investments in their rehabilitation were not "worth it" because they seemed like a lost cause.

Other publicity materials used the concept of child developmental stages to illustrate the refugees' progress, using stories of individual children whose health and "faith in living" were restored as a result of donors' investments in them. With the title "Inside Stories You Helped Write: Thanks to You," one 1948 Red Cross pamphlet presented examples of children who would benefit from the Red Cross services, including "Jimmy D.," who lost his left leg during the war. The Red Cross had already provided him with an artificial leg, but as a developing boy, he needed a new one "at different stages of his growth." The reason for continual assistance was thus attributed to his growing condition as a child. According to the pamphlet, the Red Cross came to his family's assistance by "[setting] aside funds to buy Jimmy seven new left legs as they are

[93] This latter statement about presentation was also shaped by his assumptions about the "people in this vicinity" as supposedly "of the peasant type," whom he understood as "untrained in hygiene and our standards of cleanliness." See: Report from Lt. Bishop Marshall in France, quoted in Executive Chairman Edna Blue's newsletter addressed to "Friends," Foster Parents' Plan for War Children, Inc., April 1945, Social Welfare History Archive, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

needed." This humanitarian move reached the boy beyond his physical needs; it apparently touched him emotionally as well. A Red Cross worker sang the "America" song by his bedside every day, and he repeatedly tried to sing with her until "One afternoon it happened—weak and scarcely above a whisper, his voice joined hers in singing America. On the last note, she saw the tears come to his eyes as he turned his head quickly away."[94] The pamphlet then presented similar stories of girls and boys benefitting from the Red Cross efforts and recognizing Americans' contributions as the source of this assistance. After enumerating the concrete results of the organization's relief work and Americans' voluntary contributions between 1946 and 1947,[95] the pamphlet concluded with a call to the readers to do their part in helping build relations with future global partners or American citizens: "It's Red Cross Time—Give!"[96]

Similar accounts of packages reaching orphans and families throughout Western, Central, and Southern Europe concluded with descriptions of the aid recipients' reactions, such as of children "biting into [their food] voraciously" and excitedly finding chocolate bars in their packages.[97] In a speech before Pi Lambda Theta members at Johns Hopkins University in 1946, Katharine F. Lenroot presented images of "Happy girls from Drancy, France," who hugged "the 'real shoes' they received from the American Red Cross." She spotlighted one Viennese girl at the center of the photograph, who was "Carefully

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[94] Red Cross pamphlet, "Inside Stories You Helped Write," ARC 1118 Rev., Feb. 1948, Fred Hoehler papers, Correspondence and Papers, General, March 1948-January 1949, Box 4, Folders 42, Social Welfare History Archive, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.
[95] These results included the following: "$3,449,348 material assistance to civilians abroad, $1,832,200 help for children abroad through Junior Red Cross shipments; 580,300 gift boxes shipped overseas; 2,480,600 garments made by Red Cross volunteers… and 38,415 nutrition certificates issued."
[96] Red Cross pamphlet, "Inside Stories You Helped Write," ARC 1118 Rev., Feb. 1948, Fred Hoehler papers, Correspondence and Papers, General, March 1948-January 1949, Box 4, Folders 42, Social Welfare History Archive, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.
[97] "50 'CARE' Packages Reach Orphans in Czechoslovakia," news release, March 29, 1948, CARE records, Box 899, News Releases 2/48—3/25/48, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

guarding her tin cup" of "nutritious egg punch" and a slice of bread. As Lenroot explained, this portion was "a small 'extra ration' under the emergency feeding program." The Viennese girl was among other "bewildered, undernourished children," also depicted in the image," who hoped to "get food and clothing from the Red Cross program for Displaced Persons before they begin their long journey back to the Allied countries from which their parents were driven by the Germans."[98]

The Section Chief of the Ministry of Welfare in Czechoslovakia, who made a round of visits to orphanages in 1948, had similar reports of child recipients in Prague responding to the parcels of food and clothing. Dr. Josef Krakes expressed his wish that American donors could see the little 8-year-old girl who "followed me all over the home[,] patting the sleeve of my coat." Orphanage directors were described as similarly grateful, expressing their thanks with teary eyes.[99] Recipients who knew their donors personally thanked their American friends, such as a former POW now living in Brussels who expressed his gratitude to know that "After the terrible times we have gone through… far away in America, there are still people who think of helping us, having come so far to fight for us." One Belgian mother wrote to her American friend: "You ask if we were pleased? You should have seen the children when the package was opened.

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[98] Katharine F. Lenroot, "Next Steps in the National and International Outlook for Children and Youth," Pi Lambda Theta, Gilman Hall, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, March 28, 1946, p. 13, Katharine F. Lenroot papers, Box 5, Folder 8, Series I: Writings and Speeches, Indexed Speeches, Articles and Radio, 1920-1951, Columbia University Rare Book & Manuscript Library, New York. Lenroot was also making visits to various women's groups.

[99] The Ministry of Welfare selected this Czechoslovak orphanage in a small industrial town to fund the preparation of, and directly distribute via the Section Chief, parcels of food and clothing. The 80 children residing in this orphanage (6-14 years old, either orphans, "foundlings," or with one parent alive) were from families of workers in the Skoda auto plant who had been turned out by the Nazis to use the buildings as a military hospital; their homes were bombed and ruined. See: "50 'CARE' Packages Reach Orphans in Czechoslovakia," news release, March 29, 1948, CARE records, Box 899, News Releases 2/48—3/25/48, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

They were overjoyed. The youngest said to me 'Does this gentleman know we have been hungry?'"[100]

Recipients' gratitude was taken into consideration and embedded in the next stage of rehabilitating European refugees, with relief programs that organized child- and youth-centered activities with the intention of providing "guidance" in democracy. One Christmas campaign launched by CARE in 1949 aimed to raise money for the German Youth Activity (GYA) centers in the U.S. occupation zones, which were headed by Lt. Gen. Lucius D. Clay and John J. McCloy, the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, as members of the committee.[101] While these GYA centers were state-coordinated, they needed private contributions to enable one million German children to enjoy group activities and "training in a democratic way of life," aligning with the Allied reeducation program.[102] According to *Wochenpost,* a weekly periodical in Innsbruck and reprinted in German-Austrian presses, CARE's food programs were indeed contributing to a changing perception of the U.S. among aid recipients. One article stated in 1948 that the image of CARE role in Europe was best represented by an "Uncle from America." While this persona was prevalent before the war, it had changed from that of an uncle who was "nothing but the hero of a carefree comedy" to an uncle who took action to help his

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[100] "CARE Food Packages Bring Joy to Hungry Families in Belgium," news release, October 22, 1946, translated into French and sent to the French and Belgium press in the U.S., CARE records, Box 899, Press Releases Vol. 2, 10/11/46—10/24/46, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[101] "'CARE' Launches Christmas Campaigns for Germany, Austria," news release translated for the German-Austrian Press, CARE records, Box 899, News Releases, 9/49-12/49, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[102] These activities were also gendered, with proposed programs targeting girls in order to "re-educate the often repressed and perverted instincts of motherhood and family life" with home economics courses. See: Ernst Papanek (as the Executive Director of American Youth for World Youth), "Report on Visits to Child Welfare Centers of UNRRA in Germany and Project Suggestions," June 1946, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 8, Folder 6, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

global family members. The article described CARE as a representative of "the philanthropy of the America of the canned food, incarnated in tins."[103]

CARE press releases also spotlighted the participation of youth and mothers in these drives and campaigns to serve as exemplars of American humanitarianism.[104] For example, one seven-year-old girl in Charleston asked her friends to donate money on her birthday instead of buying gifts, so that she could send food parcels to needy children in Europe. CARE director Paul Comly French saw the girl's picture in the papers and wrote a letter explaining who would receive her packages ("the most needy" orphans in Italy who lost their fathers during the war and in concentration camps, ate in a "dimly lit hall on bare wooden tables," and were "trying to rebuild some pattern for their disrupted lives") and how her money would be used (along with the regular rations, the ten packages she purchased would "insure that every little girl will have enough to eat for many months to come"). French thanked the young donor for reaching out to other children, especially to provide a personal gift "as your very own birthday gifts."[105]

These expressions of gratitude were not only addressed to CARE donors; several Catholic orphanages in Italy collected letters from their child residents to mail to their American benefactors. As one letter from the Little Orphans of the Holy Rosary Via della

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[103] "'Philanthropy Packed Sea-Proof': An Article on 'CARE' and Austria," April 5, 1948, printed in *Wochenpost* [weekly periodical in Innsbruck, Austria], reprinted and released to the German-Austrian press, CARE records, Box 899, News Releases 2/48—3/25/48, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[104] Publicity materials likewise encouraged American youth to participate in compiling packages and toilet kits for children in various institutions throughout Europe, stressing that the offer of "material help to the children over there who have suffered deprivation and oppression by the Nazis" would help the recipients feel that "they have friends in America." See: Ernst Papanek speech before various schools, "American Youth for European Youth: Student Committee, May 8, 1945," Ernst Papanek Papers, Box 5, Folder 1: Correspondence in English, German and French with children, relatives and foster parents, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[105] Associated Press report and letter from Paul Comly French, CARE records, Box 899, Folder 12/7/47 – 1/30/48, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

Panetteria in Rome explained to the American children who had sent them clothing, milk powder, and soap, the fifteen girls in the orphanage had lost both parents during the war, and their homes had been bombed. With the youngest at age 3½ and the oldest at age 15, the Dominican Sisters decided to take care of them. However, the young letter writers recognized that "our wants are so many that we need other people's help," and thus they were grateful that their "Little American friends" had been so generous.[106] Another orphanage in Rome, the Academy of the Most Precious Blood Via Pannarano, was motivated by their gratitude to begin regular correspondence with their donors, so that they could "write our hearts still more closely in spite of the distance between us," "tell each other of our daily life and of the place where we live," and eventually exchange photographs and "know you personally."[107] In most of these letters (even from different orphanages), the children drew a similar picture of the Italian and U.S. flags intertwining and tied together by a ribbon to represent the transnational bonds that were also being forged through these acts of humanitarianism, as well as the symbolic restoration of U.S. relations with a former Axis power.[108]

While organizations and aid recipients recognized (and encouraged) individuals' display of concern for neighbors outside their domestic boundaries, the prominence of political figures leading donor drives or publicly expressing their support served as reminders that Americans' donations went beyond satiating hunger. One report

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[106] Academy of the Most Precious Blood Via Pannorrina [Pannarano?] 1D – Rome, June 1, 1945; Letter from "Parva Domus Pacis," Rome, February 6, 1945, Boys Town of Italy records 1945, MssCol 360, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[107] The Little Orphans of the Holy Rosary, Via della Panetteria, Rome, Dominican Sisters, 1945, Boys Town of Italy records 1945, MssCol 360, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[108] In the letter from "grateful little Friends in Rome" to the American Relief for Italy, the drawing was of a little girl holding the American flag. See: Letter from Istituto Madri dei Derelitti [S. Giuseppe della Montagua Vilale Vaticano, Roma] to American Relief for Italy, May 30, 1945, Boys Town of Italy records 1945, MssCol 360, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

highlighted First Lady Bess Truman's purchase of the first CARE food package for a nation-wide Mothers' Day program, marking the day an American sent packages to "needy European mothers." The program was sponsored by the General Federation of Women's Clubs, whom Mrs. Truman praised for making Mothers' Day "an occasion of sympathetic assistance to the suffering mothers in Europe." In response, Mrs. J.L. Buck, the president of the General Federation, expressed her belief that "the mothers of the United States would prefer to deny themselves a gift on Mothers' Day in order to send a gift to another mother in a distant country." This sentiment applied to American children, for they would "want to honor a mother no longer living, or to honor a friend in this way, following the example of Mrs. Truman."[109] With the emphasis on mothers as donors and recipients, this news release encouraged a gendered performance of sympathy.

Other press releases spotlighted the prominent role of faith-based organizations in distributing humanitarian aid, though not without diplomatic implications. One article recognized the efforts of the late Father Flanagan, the founder of Boys Town and active participant in CARE programs in Vienna who led the Catholic Youth of Austria in distributing 120 packages to Austrian families in 1948. On the families' behalf, Austrian Chancellor Leopold Figl thanked Flanagan for his "unselfish service [that] would always stand as an inspiration to the youth of Austria" and called him "a true friend" who, by "help[ing] mothers and children," was "build[ing] up nations and creat[ing] a closer contact between peoples." The article then quoted Flanagan to showcase his commitment to such a mission: "Austria cannot be hindered in its striving for final liberty. The entire world is nowadays looking towards this country and is taking an increased interest in its

[109] "First Lady Inaugurates Mothers' Day Program of 'CARE' Parcels to Europe," news release, April 14, 1948, CARE records, Box 899, News Releases 2/48—3/25/48, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

destiny." With charitable work, "The world will in the end help Austria to take that place which is due to the country," not only as a nation but also "as a cradle of Christian culture."[110]

Such publicized stories reflect how representatives of both donor and recipient nations, including relief workers and occupation administrators, envisioned concrete ways in which American aid could ease the recipients' transition into postwar life.[111] The sense of urgency to intervene and the recipients' "deservedness" were based on their levels of need and their potential to become partners in democracy—in spite of or *because* of their wartime experiences. As the CARE press releases often concluded, the funds and packages (and expressions of hope and empathy) "which you send to [aid recipients] now will help them to *live* to become the citizens of tomorrow's world [italics added]."[112] With prodding from relief organizations and policymakers, these stories and images of children and families offered an opportunity for Americans to participate in the making of a postwar "global citizenship," or to imagine themselves as part of an interdependent international community.

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[110] In memoriam for Father Flanagan, founder of Boys Town, 1948, CARE records, Box 899, Series 4: Public & Donor Relations, Subseries 4.2: Directors' Files, Press Releases: 1946-1985, Vol. 1, 2, 4-7, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[111] For Europeans in general, both DP and non-DPs, the narrative was that American aid changed their mentality by helping create an environment of democracy and improving their quality of life with food and clothing. One rabbi was visiting Europe on behalf of Rescue Children, Inc. (which housed 2,200 war orphans in 15 homes throughout France, Belgium, and Sweden) when the Marshall Plan was approved. He observed "an easing of tension" among the people, and that they saw the approval as "a victory for democracy" ("just as we felt about the results of the Italian election"). He also reported that Europeans were motivated to move on: "People in Europe, especially France and Belgium, today are more industrious and are working hard to re-establish themselves." Se: "U.S. Loses Prestige by Palestine Stand, Rabbi Novick Finds," April 24, 1948, Rescue Children, Inc. collection, Yeshiva University Special Collections, New York.

[112] Associated Press report and letter from Paul Comly French, CARE records, Box 899, Folder 12/7/47 – 1/30/48, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

***Narrating the Results of U.S. Aid Distribution: Resettlement and Home Placement***

In addition to providing immediate food and medical relief, humanitarian organizations stressed the importance of resettling homeless child refugees as the final stage of the assistance programs.[113] According to a 1949 UNESCO publication, the estimates of orphaned children in need, especially those from Central and Eastern Europe, comprised a major part of the problem: 1.7 million orphans in Poland, 100,000 orphans in Warsaw, 50,000 orphans in Czechoslovakia, 200,000 in Hungary, and one million homeless.[114] Based on the sheer numbers of homeless children, the appeals to potential donors requested help with placing orphans in familial settings, reuniting children with parents or relatives through international tracing services and local agencies, and supporting UNRRA centers' efforts to relocate the children of Allied nationalities.[115]

The DP Commission in the U.S., as well as other social agencies, advocated on behalf of Jewish child refugees as stateless refugees who were "homeless" in multiple ways: their familial *and* their nation-state contexts. As child psychologist Ernst Papanek observed, the parents of some of these children were also "wander[ing], unsettled" in a variety of locations.[116] While the U.S., U.K., and South America served as popular sites of resettlement, American Jewish organizations such as the United Jewish Appeal and the

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[113] Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
[114] UNESCO, "Children of Europe," Publication No. 403 (Paris: UNESCO Paris, 1949), 7.
[115] Ernst Papanek (as the Executive Director of American Youth for World Youth), "Report on Visits to Child Welfare Centers of UNRRA in Germany and Project Suggestions," United Service Committee, June 1946, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 8, Folder 6, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[116] Locations included San Domingo, Shanghai, London, Lithuania, etc. See: Ernst Papanek (writing as the former General Manager of the OSE Children's Homes in France), "Project for Establishing Training Homes for Refugee Children," Ernst Papanek papers, Box 8, Folder 1, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

Joint Distribution Committee prioritized Palestine (and later Israel) as the preferred destination for these refugees, either as their own national home or an alternative for those who could not, or refused to, return to their pre-war sites of residence.

One article published in the *Hadassah Newsletter* illustrated this transition by focusing on a Jewish child's role as a witness to genocide and his rehabilitation as a refugee in Palestine. Published by Henrietta Szold, the head of the Youth Aliyah Bureau of the Jewish Agency for Palestine in 1945, the article featured watercolor paintings from a 15-year-old Rumanian Jewish boy who was being educated and cared for by the Youth Aliyah (YA).[117] The boy had lived for more than two years in the Transnistrian concentration camp, where he witnessed "tens of thousands of Jews[,] first worked to exhaustion and then murdered in cold blood."[118] He documented these scenes through art, with painting titles such as "What Mine Eyes Have Seen" (which was featured on the cover page of the article), "To the Concentration Camp," "Behind the Barbed Wire," "The Road of Suffering," and "To Eternal Peace" (an image of a wagon piled with bodies). The boy sent his paintings to Szold on Rosh Hashanah as "a reminder of what my eyes saw over there in Transnistria."[119]

When asked whether he had actually seen a wagonload of bodies as depicted in a drawing, he replied that he had "seen the very wagon on which the body of his own father had been carried away." His father had been "mauled to death" because he could not keep

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[117] The spelling of Rumania/Roumania varied throughout the sources. I decided to use Rumania for the sake of consistency.

[118] Most of the Jews in the camp (30,000-40,000, of which 10,000 were killed) were sent from Bukovina and Bessarabia by the Rumanians at the order of the Germans. See: Henrietta Szold, "Odyssey from Death to Life," National Youth Aliyah Committee of Hadassah [NY], reprinted from the *Hadassah Newsletter,* January-February 1945, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 7, New York Public Library, New York.

[119] Henrietta Szold, "Odyssey from Death to Life," National Youth Aliyah Committee of Hadassah [NY], reprinted from the *Hadassah Newsletter,* January-February 1945, Ernst Papanek Papers, Box 7, New York Public Library.

up with the others' pace when being driven to work from one place to another. To his knowledge, his mother was still alive; when she heard that orphaned children would be saved and taken to Palestine, she had disappeared for her son's sake. He was indeed saved through the efforts of Americans and a Rumanian agent, along with approximately 1500 children from the camp who were sent to Rumania.[120] The boy arrived in Palestine on May 1, 1944, and with the assistance of the YA, was able to adjust quickly, learning Hebrew in six months and devoting himself to his studies and art. Despite his ability to move on, or perhaps as part of the *process* of confronting his trauma and moving on, the images from his life in the concentration camp remained in the refugee's mind. As Szold pointed out, "No words could describe accurately what this boy saw and what these pictures reveal." But to Americans "living in relative comfort and plenty," she hoped that these paintings would serve as "a cry for understanding and for rescue for the Jewish children who can still be reached and sent to new life and hope in Palestine."[121]

The *Hadassah Newsletter* article ended with the reminder that "There are tens of thousands of children like these" and a description of the Youth Aliyah movement, which had rescued 14,000 children by the time of publication. With the assistance of funds through Hadassah, these children and youth would have an opportunity to be "nursed back to health, settled in cooperative colonies, special homes or institutions, and prepared for a self-sufficient life later on." The British government planned to release certificates for the entry of Jewish refugee children into Palestine, but the YA needed money in

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[120] The Youth Immigration Movement saved 400 additional children when the Russians took over Rumania.

[121] Henrietta Szold, "Odyssey from Death to Life," National Youth Aliyah Committee of Hadassah [NY], reprinted from the *Hadassah Newsletter,* January-February 1945, Ernst Papanek Papers, Box 7, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

advance to educate and take care of them. The article thus asked for a contribution of $360 to pay for food, medical and psychiatric care, clothes, and teachers, asking readers to "Look at the children around you. Then act."[122]

Other solicitations for resettlement assistance similarly projected the end of these programs and the DP problem, as the recipients reached their home placement or transitioned into adulthood. For example, the *March of Time* films and the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) fundraising campaign often depicted Jewish children working in the fields of Palestine and acquiring agricultural skills.[123] Another alternative for orphans was to send them to "children's villas" and agricultural collectives established across Europe, where the children could similarly develop self-sufficiency—and no longer rely upon outside assistance.[124]

For child refugees who came to the U.S., the emphasis was on finding family units, often nuclear families. Home placement was seen not only as a solution to the problems of postwar dislocation, but also essential to continuing the refugees'

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[122] Henrietta Szold, "Odyssey from Death to Life"

[123] Short films and newsreels, such as those produced by the March of Time in collaboration with American Jewish organizations, visually depicted this transition from the DP camps to their resettlement in Palestine, as the endpoint of their journey and their start of a new life. One March of Time film entitled "Shadows of Hate," released in 1947 for a United Jewish Appeal (UJA) fundraising campaign, begins with the DP camps in Germany—with images of DPs standing in line for food and receiving donated clothing from an American Joint Distribution Committee facility—to the refugees boarded on a ship headed for the U.S. or in the "fields of Palestine, their new home." Children are then depicted in the fields as well as in the classroom, where they learn Hebrew as one of their course subjects. As the narrator explains, these scenes reflect the work of the UJA and the Allies in the early postwar period, including the resettlement of 26,000 DPs; however, in 1947 there was still work to be accomplished. After presenting clips of Harry Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower urging Americans to send money to the UJA, the film then returns to the image of "ill, newly liberated prisoners" whose needs had not yet been met, and who presumably would have become the future recipients of such aid. See: *Shadows of Hate*, 1947, RG-60.1319, Film ID 2923, Julian B. Venezky Collection, Steven Spielberg Film and Video Archive, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.

[124] Dr. Thérèse Brosse, "Homeless Children," Report of the Proceedings of the Conference of Directors of Children's Communities [including representatives from the U.S., Belgium, Switzerland, Poland, France, China, and the U.K.], Trogen, Switzerland, (UNESCO, 1950). David Seymour provided the photographs to accompany this report.

development, first as children and then as future adults and citizens. One radio broadcast in 1947, organized by the WQXR radio station and the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children for a fundraising campaign, dramatized the journey of refugee children to their new homes, where they "found new parents and the peace they have longed for," as well as "a little of the childhood they never had." With the involvement of a celebrity as the narrator (Martha Scott, an actress who would later star in Cecil B. DeMille's *The Ten Commandments* and William Wyler's *Ben-Hur*) and the publisher of the *New York Times*, this program is an example of the collaboration among the press, the entertainment industry, and social agencies to raise public awareness about the child refugees waiting in DP camps.

The script was based on the writings of *New York Times* reporter Gertrude Samuels, who was stationed in Bremerhaven, Germany in 1947. She presented herself as a "witness" to the refugees' postwar plight, especially the children's suffering as they awaited the opportunity to migrate. As she explained in her introduction to the radio program, this was "a story of a pilgrimage to the stateless, the homeless, the parentless residue of war. It is a true story." She also highlighted the 6,000 children who were waiting in the U.S. zone of Germany. Echoing the "lost childhood" narrative, she noted that these were not "ordinary children," for they were children "who have known no childhood, who have lost every precious thing but life, who have nothing left but eyes to weep with." After a dramatic pause, she stated: "I have seen the children."[125]

[125] In contrast to social workers who insisted that Jewish children had particular needs that deserved special attention, Sulzberger criticized the initial draft for being "too focused" on Jewish children and wanted to downplay this emphasis: "My feeling is that it's a little too Jewish. In other words, these children, as is stated in the script, are Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish—but there is too much reference to the Jewish phase of it. In two places they are described as belonging to the three faiths and in each instance the Jewish

To convey the "human dimension" of the story, Samuels emphasized how the emotional potency of unaccompanied children's experiences overcame the "objectivism" of journalism. Although her profession required her to be "trained against sentimentality"—and she had "pledged to think with my brains and not with my glands, I respect fact"—she could not ignore "the fact… that there were children whom we were leaving behind." Samuels described her conversation with one girl who was left behind and tried to convince Samuels that she was qualified to join the U.S.-bound boat: "I pass all the tests. See, I have strong arms. I am literate also… I would also like to go with them. [*Samuels: It may take some time*.] I will wait. [*We have immigration laws and there are… it's hard to explain*.] We have waited so long for bad things, we can wait a little longer for this which is good." Although the program reminded its listeners of the "six thousand children in the American zone in Germany [who] wait for a chance at childhood and serenity," it ended on an optimistic note by emphasizing the successful journey of the "eighty-six children [who] are now *accompanied* in their new found world," with American support.[126]

Advocacy groups in the U.S. also emphasized the long-term, domestic benefits in terms of nationality and citizenship as the children grew older. In a 1951 newsletter, the

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faith is mentioned first instead of the customary 'Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish.' I don't see why the ghetto song should come in twice." Sulzberger asked for "equal representation" of Protestants, Jewish, and Catholic children, as well as the Jewish, Catholic, *and* Catholic welfare organizations for helping child refugees find parents. See: Memorandum to Mr. Wiggins from A.H.S., re: WQXR Broadcast of "I Have Seen the Children," April 23, 1947, NY Times Records, A.H. Sulzberger Papers, European Children folder, 164.4, NYPL Special Collections; WQXR Program: "WQXR Presents in 'I Have Seen the Children' by Morton Wishengrad, a radio drama based upon 'Children Who Have Known No Childhood,' by Gertrude Samuels," *The New York Times Magazine,* March 9, 1947, NY Times Records, A.H. Sulzberger Papers, European Children folder, 164.4, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[126] The program used music to signal this narrative shift: starting with a "ghetto song" throughout the piece, as the children's stories were described, and ending with "You Are My Sunshine" to mark their hopeful futures. See: Memo from Arthur H. Sulzberger of the *New York Times* to Mr. Roy Roberts of *Kansas City Star*, May 9, 1947, NY Times Records, A.H. Sulzberger Papers, European Children folder, 164.4, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

Displaced Persons Commission presented a "typical scene" that was taking place across the nation: two adolescents who had arrived as orphans from Poland and Yugoslavia with the assistance of the National Catholic Welfare Conference were now on the brink of adulthood, and they wanted to enlist in the U.S. army during the Korean War to "fight for [their] adopted country" and "[repay] their debt to a country that has given them refuge and the chance to start life anew."[127] To these former DPs, military service was a "family affair" related to their "need to achieve a sense of belonging to America" and "a feeling of obligation to the country which rescued them." As the DP Commission remarked, "What started as a humanitarian effort on the part of this government to aid these unfortunate people has now developed into a program of mutual aid."[128]

Policymakers and VOLAGs also directed this narrative of assimilation and self-sufficiency toward adult refugees who were already living in the U.S. In 1949 the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service, Inc., prepared a "Guide for New Americans: An Introduction to Your New Homeland," which opened with "a hearty welcome" from President Truman before reminding readers that they could play a role in assisting the thousands of DPs who were still in camps in Europe, "waiting…for a chance to live in democracy in America." The best help they could offer was to become "an independent self-supporting member of the American community" as soon as possible and presumably convince other Americans to support the admission and resettlement of more DPs in their country. Their integration into the "American way of

[127] The DP Commission, based in Washington, D.C., assisted with the resettlement of DPs, the issuance of visas for German expellees who were seeking refuge from political or religious persecution after the war, and the home placement and adoption for orphaned children in the U.S.
[128] U.S. Displaced Persons Commission, "DP's in U.S. Uniforms Fighting for their New Found Freedom," 6, Fred K. Hoehler Collection, Box 305, Articles, Speeches, Related Material, Nov-Dec 1951, in Social Welfare History Archive, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

life" would serve as "living demonstrations to the American people and their government of the fact that the *Displaced Person* can become a *New American*."[129]

These sources were thus narrating the immediate and long-term payoffs of American contributions by portraying donations as investments in the making of new citizens, and more specifically, in child refugees who would develop into future U.S. citizens or global partners. According to Herbert H. Lehman, Director-General of the U.N. Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), it was important to advertise these outcomes because "The American people are being called upon to finance the major portion of UNRRA's operations. To me it is of the utmost importance that our people have the fullest possible knowledge of how their money is being spent," which would only encourage more donations to support UNRRA's projects.[130] Depictions of refugees reaching a home—both a familial home and a nation-state—were also important, or at least indicating that they were on track to a destination. While initially presenting the child refugees' dependency upon American financial intervention and clarifying that child recipients were not responsible for their plight—the causes were the war and the absence or dependency status of their own refugee parents—these sources clarified that their dependency on U.S. resources was temporary. Furthermore,

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[129] "Guide for New Americans: An Introduction to Your New Homeland," prepared under the sponsorship of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service, Inc., NY, first printed in 1949 and reprinted in February 1950, German-Jewish Children's Aid records, File 293, YIVO Institute, Center of Jewish History, New York.

[130] Lehman thus asked Arthur Hays Sulzberger, the publisher of the *New York Times*, to assign reporters to UNRRA operations in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Greece, and Italy, for the UNRRA divisions needed additional funds to get through the winter in Europe. See: Letter from Herbert H. Lehman (U.N. Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) to Arthur Hays Sulzberger, November 16, 1945, NY Times Records, A.H. Sulzberger Papers, United Nationals International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), 1949, 1953 folder, 268.5, NYPL Special Collections, New York. Also see letters from Lehman and other organizations (the Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies, Inc.) to Arthur Hays Sulzberger, praising the *Times'* series of reports on starving children in Europe, which were helpful to UNRRA for identifying the needs in Europe.

Americans' contributions could support their development in a direction that was more aligned with U.S. domestic and international interests.

***Narrating the Results of U.S. Aid Distribution: Responses of the American Public***

Besides the portrayals of Americans' charitable actions in these press releases, how did the American public respond to these calls for both government and private assistance? One survey conducted in 1947 reported that media correspondents in Cleveland and Mississippi generally reacted favorably to the Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson's speech regarding the Marshall Plan. However, the respondents were clearly aware of the economic and political implications of aid. According to a summary of the survey responses indicated, many press and radio correspondents "felt that the speech represented a 'conscious effort' on the part of the Administration to emphasize the 'positive' side of European reconstruction rather than the military, ideological and emotional aspects of 'battling Communism.'" The respondents supported the Administration's political strategy, seeing it as a sign that "the U.S. would pursue a policy of 'reconstruction rather than recrimination.'"[131]

In 1947, a Roper/*Fortune* survey also attempted to gauge the American public's perceptions of the situation in Western Europe, as well as their sense of the U.S. responsibility to send aid, when it posed the following question to 3,574 individuals: "In your opinion, will people in Western Europe be able to get enough food for good health next year if we don't continue to send food to them?" Twenty-three percent of the

[131] "Initial Press and Radio Reaction to Under Secretary Acheson's Speech at Cleveland, Mississippi," May 8, 1947, filed May 15, 1947, Subject File, J. M. Jones Papers, Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, Truman and the Marshall Plan Collection, available at: http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/marshall/large/index.php.

respondents replied "yes," while sixty-one percent replied "no." Six percent of the respondents replied, "Some countries will, some won't," and the remaining ten percent were uncertain. The survey asked another question, posed only to those who agreed that Western Europe needed American assistance: "[D]o you think it would require a great deal, a little, or no sacrifice on our part?" Fifty-five percent believed that little sacrifice was needed, while thirty-two percent answered, "Great deal." Among the respondents who participated in this survey, the majority expressed their confidence in Americans' capacity to give, as well as the recipients' need for their help.[132] The views expressed in this survey thus aligned with the publicized narrative that the U.S. needed to intervene during this critical postwar moment to facilitate the rebuilding of Western Europe.

Yet there were skeptics from the start, including Americans who equated aid programs with a means of "stopping communism" and wanted to know "how much this program of stopping communism is going to cost and where it is taking us," or whether these investments would actually result in geopolitical payoffs.[133] Another Gallup poll conducted in January 1948 asked 1500 Americans to respond to a statement released by the governor of Minnesota that "the Middlewest could take several thousands of displaced (homeless) persons from refugee camps in Europe." The respondents' willingness to welcome refugees into their homes was moderated by domestic concerns. When asked whether they would approve or disapprove of their respective states taking in 10,000 DPs from Europe, 24% of the respondents approved while 57% disapproved.

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[132] Roper/Fortune Survey, Nov. 1947 [conducted between Nov. 18–Dec. 1, 1947), based on 3,574 personal interviews, national sample], iPOLL Databank, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, Cornell University, Ithaca.

[133] "Initial Press and Radio Reaction," May 15, 1947, Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, Truman & the Marshall Plan Collection.

The remaining respondents (less than 1% each) listed specific conditions: "If they won't take away any jobs," "If there's room, it's alright," "If it won't hurt me," and "If we can give them work."[134] The limit was thus set at immigration, which would be a common reaction among Americans throughout the Cold War period, as I will discuss in later chapters.

The public's understandings of the refugees' needs were also related to the presumed demographics and characteristics of the DPs. When asked, "What would be your guess as to the kind of persons who make up the majority of those people still in European refugee ('Displaced Persons') camps?", the respondents came up with the following terms that confirmed the media's emphases on certain groups and identities: "homeless—lost homes in war, have nothing," "orphans," "victims of war and political persecution," and "Jewish people." Other comments reveal the assumptions about dependency they associated with people in need: "poor, lower classes," "undesirable," "radical," and "if had a chance would be good citizens."[135] Therefore, the perceived identities of displaced persons and aid recipients mattered in shaping Americans' understandings of which refugees were "deserving" of aid.

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[134] Gallup Organization, Gallup Poll (AIPO), Jan. 1948 [survey question, conducted between Jan. 2 and 7, 1948, based on personal interviews with a national adult sample of 1,500, (Subpopulation: asked of form K half sample)], USGALLUP.410.QK14, iPOLL Databank, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, Cornell University, Ithaca.

[135] Gallup Organization, Gallup Poll (AIPO), Jan. 1948, USGALLUP.410.QT14A, iPOLL Databank, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, Cornell University, Ithaca.

| What would be your guess as to the kind of persons who make up the majority of those still in European refuge ('Displaced Persons') camps? | |
|---|---|
| All kinds of people | 6% |
| Poor, lower classes | 17% |
| Homeless (lost homes in war, have nothing), orphans, unfortunate, persecuted, victims of war or political persecution | 23% |
| Jewish people | 13% |
| Eastern European | 5% |
| Western European | 4% |
| Derogatory comment: undesirable, radical, etc. | 7% |
| Approval, general sympathy, good people, if had a chance would be good citizens, etc. | 3% |
| Sick people | 2% |
| Old people | 1% |
| Misc./No answer | 31% |

***Figure 4:*** *Gallup Organization poll, Jan. 2-7, 1948. Based on 1,500 personal interviews, national adult sample. Multiple responses were allowed.*

According to Marshall Field, the chairman of the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children, Americans did display their support concretely through voluntary contributions, and their reactions confirm the effectiveness of the child figure in mobilizing their responses. The Committee's publicity endeavors, such as the promotional articles published in various newspapers and the November 1946 edition of the *Reader's Digest,* proved to be quite effective with the American public. The majority of the "nearly 500 contributions" for the 1947 War Orphans Appeal came voluntarily and with minimal direct solicitation; only a small number had been prodded with "cultivation letters and dinner invitations." In Field's view, this outpouring of gifts and contributions reflected "a very considerable and favorable public response to the War Orphans Appeal." Likewise, in response to the 1948 *LIFE* magazine article mentioned earlier, "the Children of Europe," readers wrote letters to the editor to inquire about the concrete actions they could take to help the children depicted in the photographs. One woman explained that "The pictures touched me deeply," and she asked where she could acquire

more information about adopting a child, especially "one who has started with all the odds against him." As another reader wrote, "Who can look at your photographs of Europe's children and not reach for his checkbook?"[136]

Members of the American Jewish community also responded to Jewish refugees' lack of family ties and the calls for donors to substitute that role. In 1947, a *Women's Wear Daily* article recognized the efforts of the Manhattan League of Jewish Women to raise $30,000 through the Corset and Brassiere Industry for the "adoption" of 70 children (out of 3,000 children total) who were under the care of Rescue Children, Inc. Reminding readers that these children were the "innocent victims of the Nazi terror" with "no one to turn to… no family ties," the publication warned that these children would "face almost certain starvation and death unless *WE* help them."[137] In addition to reinforcing the emphasis on Jewish children's dependency and low prospects of survival, this article demonstrates the efforts of community groups to financially adopt refugees as they transitioned to their new homes, which was also common among churches and corporations. It also reflects the involvement of corporations and the channels they provided for donors, which continued to support capitalism and economic growth in the U.S.

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[136] The editor recommended that the readers contact the "department of welfare in their own state" or direct their inquiries to the U.S. Committee for the Care of European children, which was the only authorized agency to handle the immigration of European orphans. However, the editor also warned that there were legislative and bureaucratic obstacles to adopting children in the U.S., which will be described in more detail in Chapter 2. See: Letters to the Editor, *LIFE*, Jan. 17, 1949, p. 3, 11.

[137] "The Corset and Brassiere Industry Pays Tribute to the Manhattan League of Jewish Women," reprinted from *Women's Wear Daily,* November 11, 1947, Rescue Children, Inc. collections, Box 16, Yeshiva University Special Collections, New York. Some wanted to just send packages and correspond with a lonely displaced child in Europe. See: Letter from the Women's Christian Association (Little Falls, NY) to the Committee for Aid of Displaced Persons (NY), March 13, 1952, German-Jewish Children's Aid (GJCA) records, File 235, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

Other donor individuals and families provided a home and family by legally adopting child refugees and orphans, seeing adoption as an opportunity to have the family they assumed they could not have while performing a humanitarian act.[138] Interested adopters ranged from "bachelors, maiden ladies, organizations, clubs and even buildings" to childless couples and empty nesters. One couple in Ohio offered to act as "temporary foster parents" at no charge; since they already had full-grown children who were married and living on their own, the couple expressed their preference for an adolescent girl between the ages of 12 and 13 who could keep them company after school hours.[139] The social worker who forwarded their letter to the agency emphasized that the couple was not only offering to care for a child without compensation; they were also "well to do, congenial and responsible individuals," having already established their own self-sufficiency and capability of raising children along the same path.

Other adopting families had requests for children within certain age ranges, as well as some expressions of "racial preferences." One letter from a couple inquired about adopting a child with the following qualifications: "(a boy) of 4 to 6 years of age, a Protestant, and white race."[140] Another couple expressed preference for "a German, French, or English child [who] would be in our race of people, because we are of those nationally." Having heard a radio address about displaced children for adoption, the couple asked: "Do you know where we could apply for the adoption of a child of these

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[138] Mary Braggiotti, "The Saddest Things Left in Europe Are These Children," *New York Post,* Daily Magazine and Comic Section, July 11, 1947, Rescue Children, Inc. collections, Box 13, Yeshiva University Special Collections, New York.
[139] Letter from Dr. Salamon Faber [Rabbi at Beth Israel] to Joseph E. Beck [Director of the United Service for New Americans, NY], February 7, 1952, GJCA records, File 235, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.
[140] Letter from Mrs. G. E. H., September 20, 1951, GJCA records, File 234, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

races[?]"[141] According to Herbert Tenzer, director of the Jewish organization Rescue Children, Inc. (RCI), prospective parents usually selected their children from photographs. Mayor O'Dwyer, one of the RCI's first adopters, "chose his child, a Belgian boy named Gaston Maurice Friedmann, because he thought he looked Irish."[142] One couple had a very specific vision of their adopted child as "a cute doll-faced, fair-complexioned little 4 months old baby girl with brown eyes as our very own to raise and educate and clothe, feed and give a good American home."[143] Social workers encouraged this matching of children to adopting parents who looked "similar" to them, which reflects both the parents' and social workers' visions of a proper family unit. As other scholars of adoptions have pointed out, the pairing of children and parents by race was part of an official policy of child care agencies, which had complicated implications for "mixed race" children.[144]

While these adoptive parents envisioned specific characteristics they wanted in their children, others expressed their desire to help any child in Europe because the bottom line for them was that "a baby is a baby." Although it was agency policy to not

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[141] But this woman did seem willing to be flexible about adopting a child of different racial/ethnic backgrounds. Another couple requested a blond boy, because "We are both fair. My husband is half Norwegian and half Swedish. I am part English and what else I don't know." See: Letter from Mrs. K. S. (New Mexico) to Dorothy Spielberg (Migration Specialist of the GJCA), January 17, 1952, GJCA records, File 235; Letter from Mr. and Mrs. L. J. (Missouri Valley, IA), June 27, 1951, GJCA records, File 234, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[142] Mary Braggiotti, "The Saddest Things Left in Europe Are These Children," *New York Post,* July 11, 1947, Rescue Children, Inc. collections, Box 13, Yeshiva University Special Collections, New York.

[143] Throughout her letter, the prospective mother continued to insist on this image of the baby girl: "Could you give me information regarding the adoption of a brown eyed cute faced baby girl in good health? ... But couldn't we have a baby girl to adopt like our own with brown eyes and dark hair and fair complexion with no mother…" See: Letter addressed to "Friends" from Mr. and Mrs. C.H. Oswald (Oakland, CA), March 18, 1951, GJCA records, File 235, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[144] See, for example, the works of Heide Fehrenbach, *Race after Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Bong Soo Park, *Intimate Encounters, Racial Frontiers: The Stateless GI Babies in South Korea and the United States, 1953-1965* (PhD diss., University of Minnesota).

match children with families of different religious backgrounds, some non-Jewish couples emphasized that "a Jewish child would be as dear to us as any other."[145] When *Finian's Rainbow* (1947) actress Ella Logan decided to adopt two children, Tenzer recalled that she "didn't even want to see pictures. She just said, 'Pick me out the two homeliest children you have.'"[146] Actress Helen Hayes took a similar approach when she decided to adopt a Jewish child through RCI. According to a 1947 article published in *The National Jewish Post*, the organization "sent photographs only of beautiful children… intending to help its own work by publicizing the adoption." RCI accidentally included a photograph of Maurice, a cross-eyed, nine-year-old French Jewish child who was born in Poland. Hayes "was touched by the younger's eyes" and "his emaciated appearance won her heart,"[147] and she ultimately selected him because she felt that "the beautiful children would find 'parents' more easily."[148] With their celebrity status, these two adoptions received a lot of press coverage, and the performative aspects of taking in an orphan—especially the most helpless and unwanted child—was clearly at play, though this is not to completely dismiss the role of empathy and humanitarian intentions in these actions.

The correspondence among social agencies indicates, on one hand, the criteria and preferences for certain types of refugee children established *because of* the

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[145] For example, see: Letter from Mrs. K. S. [New Mexico] to Dorothy Spielberg (Migration Specialist of the GJCA), January 17, 1952, GJCA records, File 235, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York. But this couple is the one who expressed a preference for a child with their racial background, mentioned earlier.
[146] Mary Braggiotti, "The Saddest Things Left in Europe Are These Children," *New York Post,* July 11, 1947, Rescue Children, Inc. collections, Box 13, Yeshiva University Special Collections, New York.
[147] "Foster Parent," *New York Post,* December 30, 1947, Rescue Children, Inc. collections, Box 16, Yeshiva University Special Collections, New York.
[148] "Helen Hayes Chooses Cross-Eyes," *The National Jewish Post,* November 21, 1947, Rescue Children, Inc. collections, Box 16, Yeshiva University Special Collections, New York.

donors/sponsors' ideas about family belonging. On the other hand, letters and inquiries from interested individuals and families confirm the effectiveness of the appeals made by social agencies and policymakers, especially the belief that the children's fates were in the hands of American donors, or the international community more broadly, because the refugees lacked kin networks to support or *want* them as children. Finally, these sources reflect the anticipation that humanitarian aid would foster new and existing familial relations between the donor/sponsor and the recipient, although not everyone explicitly adopted the language of familial bonds between the donor and the recipient countries.

**Conclusion: Closing the Gaps of Understanding between Donors and Recipients**

This chapter has examined the geopolitical interests the U.S. had in investing in these refugee programs, as well as the narratives of rescuing, housing, and rehabilitating child refugees that aimed to garner public support for such programs. According to UNRRA director Fred K. Hoehler, the main obstacle to overcoming the postwar challenges of hunger and displacement was due to a "lack of understanding" on the part of the American people:

> "When one returns from Europe he is bound to be seriously disturbed at the lack of understanding of the American people concerning the constant struggle for existence that consumes the full time of millions of people abroad. Mass starvation in a complete economic breakdown, which has faced so many countries and communities abroad, is being widened and deepened by our lack of understanding.[149]

[149] Fred K. Hoehler, "Problems of Europe and their Challenge to International Social Work," found with materials dated Oct. 22, 1947, Fred K. Hoehler papers, Social Welfare History Archive, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

Similarly, Katherine F. Lenroot argued in 1945: "If we in this country could only *picture* the conditions under which people are living in countries torn by the war, we would hasten relief in every possible way, until the agricultural and industrial resources of Europe are revived to meet human needs [italics added]."[150] Hoehler and Lenroot, along with the publicity materials analyzed in this paper, attempted to close this gap in understanding, first by establishing the American people's global responsibility as part of U.S. foreign and diplomatic policy, and secondly by presenting evidence of the effects of both federal and voluntary contributions in the numbers (of dollars, supplies, and aid recipients) and in the stories of children and families who benefitted from foreign assistance programs. As Americans increasingly thought about the global position of the U.S. after the war, the policymakers, social agencies, and media outlets who helped produce these narratives encouraged the blurring of the lines between the private and public spheres, and envisioned the building of transnational relations through individualized and personalized forms of charity.

In this sense, humanitarian aid served as one way for American donors and sponsors to perform a form of "global citizenship" that crossed national boundaries. The emphasis on private contributions worked, and in these early post-World War II years, we can see the beginnings of the institutionalization of humanitarian aid and channels of sending aid to refugees.[151] In later years, relief organizations and nonprofit governmental agencies would almost function as corporations, though their public relations campaigns

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[150] Quote from Lenroot's speech at the International Labor Conference in Paris from October 5–November 5, 1945, released on December 2, 1945, GJCA records, File 239, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[151] Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); David Kennedy, *The Dark Sides of Virtue: Reassessing International Humanitarianism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Denis Kennedy, "Selling the Distant Other: Humanitarianism and imagery—Ethical dilemmas of Humanitarian Action," *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance* (2009).

would continue to emphasize the voluntary and charitable nature of donations, contributions, and humanitarian work that did not expect anything in return.

But these narratives had to clarify the geopolitical and domestic payoffs for donors, sponsors, and policymakers to get on board. The underlying emphasis on the refugees' status as economic and political "dependents" reflects a trend in the American mindset and approaches to welfare and philanthropy: prioritizing the "faultless" recipients and the least likely to become "public charges" as the most deserving of aid.[152] This rhetoric was deployed in the context of war and international politics to clarify who should receive aid, who should pay for aid, and how long these programs should last. In particular, the narratives about dependency were based on the aid recipients' identities, both as *refugees* separated from their nation-state and as *children* separated from their families and homes. The notion that children were innocent (or misled by the absence of adult guidance), malleable, and reliant on adults was useful for making the case that child refugees were deserving and needed Americans to intervene on their behalf, whether this intervention was as donors, parents, social workers, or mentors in "democracy."

Chapter 2 will contextualize these publicity materials in broader political debates among American policymakers by considering Congressional and Senate Committee hearings about refugee assistance and immigration. Together, these two chapters reveal and challenge underlying assumptions about humanitarian aid and the results it would produce, namely the refugees' rehabilitation, resettlement, and confirmation of American goodwill. By having the potential to shape domestic policies, the media and public discourses about refugees explored in this chapter clearly did not happen in a vacuum.

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[152] Drawn from the work of Michele Landis Dauber, *Disaster Relief and the Origins of the American Welfare State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

More specifically, social workers' and nonprofit organizations' emphasis on children reveals an effort to overcome legislative resistance to increasing and sustaining U.S. aid abroad, as much as they aimed to convince the American public that they had a responsibility to give.

## Chapter 2

## Searching for Homes after World War II: Policy-level Debates about Refugee Children as Economic Dependents & U.S. Immigrants, 1945–1953


***Figure 5:*** *The Washington Post cartoon, December 18, 1947. Newspaper headline states: "Legislation to Admit Displaced Persons Still under Consideration."*[153]

### Introduction:

A few months after Chaim, a 17-year-old undocumented "stowaway" orphan from Hungary, arrived in the U.S. in 1947, the boy approached the United Service for New Americans (USNA) for financial assistance and expressed his desires to notify the Immigration and Naturalization Service about his undocumented status. Having lost his parents at Auschwitz, Chaim was sent to France as a 15-year-old with a group of other children, was registered on the Hungarian quota for the U.S., and was waiting to be sent to Palestine. However, the transportation officials rejected him from one of the scheduled transports to Palestine because he was considered too old for the cut-off age. When he heard that his wait for the Hungarian quota would be "indefinitely delayed," he decided

[153] From Citizens Committee on Displaced Persons Records, 1946–1953, Immigration History Research Center (IHRC), UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

to join a boat with adult migrants (and nine other stowaway boys) to the U.S. Having witnessed the apprehension of all the other boys by immigration authorities, Chaim felt insecure about his legal status and wanted to resolve it as quickly as possible.[154]

The question now was *how* to legalize his status. The adolescent was concerned about registering at a school or applying for work, in case these actions would alert immigration authorities of his status and force him to make a "voluntary departure" to Israel, his only other possible destination.[155] When Chaim consulted another stowaway refugee who had given herself up to U.S. immigration officials, she advised him not to notify the INS because it did not resolve anything for her legal status.[156] Another alternative was to apply for citizenship under the Fellows Law at the end of his seventh year in the U.S., which was the final year he could file a petition for naturalization. However, he would have had to "live furtively and in fear" for 4.5 more years.[157] Agencies that were working with the refugee—the USNA Migration Department, the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children, and the Brooklyn Section of Council of Jewish Women—searched for various channels to legalize his status, including adoption, but ultimately decided that self-reporting was the best option. After all,

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[154] Memos from Freda S. Statneko (Migration Services) to Lotte Marcuse (EJCA), regarding Chaim E., July 17, 1948 and June 18, 1948; Memo from Lotte Marcuse to Ann Petluck regarding Chaim E., August 7, 1947; Memo from Ann S. Petluck to Miss Lillian Collins regarding Chaim E., January 3, 1947, in "Case Report on Chaim E.," as described by GJCA worker S.B. Halkin, January 19-24, 1949, GJCA records, File 362, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[155] EFCA Activity report on Chaim E., 22 November 1948, GJCA records, File 362, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[156] Her stay in the U.S. depended on extensions, and she was never certain whether these extensions would be renewed, which made her work and school life difficult. She decided that her best option to finally resolving her legal status was to marry an American citizen.

[157] Bill (HR 5886, Public Law 783) proposed by Congressman Frank Fellows (R-ME), approved in June 1948, to amend section 332(a) of the Nationality Act of 1940, which allowed displaced persons to file for naturalization between 2 and 7 years after their arrival in the U.S. Fellows also wanted to amend legislation related to stowaways (HR 5119) and displaced persons (HR 6163 and 6396), to enable DPs' admission for permanent residence. See: "Foreign Policy 1948: Summary of Action," *CQ Almanac 1948*, 4th ed., 207-15 (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1949), http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal48-1408305.

registration with the government would offer access to schooling, occupational training, and continued support from the agencies "until such a period when he will be more independent."[158]

According to the agency consultants who were dealing with Chaim's case, "generally speaking the Immigration Service has been more liberal with 'children' stowaways than with adult." Though they wanted to avoid letting this situation serve as a precedent for other stowaways, they believed that "if this boy was 'a good boy,' had no family abroad," the Immigration Services might consider him a "deserving case" that could assisted by the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children rather than a case for deportation.[159] While his initial migration status had *not* been processed as a child but rather as a young adult, the agencies now stressed Chaim's position as a child who needed to be taken under the wings of the European-Jewish Children's Aid (EJCA) organization. As Ann S. Petluck, the director of the EJCA Migration Department, argued on his behalf: "I think a child of 16 cannot be expected to bear the entire responsibility of the decision; that we as an agency have a role."[160]

This example touches upon key issues and questions that will be addressed in this chapter: the role of age categories in refugee policy, concerns about refugees' dependency, and the various criteria that determined whether or not the refugees were "deserving cases" who could enter the U.S. and receive assistance. The agencies'

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[158] Meeting with Miss Rabinowitz, Statneko (USNA Migration), Mrs. Smik, Mrs. Aaron, Miss Sishcholz (NCJW), Marcuse and Halkin (EJCA), January 14, 1949, in "Case Report on Chaim E., 17-year-old boy," as described by GJCA worker S.B. Halkin, January 19-24, 1949, GJCA records, File 362, Center for Jewish History, New York.
[159] Evelyn Hersey (Assistant to the Commissioner of the Immigration & Naturalization Service at PA), quoted in memo from Ann S. Petluck to Freda S. Statneko regarding Chaim E., June 18, 1947, GJCA records, File 362, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.
[160] Memo from Ann S. Petluck to Lillian Collins re: Chaim E., January 3, 1947, GJCA records, File 362, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

responses to Chaim's case exemplify the exceptions policymakers and social agencies were willing to make for children and youth, and how their decisions were informed by broader cultural understandings of childhood and adolescence as the most vulnerable groups within the post-World War II European refugee population. His case also reflects the bind that unaccompanied minors were in and the legal complications this age group encountered, both in terms of entering the U.S. and finding homes. Because Chaim was at an age at which he was not considered an adult but not exactly a child, social workers strove to modify the category of the child to enable his entry, working within the framework of his economic and psychological dependency.

Finally, Chaim's story exemplifies the tensions within the debates about DP policy and funding, particularly the paradox of dependency as a condition for both allocating *and* cutting off aid. Debates in Congress and the public sphere leading to statutes and amendments passed between 1945 and 1953 drew upon two competing definitions of dependency: (1) the refugees' perceived helplessness and lack of agency, which helped make the case for the legitimacy and necessity of U.S. intervention, and (2) the long-term, financial dependency of the recipients on external support, which was ultimately a question about the refugees' potential dependency on the state or how refugees would fit into the capitalist nation-state as residents and future citizens.

The first type of dependency revolved around the identities of the aid recipients—as persecuted victims of Nazism, orphans, and children—that emerged largely out of the memory of World War II, the genocide of their parents and relatives, and the varying levels of need defined by social workers and policymakers. The second way of talking about dependency contributed to policymakers' reservations about funding U.S.

assistance programs and was an underlying concern even among supporters of the proposed programs. They were willing to make exceptions for child refugees *because* these children were economic dependents, but dependency on the American welfare system was the very issue that made their presence "a problem."[161] These two definitions were at times in tension with one another, though social workers took a case-by-case approach. In Chaim's case, agency workers decided to prioritize the discourse of childlike dependency.

This chapter will explore how American policymakers and social agencies created piecemeal legislation during the 1940s and 1950s to confront the Displaced Persons dilemma after World War II, first in terms of sending aid to DPs in camps abroad and secondly in terms of resettling the DPs in new homes. Legislators and social agencies aimed to work within existing immigration laws and established the category of the "unaccompanied child migrant" based on their understandings of the following issues: refugees' positions in a Cold War environment, immigrant families as socioeconomic units, and children's roles as dependents within family units. [162] However, the following sections will examine specific cases in which the child migrant's legal status was unclear and the complications that arose when trying to get child refugees across the borders. As this chapter argues, these policies were forced to change in the face of refugees' needs. In

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[161] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Displaced Persons and the International Refugee Organization: Report of a Special Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for the use of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on the Judiciary,* 80th Cong., First Session (1947), 81.

[162] As Katharine F. Lenroot, the representative of the Children's Bureau, stated in November 1945: "It may be that we in the United States should open our doors to some of these Stateless and homeless children without families or relatives, who need the care and the education that can be so easily provided here. These questions are now being discussed with a view to determining *what may be possible under present immigration laws* [emphasis added]." See: Katharine F. Lenroot, "Observations on Child Welfare in Europe," from Attendance at the International Labor Conference in Paris, October 15–November 5, 1945, 8, Katharine F. Lenroot papers, Box 5, Folder 5, Series I: Writings and Speeches, Indexed Speeches, Articles and Radio, 1920–1951, Columbia University Rare Book & Manuscript Library, New York.

this way, the agency of European children and youth, especially unaccompanied minors, played a key role in creating and modifying U.S. refugee policy during this early postwar period by disrupting the age categories established in DP policies. The discussions among policymakers and social agencies about how to deal with young refugees, as well as the actions taken by children and youth, reveal the malleability of the criteria for receiving U.S. aid, both at the policy level and on the ground.

## Child Refugees as Aid Recipients Abroad:

### *"What is the condition of their health?": Identifying the Needs of Children & Youth*

Policy-level discussions about funding relief programs in both DP camps and in war-afflicted cities and towns established temporary dependency as a condition for receiving funding from the U.S., which was channeled through a collaboration between the U.S. government and voluntary agencies that were stationed abroad. Legislators and social workers defined displaced children as one of the most vulnerable war victims and needy recipients of food, supplies, and medical care. In addition to child refugees' inability to support themselves financially, health specialists emphasized child recipients' needs as growing children and youth and the effects of postwar conditions on their futures as adults.[163] For example, nutritionists and pediatricians participating in the Joint Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization identified 7 to 14-year-olds as the most vulnerable and the most physically affected by the war. According to the committee's report in 1947, this

[163] U.S. Congress, Senate, *United States Relations With International Organizations: III. The International Refugee Organization, Report of the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments Pursuant to Public Law 601, 79th Congress, (Section 102 (1)(g)(2)(D) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946), June 8 (legislative day, June 2),* S. Report 476, 81st Cong., 1st Session (1949).

age group lacked the necessary nutrients during the most important years of their development. As one nutritionist explained, this age group received "little special attention during the war as they were beyond the age of infancy." The effects of poor diets and malnutrition during the war manifested themselves after the war in the stunted growth of the children and youth. To compensate for this wartime neglect, this age group needed to receive priority access to aid.[164]

Portrayals of need and dependency on U.S. support were not only defined by age, but also by characteristics *associated with* children, which could be exhibited in older DPs as well.[165] The categorization of the child depended on the social agency and the national/international context in which it was working. American agencies defined children as under age 18, and sometimes up until age 21 (as I will discuss more later), while the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) defined adults as age 14 and older. UNRRA workers also divided children into two age groups: children under age 6 and children between ages 6-14. Adolescents were a distinctive, albeit ambiguous, category because they were transitioning between childhood and adulthood. Yet social workers found ways to work discursively around these age categories and used the ambiguity of the definition of a child to their advantage.

For example, Fred K. Hoehler, the American director of UNRRA in Germany and Austria (1945–1948), frequently used the figure of an 18-year-old Jewish orphan to illustrate the psychological effects of the war in his speeches and radio interviews for

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[164] Joint Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization, Interim Commission*, Report on Child Nutrition*, *prepared for the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund,* July 23–26, 1947 (Washington, D.C., 1947), 2-3.
[165] United Service for New Americans (USNA), *Facts and Figures on the Refugee Program,* prepared for the National Conference of Jewish Social Welfare, Baltimore, June 1-4, 1947, National Refugee Service records, File 751, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

UNRRA fundraising campaigns.[166] Although the young refugee was on the cusp of adulthood, Hoehler viewed him as a boy due to his experiences as a child during the war and his child-like appearance (which Hoehler explained was a result of malnourishment during the war). By age 14, the boy had "witnessed every form of Nazi cruelty," was "forced to tabulate the number of persons killed in a gas chamber," and had "counted many thousands of men, women, and children who were murdered." While medical care and food would help "restore his physical health," Hoehler noted that memories of "the barbarities [the boy] witnessed" would remain with him for the rest of his life. Nevertheless, the orphan needed to "fashion himself a new life… out of this wreckage of mind and body."[167] Hoehler strove to make the case that the boy, as a dependent who lacked familial support, needed the support of his American neighbors to propel the process of his recovery and rehabilitation. In doing so, Hoehler attributed the adolescent's "childlike" nature to his status as a displaced person who was dependent on outside support, as much as it was attributed to his age category.

Representatives of humanitarian organizations further depicted the needs of child recipients as "universal concerns" that transcended national and political affiliations.[168] When considering hungry children, some policymakers such as Congresswoman Frances Bolton (R-OH) insisted that "regardless of the politics of the country or the fact that it might be a satellite country of the Soviet Union, with a Communist ideology… the saving of a child's life and the continuance of that life is of importance to the world and,

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[166] Hoehler's social work in the U.S. before the war was based in Chicago, and he returned to this city after UNRRA was disbanded and transferred its responsibilities to the International Refugee Organization (IRO).
[167] Fred Hoehler, "Displaced Persons," *Herald-Tribune Forum* (Mrs. Ogden Reid), Oct. 30, 1945, Fred K. Hoehler papers, Articles, Speeches, and Related Material, April 1947-1948, Box 27, Folder 279, Social Welfare History Archives, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.
[168] Josephine Ripley [Staff Correspondent], "Allied Aid Held Vital in Europe's Plight: Millions Lack Bare Necessities," *The Christian Science Monitor,* Oct 23, 1945, 1.

therefore, no matter what the background of the life is, it must be done."[169] Bolton's comment was in response to debates over the International Emergency Children's Fund (UNICEF), in which Congressmen/women and Senators questioned UNICEF's policy of not providing food and supplies to children in "fascist-leaning" countries. At the time of the Senate hearing in 1949, the explanation offered by Katherine F. Lenroot, as the American representative for UNICEF and the Chief of the Children's Bureau, was that these countries had not applied for U.S. aid. However, Congressman John Davis Lodge (R-CT) doubted that this was the actual reason for withholding assistance. Implying that these decisions were dependent on the recipient countries' political regimes, Lodge questioned: "Can we differentiate and say we will feed the children in Argentina, but we will not feed the children in Spain?" While maintaining the notion that Russia's satellites posed a threat to the U.S., Lodge wondered why "We are feeding the children in Communist-dominated countries, but we will not feed a child in a Fascist-dominated country."[170] When considering children as aid recipients, these politicians urged the prioritization of the refugees' status as *children* above their national or geographic affiliations.

Yet food distribution in DP camps was clearly politicized. For adult DPs, different food quantities were designated to aid recipient categories based on their wartime experiences—whether they were former enemies, survivors of concentration and work

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[169] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Providing for Further Contributions to the International Children's Emergency Fund, Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, on H.R. 2785 and H.R. 4488: Bills to Provide for Further Contributions to the International Children's Emergency Fund, May 4 and 5, 1949,* 81st Cong., First Session (1949), 6. This was also expressed by Hoehler, who clarified that "Wherever a job of relief is performed, it is hoped that the emphasis will be on the relief of suffering and not on political interference or economic domination of a country." See: Fred Hoehler, "Displaced Persons," *Herald-Tribune Forum*, Oct. 30, 1945.
[170] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Providing for Further Contributions to the International Children's Emergency Fund* (1949), 33.

camps, or political dissidents[171]— and their affiliations with a nation-state, where the refugees would presumably reside after their temporary stay in the DP camps.[172] Although the primary objective stated by the International Refugee Organization (IRO) and the Children's Emergency Fund was "to provide aid to special categories of people without regard to nationality," a team of "special liaison officers" or "repatriation experts assigned by each of the foreign governments represented among the displaced persons" checked the nationalities of the refugees in DP camps.[173] Different nationality groups were also "billeted separately," and according to Hoehler, these divisions were not just imposed from below, for "each group [quickly] develops national unity, striving to out-do the other in patriotic zeal and self-organization." National affiliations remained important at the level of administrators and officials as well. According to a 1947 report on "United States Relations with International Organizations," the subcommittee observed "a definite

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[171] Continuing anti-Semitism persisted in DP camps, where other camp residents described Jewish DPs as "overfed parasites or louses, working in cahoots with the occupation forces to starve Germans, and receiving particularly delicious foods that they did not really need." This was in response to the UNRRA policy to provide different amounts of food to DPs and non-displaced civilians. In order to compensate for their malnourishment, DPs received larger and higher-quality portions; concentration camp survivors also received additional supplements to meet urgent nutritional deficiencies. While the visibility of these distinctions had the potential to encourage hostilities, the *lack* of distinctions made between the recipients also caused problems in distributing food. Some DPs reported that they needed to "prove" their status as "persecuted displaced persons" in order to receive their designated larger portions. The Deputy Mayor of Mainz, who supervised the departments of "Museums, Music, Art, Care of Monuments, and Jewish Affairs," also expressed frustrations with the lack of attention American personnel paid to the distinctions he saw between Jewish and German identities. Whether the fieldworkers were adhering to "red tape" or were personally reluctant to provide food to Germans, their blanket assumption that all Germans were Nazis prompted some to withhold food from German Jews. For more about the distinctions made between aid recipients, especially Jewish DPs and the "politics of atoning," see: Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Nick Cullather, "The Foreign Policy of the Calorie," *The American Historical Review* Vol. 112, No. 2 (Apr., 2007): 337-364; Alice Weinreb, "For the Hungry Have No Past nor Do They Belong to a Political Party": Debates over German Hunger after World War II," *Central European History* 45, no. 1 (March 2012): 59nn33.

[172] U.S. Congress, Senate, *United States Relations With International Organizations: III. The International Refugee Organization, Report of the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments Pursuant to Public Law 601, 79th Congress, (Section 102 (1)(g)(2)(D) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946), June 8 (legislative day, June 2),* S. Report 476, 81st Cong., 1st Session (1949), 29.

[173] Memorandum from Sherman S. Sheppard of the Bureau of the Budget to the Director of the Bureau (Webb), "U.S. Program for Foreign Assistance," The Marshall Plan, Foreign Relations, 1947, Vol. III, 201.

tendency, on the part of many high-level officials of the IRO, to act as representatives of their respective countries, rather than as employees or officers of an international organization." In this sense, perceived differences in nationality or identity groups did matter in the identification, documentation, and organization of the DP camps on the ground, resulting in tensions and animosities over the distribution of food and the requirements of proving one's dependency in order to receive assistance.[174]

The actual policies of relief organizations such as CARE also indicate that Cold War affiliations dictated which countries could receive food aid. For example, Trieste, which was "formerly in Italy, and now internationalized," was in question as a site of operation, though CARE confirmed that it was continuing deliveries to the city. Stettin [Szczecin] or Breslau [now Wroclaw] was "now part of Poland," so packages could be sent there. They were also sending packages to Sudetenland, since it was part of the Czechoslovak Republic, but not Ruthenia, which was "now part of Ukrainia, in the USSR, and Czechoslovakia relinquished the territory." CARE offered services to all European countries, including Eastern European countries such as Russia, Yugoslavia, and Hungary, but the organization explained that it needed to confirm its negotiations with the countries' governments.[175]

These restrictions were not only bound by Cold War ties, but also explicitly by family ties and implicitly by race. In an informational brochure addressed to donors, CARE aimed to address questions about its geographic reach or the restrictions of its geographic scope. In response to donors' question, "If you are really interested in feeding

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[174] U.S. Congress, Senate, *United States Relations with International Organizations,* 33.
[175] Ruth Shortell Dvorak, "Operation C.A.R.E." [informative brochure for CARE representatives], July 14, 1946, in Sample Correspondence with VIP Donors, Sales, etc., 1953-1955, CARE records, Box 932, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

starving people, how is it you don't send packages to India and China?", the brochure explained that their operations focused on donors sending packages to relatives and friends. Because there were "many more relatives and friends in Europe than in Asia," the organization wanted to adhere to this policy. Another reason was that the organization wanted to "start where the largest number of people would benefit. It was logical to start in Europe."[176] Although CARE would later expand its services to South and East Asia, the rationale provided during this early postwar period was based on both the globally imagined and immediate family ties. The countries and peoples who were included and excluded from policymakers' and social agencies' vision of the family defined the extent of American humanitarian responsibilities.

### *"Who supports and for how long?": Setting Limits to U.S. Funding of Food Aid Programs*

While American policymakers aimed to depict the U.S. commitment to international relief efforts along national lines, policymakers also stressed the multilateral funding of these programs to avoid the impression of a solely American responsibility. For example, legislators wanted aid recipients to know that they were receiving milk and supplies from boxes marked with the label "U.S.A.", or the names of the American companies that were supplying the milk. Yet the label of UNICEF was also clearly visible on the containers of dried milk, as Lenroot explained in a statement before the Committee on Foreign Affairs. Thus, she reported, aid recipients were aware that the food and supplies were from international sources, while recognizing the extensive

[176] Ruth Shortell Dvorak, "Operation C.A.R.E.", July 14, 1946, in Sample Correspondence with VIP Donors, Sales, etc., 1953-1955, CARE records, Box 932, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

involvement of the U.S. To further illustrate her point, Lenroot described a scene from one of the "early incidents in the work of the fund, when an Austrian boy came home with his eyes shining," asking his mother for a cup because "I am to get a cup of milk every day at school from the United Nations." She argued that this type of response was exactly why it was important to highlight these relief operations as an "international cooperative effort": "the fact that this has been a United Nations effort in behalf of children, and that the United States has contributed so generously to this effort… It is something which gives people faith in the possibilities of international cooperative effort."[177] As Lenroot argued, U.S. support for multilateral programs such as UNICEF would signal its investment in international peace and stability, without taking on full financial responsibility for the programs.

While social workers strove to convince U.S. policymakers that these programs would be temporary, they did not completely dismiss the possibility of extending child-centered relief operations into long-term programs. Lenroot expressed her confidence that these provisions would lay the foundation for more permanent, large-scale structures and institutions for addressing children's needs. "In the meantime," she stated, they could "give such support to the present Emergency Fund as may be needed to prevent a lapse in

[177] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Providing for Further Contributions to the International Children's Emergency Fund* (1949), 39-42. Likewise, Maurice Pate [Executive Director of UNICEF] explained to the *New York Times* publisher why these feeding programs for children were important for U.S. foreign policy: "It is most heartening to all of us here who have fully realized how much this would mean, not only in direct benefits to children, but in making other nations aware of the seriousness with which the United States regards the needs of children." See: Letter from Maurice Pate (Executive Director) to Mr. Sulzberger, July 13, 1953, NY Times Records, A.H. Sulzberger Papers, United Nationals International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), 1949, 1953, Folder 268.5, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

this essential work."[178] Furthermore, the child-centered initiatives served as potential models for expanding those services to older refugees. As Hoehler pointed out, U.S. representatives had initially resisted signing onto an international relief organization, but they were willing to support the International Children's Emergency Fund. Hoehler anticipated that these temporary relief services would develop into a long-term United Nations organization that reached across national boundaries and age categories, and he was convinced that such an institution would create the space for "the kind of participation and discussion… necessary if international relief is to be constructive and useful."[179]

Yet framing the DP problem as a responsibility shared by multiple international actors was also useful for setting limits on U.S. financial involvement in relief and assistance programs. Ben H. Brown, the Assistant to the Legal Adviser in the Department of State, specified *which* child refugees were eligible to be placed under the care and purview of the U.S. government, arguing that DPs located outside of the U.S. zones of Germany and Austria were "less in need of assistance because they will be in countries whose governments are capable of caring for them."[180] Although he recognized that it was "a very humanitarian approach" to try to encompass all DPs, regardless of locale and circumstances, Brown clarified that "the Department is primarily interested in those who are in the custody of one of the occupying powers and the occupied areas, because they

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[178] John P. Hubbard, M.D., "Trends: The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund," *Pediatrics* 6, no. 2 (1950): 317-18.
[179] Fred K. Hoehler, "Problems of Europe and their Challenge to International Social Work," found with October 22, 1947, Fred K. Hoehler papers, Social Welfare History Archive, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.
[180] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *To Permit Certain Displaced Persons Under 14 Years of Age Orphaned as a Result of World War II To Enter the United States as Non-Quota Immigrants, Hearings before the Committee on the Judiciary Committee on the Judiciary* (July 18, 1947), 4-5.

are in large part a United States responsibility, and it is a problem that this Government must solve." Much like Brown, representatives from the State Department and Congress identified the areas of urgent need while simultaneously limiting the zones of U.S. responsibility.

Representatives for relief organizations also clarified that the distribution of food and supplies would target children who were directly affected by the war, not children in the areas that needed support on a longer-term basis. In a speech before a high school graduating class (who themselves were on the brink of adulthood), UNRRA director Fred Hoehler distinguished between the temporary war victims and the long-term recipients of U.S. aid who resided in countries with "very low standards of living."[181] While he identified both categories of recipients as deserving of assistance, and that the war had exacerbated an existing problem, Hoehler prioritized the post-World War II situation as an emergency that necessitated an immediate response.

At the International Emergency Children's Fund conference in 1947, Congressman Walter H. Judd similarly identified war-related conditions as the legitimate contexts for which the U.S. could assume responsibility, which meant excluding children living in "conditions that are not much different than they have been for 50 or a hundred years." Judd asked Maurice Pate, the Executive Director of UNICEF, to elaborate on the possibility of extending funds to children in Latin American countries through the World Health Organization and the Pan American Sanitary Bureau. When Pate confirmed that UNICEF was considering this plan, Judd responded:

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[181] Fred Hoehler, "Faith for Living," notes for a commencement talk at North Shore Country Day School, June 13, 1947, Fred Hoehler papers, Articles, Speeches, and Related Material, April 1947-1948, Box 28, Folder 288, Social Welfare History Archive, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

> There is a rather sharp dividing line in my mind between the function this organization has of taking care of the emergency growing out of the war, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, assuming the responsibility for all the unfortunate victims of bad government or poor conditions all around the world. The United States cannot assume 72 percent of such a program.[182]

By making this distinction between the postwar "emergency" that would eventually end and the broader problem of hunger and poverty that was a *shared* international responsibility, these debates in Congress aimed to define clear limits on the extent of U.S. funding for relief programs. The U.S. involvement in programs abroad was intended to be just enough to prove its dedication to "international cooperation" and saving children's lives after the war, but not to assume responsibility for conditions that required larger investments and perhaps did not seem to offer clear payoffs for U.S. foreign policy.[183]

## Child Refugees as Migrants: International Efforts to Resettle Displaced Children

### *The Problem of Displaced and Stateless Children during the Cold War:*

The tension between apolitical and political humanitarian interests, as well as the paradoxical status of refugees as both "universal" and bound by nationality, also informed debates about refugee resettlement.[184] As of November 1946, the Russell Sage

[182] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Providing for Further Contributions to the International Children's Emergency Fund* (1947).

[183] The U.S. did invest in agricultural and developmental programs during the Cold War, but there were clear geopolitical strings attached to these funds. For more details, see Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Kristin L. Ahlberg, *Transplanting the Great Society: Lyndon Johnson and Food for Peace* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2008); Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[184] Later in 1952, the International Law Commission would continue to emphasize statelessness as a problem that necessitated U.S. intervention and a "generous and speedy naturalization policy." It was not only the legally stateless refugees who were in need; the Commission argued that "refugees as a rule are without another nationality," and that statelessness could be created by "a conflict of different legal conceptions, such as jus soli and jus sanguinis." The Commission thus called for a convention that could "[prevent] children being born into statelessness." See: Mr. Warburg (Coordinating Board of Jewish

Foundation reported that 920,000 Displaced Persons (DPs) were being cared for in camps, assembly centers, and other organized shelters in Austria, Italy, and the British, French, and American zones of Germany,[185] while 192,000 refugees were reported in other European countries.[186] Most of the DPs were from Austria, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and the USSR,[187] and their countries of birth became important when considering the repatriation of DPs: although UNRRA workers encouraged refugees to return home, many were "non-repatriables."[188]

As for the number of children, the majority of DPs were not young children, though appeals to the American public emphasized the plight of children. In May 1946, UNRRA reported that 6396 unaccompanied children were under its care in Germany,

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Organizations), "International Protection of Refugees," NGO Conference on Migration: Working Party on Comprehensive and Permanent Provision for Refugees, statement prepared for the Geneva Working Party Discussion, [1952?], United Service for New Americans (USNA) records, File 556, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[185] In European countries under military occupation, voluntary organizations under the sponsorship of UNRRA and IGC provided care for refugees. Government care was also extended to "liberated" and neutral countries, including France, Greece, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland. See: Pierce Williams, Preliminary Summary Report for the Russell Sage Foundation, "General Information on Refugees and Displaced Persons, 19 November 1946," October 15, 1946, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 5, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[186] For more specifics on where the DPs were located: In Germany, at the end of May 1946, UNRRA cared for 754,411 DPs under the control of the military government, 92% of the total. In Austria, UNRRA counted 46,000 DPs (only in mid-1945) under its care (through an agreement between UNRRA and Austrian government, as well as an agreement with the Allied Commission in which UNRRA covered 60% of the total). In Italy, UNRRA cared for 60% of UN and ex-enemy DPs. There were 43,000 DPs counted in Egypt, Palestine, Iran, and various countries in East Africa and Western India, with a small number remaining at El Shatt. In China, there were about 16,000 European refugees, most of whom were Jewish refugees who fled to Shanghai from 1939-1940, who were under the care of UNRRA, IGC, and the American Jewish Distribution Committee (JDC). Other "Displaced Asiatics" included Malaysians and Javanese refugees who had been deported by the Japanese to do forced labor in Siam, Northern Malaya, and Burma. For more details, see: Pierce Williams, Preliminary Summary Report for the Russell Sage Foundation, "General Information on Refugees and Displaced Persons."

[187] These were the 6 leading countries of birth: Austria (5.7% of the refugees), Germany (28%), Poland (40.1%), Czechoslovakia (11.5%), the USSR (2.9%), and Hungary (4.9%). See: "Comparison of countries of birth of family heads from USNA Case Loads in March 1940 and April 1947," in United Service for New Americans (USNA), *Facts and Figures on the Refugee Program,* prepared for the National Conference of Jewish Social Welfare, Baltimore, June 1-4, 1947, National Refugee Service records, File 751, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[188] United Service for New Americans (USNA), *Facts and Figures on the Refugee Program*.

with 2021 of Polish nationality and 53% of "undetermined nationality."[189] Of the refugees who came to the U.S. between 1946 and 1947, children under age 16 formed the smallest group of arrivals, comprising about 8.2% of total arrivals, whereas 73.1% of the arrivals were between ages 16 and 44.[190] Yet, during a time when political leaders were shifting and redefining geographic boundaries, policymakers, UNRRA workers, and social agencies considered the destination of child refugees—or the nation-state to which they belonged—of utmost importance.

As Tara Zahra has pointed out, the calls for humanitarian aid used the language of universalist human rights, yet "the so-called human rights promoted by UN officials typically depended on national citizenship." One of the refugees' human rights, for example, was to belong to and have their rights protected by a nation-state. In particular, as Zahra explains, "restoring children to the national collective was essential to the broader campaign to democratize and denazify postwar Europe and to the individual psychological rehabilitation of DP youths."[191] Along these lines, nation-states after World War II strove to "reclaim" their "lost children."[192] Child care organizations also aimed to keep "Europe's children" in Europe by encouraging sponsorship rather than legal adoption, keeping in line with the preferences of resettlement officers. Foster Parents'

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[189] Pierce Williams, Preliminary Summary Report for the Russell Sage Foundation, "General Information on Refugees and Displaced Persons."

[190] The 21-30 year olds comprised the largest group. See: "Characteristics of Displaced Persons Arriving in 1946-7 contrasted with earlier refugee immigration," based on Maurice R. Davie, *Refugees in America,* USNA Division of Statistics and Research, April 16, 1947 and Immigration and Naturalization reports, National Refugee Service records, File 751; "Age and Sex of Individuals by Boat and Date of Arrival (from Dock Notices)," Division of Statistics, July 12, 1946, National Refugee Service records, File 749, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[191] Tara Zahra, "Lost Children: Displacement, Family, and Nation in Postwar Europe," *The Journal of Modern History* 81, no. 1 (March 2009): 45–86, at 71.

[192] Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

Plan for War Children, Inc. was one such organization that asked American donors to financially adopt refugees, which aligned with the organization's official statement in 1945 that their work "never involved legal adoptions and we do not mean to go into that now." While this policy may have been primarily an issue of dividing responsibility among relief organizations, the organization explained it as an issue of national belonging and repopulation: "It has always been our feeling that children should be brought up in our countries. It is our hope to have all the children in our care from other countries returned to their own lands." With reference to the postwar context, the organization's representative stated: "Surely every devastated country in Europe will need its children. Many families in every country have lost their own children so that if these little war orphans are to be legally adopted it can be by people in their own countries."[193]

To adhere to this policy, the International Refugee Organization (IRO), UNRRA, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) first aimed to repatriate the children to their parents' country of origin. However, IRO workers had difficulty determining the nationalities of refugee children, especially for illegitimate children, stateless children, and children born during the war.[194] For example, one boy who was born in 1944 was the illegitimate child of a Russian mother, who was working in a German household before she was sent to the DP camp of Göggingen. The IRO was not sure whether he had Russian nationality by birth and whether the child qualified as a displaced person. The only fact the IRO petitioners were certain of was that resettlement

[193] Foster Parents' Plan For War Children, Inc., "The Brotherhood of Children," Ernst Papanek papers, Box 6: Refugee Children – Foster Parents' Plan for War Children, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[194] This was also the case in later years during the 1950s. See: Children's Resettlement Case Files, 1947-1954, U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, RG 466, National Archives at College Park.

in Germany was out of the question because he "never had, a home in this country," at least not the conception of home that fit their legal definitions.[195]

In another case of a Jewish orphan who was living in Germany after she lost her parents in Auschwitz, her status was ambiguous due to redrawn geopolitical boundaries after the war. The girl had Hungarian nationality by birth, but the IRO workers who petitioned on behalf of the refugees were uncertain whether she still held this citizenship status. She may have lost it because her hometown was located in an area of Hungary that was ceded to Czechoslovakia after the war, so they needed to determine whether she now had Hungarian or Czech nationality. The girl's current living situation and her preferred destination also complicated this case. Although she was living with a German family for several months and was now residing in the IRO Children's Village at Bad Aibling, she had never acquired German citizenship. She expressed interest in moving to the U.S., and the resettlement petitioners ultimately agreed that this plan would be in her "best interests."[196] In many of these cases of ambiguous nationalities, the resolution was to send the children to the U.S. under the sponsorship of the U.S. Committee for Care of European Children, or to another receiving country such as Canada and Australia.

The challenges of determining child refugees' countries of origin are further illustrated in the case of a 15-year-old orphan, whose case was described by the relief organization Unitarian Service Committee as a "tragedy [that] can be summed up in one

[195] Case of Michael N., Application of the International Refugee Organization Petitioner for the Resettlement or Repatriation of Michael N., May 2, 1951, Children's Resettlement Case Files, 1947-1954, U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, RG 466, Box 11, National Archives at College Park.
[196] Case of 15-year-old Katalin (Katharina) Z., Application of the International Refugee Organization Petitioner for the Resettlement or Repatriation, May 9, 1951, Children's Resettlement Case Files, 1947-1954, U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, RG 466, Box 11, National Archives at College Park.

word: nationality."[197] The boy, Jim H., claimed that he was a British citizen born in Liverpool and that English was his mother tongue. Having lost his parents and younger sister in St. Nazaire, the boy wandered throughout France during the war and ended up in a camp in Switzerland.[198] Social workers and psychologists who interacted with him thereafter recognized his hardships and endurance, describing him as a "particularly fine, honest, well-brought-up boy, very unlike the adventurer type who would invent things in the hope of gaining advantages from his inventions." Yet social workers and psychologists doubted parts of his story,[199] for he could only speak French, and British authorities were unable to track down his uncle, the only person who could confirm his identity.

With doubts about the boy's nationality, British authorities refused to assume responsibility for him. The Unitarian Service Committee (USC) was asked at this point to assist with the expenses, which included hospital bills that shot up due to his "nervous trouble" tied to "his distress about his nationality." The USC's report ended by pointing out that regardless of his legal status, he was experiencing the effects of being a refugee and an orphaned child: "whatever the truth about him is, there is no doubt that he is a

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[197] Unitarian Service Committee [Geneva], "Report on the Fund of the Congregational Church in the United States of America," March 1945, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 7, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[198] In Jim's account, he and his family fled England in the late 1930s and settled in St. Nazaire, France, where his father found employment in a petroleum company as an engineer. According to Jim—and the social workers clarified that this was strictly Jim's claim—the father was involved in the British Secret Service during the war before he was killed by a bomb in 1941. At age 14, Jim joined the Air Raid Precautions (ARP) Service, which required him to dig out victims from ruins. One bombardment occurred while he was at his post, when he returned home to find it in ruins. He had to dig out the bodies of his own mother and sister.

[199] When he was released from the camp, the boy suffered a nervous breakdown during which he believed he was back at St. Nazaire during the bombardments, informing his mother about his father's death. He always spoke in French, even when he was not fully conscious, which confirmed the psychologists' doubts. As for the accuracy of his story, the only evidence the British authorities managed to acquire was the confirmation from a Swiss citizen who knew the petroleum company that employed his father, which suggested that his father did work there.

victim of this bitter struggle which will leave for the future many outcasts, many persons torn forever from their surroundings, many sorrowing ghosts."[200] As this case suggests, statelessness, or the ambiguity about the refugees' nationalities, could serve as the obstacle to receiving aid, as much as statelessness was highlighted as a major reason for assisting refugees.

***Resettlement of Jewish Child Refugees Outside the U.S.: Youth Aliyah and Palestine***

For Jewish orphans whose countries of origins were now Russian-controlled nations, the calls for repatriation were more guarded, especially with Cold War political interests in mind. According to Herbert Tenzer, the chairman of the orthodox Jewish organization Rescue Children, Inc. (RCI), the repatriation of Jewish refugee children would have turned them into wards of the Russian state, and this arrangement was against their parents' wishes because they would not have been allowed to practice their Jewish religion. Keeping in line with social agencies' policy to place orphans in homes with the same religious background, and maintaining the argument that "the most important thing is that these children be entitled to be brought up in a nation where their faith can flourish," Governor Thomas Dewey (R-NY) insisted that these war orphans be rescued "from behind the Iron Curtain."[201]

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[200] This story was intended to represent "most of the children for whom in some small measure the Unitarian Service Committee has been able to lighten the burden of adverse circumstance. We trust that the Congregational Church will feel that the money it has put at our disposal has been used constructively and judiciously." See: Unitarian Service Committee, "Report on the Fund of the Congregational Church in the United States of America," March 1945, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 7, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[201] "Europe's Children Gain Dewey's Aid: Governor Urges War Orphans 'Be Brought Out From Behind Iron Curtain,'" 1947, Rescue Children, Inc. collections, Box 1, Yeshiva University, New York.

While IRO and UNRRA officers first considered the refugees' countries of origin as potential sites of resettlement, Jewish organizations and a number of child refugees themselves saw Palestine an alternative destination.[202] In particular, Youth Aliyah (YA) and other Jewish organizations placed children at the center of their vision of Palestine as a new homeland for Jewish refugees.[203] The stated goal of Youth Aliyah and Hadassah (the Women's Zionist Organization of America that represented YA in the U.S.) focused on helping children find "a home in every sense of the word" and to make sure that they felt "wanted and welcomed by the whole community, that they had security."[204]

Youth Aliyah first provided immediate relief to children who had lost their parents or guardians in the war, were displaced from their homes, and/or were living in districts that were lacking in food and supplies. YA also took in orphaned children under age 18, placing them in collectives rather than in foster homes, and provided an education and agricultural training for the children. The organizations reported that the children were adjusting quickly, integrating into the larger community and speaking Hebrew with other refugee children. The organizers recognized that these refugees might be able to

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[202] Ernst Papanek questionnaires A and C, such as Questionnaire C: 273, January 1947 and Questionnaire C: 255, Jan. 24, 1947, Box 11: Questionnaire Responses 1943-1947, NYPL Special Collections, New York. Also see: "The Children from Buchenwald: The First Arithmetic Lesson in Ecouis," Bulletin 'O.S.E.' No. 13, September 1, 1945, p. 5, translated from French, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 5, NYPL Special Collections, New York; GJCA records, File 398, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[203] For literature on Zionism and political visions of Palestine as a homeland for Jewish refugees (developed during the 1930s), see for example: Steven E. Aschheim, "Bildung in Palestine: Zionism, Binationalism, and the Strains of German-Jewish Humanism," in *Beyond the Border: The German-Jewish Legacy Abroad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 6-44; Walter Laqueur, "Israel: Immigration Jeckepotz," in *Generation Exodus: The Fate of Young Jewish Refugees from Germany* (Brandeis University Press, 2001), 94-128.

[204] Ruth E. Weltsch, "Youth Aliyah: An Experiment in Child Rehabilitation," Merhavia, July 1945, 4, sent by Henrietta Szold on behalf of Hadassah to Katharine F. Lenroot on October 19, 1946, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 7, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

forget the past, but "in order to live on, they must turn away from it to the future. Palestine, for them, represents the future—a new aim in life."[205]

According to Jewish organizations, the structure of the kibbutz and collective settlements was self-sufficient by definition. Publicity for Youth Aliyah emphasized that donations to this organization would not have the "remotest resemblance to charity," with no secondhand clothing and no gifts-in-kind. Furthermore, the children did not want, nor were shown, pity in Palestine. Rather, publicity materials stressed, these children desired understanding from their donors. As Henrietta Szold, an American-born Jewish scholar and humanitarian who wrote on behalf of Hadassah, argued in 1946: "its importance does not limit itself to the boundaries of Palestine and to the problems created by ghetto walls, barbed wire and bombs. It reaches far beyond into the field of general child welfare, by presenting a working ideal solution to one of society's oldest problems—that of the dependent child, any dependent child, anywhere in the world."

As Szold's article explained, American social workers had a tendency to "avoid long-term institutional care for dependent children, and especially for orphans," and to rely more on foster home care and adoption that would rely on family units to take financial responsibility for the dependents. But the institutional and semi-institutional care through Youth Aliyah had been successful. Children still had "the atmosphere of the family" within these collective settings while being encouraged to develop self-sufficiency.[206] The social and cultural life in these homes and communities thus seemed

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[205] Ruth E. Weltsch, "Youth Aliyah: An Experiment in Child Rehabilitation," 4.
[206] Foster home care was an exceptional case, and there were no adoptions. Numbers by 1946 included: the arrival of 20,000 children and youth, 10,000 in training, 89 collective settlements, 18 cooperative villages, 47 Youth Aliyah institutions, and a total of 154 training centers and facilities. See: Ruth E. Weltsch, "Youth Aliyah: An Experiment in Child Rehabilitation," 4.

to provide a promising alternative to the postwar challenge of finding homes for displaced Jewish children.

## Child Refugees as Migrants: Resettlement of Unaccompanied Children in the U.S.[207]

### *Defining Children as a Special Category of DPs*

Resettlement in the U.S. was sold to American policymakers and the public as another possible solution to the problem of displacement and statelessness, especially the displacement of children. Although political figures and state officials framed the DP problem as a shared international obligation,[208] they also stressed the need for the U.S. to "set the moral preset" for the rest of the world by opening its doors to displaced persons. In fact, Secretary of State George C. Marshall pointed out that the U.S. had no choice but to confront the "DP problem." In favor of a bill to admit 400,000 DPs into the U.S., he stated: "we are not asking Congress to take on a new problem. The problem of the disposition of these displaced persons is one that Congress already has on its hands."[209] Much like the appeals made in Chapter 1, Marshall reminded Congress that the DP dilemma was a continuation of U.S. responsibilities after World War II.

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[207] DP Act of 1948: http://tucnak.fsv.cuni.cz/~calda/Documents/1940s/Displaced%20Persons%20Act%20of%201948.html
DP legislation: http://library.uwb.edu/guides/usimmigration/USimmigrationlegislation.html
McCarran Act: http://tucnak.fsv.cuni.cz/~calda/Documents/1950s/McCarran_52.html.

[208] Canada, Australia, Great Britain, and South American countries were also popular destinations.

[209] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on the Judiciary, *Permitting Admission Of 400,000 Displaced Persons into the United States, Hearings before The Subcommittee on Immigration and Naturalization of the Committee on the Judiciary, on H. R. 2910 [A bill to authorize the United States during an emergency period to undertake its fair share in the resettlement of displaced persons in Germany, Austria, and Italy, including relatives of citizens or members of our armed forces, by permitting their admission into the United States in a number equivalent to a part of the total quota numbers unused during the war years], July 16, 1947 [also met on June 4, 6, 13, 20, 25, 27 and July 2, 9, 18]*, 80th Cong., First Session (1947), 503-504, available at The George C. Marshall Foundation Digital Archives.

President Harry S. Truman similarly explained in a statement to the American public that "This period of unspeakable human distress is not the time for us to close or to narrow our gates." Rather, it was "the opportunity for America to set an example for the rest of the world in co-operation toward alleviating human misery."[210] Along these lines, Truman Directive of 1945 created special entrant categories for refugees who were in the Allied-occupied zones of Germany, Austria, and Italy after the war.[211] Amidst broader efforts to prompt Congressional action on DP legislation, the Truman administration expressed a commitment to welcoming displaced children after the war.[212] When Truman issued a directive in 1945 to enable the annual entry of 39,000 European war refugees into the U.S., he expressed his anticipation and hope that children would form the majority of the incoming refugees among the numbers admitted.[213]

Legislators and representatives of international organizations also identified child refugees as a special category of DPs who deserved priority entry into the U.S.[214]

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[210] Along these lines of having the authority to call on other countries to step up, Truman asked the UK to "allow 100,000 homeless Jews to enter Palestine." See: "U.S. Opens Immigration Gate to 39,000 War Victims Yearly," *Los Angeles Times,* Dec. 23, 1945, 1.

[211] The Truman Directive prioritized the admission of displaced persons under existing national origins quotas, while the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 offered 2000 visas to eligible DPs and estimated that 20,000 DPs would become eligible for immigration (without regard to quota restrictions for the first two fiscal years).

[212] According to the *Los Angeles Times*, a group of seven Republican and two Democratic senators drafted a bill in 1947 that proposed to enable an "unspecified number" of DPs to enter the U.S. as "non-quota immigrants." See: "U.S. Opens Immigration Gate to 39,000 War Victims Yearly: America to Set World Precept, Truman States," *Los Angeles Times,* Dec. 23, 1945, 1.

[213] Harry S. Truman, "Statement and Directive by the President on Immigration to the United States of Certain Displaced Persons and Refugees in Europe," December 22, 1945, available online at the American Presidency Project, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=12253.

[214] This strategy dates back to the wartime years, when Eleanor Roosevelt attempted to classify refugee children as "temporary visitors" in order to facilitate their entry in the early 1940s. As she explained in her appeals to the American public over the Columbia Broadcasting System, "under present immigration regulations only a few hundred children can be admitted each week." See: "Child Refugee Committee To Aid Placement: More Arrivals," *The Christian Science Monitor,* July 8, 1940, 2.

Although both displaced children and adults were considered innocent war victims,[215] Senator Irving Ives argued that the needs of child refugees needed to be emphasized because "[t]he true hope of the world is in the children." When Ives introduced a bill that aimed to enable child orphans to bypass quota restrictions (S. 830), he clarified that this bill was not "dealing with the problem of immigration" or "the problem of the Displaced Person." Rather, it was a bill "solely for the purpose of aiding those innocent victims of the war who are presently orphaned and scattered throughout Europe awaiting our assistance." Ives' staff member, Gerald H. Ullman, further clarified that the problem of "the children who are orphaned as a result of the war" should be kept "separate and distinct from the overall problem of the refugee, the persecuted, the displaced person, or the immigration." Because the bill carried "so much human interest," Ives and his staff argued that it would serve as "an expression of the great heart of the United States which always went out to children."[216] Although they were careful to present this bill as an apolitical cause by isolating the child figure from the issues of immigration and DPs, it

[215] DPs from Eastern Europe, the disabled, and the elderly were highlighted as the most vulnerable after the war. According to a 1947 Senate hearing and other reports on DPs, the largest numbers were from Eastern Europe. Ben H. Brown, Assistant to the Legal Adviser of the Department of State, gave the following figures for the "national origins" breakdown: 200,000 Poles, 190,000 Balts, and approximately 145,000 Jewish persons. These categorizations often listed Jewish and stateless DPs as a separate national category. However, the adult DPs' levels of "innocence" and need, as identified by relief workers, were also stratified and relative to their wartime experiences. Furthermore, adult refugees were subject to review as potential communists under the McCarran-Walter Act (1950), while these suspicions did not apply to children. See: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *To Permit Certain Displaced Persons Under 14 Years of Age* (July 18, 1947), 16; House of Representatives, Committee on Rules, *Providing for Membership and Participation by the United States in the International Refugee Organization and Authorizing an Appropriation Therefore*, H.J. Res. 207 (May 29, 1947), 25-30; also noted by Fred Hoehler in "Displaced Persons," *Herald-Tribune Forum* (forum facilitated by Mrs. Ogden Reid), Oct. 30, 1945, Articles, Speeches, and Related Material, April 1947-1948, Box 27, Folder 279, Social Welfare History Archives, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[216] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *To Permit Certain Displaced Persons Under 14 Years of Age Orphaned* (1947), 51, 30.

was intended to bolster the image of the U.S. as a humanitarian nation on the global stage.

Likewise, the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid (HSIA) planned to ask Herbert Lehman, the Director General of UNRRA, to provide "all possible aid to the United States authorities in preparing these people for transportation to the United States and to assist in their care," with particular emphasis on "cases of children in transit and others needing special attention." Lauding the Truman Directive of 1945, President of HIAS Abraham Herman sent a telegram to the President stating: 'Other countries will follow where you have led, and the doors of other countries will be thrown open as a result of your stand.'"[217]

### *"Who supports and for how long?": Setting Limits to U.S. Resettlement Assistance, 1945–1947*

However, the framing of DP migration as an "emergency situation" that was temporary had the potential to exacerbate the displacement of child refugees. While publicly expressing humanitarian motives and discussing the passage of DP legislation, the Truman administration was moving to close the DP camps immediately after the war in order to save costs.[218] The emphasis on ending this phase of assistance as quickly as possible in fact contributed to the problem of homeless orphaned children. At a 1946 Senate hearing regarding "the Admission into the U.S. of Certain Polish Orphan

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[217] "The President's Directive," *Rescue: Information Bulletin of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS),* January 1946, 11, Ernst Papanek Papers, Box 5, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[218] According to Congressman Ed Gossett, the War Department had recommended that the State Department close DP camps in 1945, but was notified in 1946 that the State Dept. planned to veto the plan because it would only exacerbate the problem of displacement, especially for political refugees. See: U.S. Congress, House, Committee on the Judiciary*, Permitting Admission Of 400,000 Displaced Persons into the United States* (1947), 514-515.

Children," Robert C. Alexander, the State Department's Assistant Chief of the Visa Division, explained that most of the adult DPs would be sent to their home countries and other countries that were willing to accept refugees, though a number qualified for entry into the U.S. The main challenge was to find homes for 235 Polish child orphans who had nowhere to go.

While perpetuating the problem of displacement, the State Department offered a possible (yet limited) solution for this group of Polish orphans. Alexander pointed out that there were U.S.-based organizations and families who had the financial means and willingness to "assume the burden of receiving these children, supporting, educating, caring for them, bringing them up in the American spirit and tradition."[219] However, the immigration quota for child orphans had already been filled. Though the Attorney General offered to permit the admission of these children, it included the condition that "they [would] not become public charges," and that "competent, non-profit organizations" would assume responsibility for their care.[220]

Ugo Carusi, the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization and former chairman of the U.S. Displaced Persons Commission, provided another voice of concern about the number of child orphans who were coming to the U.S. He proposed that more specific criteria be used to determine whether the refugees qualified for priority entry, such as limiting the eligibility requirements "to nationality or the whereabouts of the children" in the postwar occupation zones. Without such restrictions, Carusi argued, "under this [bill] every child in the world who lost his parent because of this war is

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[219] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Regarding the Admission into the U.S. of Certain Polish Refugee Orphan Children*, Executive Session, HRG-1946-IMN-0004 (February 28, 1946), 5.
[220] Ibid., 3.

entitled to come in non-quota."[221] Other legislators expressed concern that immigration laws were being "circumvented and set aside," especially with the lack of documentation and records for DPs.[222] In response to the Truman Directive, Representative Ed Gossett (R-TX) pointed out that in normal cases, an applicant had to present proper documentation: a birth certificate (proof of nationality or country of origin), police record (proof that "you are of a good character"), and "evidence that you will not become a public charge if admitted to the country." However, most of these requirements were waived for DPs. According to Gossett, a DP could merely claim the absence of documentation before an American consulate, and "their word would have to be taken. An affidavit or 'good faith' would have to suffice," thus circumventing the "normally careful screening which is supposedly given prospective immigrants under our immigration laws."[223] Gossett expressed skepticism about the legality of the Truman Directive and concerns about the potential "weakening" of the screening process.

Although policymakers like Gossett stressed the importance of thorough screenings, they were careful to make a distinction between adult and child applicants. Despite Gossett's criticisms of the Truman Directive, he too agreed with the Directive's call for "special attention [to] be devoted to orphaned children to whom it is hoped a

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[221] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *To Permit Certain Displaced Persons Under 14 Years of Age Orphaned* (1947), 44-45.

[222] For example, one child refugee's father explained in a letter to the IRO that the boy's birth certificate was missing "as we lost all our documents during the war and persecution. To obtain such another authentical certificate I am not able because of the political present situation in country of his birth." See the case file of Efroim F., IRO Resettlement Registration Form for Unaccompanied Children, USCCEC, August 7, 1951, GJCA records, File 366, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[223] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on the Judiciary*, Permitting Admission Of 400,000 Displaced Persons into the United States* (1947), 10.

majority of the visas will be issued."[224] Regarding the possibility of child orphans being involved in documentation fraud, Robert C. Alexander, Assistant Chief of the Visa Division in the U.S. State Department, argued that "there is not going to be much of a fraud in the case of an orphan under the age of ten years… usually the fraud will be perpetrated by some adult." Questioning his colleagues, "are you going to take it out on the orphan and try to deport that kid because of a fraud some adult has perpetrated?", Alexander responded: "Well, maybe you should go after the adult. But you should not go after the poor orphan."[225] According to Alexander, displaced children were considered deserving of exceptions in immigration policy, based on his understanding of childhood as a stage of life defined by a reliance on adult support.

Although children's innocence was presumed, policymakers still wanted child refugees to undergo the same investigative and screening procedures to which adult DPs were subjected by the United States Army Counter-intelligence Corps. In a 1947 Senate hearing on the possible admission of displaced orphans as non-quota immigrants, Ben H. Brown, Assistant to the Legal Adviser in the Department of State, pointed out that it was "impossible to get the same background on [the children's] political philosophy that we are able to get on an adult who has been active along those lines." Nevertheless, the Consular Service and the U.S. Public Health Service planned to evaluate "from a physical

[224] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on the Judiciary, *Permitting Admission Of 400,000 Displaced Persons into the United States* (1947), 513.
[225] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Regarding the Admission into the U.S. of Certain Polish Refugee Orphan Children* (1946), 6.

and mental standpoint" whether the child applicants qualified under the existing immigration laws."[226]

As economic dependents, children were not expected to provide skills-based qualifications and proof of their employability, as was required for adult applicants. Yet their guardians or adoptive parents still needed to provide proof of income before the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization to confirm that they were "willing and financially and legally able to adopt, rear, and educate such immigrants [the orphans]."[227] Children and youth were also expected to begin preparing for the work force by acquiring language skills and job training, so that they would not remain as dependents once they legally became adults.[228] Pamphlets released by the UN Appeal for Children, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization), and the American Red Cross reinforced this expectation for child refugees to eventually enter the work force by presenting the types of skills children and youth were obtaining through educational and vocational training, or their projected development of employable skills through social services and rehabilitation programs.[229] By setting age limits in the

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[226] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *To Permit Certain Displaced Persons Under 14 Years of Age Orphaned* (1947), 21.

[227] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *To Permit Certain Displaced Persons Under 14 Years of Age Orphaned* (1947), 5; also mentioned in U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Regarding the Admission into the U.S. of Certain Polish Refugee Orphan Children* (1946).

[228] In appeals to Congress and potential sponsors (especially German-American communities), the DP Commission and Citizens Committee on DPs in several states generally emphasized incoming refugees' employability and their potential to develop "self-help" skills: (1) their respective states needed a larger agricultural work force, a gap the DPs could help fill, (2) Americans could alleviate problems of overpopulation in other countries by absorbing immigrants, and (3) these expellees would know from firsthand experience "that citizenship in a free nation is priceless," which would presumably facilitate the latter's assimilation into American society. See: "We Need the DPs," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 28, 1947; *The Light: Official Bulletin of Citizens Committee on Displaced Persons* [New York], no. 7, July 29, 1947.

[229] Dr. Thérèse Brosse, "Homeless Children," Report of the Proceedings of the Conference of Directors of Children's Communities [including representatives from the U.S., Belgium, Switzerland, Poland, France, China, and the U.K.], Trogen, Switzerland (UNESCO, 1950). For Jewish child orphans, American Jewish

admissions policies, policymakers aimed to clarify for how long a refugee could be treated as a dependent and a "public charge," with the expectation that young refugees would eventually "grow out" of their state of dependency. These criteria also aimed to address how refugee children would later fit into the larger societal structure as adults, specifically their potential to contribute to the economy and capitalist system.

## DP Legislation: Enabling & Prohibiting the Admissions of Child Refugees, 1948–1953

The concerns and conditions about dependency and deservedness discussed in these hearings between 1945 and 1947 were also built into the DP program of 1948. Displaced adults and children alike had to meet specific criteria related to geography, wartime experiences, and family circumstances to qualify as DPs and as migrants to the U.S. To qualify as "Displaced Persons," they needed to have entered Italy or the Allied zones of Germany or Austria on or before the duration of the war, been displaced due to the war or political/religious persecution, and been residing in the Allied zones of Germany, Austria, or Italy as of January 1, 1948 (and these criteria, particularly the dateline, continued to be modified throughout the 1950s).[230] To qualify as unaccompanied *orphans* under the DP Act of 1948, minors had to be missing one or both

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organizations and U.S. state officials envisioned the children's acquisition of agricultural skills and their eventual self-sufficiency in Palestine (and later Israel) or in one of the organized communes throughout Europe, called "children's villages." The 1947 March of Time film that was released for a United Jewish Appeal (UJA) fundraising campaign depicted Jewish children in the fields of Palestine as well as in the classroom, where they learn Hebrew as one of their course subjects. See: *Shadows of Hate*, 1947, RG-60.1319, Film ID 2923, Julian B. Venezky Collection, Steven Spielberg Film and Video Archive, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.

[230] *Displaced Persons Act of 1948: An Act to Authorize for a Limited Period of Time the Admission into the United States of Certain European Displaced Persons for Permanent Residence, and for Other Purposes [S. 224],* Public Law 80-774*, U.S. Statutes at Large* 62 (June 25, 1948): 1009-1014.

parents due to the war or persecution.[231] The Act designated 5000 visas for children to enter on a non-quota basis, often under the corporate sponsorship of the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children, an organization that evacuated refugee children (especially German Jewish children) during and after the war.[232] Yet to qualify for admission into the U.S., all refugees needed assurances from relatives, friends, welfare agencies, or local communities that they would not become "public charges" during their stay, by providing temporary sponsorship and assistance until they became self-supporting. [233]

The Act also operated under existing national origins quotas, which limited the number of refugees who could enter the U.S., especially Jewish refugees. Truman stated that he signed this legislation with reservations, criticizing its admission quota for enabling discrimination against Jewish DPs and only allowing "up to 50 percent of the quota per year" of their "countries of birth" in order to "'[mortgage]' the remaining 50 percent for future immigrants." Furthermore, the application process was cumbersome and selective, subjecting applicants to a "thorough investigation and written report" by a U.S. agency that would evaluate the individual's "character, history, and eligibility."[234] These arrangements facilitated the admission of those deemed "useful and worthy

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[231] Defined earlier in U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *To Permit Certain Displaced Persons Under 14 Years of Age Orphaned* (1947), 14.
[232] The Act permitted "for a limited period of time" the admission of displaced persons who qualified under the IRO definition and prioritized their dependent spouses and children under the age of 21 as eligible applicants for admission. See: *Displaced Persons Act of 1948,* Public Law 80-774*, U.S. Statutes at Large* 62 (June 25, 1948): 1009-1014.
[233] U.S. Congress, House, Committee of Conference, *Authorizing for a Limited Period of Time the Admission into the United States of Certain European Displaced Persons for Permanent Resident, June 17, 1948*, 80th Cong., Second Session (1948), H.R. Report No. 2410, USNA records, File 12, MKM 24.1, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.
[234] *The Light: Official Bulletin of Citizens Committee on Displaced Persons* [New York] No. 7, July 29, 1947.

people" by immigration officials, especially young, employable individuals with a vocational or agricultural background. However, as Truman and other critics pointed out, these qualifications would "necessarily deprive many other worthy people of an opportunity to come to the United States in future years."[235]

Humanitarian organizations were also aware that Congress was making decisions based on Cold War interests and that they had to operate within these limits, despite the moves to liberalize U.S. immigration policy throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s.[236] As Mrs. L. Guilden of a Belgian organization, the Bulova Foundation, explained to Frederick Fried, a case consultant for the United Service for New Americans (USNA), her organization never knew "if or when Washington might stop them from giving more affidavits." On one hand, Congress might set a limit as it had in 1950, after Bulova had issued approximately 350 affidavits for refugee families in Belgium. On the other hand, Guilden noted that the current situation in the Iron Curtain countries might prompt Congressional action to open the doors to more political refugees. It all depended on whether or not Congress deemed the geopolitical situation an "emergency."[237]

The Bulova Foundation, as well as other organizations such as the United Service for New Americans, was also aware of the limitations of immigration policy and thus made strategic decisions about which refugees to prioritize for immigration. The USNA

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[235] *DP Refugee Relief Act of 1948*, Sec. 6; *The Light: Official Bulletin of Citizens Committee on Displaced Persons,* no. 7, July 29, 1947.

[236] For example, Lotte Marcuse, the director of the German-Jewish Children's Aid, expressed her hopes that the amended Displaced Persons Act of 1948 would include "provisions for orphan children from all nationalities and irrespective of their D.P. status and the country of their present residence." See: Letter from Lotte Marcuse (Director) to Lucille P. Alpert (Vista Del Mar in Los Angeles), Re: Albert Blanklet, May 17, 1950, GJCA records, File 401, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[237] Guilden pointed out that the issue at stake was "not…a person's right to immigrate to the United States, nor…the desirability of the plan," but rather "the urgency of their need as compared to others elsewhere in Europe." See: Memorandum from Ann S. Petluck to Fred Fried regarding Brussels Cases, November 19, 1952, USNA records, File 58, MKM 24.3, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

prioritized the refugees who were politically and financially insecure in both their past and present circumstances: they had "suffered persecution at the hands of the Nazis or their collaborators" during the war, and after the war "still could not feel fully secure in the European country where they live because of the threat of the international situation, the uncertain rights to continue residence, limitations of employment, etc." Due to the limited number of affidavits it could distribute, the Bulova Foundation focused on "the fully dependent class in Germany, Austria and Italy" who were still not resettled by 1952. While Bulova's representative Guilden was not unsympathetic to the "less dependent" persons who wanted to come to the U.S., she argued that "If Bulova gave consideration to all needy situations they could 'bring half of Europe over.'"[238] However, these terms—"emergency," "needy," "dependent," and "fully dependent"—were malleable and contingent on the interests of Congress and social agencies.

***DP Legislation: Defining "Child Dependent" and the Importance of Age Categories***

As one way to figure out who was "fully dependent," DP legislation used age limits to create a hierarchy of dependency levels.[239] The DP Act of 1948 defined

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[238] Guilden stated that the other refugees "would have to find other means of getting here." Memorandum from Ann S. Petluck to Fred Fried regarding Brussels Cases, November 19, 1952, USNA records, File 58, MKM 24.3, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[239] Agencies such as the National Refugee Service also categorized refugees according to the "degree of risk" they posed if they were "transferred to public care." The risk level of one family member, ranging from "no legal risk" and "slight legal risk" to "great legal risk," could determine the classification of the entire family. At the same time, the Committee recognized that these categories were "certain hypothetical categories of legal risk based on our interpretation of the law without certainty that any given case would be so regarded by the immigration authorities in actual practice," and that their failure to maintain a consistent policy could potentially jeopardize the refugee family's opportunities for resettlement and receiving welfare assistance. Sample size of 597 cases from June caseload (on June 25, totaled 669 cases), in "Preliminary Report of Study of NRS Relief Cases: Determining Public Charge Risks," a study requested by the Sub-Committee on Public Charge of the Committee on Migration and Alien Status, National Refugee Service (NRS) records, File 751, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

orphaned children as under age 16 (as of June 1948), later modified to age 10 by the amendment of 1950 and the Refugee Relief Act of 1953.[240] With the cooperation of various European governments and welfare agencies in the U.S., the Displaced Persons Commission in Washington, D.C., managed to "expedite and safeguard the adoption of these orphans" by 1951.[241] Later, a bill to amend the Refugee Relief Act of 1953 attempted to raise the age limit for eligible orphans from 10 to 14.[242] In support of this bill, Herbert H. Lehman, the first Director-General of UNRRA, argued that "There is no real reason to limit the definition of orphans to children of 10 years or under."[243] He also expressed confidence that he had the support of "All the responsible voluntary organizations working in this field," for they agreed that "An orphan is just as appealing, just as desirable, and just as adaptable to the United States at the age of 14 as at the age of 10." While challenging assumptions about childhood innocence, or the notion of childhood as a state of innocence that ended once a child passed a certain age threshold,

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[240] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary*, Amendments to Refugee Relief Act of 1953: Hearings Before the Subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary, on S. 1794, S. 2113, and S. 2149 [To Amend the Refugee Relief Act of 1953, So As To Relax Certain Requirements for Qualifying Under Such Act], June 8, 9, 14, 16, and 21, 1955,* 84th Cong., First Session (1955), 13. Age change was made on July 18, 1950. See: Agreement for the U.S. Committee to care for 100 orphans, signed on May 10, 1951 by M. Ingeborg Olsen on behalf of the US Committee for the Care of European Children, Inc., and G.A. Polos on behalf of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive, GJCA records, File 208, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[241] U.S. Displaced Persons Commission, "DP's in U.S. Uniforms Fighting for their New Found Freedom," 6, Fred K. Hoehler Collection, Box 305, Articles, Speeches, Related Material, Nov-Dec 195, Social Welfare History Archives, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[242] According to a later assessment of the 1953 Refugee Relief Act, 4182 orphans were able to enter the U.S. as a result of the DP program. See: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Amendments to the Refugee Relief Act of 1953, Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary, on S.1794, S.2113, and S.2149 bills, To Amend the Refugee Relief Act of 1953, So As To Relax Certain Requirements for Qualifying Under Such Act,* 84th Cong., First Session (1955), 22.

[243] Senator Arthur V. Watkins had already proposed a bill to raise the age limit to 12, but Lehman argued that his bill would enable the entry of more children. The Displaced Persons Commission in Washington, D.C., also tried to make additional arrangements with various European governments and welfare agencies in the U.S. to enable more flexibility in the immigration quota for orphans. See: U.S. Displaced Persons Commission, "DP's in U.S. Uniforms," 6; U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Amendments to the Refugee Relief Act of 1953* (1955).

Lehman's comments confirmed legislators' expectation that children and youth had higher "prospects of…becoming," or being molded to become, "good citizens in this country."[244]

The statement of Hon. G. Mennen Williams, the governor of Michigan, during this hearing also reinforces the expectation that child migrants would become "good citizens" of their host country. While he acknowledged the popular perception of the U.S. as traditionally holding an "open door" to immigrants, he noted that the refugee problem was becoming a personalized and localized issue, as American parents and children faced the refugees as their neighbors, peers, and friends: "this is not just a matter of theory with me. My children go to public schools with these children, not only the second and third generation Americans but the DP's... They not only go to school with them but they play with them and bring them into our home." Bringing in his wife's affirmation to confirm that this was a family-centered viewpoint, he expressed their joint belief that the children would "be not only better citizens but better human beings for it."[245] Policymakers' existing notions about children as impressionable dependents and future citizens thus informed their attitudes toward making legal adjustments for child migrants, though these debates also required, and helped produce, redefinitions of the "child dependent."[246]

The quota system also created obstacles for children whose circumstances did not fit neatly into the categories established. If the national quotas to which the children were charged were oversubscribed, they had to wait an indefinite amount of time for their

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[244] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *To Permit Certain Displaced Persons Under 14 Years of Age* (1947), 8.
[245] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Amendments to the Refugee Relief Act of 1953* (1955), 33.
[246] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Amendments to the Refugee Relief Act of 1953* (1955), 22.

turn.[247] According to the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children, the annual immigration quotas in 1947 totaled 153,000, yet less than 12,000 were admitted.[248] The Polish quota was oversubscribed for the next five years, and the British quota of 65,000 was mostly unused. In the case of unaccompanied children, there was also a gap between the need for and the availability of home placements. The organization reported that it could only find homes for 2000 of the 6000 unaccompanied children in the American zone. Along with limited funds and the quota system that "arbitrarily restricts annual immigration," the U.S. Committee stated that quota numbers remained "largely unused while the children wait."[249]

Modifications in legislation also determined whether or not the child refugees held priority status. In one case, the prospective American mother of a Polish girl orphan applied for the child's visa to bring her to New York, but because the child had registered in her country of origin after the Truman Directive was issued in December 1945, she was "not considered a Displaced Person within the meaning of the President's Executive Order." As a result, the child was "not entitled to the slight priority" afforded to orphans by the directive, and her status as a migrant was evaluated according to the quotas normally assigned to Polish immigrants. The adoptive mother ultimately had to ask Senator Ives for assistance with the visa issuance. As Carusi (the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization) argued on her behalf, this girl's case exemplified "the

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[247] For example, in one case a girl refugee faced a waiting period of seven years. See: Interoffice Memorandum from Ella Hammer (Migration Department) to Lotte Marcuse (EJCA), Re: Gertrude B., December 20, 1948, GJCA records, File 404, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.
[248] The quotas for various Central and Eastern European countries included the following: 236 for Latvia, 386 for Lithuania, 116 for Estonia, 2874 for Czechoslovakia, and 6524 for Poland.
[249] Gertrude Samuels, "WQXR Presents in 'I Have Seen the Children' by Morton Wishengrad, a radio drama based upon 'Children Who Have Known No Childhood,'" *The New York Times Magazine*, March 9, 1947, NY Times Records, A.H. Sulzberger Papers, European Children folder, 164.4, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

rigid restrictions of our immigration laws," as well as tensions between the classification of child refugees as DPs who were subject to stringent criteria and as children who deserved to be prioritized.[250]

The time lag in the screening and visa issuance process, as well as the changes made to the DP Act in subsequent years, posed a problem for adolescents (or children who were on the brink of adolescence) in particular. Youth who initially qualified when they applied for a visa may have passed the age limit while they were waiting for their applications to be processed.[251] By the time their visa was issued, they were considered "too old." This was the case for one 10-year-old boy who registered for the Austrian quota in 1948 and did not have any identified relatives in the U.S. The agency had difficulty acquiring an affidavit and finding a home for him; by the time social workers identified a potential sponsor three years later—when the 1950 amendment had changed the age limit from 16 to 10—the boy was "at an age at which he no longer had non-quota privileges, so that he might not be ready to emigrate for some time to come."[252] As a result, he was placed back on the waiting list for the Austrian quota, along with adult refugees, and the waiting period was indefinite. This example illustrates the bureaucratic and administrative barriers for admitting child refugees, as well as the limitations of the

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[250] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Regarding the Admission into the U.S. of Certain Polish Refugee Orphan Children* (1946), 28-30.

[251] Interoffice memorandum from Lili G. Sweat (Migration Dept. of the United Service of New Americans) to Lotte Marcuse (European Jewish Children's Aid), July 22, 1948, regarding Willy S., GJCA records, File 363; Interoffice memorandum from Lili G. Sweat to Lotte Marcuse, December 7, 1948, regarding Willy S., GJCA records, File 363, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[252] Report on Peter S. from Lotte Marcuse, March 13, 1951, GJCA records, File 363; Case of Egon, letter from Lotte Marcuse to Alma R. Block (Migration Consultant of the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children), October 31, 1950, GJCA records, File 364. Hilda Hayerowitz (Field Representative of GJCA) also noted that the Jewish children were "considerably older" in her letter to Mrs. Beatrice W. Carter (the Jewish Family & Children's Service), May 25, 1949, GJCA records, File 363, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

emphasis on age categories, though it was supposed to facilitate the entry of child orphans. In some cases, the United Service for New Americans (USNA) tried to work around these restrictions by filing the required paperwork on behalf of "stowaway" adolescents,[253] or young refugees who did not technically qualify under the DP Act. Much like Chaim, the refugee boy mentioned in the introduction, these refugees joined boats headed to the U.S. despite their legal status.

In other cases, however, immigration officials and social workers were suspicious of the refugees' real ages, which were tied to how they understood the refugees' level of dependency. Some adolescents and even young adults who wanted to be sent to the U.S. (or alternatively, Palestine) claimed to be younger and "adjusted age to purpose," while children who wanted to enter the workforce rather than attend school in their host societies claimed to be older.[254] The U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children and agencies such as the European Jewish Children's Aid also noticed that young refugees "seem[ed] to have a 'flexible' age." In one case, the American relatives of a 19-year-old orphan from Germany initially listed her birth date as 1928 in their affidavit. When they learned that this age would disqualify her for the U.S. Committee's sponsorship, they adjusted their statement to claim: "maybe she was born in 1930."[255]

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[253] Memo from Ann S. Petluck to Miss Lillian Collins regarding Chaim S., January 3, 1947, GJCA records, File 362, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[254] For example, one older boy who claimed to be younger was asked to go to vocational school for training as a blacksmith; he agreed to go only if he would get more food, which he did receive. But soon he wanted to continue his vocational training, even if it meant surrendering his food supplement. See: Bergen-Belsen, June 27, 1946, 10, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 5: Refugee Children – Diary Entries 1946, Papers on Refugee Children of World War II, NYPL Special Collections, New York. Tara Zahra also mentions these adjustments to age in "Lost Children: Displacement, Family, and Nation in Postwar Europe," *The Journal of Modern History* 81 (March 2009): 45–86.

[255] Letter from Lotte Marcuse (Director of Placements, German-Jewish Children's Aid) to M. Ingeborg Olson (Executive Director, U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children), re: Tillie B. (UNRRA Team 176, Bamberg DP Center, U.S. Zone of Germany), July 8, 1947, GJCA records, File 398, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

In addition to the absence of legal documentation (such as birth certificates), the appearances of young refugees belied their age due to years of malnutrition and stunted growth, which worked to their advantage.[256] In one case, the exact age of a refugee girl was undetermined at the time of her arrival, though the agency estimated that she was between 17 and 19 years old. Eventually, the Immigration Services decided that the girl was 17 years old and legally a child, so they placed her under the supervision of the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children.[257] While agencies ultimately took a case-by-case approach, the adherence to these age-based categories of "dependency" and "self-sufficiency" established clear limits to how long a refugee could receive aid—or for how long a refugee could be treated as a child dependent. Yet age categories and the definition of a child in refugee legislation were being figured out during this early postwar moment, and this ambiguity proved either frustrating or advantageous for social agencies and refugees who had to maneuver their way around an inefficient immigration system. As these examples indicate, the actions of refugees and their relatives had the potential to prompt changes in immigration and agency policies, or at least to push social agencies to make exceptions in their policies.

### *DP Legislation: Creating Unaccompanied Child Refugees*

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[256] For example, one 16-year-old boy was "very small for his age," so it was difficult for the U.S. Committee to "accept the idea that he should not be treated as a child." See: Letter from Theodora Allen (European Representative of the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children, HQ) to Ingeborg Olsen, Re: Karol B. (born January 21, 1932, Romanian Jewish), December 7, 1948, GJCA records, File 398, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[257] Not all child refugees wanted this arrangement; some adolescents between ages 15 and 18 saw themselves as independent young adults and preferred to support themselves, requesting to be released from agencies' supervision.

Although DP legislation emphasized "children's best interests"[258] and family reunification, it also had the potential to *encourage* the separation of families, especially when U.S. immigration policy interacted with the policies of other countries. One Polish family consisting of both parents and two sons was registered with UNRRA in Austria and later in Germany after World War II. By the 1950s, the family members obtained an assurance that made them eligible for immigration to the U.S. However, the U.S. Public Health Service denied the family's application in 1951 due to the father's lung condition. When the family heard that their chances of admission were higher if they only had one child in the family, they decided to send the older 13-year-old boy to Canada as an "orphan" under the Orphans' Project in 1948. The boy had to claim that both parents were dead (and he did so under a different name). When a child care worker for the United Service for New Americans interviewed the child, she reported that he seemed "very anxious about the welfare of his family, and is definitely despondent over the separation," but at the same time, "confident and determined to go to America, as he does not want to remain here in Germany and he believes that he will be in a better position to help his parents if he were in the U.S."[259] As this case suggests, the legislation had the potential to *create* unaccompanied children when the children did not necessarily need to be "unaccompanied." This case also illustrates how parents sometimes used DP

[258] Tara Zahra, "Lost Children: Displacement, Family, and Nation in Postwar Europe," *The Journal of Modern History* 81 (March 2009): 45–86; also see Linda Gordon, "The Perils of Innocence, or What's Wrong with Putting Children First," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 331-350.
[259] Social History of Efroim F., written by Joan W. Aitken (Child Care Office), September 7, 1951, GJCA records, File 366, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

legislation to arrange for their children's admission into the U.S., even if they did not technically qualify under its terms.[260]

There were other instances in which the children were not orphaned or abandoned, but the parents decided to give their children up for adoption in order to secure their financial stability. One refugee mother, originally from Sudetenland and now living in Germany, wrote to an official in the U.S. occupation zone to see if there was any possibility for her children to be adopted by an American family. She had nine children ranging from ages 2 to 19, and the family was prepared to give up six children (1 girl and 5 boys) for adoption. The parents wanted to keep three of the children with them in Germany, the two infants who needed their mother's care and the eldest daughter who was already married (presumably to help with child care and housework). Because the remaining children were older youth who could work, she hoped to find a family of farmers who would be willing to take them in, especially the eldest boys (ages 17 and 18) who were employable. She stressed that she was not giving up her children by choice, but rather because her husband was unemployed and the entire family could not live on the small amount of relief they received. Feeling hopeless, she expressed doubt that it was worthwhile "staying alive," but she also believed that "it is a great sin to commit

[260] This was also a case of financial responsibility for the child's migration. The parents managed to come to the U.S. through the sponsorship of a relative. Once they had the means to provide an affidavit, they tried to bring their son over to join them in Albany, New York. When they explained their situation to a local agency in Albany, they were informed that they faced "an indefinite waiting period unless they could claim preference for him as their son." Out of concern, the parents wrote to the United Jewish Refugee & War Relief Agencies for advice, inquiring as to whether they would create problems for the son's immigration status in Canada and whether this was a question of violating immigration regulations. The agency in Toronto expressed more concern about the parents' ability to "reimburse them for the expenses involved."

suicide." This letter reflected an act of desperation and her hopes that someone would come to their assistance.[261]

The resettlement files of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany reveal a number of cases in which the parents were similarly unable to take care of their children. For minors who were heading to the U.S. as their destination, their parents signed over their guardianship to the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children. Among the cited reasons for this transfer of responsibility were the parents' health problems, financial ability, and general neglect.[262] Aid workers and officials often listed mothers' desire to "free for [their] own pleasures" as another common reason, though in some cases, the husbands were the ones who refused to take care of the children, especially if the children were illegitimate.[263] Agency workers also expressed concerns that a "liberal interpretation of abandonment" in Section 2(e) of the amended DP Act (which made

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[261] Letter to Mrs. S. from Mrs. H. in Jetzlsberg, Post: Tann H., U.S. Zone of Germany (translated into English from German), June 26, 1950, GJCA records, File 294, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[262] For example, the case of Walter P., described by Vera Samsonoff (Chief of the Tracing Brach, for the Director of ITS, Allied Commission for Germany) to Miss M. Farley (Child Care Field Representative for Land Bavaria), Re: Walter P., born 1.7. 1946 in Mosbach, April 27, 1951; case of Anna H., April 10, 1953, Munich, R 51-8-20, Children's Resettlement Case Files, 1947-1954, U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, RG 466, Box 3, National Archives at College Park. Also see letter from Evelyn Survol (director of the Jewish Social Service) to Hilda Meyerowitz (Field Representative of the GJCA) regarding Charles A., December 8, 1949, GJCA records, 8.22, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[263] For example, one mother who recently remarried wanted to give up her daughter because her new husband refused to financially support the child (Case of Anne-Rose B., 17 January 1951, Box 3). See also the following cases: U.S. Court of the Allied High Commission for Germany, District Court for the 8th Judicial District, In the Matter of Application of the International Refugee Organization for the Resettlement of Peter S., An Unaccompanied Displaced Child, Action No. R. 50-8-7 [with court hearing on March 29, 1951], Box 1; Case of Jozeta P., April 10, 1953, Munich, R 51-8-19, Box 3; Case of Anna Hasioszyna, April 10, 1953, Munich, R 51-8-20, Box 3, Children's Resettlement Case Files, 1947-1954, U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, RG 466, National Archives at College Park.

children who were abandoned by their parents eligible for immigration to the U.S.) would encourage birth parents to "release their children too easily" for adoption.[264]

Other cases encountered complicated issues of guardian and child consent. In one case, a child was mistakenly categorized as an orphan due to incomplete documentation, and the parents did not have the opportunity to provide their consent for his adoption. When the birth parents inquired about their child's whereabouts, they heard the news of his adoption from their friends and wrote to the IRO. The adoptive parents, once they realized the boy was not orphaned, insisted on respecting the birth parents' authority and returning the child to his birth parents.[265] In other cases, children in the Children's Village at Bad Aibling, an IRO transit camp near Munich for DP orphans and children whose parents' whereabouts were unknown, were similarly separated from their parents, though the parents were able and willing to be reunited with them. One mother wrote incessantly to the IRO to request the return of her child: "Can you imagine how terribly a mother has to suffer who knows that her own daughter is far away in a foreign country where she is being educated by strangers while she could live with her own mother enjoying motherly love and everything she needs. Mr. H., for goodness sake, I just can not imagine what you need strange children for."[266]

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[264] Letter from Miss Theodora Allen to Ingeberg Olsen, November 22, 1950, regarding "M., Joseph and Edith (born 10 November 1935 and 27 May 1933), Czech, Jew, at Camp Hallein, near Salzburg, Austria," GJCA records, File 294, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[265] U.S. Court of the Allied High Commission for Germany Area Five, In the Matter of Application of the International Refugee Organization respectively of Mr. G.J. van Heuven-Goedhard, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, for the Resettlement of Adolf L., An Unaccompanied Displaced Child, Action No. H. 51-A5-9; Letter from Christian and Maria Buch in Mannheim to the Bayerisches Landesjugendamt München (Bavarian Land Youth Welfare Office in Munich), March 24, 1952, Box 2, Children's Resettlement Case Files, 1947-1954, U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, RG 466, National Archives at College Park.

[266] Letter from Mrs. B., mother of Johanna B., to Mr. Heuvelmans (Director of the IRO Children's Village Bad Aibling, German), June 8, 1951, Box 4, Children's Resettlement Case Files, 1947-1954, U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, RG 466, National Archives at College Park.

In another case exemplifying inaccurate documentation, the issue was not with the IRO's misclassification of the child's family situation, but rather was an intentional move taken by the child's relative. The 14-year-old girl was truly an orphan, but her uncle had listed her as his daughter when he filed his own immigration papers for the U.S. shortly after the war. He assumed that this status would facilitate her entry, but in fact this decision complicated matters for the girl. Because she had other relatives in the U.S. who notified the German Jewish Children's Aid of their actual relations, the organization was unsure of how to proceed: it was difficult to present her as an *orphan* who qualified for priority entry into the U.S. when the official documentation "listed her as someone's daughter." Much to the frustration of the other relatives, this uncle's actions worked against her legitimate orphan status.[267]

In another case, social workers of the German Jewish Children's Aid (GJCA) pressured a mother to send her teenage daughter to the U.S. as an unaccompanied minor, in an effort to accommodate the girl refugee's preferences as well as the agency's own assessment of the girl's future prospects. However, the mother wanted her daughter to remain in Germany and take care of her, since she suffered from poor health.[268] Arguing on the girl's behalf, the child welfare officers referred to the time-based restrictions imposed by the U.S. immigration system: that the mother's hesitation would delay the girl's chances for emigration, and "the U.S. DP Act which is law would not take such

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[267] Letter from Lotte Marcuse (EJCA) to Mrs. J.M. Margolies, Re: Mania B., January 24, 1949; EJCA Activity: Case Entry, Re: Overseas Inquiries on Mania Berger, reports by B. Frankel, February to June 1949; Interoffice memorandum from Bernice Judd (Migration Services) to Lotte Marcuse (EJCA), RE: Mania Berger, January 5, 1949. All in GJCA records, File 398, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[268] This case is also discussed by Tara Zahra in the introduction of *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 1-3.

sympathetic view to her problem."[269] In the name of the "child's best interests," social agencies such as the GJCA aimed to accommodate the preferences of the parents and the children, within the confines of DP policies and the social workers' own judgment. However, at times these efforts resulted in the unintended consequence of "creating" more unaccompanied minors.

There were also cases in which DP legislation prevented or posed barriers to family reunification. In one case regarding three siblings over age 10 who were French nationals living in their native country and wanted to join their mother in the U.S., the children could not receive agency sponsorship for their trip because the children did not qualify under any provision of the DP Act, and the International Refugee Organization (IRO) could not designate them as eligible DPs.[270] First, they did not qualify under the Orphan's Provision of Section 2(e) of the DP Act in 1951 because their mother was still alive. Secondly, they did not meet the age requirement, which was 10 years and younger in order to receive a visa. Failing to qualify for U.S. Committee sponsorship, their only option was private sponsorship with affidavits of support from their relatives.[271] If they could not find relatives to provide a home for the children, then a foster home placement had to be arranged, but this arrangement raised additional questions about parental and guardian consent and whether the children could reunite with their mother once they were in the U.S. In addition to the fact that the child refugees did not fit into any existing legal

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[269] Letter from G.Y. Roch (Field Child Welfare Office), Final Report of Interview regarding Ruth-Karin D., December 7, 1951, GJCA records, File 365, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.
[270] According to current immigration laws, agency sponsorship (including USNA and USC) was only permissible for persons immigrating under the DP Act.
[271] Letter from Miss Bertha Zucker (Caseworker of EJCA in NY) to Henrietta L. Stern, Department of Service to the Foreign Born (Council of Jewish Women of Los Angeles), re: Claire, Jacques, and Pauline W., cc: Vista Del Mar, June 25, 1951, GJCA records, File 362, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

categories, the case prompted questions about the requirements of French and U.S. immigration laws.

Though family unity was emphasized in U.S. refugee policy, these cases reflect the attempts to balance the needs and interests of multiple actors—the birth parents, adoptive parents, social workers, relatives, and the children—and how sometimes these efforts on behalf of refugee children worked against family unity in practice. Furthermore, these examples reveal how the refugees' consent to (or refusal to comply with) American refugee and immigration policy forced social workers to modify and adapt these definitions of the "child," "orphan," "unaccompanied minor," and "family." In some cases, these legal statuses were malleable and contextual, while in other cases the legal categories were very rigid.

## Child Refugees as "Public Charges": Welfare Assistance & the Limits of Age-based Dependency

For children without immediate family members, they were assigned to the care of the European Jewish Children's Aid (EJCA, later the German Jewish Children's Aid[272]), which helped place refugee children in foster homes. Even more than legislators, social agencies had to pay attention to the limited resources they had to stretch in order to assist child refugees. In an effort to maximize their efforts, multiple agencies and organizations targeted specific demographics and were designated to take responsibility for the refugees at different stages: UNRRA, Red Cross, and international organizations took responsibility for the DPs while abroad, while American Jewish organizations and

[272] I use these two titles interchangeably, based on the date of the source: the European Jewish Children's Aid before the end of 1948 and the German Jewish Children's Aid after 1948.

Catholic, Lutheran, and Quaker church groups took the lead domestically.[273] For example, the EJCA worked to obtain information and documentation for the migration of Jewish child refugees and then transferred the authority to local Jewish agencies (though the organization's workers and directors frequently coordinated with other faith-based and local agencies if there were no Jewish agencies in the vicinity).[274] Rescue Children, Inc., was even more specialized, focusing on placing Orthodox Jewish war orphans in American homes with Orthodox Jewish backgrounds. This division of responsibility and collaboration among different child care agencies also reflects the agencies' general policy to respect the birth families' religious affiliations by placing children in homes with similar backgrounds.[275]

Defining the specific cut-off age of a "child" also determined for how long these refugees could financially depend on social agencies (or family units, if they were placed in homes) until they were expected to support themselves**.** Though social workers strove to establish a standardized age range, agencies and units varied on the age limit and their definitions of a child. While UNRRA had its own definition of children (age 14), as

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[273] Other organizations that were involved in the resettlement process during and after the war include the following: Beth Israel Hospital, Brooklyn Hebrew Orphan Asylum, Committee for the Care of Jewish Tuberculous [sic], Federation Employment Service, Hospital for Joint Diseases, Jewish Board of Guardians, Jewish Family Welfare Society of Brooklyn, Jewish Hospital of Brooklyn, Jewish Memorial Hospital, Jewish Social Service Association, Lobanon hospital, Montefiore Hospital, Mt. Sinai Hospital, New York Association for Jewish Children. See: "Outline of Data on Relationships between Federation Agencies and the NRS," developed in January 1943, in Interim Report to the Fact Finding Committee, January 22, 1943, National Refugee Service (NRS) File 750, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[274] Unaccompanied minors were referred to the Family Service Department if they were joining an American family. B. Goldstein to Supervisors, "Plan for Transfer of Responsibility of Cases to EJCA," August 24, 1948, GJCA records, File 36, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[275] Agencies (Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant alike) had a strict policy of matching children with families of the same religious background, and they would often refer cases to agencies of the corresponding religious affiliation. This policy mostly aimed to respect the wishes of the parents, whether or not they remained alive. In the case of Jewish children, some agencies and adopting families were willing to accept matches of non-Jewish families with half-Jewish children.

mentioned earlier, the Headquarters for the U.S. Forces in Austria defined children as persons under age 19, while the Military Government Area Commanders in Austria set the maximum age at 17.[276] As for social agencies in the U.S., they selected 18 as the established age limit, in agreement with the federal government. In fact, sponsoring agencies could not refer minors under age 18 for public assistance because they had pledged to the Truman administration that these unaccompanied minors would remain under their care and not become "public charges" until this age.[277] These multiple definitions of a child created complications as the young refugees transferred from the international to the domestic contexts. In one case, the Jewish Distribution Committee's Munich Office mistakenly nominated an adolescent boy for an adult assurance, though he was not 18 years old at the time. In an effort to resolve the issue, the German Jewish Children's Aid (GJCA) tried to include him in the U.S. Committee project that aimed to bring European *children* over to the U.S., which illustrates how the agencies lacked a specific avenue for this age group, and how the boy had to be treated as either an adult or a child. In the end, the GJCA's request came in too late and the boy was already processed (as an adult) and placed in a community in Jacksonville, Florida, where he was expected to start working.[278]

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[276] Headquarters, United States Forces in Austria, APO 777, U.S. Army, AG C14.32 OVA/J, Exhibit 21, 23 July 1946, GJCA records, File 207; Memo from Howard V. Judson (Major Ass. Adj. General) to Commanding General (Zone Command, Austria and Vienna Area Command), Military Government Area Commander, Land Salzburg, Military Government Area Commander, Land Upper Austria, May 23, 1947, GJCA records, File 207, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.
[277] The Truman Directive of 1945 had also changed the age limit from 21 to 18. See: Letter from Dorothy Spielberg to Ann Rabinowitz, "EJCA Study," June 4, 1953, GJCA records, File 208; Letter from Lotte Marcuse to Mrs. Rose W. Batavia (Executive Director of the Jewish Social Service Bureau, Paterson, NJ), February 27, 1950, GJCA records, File 41, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.
[278] Letter from Lotte Marcuse to Alice Laden (Association for Jewish Children), Re: Karl A., July 27, 1950, GJCA records, Closed Cases, MKM 8.22, File 396, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

At the same time, the ambiguity of these age categories offered the space for the agencies to be flexible. In particular, some welfare agencies decided to accommodate 21-year-olds (and in special cases, those over 21) as dependents. As the European Jewish Children's Aid (EJCA) explained, "Chronologically most EJCA clients are young adults. Emotionally they are young children."[279] Others seemed too mature for their age; one social worker recalled her impression of a 15-year-old boy who had assumed the role of "the man of the family": "He carried a large briefcase like so many Europeans do, wore hornrimmed glasses and trench coat and gave [his sister] instructions all along the way."[280] The maturity of older children and youth impressed social workers, and often times this maturity convinced social workers to let them lead the way in selecting their sites of resettlement and defining their "best interests." For example, the EJCA decided to release young refugees from its responsibility whenever they proved the end of their dependency.[281] The following refugee groups needed to obtain legal releases from the Immigration & Naturalization Service: boys joining the army, children who were being adopted, adolescents who were reaching their 21st birthday, adolescent girls who were

[279] European-Jewish Children's Aid, "They Never Had a Childhood," Reports to the Annual Meeting of the United Service for New Americans, Inc., New York City, January 10-11, 1948, USNA records, File 16, MKM 24.1, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.
[280] S. Kestenbaum, September 19 report, Central Files, September 28, 1948, GJCA records, Closed Cases, MKM 8.22, File 399, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.
[281] As Petluck explained: "Eighteen is not always the age to which dependency is limited in all States. Also, in some States children can secure employment before 18." See: Memorandum from Ann S. Petluck (Migration Services) to Miss Lotte Marcuse (EJCA), "U.S. Committee Letter Re DPC Policy #7," December 19, 1949, GJCA records, File 190. Also see letter from Lotte Marcuse to Mr. Charles Cohen (Executive Director of the Jewish Social Service Bureau, Miami, FL), December 9, 1949, GJCA records, File 41, and letter from Dorothy Spielberg to Ann Rabinowitz, "EJCA Study," June 4, 1953, GJCA records, File 208, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

marrying, children who were reunited with their parents or relatives, and 18-21 year olds who proved their ability to support themselves without assistance.[282]

Once again, the age of release was a complicated issue for displaced orphans who were transitioning between childhood and adolescence, or between adolescence and adulthood. Within households, including foster homes, the expected age for older youth to start contributing to the household finances may have been even earlier.[283] Furthermore, agencies such as the German Jewish Children's Aid described this age group as a "specially deprived one": their education had been cut short, they had been forced to work at a young age, and they had received no technical training in the DP camps to prepare them for their job search after they were resettled in a new location. In addition, some of the communities in which the young DPs were placed lacked trade schools, vocational schools, or industries that could offer employment, which prompted the communities to request a "re-designation or re-allocation of some of these over grown boys."[284]

Refugee children and youth did actively participate and sometimes took the initiative in making their own resettlement plans, even as social agencies strove to define and adhere to their "best interests." Some knew exactly where they wanted to go, such as

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[282] Categories of children who would request release of INS, 1952 [?], GJCA records, File 208, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[283] For example, one aunt in Brooklyn provided affidavits in 1947 to bring her twin 15-year-old nieces to the U.S. The plan had been for the girls to work shortly after arriving in the U.S. However, one girl's qualifications (as a beautician-in-training) in France were not accepted in the U.S. and she needed to return to school for a license. The aunt requested financial assistance from the agency because her family was not able to support them. The family and social workers ultimately decided that the twins needed education and vocational training, and one girl started working part-time, with temporary assistance from the agency. But the financial and employment situation created tensions within the family and extensive meetings with the social workers. See: Brief Record of Family Service Contact with the A. Family, written by Beatrice P. Frankel, May 27-31, 1949, GJCA records, Closed Cases, MKM 8.22, File 395, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[284] Letter from Lotte Marcuse to Alice Laden (Association for Jewish Children), Re: Karl A., July 27, 1950, GJCA records, Closed Cases, MKM 8.22, File 396, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

one 14-year-old Bulgarian boy who criticized the inefficiency of the International Refugee Organization (IRO) procedures, remarking in a letter to a caseworker: "what the IRO is doing with me, is a nonsense." He had grown attached to the IRO Children's Village in Bad Aibling, Bavaria, where he was living since the war, so he insisted upon staying in Germany.[285] Another 15-year-old boy from Hungary, who had been forcibly separated from his family at age 10 and placed onto a German military truck with other children during the war, was now residing at Bad Aibling as well. After the war, he refused to return home, though his mother pleaded with him to repatriate. Rather, he was determined to "make an independent existence in the United States," and the IRO workers recognized that this was "a wish which appeared to be a result of mature and considered deliberation on his part."[286] As the responses of these two boys demonstrate, the agency of young refugees forced changes in the enforcement of resettlement policy on the ground.

## Adoption: Familial Obligations and the Legal Status of Child/Youth Orphans

Another case illustrates the complications posed by nationality-based categories and the differences in adoption laws as child refugees transitioned from the international context to the U.S. context. In 1953, Rescue Children, Inc., an Orthodox Jewish organization that reunited children with their families and arranged adoptions for orphaned children, brought a French Jewish boy to the U.S. as a poster child for the

[285] Case of Nikolai K., Application of the International Refugee Organization Petitioner for the Resettlement or Repatriation of Nikolai K., June 28, 1951, Children's Resettlement Case Files, 1947-1954, U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, RG 466, National Archives at College Park.
[286] Case of Andre D. P., August 13, 1952, Box 7, Children's Resettlement Case Files, 1947-1954, U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, RG 466, National Archives at College Park.

organization to assist with fundraising campaigns. When an American couple decided to adopt him, the organization brought his sister over to join him. As the organization's representatives and the adoptive parents assumed, the same couple could adopt her and keep the siblings together. The social workers were under the impression that the girl wanted to stay as well, though it is not clear how leading they were in their questioning of the child.[287]

However, the siblings had an uncle in France who had legal guardianship over the children and was hesitant to release his niece to the American couple. From the summary provided by the legal counsel, the uncle may have been fully aware that he was giving his consent for the girl to be adopted when he first agreed to let her visit her brother in the U.S. Yet when he requested to visit the siblings himself, immigration officials denied his entry due to concerns about his political affiliations (i.e., Communism) and suspicions about his intention to overstay his visa. Social workers similarly suspected that the uncle was intending to use the children as his entry point into the U.S. In turn, the uncle refused to allow his niece to be adopted without assessing the household with his own eyes.

This case first illustrates an instance when a child refugee was prioritized and could receive exemptions within the U.S. immigration system, whereas the adult relative did not receive such a pass, thus confirming the tendencies of policymakers to politically scrutinize adult refugees when it came to "the DP problem."[288] Because there was "no

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[287] Case of Helen K. (1952-1954); Report on the Meeting at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, with the minors Charles K. F. and Helene K. F., translated by Rabbi Simon Langer, June 1, 1954, Rescue Children, Inc. Collection, Box 15, Folders 11-14, Yeshiva University Special Collections.

[288] In another case, immigration officials' suspicion of a parent's political activities, and thus his inadmissibility to the U.S., determined whether the children's status was "attached" or "unattached." The father wanted his second wife and two children to be placed on the same assurance as he was, but the family encountered barriers due to the father's "organizational activities." See: Letter from Bernice Judd

definite proof of children's nationality," it was also unclear whether the case should have been subjected to U.S. immigration law or to that of the migrant's country of origin. The American courts and attorneys ultimately decided to treat the children as French nationals, and the French Consul in New York intervened on their behalf.[289]

To an extent, these legal questions were in fact questions of financial responsibility, first in terms of which national agencies had authority over the children's placement and which family units should have custody over the children, and secondly in terms of distinguishing between the "deservedness" of adult and child refugees to enter the U.S. From the agencies' and policymakers' viewpoints, the question of "which family" took care of the children was ultimately a question of who would assume the costs of their care.[290] Likewise, the agencies gave more credibility to the adoptive parents over the uncle because the latter could not provide financially for the children. Although the social workers, attorneys, and foster parents paid attention to the refugees' emotional and physical dependency, their financial dependency often took priority.

Other adoption arrangements with foster families did not work out well due to the families' disappointment with the publicized information about child refugees and DP legislation, or because a family had their own expectations for how a child should act. First, agencies faced the challenge of confirming whether the child had relatives in the U.S. There were a few instances when American families claimed a relationship to the child in response to a photograph they saw in the newspapers. If these claims proved to

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[Migration Worker] to Lotte Marcuse, re: Egon S. in Baden, Germany, November 10, 1950, GJCA records, File 364, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[289] Case of Helen K. (1952-1954), Rescue Children, Inc. Collection, Box 15, Folders 11-14, Yeshiva University Special Collections.

[290] There were also cases where older youth planned to migrate first to the U.S. and, once they turned the legal age, would send for their parents.

be invalid, they had the potential to "spoil a perfectly good placement plan."[291] In other cases, publicity materials raised the hopes of couples when the children were in fact unavailable. For example, a childless couple saw a picture of an orphaned boy in a 1949 issue of the newsletter *Forward.* After inquiring about adopting a child from the U.S. zone of Germany, the couple was placed in contact with the child's father in Germany. With a letter of support from their lawyer to a child care agency, they presented their qualifications to take care of the child: they owned property and ran a store in Montgomery, and their lawyer confirmed that they could provide the "necessary affidavit of non-support" and "meet any other requirements of the immigration department."[292] If the arrangements with this German child did not work out, they expressed interest in adopting any child under age four. Similar inquiries to social agencies indicate that many donors, sponsors, and adoptive parents were under the impression that the majority of the child refugees were young children and infants, as depicted in the publicity materials.[293] As the staff of the German-Jewish Children's Aid (GJCA) observed, "newspaper information on '10,000 orphans' has indeed given to people here new hope that there may be many Jewish children from whom they could choose one for their homes." However, this was a misrepresentation, and agency workers had to explain to these couples that "young D.P. families are holding on to their children more than Jewish parents have ever before, for their young children make it possible for them to become

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[291] Letter from Lotte Marcuse to Mrs. G. Larson Sperry (U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children), Re: Ravidovicz, Ruth-Karin, May 26, 1950, GJCA records, File 365, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.
[292] Letter from a lawyer in Montgomery, AL, to Mrs. Ann S. Petluck in New York, October 25, 1949, GJCA records, File 231, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.
[293] Letter from Lotte Marcuse to Mr. Hoppenstein, director of the Jewish Welfare Council, December 1, 1950; Letter from the German-Jewish Children's Aid, July 10, 1950, GJCA records, File 231, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

reconciled to the loss of their own families abroad."[294] The GJCA staff acknowledged the difficulty of informing disappointed prospective families: "we find it very hard for people to accept the fact that this should not be possible."[295]

The misunderstanding was partially due to the passage of the DP Act of 1948, as discussed in previous sections.[296] The mainstream American media and the public assumed that this legislation would facilitate the admission of more orphaned children, especially Jewish children. In 1950, both Jewish and non-Jewish couples wrote to Jewish child care agencies in anticipation of the proposed legislation to enable the entry of displaced children from camps outside of Germany.[297] One woman from Brooklyn followed up on her previous letter to the GJCA, months before the passage of the bill. Because the couple did not receive a response, she "assumed you were delaying your reply to us pending the action of Congress." Now she wanted to remind the organization of the couple's qualifications for adopting a child. Other couples, though they were already informed about the unavailability of young Jewish children, similarly wanted to check if the GJCA was still "looking for proper parents and good homes for these

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[294] Letter from Lotte Marcuse to Mrs. Ernest M. (FL), May 17, 1950, GJCA records, File 233, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York. Also see letter from Lotte Marcuse to Mrs. George M. C. [who had been advised by Congressman Jacob K. Javits when she wrote him about the possibilities of adopting an orphan under the DP Law], July 17, 1950, GJCA records, File 233, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[295] Letter from Lotte Marcuse to Mr. John C. Stern (of Aliquippa, PA), July 18, 1950; Letter from Lotte Marcuse to Mr. Benjamin E. (NJ), April 21, 1950, GJCA records, File 233, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[296] However, according the United States Committee for the Care of European Children, Inc., a child immigrating to the U.S. under the Displaced Persons Law of 1948 was "in a different and much more vulnerable position than one entering under the Truman Directive." United States Committee for the Care of European Children, Inc., May 27, 1949, GJCA records, File 239, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[297] Letter to Mr. Norman Winestine (Vienna Area Director of the American Joint Distribution Committee, Headquarters U.S. Forces Austria, JDC Abroad) from Lotte Marcuse, March 19, 1946; Letter from Normal Winestine to the National Refugee Service, February 25, 1946; Letter from Philipp Luster (AJDC Salzburg–Emigration Department) to United Service for New Americans, Inc., New York, September 5, 1947; Letter from Lotte Marcuse (Director) to Miss Jeanette Robbins (Joint Distribution Committee), June 2, 1949, GJCA records, Files 223-230, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

children," now that the legislation had passed.[298]As Lotte Marcuse, the director of GJCA, pointed out, the bills themselves had little to do with the possibility of displaced Jewish orphans coming to the U.S.: "even with the ridiculous number of orphans it mentions, [the D.P. Bill] has not changed one bit the number of available children abroad. Actually, ever[y] single Jewish child could have come here, if not under the Truman Directive, then under the D.P. Act of 1948. People who know the facts realize that the figure mentioned in the Bill is an astronomical figure quotes because it pleases the American public, but not based on the facts of available individual children."[299] As these discrepancies between the publicized information and the realities of these children's circumstances indicate, the media's emphasis on children may have been important for garnering public support for refugee programs and bolstering the narrative of U.S. aid "resolving" postwar dilemmas, as analyzed in Chapter 1. However, they also set up expectations for the resettlement of these children that did not always materialize on the ground.

In cases when children did have relatives in the U.S., some relatives were not completely on board with assuming responsibility for the children, though most immediate and distant relatives did feel an obligation to rescue "their own flesh and blood."[300] For example, in one 1948 case with the Children's Aid Society (*Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants*, or OSE), two sisters of ages 15 and 18 had an uncle and an aunt who were reluctant to take the girls in, perhaps because they did not feel financially capable of supporting them, but they felt responsible as their remaining relatives. Two

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[298] Letter from Mrs. M. B. (Brooklyn, NY) to the European Jewish Children's Aid, July 7, 1950, GJCA records, File 231, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.
[299] Letter from Lotte Marcuse to Mr. John C. Stern (Aliquippa, PA), July 18, 1950, GJCA records, File 233, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.
[300] J. Wallerstein, Report on Gracia and Jacques, summary of letter from Miss Benrubi, September 20, 1948, GJCA records, File 398, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

months after the refugees' arrival, both the adults and the two girls were miserable; the aunt and uncle told the OSE that they took them in with the intention of immediately finding a sponsor for the younger child and a job for the older girl. The relatives then asked the German-Jewish Children's Aid (GJCA) to take the girls off their hands. The caseworker who wrote the report of the situation described the adults' attitudes as "punishing and harmful." As a way of calling for less OSE direct oversight of cases, the caseworker noted that this mismatch should have been red-flagged and prevented from the start. If the GJCA had been able to "[work] with these children in our usual way, we could have eased them into their living in this country," and the organization could have researched more thoroughly the children's backgrounds and personalities of the relatives.[301]

Ultimately, the families' willingness to adopt the children and to follow through with the financial paperwork was the deciding factor in these home arrangements. Some families did not want to adopt children and youth who were labeled "disturbed," especially if they were adolescents by the time of adoption. One couple that considered adopting a 12-year-old boy Brussels decided that he was too old for their family. They had received a report from their rabbi's sister (who visited the boy while abroad) that he

[301] Summary for JDC: Immigration promoted by OSE, April 27, 1949, GJCA records, File 223, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York. Other examples of tensions or miscommunications between relatives and orphans include a 14-year-old girl who decided to go to Israel because, the social workers suspected, she got the sense that her relatives lost interest in taking her into their home. In another case, a 13-year-old boy refused to live with his aunt and uncle, who had just arrived in the U.S. from Belgium. But the psychiatrist interviewing him suspected there was more going on psychologically with this boy. See: Letter from Alma R. Block (migration Consultant for the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children, Inc.) to Lotte Marcuse (EJCA), Re: Mania B., June 29, 1949; B. Frankel, "EJCA Activity: Case Entry, Re: Overseas inquiries on Mania B.," by February-June 1949, GJCA records, File 398, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York; Memorandum on psychiatric findings in the examinations of Lion B. (13-year-old, from Dorchester), interviewed on January 1 and 8 by Benjamin Cohen (MD, from Boston), to Beatrice W. Carter (Assistant Director of the Jewish Family and Children's Service in Boston), January 24, 1949, GJCA records, File 399, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

was "a disturbed child in terms of his physical and emotional development." With an understanding of adolescents as less malleable than younger children, the couple came to the conclusion that he was too old to *change* and for them to "take the chance of helping him to be different."[302]

Other families encountered tensions with the adolescents they adopted, especially if the adults expected the youth to work and contribute to the household immediately as a full member of the family.[303] For example, one girl who arrived from Germany as a 14-year-old resented her foster parents' expectations for her to take care of the younger children. As a result, she expressed her preference for children's institutions, where "adjustments can be made much easier" and "girls don't feel like owing any one a thing."[304] Her response highlights the gendered differences in the expectations for girl refugees and how these expectations shaped their resettlement options.[305] The reactions

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[302] Letter from Annette Buchman (Caseworker of the Jewish Family & Children's Services) to Lotte Marcuse, Re: Rabbi Pincus Miller and Mrs. Lea Miler, December 12, 1950, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

[303] Aiss Family – Brief Record of Family Service Contact with the Aiss Family, written by B. [Beatrice P.] Frankel, May 27 to 31, 1949, GJCA files, File 395, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York. Tara Zahra also discusses cases with these familial tensions, especially adult-adolescent conflicts, in *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 74-75.

[304] Questionnaire C: 268, Jan. 30, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11: Questionnaire Responses 1943-1947, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[305] Other girls were similarly expected to take care of infants and children or do household work. Likewise, older girls who were placed in households or children's homes often had the option of working as a governess for children. See: Questionnaire C: 288, Feb. 13, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11: Questionnaire Responses 1943-1947, NYPL Special Collections, New York. There were also expectations for teaching DP mothers how to be mothers (again or for the first time): "The problem of mothers in the country of resettlement can become an exceedingly difficult and trying one. The services, which are indicated in connection with this phase of the problem are in many respects closely related with the services, which will be described under the heading of Adult Education, which in this presentation constitutes the fourth phase of the assimilation program… It is to be noted that resettled displaced persons must be educated to the use of their newly obtained liberty. In the shelter of displaced persons camp medical care, nutrition and pre-school training were accorded almost automatically and without any particular effort on the part of individual mothers. Many of the young mothers involved have no adult recollection of individual family life or the problems of budget. Child rearing in a new environment, without the knowledge of language and customs, becomes a definite challenge to such a mother." See: Letter to Ernst Papanek (Unitarian Service Committee) from Tatiana S. Weller, December 19, 1947, p. 4,

of these families to older refugees—especially those who did not seem to have the potential to develop in the "proper" direction—reinforce the emphasis placed on valuing children as *child-like* children and as future workers.

Social agencies worked hard to accommodate the needs of refugee children and youth, and to find suitable homes for them in the U.S. Yet the process of resettlement was a balancing act between the publicized information about the refugees, the legal categories established in DP legislation and the American immigration system, the demands of interested adopting families, and the preferences of refugee children themselves. With the interests and involvement of multiple actors, the challenges faced by child care agencies reveal gaps between the emphasis placed on family units in refugee legislation and the realities of placing children in homes.

**Conclusion:**

In 1947, a staff member of the United Service for New Americans and the European Jewish Children's Aid (USNA-EJCA) met with a group of American schoolchildren, inviting them to ask questions they had about the European refugee children who were coming to the U.S. According to her report, the children seemed curious and asked thoughtful questions: "What is the condition of their health?"; "Who supports and for how long?"; "Are the children eligible to become citizens?" One girl recognized that the refugees would become her neighbors, explaining that she had many

Ernst Papanek papers, Box 5, Folder 1: Correspondence in English, German and French with children, relatives and foster parents, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

questions because "a refugee child was coming to live with her family and she wondered whether he would be 'resentful' of the privileges she had had."[306]

As indicated by the bills and debates analyzed in this chapter, policymakers in Congress and social agencies were asking similar questions as well, though they had different reasons for raising such issues. They were primarily concerned with the changes the influx of refugees might have introduced into the existing U.S. immigration and social welfare systems: would immigration law need to be modified, or would temporary measures to accommodate refugees work within the existing system? Who would provide the majority of the funding for assisting the refugees' migration and transition to their resettled life in the U.S.? In an effort to address these questions and to clarify how much the U.S. could give and *which* refugees deserved aid, policymakers were modifying and consolidating the legal categories of aid recipients in the U.S. during the early post-World War II years. More specifically, age limits, working together with the national origins quota system and the geographic restrictions built into refugee legislation, aimed to triage the circumstances for distributing U.S. aid and enabling the admission of displaced persons to the U.S.

Policymakers and social agencies did not anticipate the complications that would arise in the process of transitioning refugees from the "displaced" to the "resettled" stage, and the legal statuses established in DP policies did not adequately suit the experiences and circumstances of the refugees. While the age-focused approach may have helped agencies deal with the number of cases, it also reinforced a hierarchy of needs and

[306] Letter from Marge Golton (USNA-EJCA/Distribution Center staff member) to Miss Portnoy (USNA Reception Center staff), March 23, 1947, GJCA records, File 208, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

(perceived) dependency among refugees. One unintended consequence was that child refugees, as well as young adults, who might have benefitted from DP legislation were unable to access these opportunities, especially when the criteria were based on strict definitions of age or were arbitrarily applied to the refugees' situations. Some children and youth remained in limbo in the DP camps as they awaited updates on their immigration status; others encountered roadblocks to receiving the assistance for which they qualified. While Chapter 1 highlighted the role of age, familial ties, and national affiliations when making the case for why these refugees needed U.S. support, this chapter indicates that these very qualifications had the potential to *create* obstacles to receiving assistance. At the same time, as much as the refugees' interactions with immigration policy reveal its rigidity, the ability of refugees and social agencies to find ways to work their way around the immigration system reveals the refugees' agency, the commitment of social workers to finding solutions by "adjusting age to purpose" (though social workers could also be the source of the problem), and the ability for DP criteria to be shaped by actors on the ground as much they were shaped by policymakers and politicians.

Agency case records also indicate an emphasis on clarifying who was responsible for the children's care at different stages of their transition from wartime to postwar life: international and social agencies while awaiting home placement; individual family units once resettled; and refugees themselves once they reached the age of employability. Although the division of responsibility for the refugees aimed to avoid overburdening one agency, this fragmentation contributed to administrative complications and enabled agencies to be selective about *which* refugees they would assist. These designations of

responsibility also set limits for how long a refugee could remain "dependent" on U.S. aid, with attention to taxpayers who had to support "public charges" during this emergency period. Refugees were either temporarily relying on agencies during this transitional period or, if not quickly resettled, were potentially long-term "public charges" on American dollars. Whether the refugees' destinations were their home countries, the U.S., or another country, the phase of finding homes and families marked the start of their transition to self-sufficiency.

Although exceptions were made for child refugees because they were children *and* DPs, immigration and social agency policies toward refugee children and youth also reinforced the emphasis on getting off aid as quickly as possible and evaluated their potential to contribute to their host societies as future citizens and productive members of society. In this sense, debates about U.S. aid during these early postwar years reveal Americans' understandings about foreign assistance and economic dependency, or how they began to perceive refugees and unattached children from abroad as economic dependents. Of course, financial interests did not overshadow the humanitarian elements of the DP crisis in every case, but policymakers approached the refugee crisis as more than simply a tragedy. As the larger dissertation will continue to argue, these definitions of dependency and refugee needs lay the groundwork for refugee policy in subsequent years, including the second case study with Southeast Asian refugees in the 1970s and 1980s.

Chapter 3 will further complicate this story with the perspectives of those who were directly involved in the distribution and reception of aid. These debates among policymakers and social agencies were not only setting the criteria and vocabulary for

incoming refugees, but also creating the environment that surrounded refugee children and youth. Along with Chapter 2, this next chapter will illuminate the ways in which child and youth refugees themselves perceived these changes, and how their own actions and voices contributed to, and even set the agenda, for debates about refugee and social policy.

## Chapter 3

## Refugee Children's Voices: Disrupting Narratives about Aid Distribution, Resettlement, and Homes, 1945–1953

### Introduction:

In response to a questionnaire distributed in children's homes throughout the U.S. in 1943, one 17-year-old boy refugee who left Germany in 1939 and came to the U.S. in 1941 addressed the question, "Is it worth while fighting for democracy? Why?" He answered: "Yes, because Democracy granted us refuge."[307] Another 16-year-old boy refugee from France had a response that was informed by the rhetoric of rights and equality, perhaps picked up from educators and social workers around him: "It certainly is, because we are all created equal with certain privileges which we have to maintain. We want to maintain the rights with which we were born and select our government by ourselves."[308] Another 15-year-old boy from France, when asked to describe the difference between life under a democracy and a dictatorship, used the format of the questionnaire itself to articulate this distinction while indicating awareness of his own agency: "the power to fill in this questionn[aire] as I please, when I please and as my conscience indicates."[309]

These refugee boys were young participants in a study conducted by Ernst Papanek, an Austrian-born child psychologist who had served as the General Director of the O.S.E. (*Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants*) children's institutions in France in the 1930s,

[307] 17-year-old male who left Germany at age 14, Questionnaire A: 58, Feb. 25, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11: Questionnaire Responses 1943-1947, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[308] 16.5-year-old male who left France at age 14, Questionnaire A: 56, Feb. 24, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11: Questionnaire Responses 1943-1947, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[309] 15-year-old male who left France at age 13, Questionnaire A: 48, March 27, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11: Questionnaire Responses 1943-1947, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

emigrated to the U.S. as a refugee himself in 1940, and later became the director of Child Projects at the Unitarian Service Committee in the U.S. after the war. In an effort to gauge refugee children's own assessments of their emigration and resettlement experiences, Papanek mailed 214 questionnaires to young Jewish refugees whom he had mentored before and during the war, though not every recipient participated. The majority of the respondents had migrated from Western Europe, especially Germany and Austria, as children or youth during or shortly after the war, and many had been living in large cities such as New York and Chicago for at least a year before participating in the study.[310] This questionnaire, distributed and returned between 1943 and 1947, provided an opportunity for these refugees to reflect and comment upon their experiences as displaced persons, migrants, and aid recipients. As suggested by the responses of the refugees above, the refugees' wartime experiences shaped their sociopolitical development and provided the framework for narrating their pasts and interpreting concepts such as democracy and freedom.

This chapter analyzes similar firsthand accounts, as documented in Papanek's questionnaire as well as in social agencies' case files and oral history interviews with former child refugees, to highlight the agency of European Jewish refugee children and youth during and shortly after World War II. In particular, this chapter offers the space for children themselves to speak as persecuted victims, displaced persons, aid recipients,

[310] Papanek mailed a separate questionnaire to the adults who worked with refugee children, including social agencies, teachers, pediatricians, and social workers, foster parents, and refugee parents. Participants included 14 social work agencies, 4 schools, 17 social workers, 10 teachers, 2 pediatricians, and 2 camp counselors who all worked with refugee children in Europe as well as in New York, Illinois, New Hampshire, Maryland, California, Pennsylvania, Palestine, Canada, England, and Mexico. Nine refugee parents and five foster parents also wrote to Papanek about their opinions regarding their children. Questionnaire B was for social agencies, teachers, and social workers to fill out; Questionnaires A and C were for the refugees.

and migrants, whether they confirmed or challenged the narratives produced by adult social workers, policymakers, and the American media. These sources undoubtedly have shortcomings; for example, the oral histories were shaped by the passage of time and the unreliability of memory, while children's letters and questionnaires were often filtered through the social workers who collected and published them. The children's willingness to share information was also moderated by their relationships to the social professionals. In the case of Papanek, he had already established a level of trust after closely mentoring the children for several years. In the case of agency caseworkers who received letters from discontented youth or interacted with the children strictly as professionals and not as mentors, most of these children did not fully trust the caseworkers as authority figures and were more reserved. Nonetheless, these sources offer glimpses into the children's reactions and the active roles they played in the aid distribution process.

The first section of this chapter aims to show how the perspectives of those who were experiencing postwar changes on the ground—namely social workers and refugees themselves—complicate the public narratives about aid distribution and resettlement from the first two chapters. Refugee children's narrations of these processes reveal the limitations placed upon children's agency, especially due to the bureaucratic aspects of distributing aid. Yet their accounts also highlight the deliberate actions and choices made by children, and in some cases, the active roles they played in determining their home placement. Furthermore, social workers were not the only ones with particular notions of childhood and child dependency in mind when it came to distributing aid. The children and youth's own understandings of their roles as dependents and independent actors determined whether they understood relief efforts and aid packages as symbols of

American humanitarianism, or as evidence of administrative inefficiencies and institutional politics within nonprofit organizations and relief programs. As this chapter demonstrates, these different conceptions of child and youth agency held by social workers and refugees shaped their assessments of the war's effects and the efficacy of international aid programs.

The second section will follow European orphaned children who traveled to the U.S. as refugees and immigrants. Within the context of American social workers' projects of creating certain kinds of new citizens, this section will use the personal narratives of child refugees to raise questions about how the experiences of war and displacement shaped the refugees' understandings of home, belonging, and notions of citizenship, which were also tied to ideas about self-sufficiency. In addition, their responses provide glimpses into the young refugees' own notions of humanitarianism and their political consciousness that were developing through their interactions with social workers and their host communities. By revealing how children, as historical actors, perceived their role in the changing geopolitical world during the Cold War, these personal narratives reflect how the feedback from children and youth played a role in shaping "official" narratives and policies produced by state-level actors and agency workers. As social agencies strove to adapt to refugees' needs, the negotiations between refugee children and social professionals prompted modifications in social work and shifts in the evolution of refugee policy after World War II.

**Historiographical Considerations: Personal Narratives and Refugee Voices**

This chapter aims to closely analyze the intersections of refugees' personal narratives with the collective memory and popular narratives about humanitarianism and the resettlement of child refugees. Refugee narratives offer another type of narrative within the broader context of popular and policy-level narratives about American and international aid after World War II. I am not as interested in the events mentioned in their accounts as I am in how refugees themselves narrated, understood, and made meaning of the changes they experienced and witnessed on the ground. As Barbara Laslett, Mary Jo Maynes, and Jennifer L. Pierce have pointed out, "personal narratives can never be taken as a transparent description of 'experience' or a straightforward expression of identity."[311] Rather, these narratives can "document a subjectivity that has evolved along with and within a memory embodied in an individual who has constructed him- or herself in a specific social context through interpersonal relationships and psychodynamic processes."

Since I am analyzing narratives that were captured in particular moments—both the contemporaneous narratives documented in letters and questionnaires filled out by the refugees as children and youth, and the retrospective accounts recorded in oral history interviews with adults reflecting on their childhoods—these narratives offer snapshots of "one form and moment in [an] ongoing narrative self-construction."[312] Specifically, these accounts reflect the refugees' self-construction of their identities as children and as refugees during this period. This chapter also aims to use personal narratives to "*illuminate the operation of historical forces and of public or historical narratives as*

[311] Mary Jo Maynes, Jennifer L. Pierce, and Barbara Laslett, *Telling Stories: The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 41.
[312] Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett, *Telling Stories*, 41.

*they influence people's motivations and their self-understandings as historical agents.*"[313] The contemporaneous sources (letters and questionnaires) might reflect the children's own thoughts, but they also reveal their writing according to the expectations of the social workers, mentors, or guardians they trusted, as well as the children's awareness of public discourses, since it is clear that some children and youth picked up on the language being circulated around them. The oral history interviews also indicate that the refugees' acquisition of knowledge about the past—details about the war, documentation they tracked down about what happened to their families during and after the war, and other life experiences in their adulthood—shaped the narratives they presented to the interviewers and in front of the camera.

**Distributing Aid Abroad: Challenging Social Workers' Narratives about Age Categories and Child Dependency**

Social workers had certain goals in their efforts to resettle and rehabilitate displaced European Jewish children and youth. First, social professionals aimed to restore their physical and emotional health, or as educators such as Tatiana S. Wells explained, "To make these little creatures, burdened by anxieties and problems beyond their grasp, into 'children' again," since the war had robbed them of their childhood experiences.[314] Secondly, social professionals had an educational agenda to develop refugee children and

[313] Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett, *Telling Stories*, 45 [Italics in original text].
[314] But other social workers, including Papanek, encouraged independent thinking in refugee children and youth. See: Letter from Tatiana S. Weller to Ernst Papanek (Unitarian Service Committee), December 19, 1947, Ernst Papanek Papers, Box 5, NYPL Special Collections, New York; Associated Press report and letter from Paul Comly French, CARE records, Box 899, Folder 12/7/47–1/30/48, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

youth into free-thinking and "responsibly thinking" individuals.[315] Along these lines, social workers wanted to avoid forcing resettlement options onto refugee children against their wishes and strove to include the young refugees in the decision-making process, though most social workers did make the final call based on what they assumed to be the "child's best interests."[316]

For refugee children and youth who were resettled in the U.S., social agencies also aimed to help them assimilate and develop into citizens of their new homes. According to Papanek, the goal was to teach refugee children and youth how to become productive members of their communities and to "forge their own fates." At the same time, social workers emphasized discipline—though they were careful to distinguish this definition of discipline from "the one in Germany"— to encourage the children to appreciate their freedoms, but not to enable "the illusion of unrestricted freedom." Ultimately, the social workers aimed to develop refugee children and youth into "true, free men and women conscious of their responsibilities, possessed of an understanding of their surroundings, industrious and conscientious," and to educate young displaced persons about "the use of their newly obtained liberty."[317]

This emphasis on the making of "free-thinking" individuals not only aligned with social agencies' project of instilling democratic values in the children, but also to teach

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[315] Letter from Mueller (Direktorin of the Auguste-Foerster-Haus) to HICOG Children's Court in Munich, "Nikolai K.'s Repatriation, born on 20 February 1937," March 4, 1951, Box 14, Children's Resettlement Case Files, 1947-1954, U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, RG 466, National Archives at College Park.
[316] Tara Zahra, "Lost Children: Displacement, Family, and Nation in Postwar Europe," *The Journal of Modern History* 81 (March 2009): 45–86; also see Linda Gordon, "The Perils of Innocence, or What's Wrong with Putting Children First," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 331–350.
[317] Ernst Papanek, "Initial Problems of a Children's Home and Experimental School for Refugee Children: The Refugee Children's Homes in Montmorency, France," p. 4, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 8, Folder 8: Articles by E.P.; Letter to Ernst Papanek [Unitarian Service Committee] from Tatiana S. Weller, December 19, 1947, p. 4, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 5, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

child refugees how to grow *properly* out of their dependency on the agencies. This goal was part of a larger agency emphasis on self-sufficiency for the broader DP population in Europe.[318] One rabbi who was visiting Europe on behalf of Rescue Children, Inc. (an Orthodox Jewish organization that housed 2200 war orphans in 15 homes throughout France, Belgium, and Sweden) observed that the people of Europe "want to become independent again, and indicated they were tired of having [their] fate [debated] in Washington. They are a proud people and don't like to be looked upon with pity because they have suffered."[319] Aid workers, as well as policymakers, further linked self-sufficiency to ideas about postwar political and economic freedom as they considered the educational function of relief and resettlement assistance programs for adult and child refugees alike.

In social workers' visions of resettlement and rehabilitation, the home, family unit, and nation-state offered the environments for them to exercise and develop these skills and values, as well as the solution to the postwar displacement of refugee children and youth. As Katharine F. Lenroot, the Chief of the Children's Bureau, stressed to child welfare leaders in 1944, "Every effort should be made to preserve and strengthen normal social groupings, especially families. Attempts should be made to enable children to live in their own or foster families rather than in institutions," with the exception of children

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[318] The USC also aimed to build self-sufficiency in adult refugees to strengthen refugee families. For families who were reunited, the USC discussed the possibility of an adult program that would focus on "detaching parents from the feeling of dependency which they have developed. Their direct responsibility to each within the family group and to their children must be fortified." See: Letter to Ernst Papanek [Unitarian Service Committee] from Tatiana S. Weller, p. 6, December 19, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 5, Refugee Children – Correspondence with Organization, 1947-1948, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[319] "U.S. Loses Prestige by Palestine Stand, Rabbi Novick Finds," April 24, 1948, Rescue Children, Inc., Collection, Box 1, Yeshiva University Special Collections.

who needed institutionalized treatment.[320] Along these lines, child care agencies and faith-based humanitarian organizations during and after the war, such as the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children, the German Jewish Children's Aid in New York, and the Quaker-headed American Friends Service Committee, coordinated the placement of children in homes and familial settings in order to alleviate the plight of displacement, as discussed in Chapter 2. These arrangements hinged upon the social workers' understandings of the refugees as dependents, both economically and psychologically, but social workers also envisioned these war-afflicted children and youth as eventually contributing to their host communities as self-sufficient citizens.

Educational programs within children's homes offered another space where refugees could readjust to "ordinary life" and make up for "lost time" after the war.[321] For social workers, especially those who worked in children's homes, educational services addressed the children's psychological needs and helped them to resume their expected roles as students and children.[322] Social workers' accounts aimed to highlight the work that educational programs were doing for the rehabilitation of older children and youth.

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[320] Katherine F. Lenroot (Children's Bureau), "International Cooperation in the Development of Social Welfare Services," Commission to Study the Organization of Peace [prepared in collaboration with Martha Branscombe of the Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor], May 16, 1944, p. 11, Katherine F. Lenroot papers, Box 5–Series I: Writings and Speeches, Indexed Speeches, Articles and Radio, 1920-1951, Folder 1, Series 1.1, Columbia University Rare Book & Manuscript Library, New York.

[321] Ernst Papanek, "Initial Problems of a Children's Home and Experimental School for Refugee Children: The Refugee Children's Homes in Montmorency, France," p. 4, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 8, Folder 8: Articles by E.P., Folder 8, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[322] Regarding children who were resettled in Belgium, Weller recognized that refugees faced difficulties detaching themselves from their national identities due to language and cultural barriers. Weller thus argued that "Unless this situation is met with a flexible supplementary educational program the school-aged children of the DPs cannot be expected to take their places, for a long time to come, alongside of their future fellow citizens." See: Letter to Ernst Papanek (Unitarian Service Committee) from Tatiana S. Weller, December 19, 1947, p. 4.

In one published story about an O.S.E. children's home in France,[323] the 14- to 16-year-old residents realized during their first arithmetic lesson that they had forgotten the multiplication table. They felt ashamed until their teacher reminded them of their interrupted education during the war and that "they were not responsible for their ignorance due to the tragic conditions we know well." Once they recognized this, the OSE bulletin explained, the children began to smile "out of timidity" and worked diligently during their free time to work on arithmetic problems and to study English and French. As the bulletin claimed, the children's home provided "'a place of refuge' that made possible to take up contacts with a life in liberty."[324]

However, social workers quickly discovered the challenges in helping younger child refugees make the transition to postwar life. According to Papanek, the Jewish refugee children he observed were skeptical and hesitant to open up to social workers, especially when it came to the concept of "play time." They frequently asked, "Are Jewish children really allowed to go into the park?" As he explained in an article about the refugee children in a school he established in Montmorency, "They had, of course, been forbidden to enter a public park in Nazi Germany."[325] Another social worker at a children's home in Engerode, Germany discovered that her "lovingly planned" educational and recreational activities were unsuccessful with the young residents. In a

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[323] Information about the Ecouis home: the group consisted of 427 boys from Buchenwald who had dispersed as their families and relatives came to claim them after the war. 27 were resettled in France and 2 in Belgium; 173 left for Palestine, "Looking forward to a family reunion," while 13 others boarded another ship; Ambloy opened its doors to 73 boys of orthodox faith; and the children's home of Collonges received 8. Homes started training and some were already working.

[324] O.S.E., "The Children from Buchenwald: The First Arithmetic Lesson in Ecouis," *O.S.E. Bulletin*, no. 13, September 1, 1945, p. 5, translated from French, in Ernst Papanek papers, Box 5, Refugee Children – Misc, General info on, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[325] Ernst Papanek, "Initial Problems of a Children's Home and Experimental School for Refugee Children: The Refugee Children's Homes in Montmorency, France," p. 4, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 8, Folder 8: Articles by E.P., Folder 8, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

letter to Papanek, she explained how she had to teach the children how to act as children, thus echoing the themes established by the publicity materials from Chapter 1: "I even had to teach 2 small ones how to play with a doll by making the doll talk to them, and say she was hungry, sleepy, wanted loving, etc." She also noted that at least seven children had run away from the home. Though she tried to rationalize this by claiming, "All were bad eggs anyway," she recognized that she needed to adapt her social work and educational approaches to better suit the children's needs.[326]

The personal narratives of refugee children can also reveal discrepancies between social workers' and children's understandings of refugee needs. One refugee, Bela, recalled receiving many packages of toys and clothes at the London reception center from American donors through relief organizations. Though she expressed her appreciation for the parcels, she explained that she and the other refugees "weren't used to material things, so in some way they weren't important to us… they sent us toys, clothes that didn't fit, of course, at least there were clothes… but we never really were that interested in those things."[327] According to Bela, there was a discrepancy between what the aid distributors and donors assumed she needed as a child and what she wanted or needed as a refugee.

Bela was part of a group of Jewish girl refugees who eventually resettled in the U.K. at age 16 or younger, though they had some point of contact with American aid workers, among other international aid personnel and multilateral relief programs that

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[326] Letter from Selma B. Jones (Engerode Children's Home) to Ernst Papanek, April 10, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 5: Refugee Children – Correspondence with Organization, 1947-1948, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[327] Wiener Library Institute of Contemporary History [London, UK]/"The Girls"–A Documentary Oral History Project/Interview 12: Bela R., 26/12/2006 and 31/12/2006.

were largely supported by U.S. funds and supplies. This group included 1,000 boy and girl child camp survivors who, through a jointly funded program by British and American governments and private Jewish organizations, were brought to the U.K. in 1945. However, only 10% of these children were girls. Although scholars were interested in the experiences of these war refugees, they published historical narratives that focused on the accounts of the boy refugees and overlooked the experiences of the girls, as well as the differences between the refugees' gendered experiences.[328] In 2007, the Wiener Library in London began a project to collect the stories of "The Girls" and was able to interview 14 women.[329] Although layers of memory and the knowledge they acquired as adults informed the narratives they told, it is useful to consider how the refugees' understandings of children shaped their perceptions and narrations of the "humanitarian industry" that was developing in the postwar years.

In particular, these oral history interviews can challenge social workers' assumptions about child and youth dependency. The interviewed refugees expressed a sense of helplessness not so much because of their age, but rather due to inefficiencies embedded in the aid distribution programs and their inability to communicate with relief workers and the Red Cross personnel. Most of these bureaucratic complications resulted from missing documentation to prove nationality and age. However, Bela recalled how these uncertainties were compounded by relief workers' and adult refugees' tendency to

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[328] 850 of the 1,000 child camp survivors involved in this emigration scheme were tracked down. The accounts of "The Boys" were published by Martin Gilbert in *The Boys: The Untold Story of 732 Young Concentration Camp Survivors* (Macmillan, 1998).

[329] Interviewees include Madeleine H. (from Hungary), Bela R., Lydia T. (who was in Terezin and Auschwitz), Sylvia C., Claire P. (whose family came from Budapest; her father was sent to Bergen Belsen and she was sent to Auschwitz, and they both survived the war), and Eva Clarke (who was born on a cart on the way to Theresienstadt, survived along with her mother, and became a child psychologist, a career she chose based on her own experiences as a child).

withhold information from her *because* she was a child, and that she had to "work out all this through on my own[,] which is quite difficult for a small child."[330] While adult refugees experienced the same sense of confusion from the administrative processes—for "nobody had bothered to explain anything to us[;] we didn't know even where our next meal was coming from, where we were going to go, what would happen to us"—Bela remarked that this was a pattern "throughout my childhood[;] nobody bothered to explain really very much about anything." As she observed, "the adults of course didn't appreciate that we were actually little people ourselves and our thoughts and ideas were already very formed and probably quite mature for our age." While confirming the "lost childhood" narratives, that "obviously we were very backwards in some ways—we had never had any toys to play with—we hadn't had a normal childhood so obviously many things were new to us," she also emphasized that "survival—we were masters at [that]."[331] In her account, relief workers' assumptions about children's inability to understand and fully participate in the aid distribution process in fact created more barriers between the aid workers and child recipients, as well as a feeling of disconnection from other refugees.

Some of the interviewed refugees expressed feeling older or more "grown up" by virtue of experiencing a sense of change as they transitioned from the concentration camps to the DP camps. In explaining the various stages of relief distribution and rehabilitation— first the receipt of food, supplies, and medical attention, the registration with the Red Cross to establish or confirm their identities, and then the steps toward

[330] As part of this "cloak of secrecy," Bela recalled how adult refugees discouraged the children speaking about their wartime experiences, and to encourage them to learn English quickly, they forbade the children from speaking German.
[331] Wiener Library/"The Girls" Project/Interview 12: Bela R., 26/12/2006 and 31/12/2006.

resettlement— Claire P. also described the change she felt from being under-clothed to feeling properly attired, and from feeling "childlike" to being recognized as a "grown girl":

> "…I don't know where from they got… shoes and clothes for us. But we all had a summer dress, a panty, and some shoes. I mean was lots of shoes. Everybody could just choose, uh, what shoes they fit to put on. And, you know, I mean, I was only 13, and I was having a dress on, which was really for a grown woman supposed to have. And everybody said, oh, you look like a grown girl, you know… we had a fantastic, uh, feeling of, uh, such a change. Suddenly. And then… next day, these Red Cross ladies start… registering us."[332]

In this narrative, this transition hinged upon the abundant supply of clothing and the refugees' ability to make their own choices, whether it was selecting the articles of clothing they wanted to wear or fending for themselves during the war, as well as the regaining of an "identity" with their Red Cross registration papers (though the conflation of papers with identity would also create problems for refugees). What these narratives suggest is that the refugees' own perceptions of age categories and self-sufficiency were based more on their feelings of dependency and their ability to exercise agency within their constrained environments during and after the war.

The ambiguity of age categories (whether the refugees were classified as children, teenagers, or being on the brink of young adulthood) also led to red tape and administrative complications. The interviews with Lydia T. and Claire P. reveal the refugees' experiences of not appearing "child-like" enough, or on the other hand, not being "grown-up" enough in the eyes of the relief workers and hospital staff. Their

[332] Wiener Library/"The Girls" Project/Interview 12: Claire P., 25/07/2007.

outward appearances often belied their age range due to issues of malnutrition and stunted growth, and some refugees were able to use this ambiguity to their advantage, confirming the social agencies' concerns about refugees "adjusting age to purpose" in previous chapters. As Lydia put it, it was "quite ironic, in Auschwitz I had to make myself… older, because I wasn't 16 yet, in order to survive." Once the war ended, she had to pretend she was under age 16—and still a child—in order to remain with her father.[333] In another case, one girl's swollen stomach, caused by malnutrition, raised questions about whether she was pregnant; yet her reaction— when she states that she had no idea what "pregnancy" was— reveals her youthful innocence about her body. This discrepancy between age and physical appearance did not only apply to children and youth. At the war's end, Claire's father appeared much older than his relatively young age (44 years old), and she compared him to the way "my grandfather used to be." When they first reunited, the father and daughter did not recognize one another because, she noted, "I wasn't a big girl by [the war's end], but I was a different person. I wasn't a child… And my face most likely was not like a child, you know."[334]

Other child refugees recalled the feeling of "growing up too quickly," or not having a childhood at all, thus echoing the publicity materials from the Chapter 1. Madeleine H. assumed maternal responsibility for the younger refugees in her cohort, who served as her surrogate family members during the transitional stage from the orphanage to home placement. Her mother-son relationship with one of the younger boy

[333] Wiener Library/"The Girls" Project/Interview 14: Lydia T.
[334] Wiener Library/"The Girls" Project/Interview 12: Claire P., 25/07/2007.

refugees retained the same dynamic years later, when they reconnected as adults.[335] Competing interpretations over age categories and the childhood story itself also surfaced during the oral history interviews. At one point in their conversation, the interviewer exclaimed, "But you were a kid, you were still a kid!", to which Lydia responded, "I was 16." When the interviewer protested, "You weren't— a teenager," Lydia insisted on complicating that age category by replying: "Well, I was and I wasn't."[336]

The refugees also recalled the gaps in their "childhood narrative" and how they talked *about* childhood as they encountered doctors, American Red Cross personnel, and job interviewers throughout their various stages of life. When Nelly W. attempted to apply for a job as a laboratory assistant at a university in her adult years, she had several blanks in her curriculum vitae, particularly in relation to education. When the job interviewer asked sarcastically, "Oh, you didn't go to school," she had to explain her past, after which he "dropped all his sarcasm… treating me absolutely with kid gloves… afraid to say anything." Wilson noted that this was a common reaction: people were "horrified by the fact that you had no normal life."[337] Although one might explain the blanks on application forms as markers of the blanks in her narrative about childhood, the adults around her implied that there was a blank in her past as well—or much like the narrative presented by relief organizations, that she had a "missing" childhood.

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[335] Wiener Library/"The Girls" Project/Interview 4: Madeleine H., 24/07/2007. Male refugees also experienced this sense of behaving older than one's actual age, or at least striving to do so, such as Marton A., who was 10 years old in 1939. When his father left for military service, a neighbor told the boy that he was now "the man of the house" who had to assist his mother and accompany the children to the synagogue every Friday and Saturday. Marton recalled, "that's what I did…I did it gladly, I didn't do it like out of charity, this is my job. I am a big boy, I'm twelve, I'm not a baby." He also noted the continuing shifts in the definitions of "childhood" and "youth" in the U.S., remarking on the side: "Here you're a baby when you're forty." See: Interview with Marton A., July 13, 1989, The Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive, University of Michigan-Dearborn.
[336] Wiener Library/"The Girls" Project/Interview 14: Lydia T.
[337] Wiener Library/"The Girls" Project/Interview 15: Nelly W., 14/05/2007.

According to Claire P., these silences about their wartime pasts were partially encouraged by Jewish doctors from the U.S. and England. As she recalled, "they all told us, the day when we left, you… (CRIES) never think of what happened. You wake up every morning. Life start today. So seem to me, it stuck in everybody's head, including mine." Though she and her father were able to piece their wartime stories together with information and documentation from "the Red Cross ladies," Claire and her father acted as if that part of their lives— including her childhood— had never happened: "he was not saying, not saying anything, and never asked what happened to me… We just, like, uh, like nothing happened. We never talked about it."[338] Eva C. similarly expressed a sense of not having a "childhood story" to tell. When the interviewer asked Eva, "When you speak in schools, what do you talk about?", she replied: "I tell stories. [*Interviewer: Whose story?*] I tell my story… I tell my mother's story… no it's not my story, I tell my mother's story. I tell the story of the family."[339] Yet she also felt a sense of responsibility to speak to the next generation about her wartime experiences.

In addition to reflecting the broader collective silence about the Holocaust in the aftermath of the war, the refugees' narrations of resettlement and aid distribution illustrate "the complex social and historical processes involved in the construction of the individual self," including "the ideas about selfhood and human agency that inform personal narrative accounts."[340] In particular, the nature of the interviews and the passage of time played a role in shaping these narratives about the inefficiencies within the international humanitarian networks and the decisions that children were able to make (or

[338] Wiener Library/"The Girls" Project/Interview 12: Claire P., 25/07/2007.
[339] Wiener Library/"The Girls" Project/Interview 2: Eva C., 11/05/2007.
[340] Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett, *Telling Stories,* 16.

not make) within these settings. For example, a number of "The Girls" were able to fill in the gaps in their childhood and family stories as they grew older by tracking down birth certificates, marriage certificates, and the Red Cross documents they could not access immediately after the war.[341] Furthermore, these refugees' notions of childhood and age categories, which shifted and developed throughout their youth and adulthood, did not always match the experiences of childhood presented by the publicity materials. Their understandings of the past, and of children's roles as objects of aid and as agents in their own stories, thus complicate some of the narratives about the transition that foreign and humanitarian assistance was supposed to help child refugees make.

**Challenging Narratives about Family Units as the Solution: Child Refugees' Understandings of Family and Self-Sufficiency**

The accounts of young refugees who were placed in foster homes and children's institutions can also confirm *and* challenge social workers' assumptions that family units and nation-states were a solution to the postwar situations of being orphaned, homeless, and/or stateless. Refugee children arrived in the U.S. with their own conceptions of home, family, and self-sufficiency, as well as certain expectations of the living standards and community life, as reflected in a study conducted by Papanek. The questionnaires he mailed out not only recorded the responses of child refugees, but also reveal how Papanek—as a social professional, an émigré, and a naturalized American citizen—understood the needs of refugees, the obligations of citizenship, and the obligations

[341] Wiener Library/"The Girls" Project/Interview 10: Claire P., 25/07/2007, and Interview 5: Zdenka H., 20/01/2007. Zdenka wanted to know "when [my parents] got married and am I the only child"; she also noted that she was fortunate to arrive in England with a "pink card" with "stamp of TEREZIN and my date of birth and my name…so I had *something*… and I've got a paper with the HOME OFFICE stamp on it." Her peers did not have the documentation indicating their full name, age, and nationality.

embedded in humanitarianism. His questions may have been leading, but these survey questions also had the potential to raise the respondents' awareness of an issue, such as the importance of fighting for democracy or participating in humanitarian efforts.

Papanek aimed to identify the challenges faced by refugees and the ways in which his agency, the Unitarian Service Committee, could better assist child refugees in adapting to American culture. Thus, he asked questions about their experiences in Europe, the advantages and disadvantages of children's institutions and foster homes, whether they felt safe in the U.S., the differences they noticed between their old and new environments, and their opinions about the educational systems in Europe and America, among other questions. He also asked the refugees to identify the people or groups of people who helped them the most, especially in helping them "feel at home here," and whether they believed "this help was effective, or do you see any way in which it could have been better?" In response to inquiries about their home placements, some refugee children indicated that they adjusted quickly to their foster family arrangements, while others did not feel at home with their foster families, especially when the families had their own kids. As explained by one 15-year-old girl who had arrived from Austria as an 8-year-old, she felt "more like a stranger there" who was intruding the family unit.[342] Another boy who left Germany as a 14-year-old boy before the war began was aware of the financial arrangements: "The people were nice to me, but I came to realize in more ways that they were paid for their services towards me."[343] While some refugees identified the "daily contact" with their foster parents as the key factor that helped them

[342] 15-year-old female who left Austria at age 8, Questionnaire C: 290, Feb. 14, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11: Questionnaire Responses 1943-1947, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[343] 22-year-old male in 1943 who left Germany at age 14, Questionnaire A: 14, March 18, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11: Questionnaire Responses 1943-1947, NYPL Special Collections, New York

adjust to postwar life and feel more at home, others stated "Getting out of a foster family" as the turning point of their adjustment.[344]

One 17-year-old girl who had fled Vienna to Belgium and France before coming to the U.S. in 1946 to live with her uncle and aunt encountered difficulties connecting with her family for different reasons. When asked for her opinion about living in a foster home, she recalled her initial unhappiness about her home arrangement because of the differences in their wartime experiences and the fact that her foster family did not understand what she had gone through. While she had witnessed the persecution of Jews in Vienna and France, as well as the deportation of her parents, her foster family was one "that has not been uprooted by the war." But now, she explained, "I got quite used to it already, and I learned to control myself."[345] Though social workers, policymakers, and media outlets assumed that familial settings were the best options for child refugees, especially for orphans, these accounts suggest that some child refugees did not feel completely "at home" with American nuclear family units.

Recognizing the incompatibility of some children with their relatives or foster parents, Ernst Papanek pushed for the creation of children's homes as another option. Papanek noted the challenges of finding families who would be willing to assume responsibility for children on a permanent basis. From his observations of past cases, "Families like children for a short holiday. In a permanent stay, however, only the really beloved child is not a burden..." Children's homes would not only offer "safety and

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[344] 18-year-old female who left Germany at age 10 and arrived in the U.S. at age 12, Questionnaire C: 275, Jan. 28, 1947; 20-year-old female who left Germany at age 13, Questionnaire C: 268, Jan. 30, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11: Questionnaire Responses 1943-1947, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[345] 17-year-old female who left Austria at age 11, Questionnaire C: 298, unspecified month, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11: Questionnaire Responses 1943-1947, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

shelter from bombardment and starvation," but also "[help] them to grow up in a happy child[-]like healthy way, in spite of having no parents or relatives to help them."[346] He thus acknowledged the tension between the refugee children's status as a child and an aid recipient: children needed to be viewed not as a burden but rather as an integral part of the family or community, but as aid recipients they were viewed as potential "public charges" who could become a burden on the community or sponsor.

When publicizing these homes, Papanek also felt the need to emphasize that "the donors can see that their money is not being spent on professional beggars, but is used for conscious, constructive work and for productive welfare."[347] In these homes, children's ages ranged from infanthood to age 16. The upper age limit for admission was 10; only in special circumstances could a child over age 16 be permitted to remain at the home or to leave the home if they were under age 14. But the social workers prioritized "the good of the child" as their "first consideration," with a committee of 7 staff members assessing whether or not the circumstances were exceptional. After leaving the home, the children were expected to become self-supporting, and it was clear that the Committee would "have no responsibility for the material welfare of any of its old students" thereafter, though the Committee intended to maintain contact to track the refugees' transition into self-sufficiency.[348]

Refugees themselves saw the children's homes as cultivating self-sufficiency in its inhabitants, and they expressed their preference for this setting in Papanek's

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[346] Ernst Papanek (writing as the former General Manager of the OSE Children's Homes in France), "Project for Establishing Training Homes for Refugee Children," Ernst Papanek Papers, Box 8, Folder 1, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[347] Papanek, "Project for Establishing Training Homes for Refugee Children."
[348] Letter to Ernst Papanek (Unitarian Service Committee) from C. Mervin Palmer (Officer-in Charge of Friends Service Unit), Jan. 13, 1948, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 5, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

questionnaire. One girl from Austria noted that although foster homes offered a possibility for the child to "find a home which replaces for him a little of what he has lost," one downside of living with foster parents was that a refugee child might feel "quite unhappy about his dependence."[349] Similarly, one 19-year-old German girl who had arrived in the U.S. as a 15-year-old believed that the children's home in which she was placed was productive for her growth by encouraging her to "form [her] own… points of view, because of the [responsibilities] you had to take[,] it made you more grown-up."[350] Another German girl who had lived in an O.S.E. home in France took pride in her independence, stressing in her questionnaire responses that she had worked during the war, even when she was hidden as a child. After the war, she continued to support herself by working as a governess in this home, "earning my daily bread at all times."[351] Age mattered in the sense that adolescents valued their independence as young workers, though younger children who had to act older in order to take care of themselves during the war also resisted social workers' narratives about child dependency.

Some refugees also saw children's homes as encouraging interdependency among the refugees and the formation of their own communities. One young woman who immigrated to the U.S. as a refugee during the war wrote to Papanek in 1947, expressing her delight about his proposal to establish children's homes not only for orphans, but also for "homeless European children" who had relatives but could not, or did not want to, remain in their homes. While there were promising cases in which the relatives were

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[349] 17-year-old female who left Austria at age 11, Questionnaire C: 298, unspecified month, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[350] 19-year-old female who left Germany at age 15, Questionnaire A: 55, Feb. 21, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[351] 21-year-old female who left Germany at age 14, Questionnaire C: 288, Feb. 13, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

"rich and have a generous heart," she questioned, "how many children do not have this opportunity?", and observed that in many cases the children had difficulty communicating linguistically and interpersonally with their relatives.[352] Although this refugee acknowledged that the residents would still be suffering from the loss of their parents, she argued that refugee children could benefit from a communal setting that provided an alternative to a nuclear family, as she knew from her own experience.[353]

Not all refugees had such positive experiences in children's homes, as exemplified by a letter from a teenage boy who criticized his home placement, though he in fact used his child status rhetorically to his advantage. According to the boy's letter to a trusted social worker, he and the other children in the cottage home were consistently on duty and timely with their chores. However, the "cottage father" was unreasonable in his demands for working the children and, with direct comparisons to Hitler, the boy described the father as dictatorial in his treatment of the cottage children. When the youngsters protested, the boy paraphrased the cottage father's response: "*Ich bin der Kottage father, Ich habe das recht zu bestimmen was ich [will]. Ihr koennt gehen wie Ihr [wohlt]* [I am the cottage father. I have the right to decide whatever I want. You can leave if you want]." The refugee thus implored the caseworker who had placed him (and other refugee children) in the home to be "an understanding mother, especially since you told

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[352] Letter from Margot Dreyfuss to Ernst Papenek (as Director of Child Projects, Unitarian Service Committee), Feb. 13, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[353] Refugee children and youth appreciated the impact of communal living on their individual development and transition into adulthood. Younger children noted that being around other children helped "forget [their] troubles," as one 11-year-old German girl explained. Older youth, such as one 18-year-old Austrian girl, stated that "In a children's institution… We do not get too self-centered or spoiled. I think that there is nothing as beautiful and healthy as living among people of one's own age." See: Quotes from Elizabeth Tully Gutman, *Refugee Children's Adjustment in the United States* (March 1947), in Ernst Papanek papers, Box 5, Refugee Children – Misc., General info on, NYPL; Letter from Yvonne Goldberg, Au Vieux Moulin, Moissac (Tarn et Garonne), France, March 12, 1946, 3 pp., Box 5, Refugee Children – Correspondence with Organizations, 1946, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

us that we would find a pleasant home here [and] This is not the case," and to intervene on their behalf.[354]

In addition to appealing to the social worker's maternal instincts, the boy drew on both the refugees' identities as children and as war refugees. Having "suffer[ed] many injustices because of our helplessness," he questioned, "haven't we starved enough? Or haven't we suffered enough because someone had the 'right' to punish even if he didn't have any idea of justice?" Finally, the boy appealed to the social worker's understanding of human rights rhetoric, which he may have picked up in the discussions around him regarding resettling and assisting refugees: "We would like in America, where everything is based on justice and human rights, to feel that we, too, can live in an atmosphere of fair play and understanding."[355] In this case, the refugee boy, informed by his personal experiences during the war, saw himself as an individual with rights that should be respected.

In these case files, the refugees' own understandings of child agency as dependents and as displaced persons shaped their assessments of relief and resettlement efforts. In their narrations, the refugees highlighted the decisions that they were able to make (or not make) as children within this postwar setting. Many of these young refugees narrated their helplessness as evidence of bureaucratic inefficiencies within nonprofit organizations, relief programs, or foster homes rather than a symptom of their age-based dependency. Instead of seeing themselves as dependents on adults or outside support,

[354] Letter from A.Z., H.O., and J.R. to Mrs. Welsh, Cleveland, October 17, 1947, GJCA records, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.
[355] Ibid.

these child refugees saw themselves as independent actors who relied on the networks they established with their peers, as well as key actors in the resettlement process.[356]

**Challenging Narratives about National Homes: Child Refugees' Understandings of Citizenship and Belonging**

In addition to shaping their definition of family, or whom they considered their surrogate family members after the war, these young refugees' wartime experiences shaped their relationships to their countries of birth and resettlement as their former and current homes. When asked about their memories of their countries of birth, one boy who came from Germany as a 10-year-old expressed his attachments to his family, but not to Germany as his national home: "I have no special feelings about leaving Germany, but I left my parents."[357] Another teenager who left Austria as a 12-year-old, emigrated to England in 1939, and arrived in New York in 1942 recalled the initial language difficulties and hardships with participating in American teenage life; however, he felt that the adjustment became easier with time and was content to stay in his new home. When asked if he felt homesick for Vienna, he responded: "I wish I were [homesick] sometime; but hardly could say that in truth I am." When asked if he would consider returning to his native country, he replied: "Not permanently; I don't deliberately want to

[356] While some took pride in their independence, refugee children did recognize and appreciate the possibility of relying on external sources of aid when they needed help, temporary as it may have been. In response to questions asking the refugees to assess the humanitarian assistance they received ("What people or group of people helped you to get used to America? In what way did they help you?" and "Do you think this help was effective, or do you see any way in which it could have been better?"), one young man from Germany expressed his gratitude to those who helped him when he arrived in 1939: "Quakers, friends, relatives, and the American people in general," who had helped him "By being real people; also by their broadmindedness." He did believe that this help was effective, especially because "Personally I dislike the idea of making people realize that they cannot stand on [their] own feet." See: 26.5-year-old male who left Germany at age 19.5, Questionnaire C: 276, Feb. 12, 1947, Box 11, Ernst Papanek papers, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[357] 21-year-old male who left Germany at age 10, Questionnaire C: 294, Feb. 9, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

return to an environment of persecution, political unrest, starvation and disease, for ever."[358] Similarly, one girl from Germany, who was now reunited with her sister in the U.S., stated firmly: "I never want to go back to my native country," while another girl did not expect to stay in the U.S. forever, but she "certainly [didn't] want to go back to Germany," though she considered Palestine as an option.[359] These refugees were thus informed by their memories of what they left behind.

To an extent, these children's responses fit into social workers' goals to realign their national identifications and to assimilate these children into their new sites of resettlement. For some respondents, especially older youth, it did not take long for them to consider the U.S. their home. One male refugee who had arrived from France as a 15-year-old, stated in his questionnaire: "I'm a U.S. subject," while another male refugee from Germany recognized and appreciated the "possibility [for him] to become an equal U.S. citizen."[360] For these respondents, strong attachments to their former homes did not pose a major barrier to their adjustment as immigrants. One boy who had left Germany at age 11 questioned the very meaning of home when asked if he wanted to return: "If home is Germany, no."[361] Another 15-year-old female who left Austria at age 9 in 1940 expressed her desire to return to Europe for a trip to "see the places my parents have told

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[358] 19-year-old male who left Austria at age 12, Questionnaire C: 281, Feb. 12, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[359] 22-year-old female who left Germany at age 14, Questionnaire C: 273, Jan. 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[360] 18-year-old male who left Germany at age 10, Questionnaire C: 287, Feb. 14, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[361] 21-year-old female who left Germany at age 14, Questionnaire C: 288, Feb. 13, 1947; 18-year-old male who left Germany at age 10, Questionnaire C: 287, Feb. 14, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

me about," but she clarified that it was "not because of any love for Austria, because I don't love any country."[362]

Yet not all the respondents considered the U.S. their home, at least not at this moment. Some children resisted the questionnaire's framing of their migratory experience as an "exile" from their native countries, preferring to describe their resettlement in the U.S. as a "change" or "new start" that did not necessarily sever all ties to their former countries.[363] Other adolescents indicated their difficulties with adjusting to American schools and connecting with non-refugees. For example, one boy from Austria who had immigrated as a 7-year-old pointed out that he had not really experienced persecution back home; rather, he experienced such treatment and discrimination "Only during first years *here* [in America,] when I was classified as a 'refugee.'"[364] Similarly, a sixteen-year-old boy from Germany described his "outsider" status as a refugee in the U.S. and the "enmity expressed towards [resident] aliens."[365] This boy left Austria before he had a chance to experience such discrimination, but despite the change in locale, he felt that he was still in a vulnerable and liminal status as a Jew and a refugee.

Others noted persisting anti-Semitism and religious discrimination in the U.S., though a few children listed "religious freedom" as one of the reasons they appreciated

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[362] 15-year-old female who left Austria at age 7.5 and came to the U.S. at age 9, Questionnaire C: 270, Jan. 31, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[363] 15/16-year-old male who left Austria at age 11/12, Questionnaire A: 53, Feb. 26, 1943; 14-year-old male who left Austria at age 10, Questionnaire A: 60, Feb. 19, 1943; 22-year-old male who left Germany at age 14, Questionnaire A: 14, March 18, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[364] 16-year-old male who left Austria at age 7, Questionnaire C: 251, Jan. 21, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[365] 18-year-old male who left Germany at age 10, Questionnaire C: 287, Feb. 9, 1947; 18-year-old male who left Germany at age 10, Questionnaire C: 287, Feb. 9, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York. Quotes/snippets from children in children's homes/institutions, collected by Elizabeth Tully Gutman, *Refugee Children's Adjustment in the United States* (March 1947), Ernst Papanek papers, Box 5, Refugee Children – Misc., General info on, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

being in the U.S.[366] One refugee girl distinguished between "the relative freedom you have politically, socially etc." and "the impersonal contact that naturally goes with it." In particular, she "[worried] about the antisemitism that seems to be growing."[367] Some children felt ambivalent about their religious upbringing, such as in one case handled by the German Jewish Children's Aid. One boy had mixed feelings due to the anti-Semitism he had witnessed during the war and his tensions with his mother over religion prior to her death. The boy, now 16 years old, was half-Jewish, but had converted to Catholicism during the war as "a preventive measure"; his younger sister was baptized as a Catholic and was apparently unaware of their background. After the war and the mother's return from a concentration camp, she wanted her son to convert back to Judaism, but he refused. After the mother's death,[368] IRO child welfare workers believed that the son felt guilty about their conversation, though he refused to admit it. The welfare workers noted that he needed help with this ambivalence about his faith; he still feared that "people might find out about it and discriminate against him," but he also did not "deny his origin."[369] Other refugee children similarly were not practicing their faith, though they indicated their participation in Jewish youth groups.

The question of whether the refugee children felt "at home" in their new communities varied based on the communities in which they were placed. Some children had no choice but to immerse themselves in non-refugee communities, because no other

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[366] 19-year-old male who left Germany at age 13, Questionnaire C: 267, Feb. 2, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[367] 20-year-old female who came from Germany (and Switzerland) at age 15, Questionnaire C: 258, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[368] She committed suicide in 1946; she had had a history of institutionalization, but her reasons for committing suicide were likely tied to her experiences in the concentration camp.
[369] Note for File, Re: Kurt-Werner and Erika-Berta W., written by Nelly Brann (Child Welfare Officer, IRO Dusseldorf), September 1950, GJCA records, File 369, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

refugee children had been placed in those communities.[370] Others preferred to surround themselves with non-refugee children because they wanted to assimilate and, as one refugee explained, "I [want] to become citizen."[371] Respondents who interacted more with refugee children noted that they shared similar experiences of emigration. One refugee who had arrived as a 12-year-old boy from Germany indicated that he interacted "Much more [with] refugees[,] Who came over after the war finished" because "They understand better… Americans don't think my way. With refugees I have not difficulties."[372] Likewise, one 16-year-old girl refugee from Germany interacted with "some of [the refugees] I knew on the other side, and we understand each other better. I mean because most refugees have gone through something."[373] Although these respondents did not immediately consider their American communities to be "home," they carved out a space for themselves by seeking and building relationships with other European refugee children.

Papanek's questionnaire also asked for the refugees' input on how social agencies could facilitate the incoming refugees' adjustment to American culture by asking: "If you were a member of a committee set up to help refugee children feel at home in America, what activities would you have this committee undertake, and how would you organize these activities?". One refugee suggested keeping refugee children together in a home, where they could learn English and "little by little permit them to accustom themselves to

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[370] 19-year-old male who left Austria at age 12, Questionnaire C: 281, Feb. 12, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[371] 16.5-year-old male who left France at age 14, Questionnaire A: 56, Feb. 24, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[372] 20-year-old boy who left Germany at age 12, Questionnaire C: 289, Feb. 22, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[373] 16.5-year-old female who left Germany at age 14, Questionnaire A: 57, Feb. 24, 1943; Also articulated by a 19-year-old female who left Germany at age 15, Questionnaire A: 55, Feb. 21, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[American] living, thinking, and would show them the good and the bad way," along with their peers. Similarly, one female refugee identified both the psychological and emotional changes that young newcomers would experience as *refugees* (such as the inevitable "period of mental depression before feeling at home here"), as well as the emotional needs the refugees would have as *children* (since they were dependents, they would be placed "in a family setting with people who are fundamentally strange to them"). She thus suggested that child refugees be provided with external resources, including a greeter who could speak their native language to welcome them initially, mentors to guide them through schooling and job training, and a committee or broader refugee community to offer support when they needed "a home where the child can find refuge when family life becomes intolerable."[374]

Rather than easing refugee children into their environments, several respondents emphasized the importance of immersion in social activities, so that refugee children could interact with non-refugee children sooner rather than later.[375] Another male refugee suggested forming a youth organization with a mix of both refugee and non-refugee children, while a girl refugee recommended "As much contact as possible with American children as possible and as little with other refugees, as possible."[376] One adolescent from Austria acknowledged the potential ambivalence refugee children would feel about their national affiliations and expressed her hope that American boys and girls would "accept [refugee children] into their group without always referring to their native country."

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[374] 17-year-old girl who left Austria at age 11, Questionnaire C: 298, unspecified month, 1947; 18-year-old female who left Germany at age 10 and arrived in the U.S. at age 12, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[375] 19-year-old male who left Austria at age 12, Questionnaire C: 281, Feb. 12, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[376] 18-year-old male who left Germany at age 10, Questionnaire C: 287, Feb. 14, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

Although she recognized that children were naturally curious, she recalled "how I hated the question, 'Which do you like better, America or Austria,'" for it reminded her that she was viewed as an outsider or in-between those two nationalities.[377]

Social workers had similar community-building programs in mind, though some agencies such as the Unitarian Service Committee (USC) had a particular assimilationist agenda that downplayed ethnic or national identities and connected assimilation to self-sufficiency. As Tatiana S. Weller explained in a letter to Papanek, "Once resettlement is accomplished it is important to bear in mind that those resettled, as potential citizens of a new country, no longer requires the intensified protective services of their own organized national groups. The objective should be assimilation and not the perpetuation of ethnic cysts, if resettled displaced persons are to be happy in their new environment and be cordially received in their new country."[378] Furthermore, particularly for adults, she expected former DPs to participate actively to keep this process of assimilation moving. Finally, "[t]o further remove them from feeling of dependency," Weller suggested that DPs "be required to participate financially by making at least a token money payment."[379] As Weller implied, remaining in "ethnic cysts" encouraged dependency on the refugee community, while assimilation and constant interactions with non-refugee Americans—

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[377] 15-year-old female who left Austria at age 7.5 and came to the U.S. at age 9, Questionnaire C: 270, Jan. 31, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[378] Letter to Ernst Papanek [Unitarian Service Committee] from Tatiana S. Weller, December 19, 1947, p. 6, Ernst Papanek Papers, Box 5, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

[379] Social workers and psychiatrists were also acting out of their concern about the child refugees' internalization of dependency. According to a psychiatrist who evaluated the mental state of one refugee boy, the boy repeatedly referred to himself as "a little boy" and gave "the impression that he believes, because of his dependence, age and size, his feelings would not be regarded as important, when adults over him wish otherwise. He observes pessimistically that there cannot be any goodness in a world of wars and atomic bomb intervention." See: Memorandum on psychiatric findings in the examinations of Lion B. (13-year-old from Dorchester), interviewed on January 1st and 8th, by Benjamin Cohen, MD (Boston) to Beatrice W. Carter (Assistant Director of the Jewish Family and Children's Service in Boston), January 24, 1949, GJCA records, File 399, YIVO Institute, Center for Jewish History, New York.

as fellow self-sufficient members of their communities—was the route to full belonging and citizenship in the U.S.

While social workers had their own visions for the integration, assimilation, and the making of new citizens, the voices of refugees, also reflected in these sources, both confirm and complicate the adults' expectations. As the questionnaire responses suggest, nationalistic feelings about their former homes were not the primary barrier to adjustment, but their resettlement in families and homes in the U.S. did not necessarily mark the end to their search for social and relational homes, families, and places of "refuge" within their host communities.[380] Of course, the questionnaire responses reflect a small sample of refugee children's experiences and mostly reflect the respondents' personal preferences and the contingency of their circumstances. Furthermore, these questionnaires only partially captured their responses at a particular moment of their lives. Yet these sources reflect children responding to adults' narratives about resettlement, whether they adopted or pushed back against the social workers' ideas about particular homes and family units as the solutions for the young refugees' needs. The refugees also negotiated their own conceptions of home and belonging through their interactions with social workers, other refugee children, and non-refugee children alike.

**Challenging Narratives about U.S. Democracy: Child Refugees' Developing Notions of Justice, Equality, and Human Rights:**

Papanek's questionnaire also captured the perspectives of young refugees at a moment in their lives when their political consciousness was developing. More

[380] 17-year-old girl who left Austria at age 11, Questionnaire C: 298, unspecified month, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

specifically, the refugees' experiences of persecution, exile, and loss in their countries of birth, or their acknowledgment of what they did *not* experience due to their timely departure, shaped their understandings of justice in their past and present homes. These responses offer glimpses of the developing awareness of future citizens who would change and shape the postwar political landscape in subsequent years. Yet both the questions—or rather, Papanek's selection and phrasing of topics in the questionnaire forms—and the refugees' reactions to the issues he broached reflect the influences of social workers' educational agendas, particularly their efforts to mold refugees into American citizens.

In particular, social workers such as Papanek had been encouraging children and youth to think about democracy and freedom in certain ways. Some of the responses were "ideal" answers that adopted similar language as that used in social workers' own writings, or what the refugees assumed were common understandings of these terms. For example, one 14-year-old boy's definition of the difference between a democracy and dictatorship referred to the "four freedoms which we all cherish," which "Under a dictator none of [them]…are recognized."[381] In addition to incorporating President Roosevelt's "four freedoms" into his understanding of democracy, the boy explained that "In a democracy everyone has an equal part in the government. In Germany 'Der Fuhrer' is supreme." Some of these refugees were in fact too young to have lived or remembered the experiences of living under a dictatorship and mostly picked up such language from their school settings and social workers around them. But others spoke from experience, such as one 16-year-old boy from Austria who stated: "I happened to live under *a certain*

[381] 14-year-old male who left Austria at age 10, Questionnaire A: 60, Feb. 19, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

dictator. The difference of life under him and in a democracy does not have to be told by me."[382]

Older refugee youth similarly drew upon their personal experiences to contextualize their understandings of these terms. One adolescent from Austria recalled witnessing the persecution of his family and other Jewish people in Vienna, which shaped his understanding of justice: "I have been persecuted as a Jew to the extent where I watched the family's belongings and properties being confiscated and my father being bodily mistreated and taken to a concentration camp." In addition to the violence done to his family, he had been forced to "[watch] the Jews being made to scrub the streets and later being rounded up for concentration camp. Aside from a slight scare I just did not feel." He did not want to remain a witness to wartime violence; after the war, he wanted to witness justice being carried out for the perpetrators: "I think of all these villains with hate and would like to see all of them slaughtered pitilessly, tortured, etc. I want them to get their just and worst punishment."[383]

Wartime experiences not only informed the respondents' understandings of their pasts, but also political and international state of affairs, particularly for refugees who completed the questionnaires in the aftermath of the war. One refugee girl commented on the war crimes trials that were taking place at the time by drawing upon the incidents of persecution against Jewish families and neighbors she had witnessed in Germany: "I asked myself where justice comes in. I wished at the time that I would have had means to stop it, with the only difference that I can't understand why there is being so much fuss

[382] 16-year-old male who left Austria at age 13, Questionnaire A: 23, unspecified month, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[383] 20-year-old male who left Austria at age 15, Questionnaire C: 277, Feb. 6, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

made over the persecutors in Germany. They deserve no chance at all, as far as I can see."[384] According to a German refugee boy who had witnessed his father being taken to a concentration camp, the Nazis were not the only ones who needed to be held accountable; he also blamed the bystanders and those who turned away Jewish refugees. As he stated in his questionnaire: "I'm mad at the whole world for closing their doors to the Jews when they still could have saved many."[385] During a time when the public discourse about the war, including the U.S. wartime response to Jewish refugees, was mostly silent, these refugee youth were speaking out.

As a result of the scenes of persecution they had witnessed before or during the war, these refugee children and youth expressed their sensitivity to the injustices they witnessed in their new homes. The respondents commented on the racial inequalities they noticed in the U.S. without being directed or prompted for such a reaction.[386] In response to Papanek's question, "What do you like and dislike about America?", one 16-year-old girl from Vienna pointed out the religious and racial intolerance around her: "I like everything here except that there is still discrimination against Jews and Negroes."[387] Another 12-year-old refugee living in California noticed not only the prejudices against African Americans, but also "the way the children in our school treat the Mexicans,"

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[384] 20-year-old female who left Germany at age 12, Questionnaire C: 260, Jan. 24, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[385] 21-year-old male who left Germany at age 13, Questionnaire C: 255, Jan. 24, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[386] 17.5-year-old male who left Germany at age 13, Questionnaire A: 50, Feb. 24, 1943; 12.5-year-old female who left Austria at age 8, Questionnaire A: 22, Feb. 8, 1943; 17-year-old female who left Austria at age 13, Questionnaire A: 29, Feb. 9, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[387] But of course, they used the language and terminology of the times. See: 12-year-old male who left Germany at age 4 and arrived in the U.S. at age 6, Questionnaire C: 274, Jan. 28, 1947; Also see 17-year-old female who left Austria at age 14, Questionnaire A: 29, Feb. 9, 1943; 19-year-old male who left Germany at age 12, Questionnaire C: 267, Feb. 2, 1947; 20-year-old female who left Germany at age 13, Questionnaire C: 268, Jan. 30, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

adding in response: "I am against racial discrimination." One 19-year-old girl deplored the coexistence of "freedom" and inequalities in the U.S.: "the prejudices against Negroes… should not exist in a Democracy. Yes. Nobody likes to be a slave, to be terrorized…" She identified the source of her conviction: "once you have lived in a dictatorship you know that never again do you want to see terror of any kind, and you'll fight for a kind of government which will assure you safety and freedom."[388] Another female adolescent believed that she was more attentive to this issue than her American peers because "I think I know what I am fighting for and against, even better than the Americans who, naturally, take their freedom for granted, although they cannot be blamed for it."[389] Therefore, their experiences and witnessing of inequalities and discrimination as Jewish child refugees provided a framework for viewing the domestic political environment in the U.S., and these children and youth were picking up on the human rights and civil rights discourses that were developing during and after the war.[390]

Others noticed economic inequalities in the U.S. as well. One 16-year-old male refugee stated: "I like its [America's] promise for the future, and the unlimited possibilities and I very much dislike the fact that such a rich country has to have its slums, po' south and labor troubles."[391] In response to the question, "Did you expect

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[388] Gutman, *Refugee Children's Adjustment in the United States* (March 1947).
[389] 18.5-year-old female from Austria, Questionnaire A: 62, Feb. 20, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[390] For the evolution of human rights discourse before and after World War II, see Micheline R. Ishay, *The Human Rights Reader: Major Political Essays, Speeches, and Documents from Ancient Times to the Present* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2007) and Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). For more on global civil rights rhetoric that developed through the interactions between the domestic and foreign spheres, see Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000) and Thomas Borstelmann. *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).
[391] 16-year-old male who left Austria at age 7, Questionnaire C: 263, Jan. 28, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

things over here to be as you found them? What for instance?", another male refugee remarked: "I thought of the U.S. as wealthy a nation and it is. I didn't know about the ignorant and miserable millions. I didn't think the U.S. have these, but they do." One girl from Germany had similarly "expected the wealth of this country more equally divided." As other refugees observed, these gaps undermined the "constant boasting of everybody that U.S. is so great."[392] These responses are examples of refugee children who noticed discrepancies between their expectations of what the U.S. stood for, especially the narratives of prosperity and equality advertised abroad, and what they witnessed on the ground.

Older youth also took the opportunity to push back against the questionnaire or to insert their own definitions of issues and terms such as intolerance and democracy. In response to the question "Is it worthwhile fighting for democracy?", one boy from Austria who was approaching military recruitment age recognized that his definition of this term might differ from that of social workers: "If we both mean the same thing by 'democracy', yes. Because the alternative is horrible."[393] Some refugees responded brazenly or tongue-in-cheek to some of the questions, refusing to answer because they deemed them "Poor question[s]," or when asked to identify what they liked and disliked about America, stating: "Like best: The life here. Dislike most: Filling out

[392] 15-year-old female who left Austria at age 10, Questionnaire C: 259, unspecified date, 1947; 21-year-old male who left Germany at age 13, Questionnaire C: 255, Jan. 24, 1947. Also see: 20-year-old male who left Austria at age 12, Questionnaire C: 277, Feb. 6, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[393] 19-year-old male who left Austria at age 12, Questionnaire C: 281, Feb. 12, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

questionnaires."[394] In response to the question about the difference between a democracy and dictatorship, one 14-year-old German boy wondered: "Isn't there enough talk about that difference now[a]days, without my having to answer that question?"[395] The latter response points to the emphasis placed on this topic by the adults around him, whether they were teachers, social workers, or other refugees. Though their reactions may have primarily been a display of a rebellious adolescent streak, the resistance of these refugees to answer the prompt also illustrates how some respondents did not accept these terms without question.

Others did accept Papanek's prodding to think about democracy and citizenship within the context of their new national homes. In response to a question asking whether the refugees were willing to fight for democracy by participating in the war effort, one girl who had arrived from Germany as a 15-year-old recognized that she was not allowed to serve in the military, but nevertheless expressed her desire to fight: "Just the thought of the past, makes me sure that it is worth to fight for [democracy]."[396] While some refugees downplayed the role of nationality in expressing their dedication to the fight for democracy, such as one 15-year-old Austrian boy from Austria who clarified that he would fight "Not *for* the U.S. but against the [aggressors]," others now considered the

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[394] But these responses were often from older males (now young adults): 18-year-old male who left Germany at age 8, Questionnaire C: 262, Jan. 25, 1947; 25-year-old male who left Germany at age 20, Questionnaire C: 266, Feb. 7, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[395] 14-year-old male who left Germany at age 6, Questionnaire A: 19, March 8, 1943; 18-year-old male who left Germany at age 8, Questionnaire C: 262, Jan. 25, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[396] 19-year-old female who left Germany at age 16, Questionnaire A: 55, Jan. 21, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

U.S. as the nation-state to which they owed their allegiance.[397] One 17-year-old boy from Germany felt that "this is my war as much as any American's," and he recognized that citizenship status would be offered in exchange for his military service. Another girl from Austria framed her response in terms of the assistance she had received as both a refugee and a citizen: "If I could. Because I owe it to the U.S. I expect my country to help me, so I also expect to help it. I feel a part of it, I don't deserve to, unless I am ready to help it."[398]

The questionnaire also encouraged the respondents to think about assisting other refugees who were "on the other side," waiting in Europe. Such questions encouraged refugees who were already in the U.S. to perform their civic and humanitarian duties by helping their fellow refugees. Some respondents did express their desire to help, since "I have seen much suffering abroad," and "Since I was myself one of them and know what it means at that time," as a 16- and 17-year-old Austrian refugee stated respectively on their questionnaire forms.[399] Other respondents were more specific about the steps they would take to assist other refugees, such as helping abroad in a Displaced Persons camp or sending packages abroad. One girl from Germany wondered if it were "possible to continue the transports of those poor children," or to help "any body on the other side…

[397] Italics added; 15-year-old male who left Austria at age 13, Questionnaire A: 53, Feb. 26, 1943; 14-year-old male who left Austria at age 10, Questionnaire A: 60, Feb. 19, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[398] 17.5-year-old male who left Germany at age 14, Questionnaire A: 50, Feb. 24, 1943; 12.5-year-old female who left Austria at age 7, Questionnaire A: 22, Feb. 8, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[399] 16.5-year-old male who left France at age 14, Questionnaire A: 56, Feb. 24, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

by giving money to the Red Cross or any other organization that helps those people," much like the humanitarians who helped her as a refugee.[400]

Just as much as, or perhaps more than, they reveal the refugees' perspectives, the questionnaire responses reflect social workers' influence on refugee children and youth, particularly their guidance of these refugees to reach certain conclusions. Of course, the narratives presented by these children and youth have inevitably been confined by the structured format of the questionnaire and the respondents' selectiveness in what they shared with their mentor. In some cases, the adoptive parents or guardians wrote out the responses for younger children and thus had the opportunity to supervise, edit, or reinterpret their words. For example, one foster father added a note at the end of the questionnaire that he had assisted the child in filling it out, but he reassured Papanek that "I did not suggest answers to him. I gave them almost with same wording I got them from him."[401]

One 16-year-old German boy was self-conscious that his answers were *too* unfiltered and added a request at the end of his questionnaire: "I took it for granted that this is all strictly and entirely confidential. I have, with that supposition in mind, told you several things that even my parents do not know. Even if you could find out more about me, I am confident that you will not try to, and that no one but you will ever know the contents of this questionnaire," before thanking Papanek for "giving me a chance to

[400] 19-year-old female who left Germany at age 15, Questionnaire A: 55, Feb. 21, 1943; also see 19-year-old male who left Austria at age 12, Questionnaire C: 281, Feb. 12, 1947, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[401] 14-year-old male who left Germany at age 11, Questionnaire A: 49, Feb. 21, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

express my views."[402] Another boy from England was similarly worried about the impression given by his responses, especially those related to his ambivalence about citizenship and nationality: "I don't want to seem unpatriotic. It is a great debate in my own mind whether I'd rather live in England or America."[403] Once again speaking to their socialization as minors and the expectations of adults regarding their political views, national affiliations, and development as citizens, these refugee children were conscious that their responses would be circulated by social workers and cited in reports and appeals to potential donors, sponsors, and policymakers to improve refugee programs.

Other children were aware that their responses would be used to advance Papanek's goals as a social worker. Several refugees wrote to Papanek at the end of their forms: "I hope I helped you in filling out this questionnaire."[404] One refugee, however, questioned the purpose of the questionnaire, and his skepticism determined how much he was willing to share: "I believe that some of these questions would take volumes to express, and decisive actions to prove them, and since I can at this point do but little to remedy the situation of my compatriots, I do not see the necessity, the usefulness or the point of speaking about it."[405] Whether these refugees accepted or rejected the social workers' projects, these questionnaire responses indicate that the young refugees' notions of humanitarianism, civic participation, and political consciousness were forming through

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[402] 16-year-old male who left Germany at age 6, Questionnaire A: 20, March 8, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[403] 15.5-year-old male who left England at age 13, Questionnaire A: 16, March 3, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.
[404] 15-year-old male who left France at age 13, Questionnaire A: 48, March 27, 1943; 14-year-old male who left Germany at age 6, Questionnaire A: 20, March 8, 1943; 17-year-old male who left Germany at age 14, Questionnaire A: 49, Feb. 21, 1943; 16.5-year-old male who left France at age 14, Questionnaire A: 56, Feb. 24, 1943; 16.5-year-old male who left Germany at age 12, Questionnaire A: 54, Feb. 24, 1943.
[405] 15-year-old male who left France at age 13, Questionnaire A: 48, March 27, 1943, Ernst Papanek papers, Box 11, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

their exchanges with social workers, their host communities, and other refugee children and youth.

More broadly, these refugees' personal narratives illustrate how "Individual life stories are very much embedded in social relationships and structures and they are expressed in culturally specific forms…"[406] Likewise, these children's writings reflect the intersections between "individual life trajectories and collective forces and institutions beyond the individual," including the environments of social work, family and community life in the U.S., the American education system, and domestic politics, especially racial politics.[407]

## Conclusion:

### *Refugee Children's Narratives Challenging Portrayals of International Aid & Childhood*

These sources, co-produced by social professionals and child refugees, offer insights into how refugee children and youth perceived humanitarian aid, the resettlement process, and their new lives in the U.S. In both the questionnaires and the oral history interviews, the refugees' narrations of their roles as recipients of aid and as agents in their own stories can both confirm and challenge the "official" narratives produced by agency workers about the transition that humanitarian assistance was supposed to help child refugees make.

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, social workers and policymakers believed that aid programs offered one mechanism of instilling "American values" of democracy and

[406] Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett, *Telling Stories*, 3.
[407] Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett, *Telling Stories*, 3.

self-sufficiency in the children. In some ways, the expectations for aid and resettlement programs did not work out as planned, as suggested by the children and youth's narrations of their home placements and their relationships to their new homes, as well as their criticisms of the inefficiencies of humanitarian work. In other ways, the "investments" in orphaned, homeless, and stateless children did seem to pay off in the making of new citizens, productive and self-sufficient members of American society, and advocates for peace. Personal narratives reveal that some child refugees did believe in the agendas of social workers and child specialists such as Ernst Papanek and Katharine F. Lenroot. At the same time, the developing voices of child refugees indicate that they were not just dependents or passive aid recipients; rather, they assumed active roles in carrying out these agendas. In fact, these sources were more like a conversation between social workers and young refugees, reflecting both the social workers' intentions and the refugees' pushback or adoption of these ideas. The educational agendas of these social workers and the agency of refugee children and youth coalesced, not only to alter refugee policy, but also to shape the refugees' experiences on the ground.

Aid did not just aim to resettle, rehabilitate, and restore these children and youth's physical and emotional health; it also aimed to politicize the children as they developed into young adults. The social workers, as they interacted with child and youth refugees, encouraged or tried to guide the young refugees to certain conclusions, or to become more aware of their rights, responsibilities, and civic duties as citizens and global actors. As the personal narratives indicate, child refugees' own experiences of displacement and exile—including memories of Jewish persecution in their home countries, their migration to other countries of refuge before resettling in the U.S., and their efforts to adjust to life

in American communities—*did* provide the language for discussing their conceptions of justice, home, belonging, and notions of citizenship in relation to their former and new homes. At times their definitions aligned with the definitions produced by social workers and policymakers, and sometimes they diverged, but the interactions between the children's and adults' perspectives reflect the social professionals' efforts to develop "free-thinking" skills in refugee children and youth.

Regarding the broader geopolitical project of the U.S., refugee children's observations and commentary on the inequalities they witnessed in their new homes also challenge the image of the U.S. as a champion of democracy and equal rights that was being advertised during the Cold War. These personal narratives thus illustrate the role of children as witnesses both during and after the war, not only to the persecution of Jews in Europe during the war, but also the discrimination against minorities in the U.S. after the war. As one 16-year-old German boy aptly stated, "my several exiles have given me very much that I would never otherwise have been able to know or see."[408] These connections are important to keep in mind for the following chapters, when Jewish refugees spoke up on behalf of the civil and human rights violations of low-income aid recipients as well as refugees from subsequent wars in which the U.S. was directly and indirectly involved, including the dissertation's second case study with Southeast Asian refugees.

Finally, the various understandings of child agency—whether it was the adults' perceptions of refugee dependency or the children's views of their own agency—shaped narratives and assessments of the humanitarian aid industry that was developing during this postwar period. Related to the larger goal of this dissertation, the different

[408] Gutman, *Refugee Children's Adjustment in the United States* (March 1947), Ernst Papanek papers, Box 5, NYPL Special Collections, New York.

conceptions of home held by children and social workers, in terms of familial homes and national homes, had the potential to disrupt the narratives upon which post-World War II American humanitarianism was built.[409] Therefore, a closer examination of these exchanges broadens the historical narratives about World War II refugee children and youth as dependents and as displaced persons, by drawing greater attention to how narratives about child agency, refugee experiences, and humanitarian work were constructed by multiple actors.

### *U.S. Growing Involvement in Foreign Aid Programs during the Cold War*

Despite administrative complications and shortcomings, the resettlement of Jewish refugees in the U.S. was largely successful. The postwar refugee program laid the groundwork for subsequent years and refugee groups, including the entrance of Korean War refugees, Hungarian and Central European refugees, and Cuban refugees in the 1950s and 1960s.[410] Although the programs in the following years needed to be adapted to accommodate the specific needs of each migrant group, the early postwar refugee policies and programs provided a template for American agencies and legislators to work

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[409] These children's responses remind me of a talk by writer Taiye Selasi ("Don't Ask Where I'm From, Ask Where I'm Local," TED Talk, September 2015), who describes the ambivalence provoked by the questions "Where are you from?" and "To which country do you belong?": "I'm not multinational. I'm not a national at all. How could I come from a nation? How can a human being come from a concept? ... to say that I came from a country suggested that the country was an absolute, some fixed point in place in time, a constant thing, but was it? In my lifetime, countries had disappeared…" Her talk also addresses the factors that determine people's definitions of home: "We're local where we carry out our rituals and relationships, but how we experience our locality depends in part on our restrictions. By restrictions, I mean, where are you able to live? What passport do you hold? Are you restricted by, say, racism, from feeling fully at home where you live?"

[410] Cheris Brewer Current, "Normalizing Cuban refugees Representations of whiteness and anti-communism in the USA during the Cold War," *Ethnicities* 8, no. 1 (March 2008): 42-66; Sample Correspondence with VIP Donors, Sales, etc., 1953-1955, CARE records (1945-1985), Box 932, NYPL Special Collections, New York; Fred K. Hoehler, Untitled article, 1945, Fred K. Hoehler Papers, Box 27, Folder 279: Articles, Speeches, and Related Material, April 1947-1948, Social Welfare History Archive, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

with, as well as a vocabulary for discussing Americans' responsibilities to incoming refugees and needy people abroad.

Meanwhile, on the international front, organizations such as CARE and UNICEF were expanding to provide services in "Third World" countries that not only needed emergency relief, but also long-term relief programs.[411] CARE, which initially targeted Europe and was entitled "Cooperative of American Remittances to Europe," soon expanded its geographic scope to countries in the Middle East, Latin America, East Asia, and Southeast Asia, and renamed itself as the "Cooperative for American Remittances to Everywhere, Inc."[412] According to a 1958 *Christian Science Monitor* article, this organizational growth was building upon "a dozen years [during which] Americans have CARED for the world this way," displaying "Americans' generosity and the openhandedness of the United States Government" with a "freshly baked bun, a glass of milk, a child's smile."[413]

Former First Lady and former U.N. delegate (1945–1952) Eleanor Roosevelt similarly noted the shift in the demographics of aid recipients. In her appeals to the American public to support UNICEF as a long-term organization, she asked her readers to "Picture a European child, in the early post-war emergency, being given a cup of milk,

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[411] Diana Wylie also notes that the widely publicized famine in Biafra marked a turning point in international awareness of hunger and the need for food aid. See: Diana Wylie, *Starving on a Full Stomach: Hunger and the Triumph of Cultural Racism in Modern South Africa,* Reconsiderations in Southern African History Series (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 2001).

[412] Ruth Shortell Dvorak, "Operation C.A.R.E." [informative brochure for CARE representative], July 14, 1946, Sample Correspondence with VIP Donors, Sales, etc., 1953-1955, CARE records, Box 932, NYPL Special Collections, New York; Harry C. Kenney, "CARE Food Crusade Outlined," *The Christian Science Monitor,* Sept. 22, 1956, p. 4; "CARE Food Packages Available for Vietnam," *The Washington Post and Times Herald,* Aug 1, 1954, M17; Frank Robertson, "CARE Buoys Asian Pupils," *The Christian Science Monitor,* Sep 26, 1957, 10; Mary Hornaday, "Vietnam Refugees Get Milk From UN: Other Refugees Other Agencies," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Oct 16, 1954, p. 2.

[413] Emilie Tavel (Staff Writer of *The Christian Science Monitor*), "CARE Expands Aid: What Is CARE, U.S.A.? Joint Program Dynamic," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Mar 12, 1958, p. 13.

a blanket or a pair of shoes, a vaccination. Now picture UNICEF's later development." She then proceeded to describe the success story of a 13-year-old Filipino boy who had benefitted from shark-liver oil capsules, which contained Vitamin A, and the basic cup of milk distributed by the organization.[414]

In addition to highlighting the images of starving and malnourished children who now needed American support, her appeal also emphasized the perceived gap between the wealth of the U.S. as a donor nation and the poverty of the receiving countries, continuing the themes from Chapter 1. Roosevelt compared the problems faced by children abroad with those faced by the "average American home," with both parents at home and "blessed with young children." While the American household might face daily struggles of convincing the children to "eat properly— to down the spinach before the dessert," to dress properly, and to attend dentist and doctors' appointments, at least "for most American children, the spinach, the rubbers and the doctor are available." In contrast, Roosevelt reminded her audience, "For more than half the children on earth they are not [available]… More than half [of the children on earth today]—about 500 million—live and die in want. The youngsters may never have tasted milk, or worn shoes or visited a doctor. But they are familiar with hunger and cold and disease." Her American readers had a way to help: by supporting "The only organization that even begins to answer their needs... UNICEF—the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund."[415] As relief efforts expanded and voluntary organizations working abroad multiplied, the visibility of poverty abroad increased in the American imagination.

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[414] Eleanor Roosevelt, "The Children Fight for Life," *New Outlook* 6, no. 7 (July, 1953): 43-47, at 44.
[415] Eleanor Roosevelt, "The Children Fight for Life," *New Outlook* 6, no. 7 (July, 1953): 43-47, at 43.

These global aid programs were part of American investments in developing the "free world," reflecting Cold War beliefs in the "universality" of the U.S. and the Soviet Union political systems. The concept of self-sufficiency was still at the center of these overseas programs, with the goal of teaching peasants and families in these regions how to become productive workers in an international capitalist economy.[416] In the case of child welfare, the project was to create "global childhoods" and "global parents," albeit in the mold of Western childrearing practices.[417] Ultimately, these programs relied on the perceived gap between the U.S. as a donor nation and the receiving countries that had been established during the early post-World War II years, which assumed that the U.S. was "more developed" than the latter. These child- and youth-centered programs also offered the space for voluntary agencies to establish a presence in South Vietnam shortly after the end of French colonial rule in 1954. As Sara Fieldston has argued, organizations such as the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) set up neighborhood centers in Saigon, which provided child welfare services, social work training, and recreational activities with the goal of training Vietnamese children and youth in "democratic self-help."[418]

These types of narratives continued to serve as a compelling reason for Americans to support child-centered programs abroad, based not only on such comparisons regarding wealth or ideas about democratic progress, but also on the narrative of a "historical tradition" of humanitarianism and investments in the project of democracy-

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[416] Military aid accompanied these humanitarian programs, helping expand the military-industrial complex. See: Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
[417] Sara Fieldston, *Raising the World: Child Welfare in the American Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).
[418] Sara Fieldston, *Raising the World,* 179-181.

building since the end of World War II. As the next chapter will explore, activists, journalists, and critics would challenge this rhetoric on the domestic front by bringing into the spotlight an issue that was “hidden” (or neglected) in public policy debates: the issue of poverty and hunger among Americans, especially American children.

## Chapter 4

## "A Marshall Plan at Home": the "Discovery" of Hungry American Children and Shifting Public Debates about U.S. Foreign & Domestic Aid, 1950s–1970s

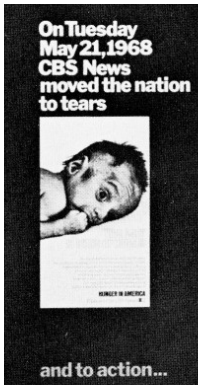


***Figure 6****: Pamphlet on issues of hunger, published shortly after the CBS documentary,* Hunger in America *(1968)*

### Introduction:

On May 21, 1968, CBS broadcast a documentary entitled *Hunger in America* on national television, which aimed to highlight the U.S. government's negligence and failure to provide assistance to its own citizens. The program opens with images of hungry children and malnourished infants, with the narrator remarking: "Hunger is hard to recognize in America. We know it in other places, like Asia and Africa." With the camera resting upon a heavily breathing, malnourished infant, the narrator explains that "This baby is dying of starvation,"[419] and then proceeds to clarify that the infant was not located in a "Third World" country or a war-devastated region. Rather, the child resided in San Antonio, Texas, and "was an American. Now he is dead."[420] Furthermore, the

[419] According to Lewis Jacobs, the baby had been prematurely born and was misrepresented in the documentary as having been dying of starvation. See: Lewis Jacobs, *Documentary Tradition* (New York: Hopkinson & Blake, 1971), 490.
[420] "CBS Reports: Hunger in America," CBS News, produced by Martin Carr, 1968. Another CBS documentary released earlier in 1960, *Harvest of Shame,* focused on the conditions of migrant workers in California and opened with a similar narrative framing. Broadcaster Edward R. Murrow explained: "This is

narrator notes, all the children and families featured in the documentary were Americans: "And all of them are hungry."[421]

The documentary's writers, Martin Carr and Peter Davis, aimed to disrupt the American audience's understandings of the U.S. as a nation of prosperity and equal opportunity, as it was widely advertised during the Cold War. The locale of hunger and the infant's identity make all the difference in this narrative: the "shocking" turn of this narrative is premised on the assumption that such images were not commonplace or "recognizable" in postwar America. By coding the sights of hunger and the conditions of scarcity as being characteristic of "developing countries" or the "Third World," the documentary implies that scenes of inequality and need were "unnatural" or unrecognizable in certain locales—for example, in the U.S., but not in other countries.[422] Furthermore, the documentary suggests, the inability to distinguish between the conditions at home and the conditions of "less fortunate nations" was problematic.

These scenes illustrate a common rhetorical strategy of using comparisons with conditions abroad in order to raise awareness or to provoke debates about the social and economic inequalities at home. Other newspaper and media sources at the time, such as a *TIME* article in 1969, similarly characterized the conditions of hunger and poverty—empty refrigerators, "underdeveloped" communities, malnourished children, and the

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not taking place in the Congo. It has nothing to do with Johannesburg or Cape Town; it has nothing to with Nyasaland or Nigeria. This is Florida. These are *citizens* of the United States, 1960 [emphasis added]."

[421] The broader cultural and political contexts in which this source was produced and broadcast are analyzed in Laurie Greene, "Hunger in America and the 'Power of Television': The Politics of Hunger in Spring 1968," conference paper presented at the University of Minnesota, April 2011.

[422] In more recent years, the popular narrative is that poverty is in urban and rural areas, but not in suburban areas. See: Alan Berube, Elizabeth Kneebone, and Jane Williams, *Confronting Suburban Poverty in America* (Brookings Institution, 2013), which notes that suburban poverty in the U.S. is now on the rise. Reviewers of the book have called this trend "an oxymoron" and a challenge to "the way we think about an important domestic problem."

presence of diseases like pellagra and parasitic worms—as "supposedly nonexistent in this country."[423] Whether these commentators described poverty as a remnant of the past or scattered as "pockets of poverty" within the larger landscape of a capitalist, "well-developed" country,[424] the visibility of poverty in postwar America—understood through the lens of the perceived gaps between the "developing" and the "developed worlds"—still evoked sentiments of discomfort.

*Hunger in America* was released at a key moment in the late 1960s, when domestic social policy was being debated in conjunction with foreign policy. In particular, the documentary marks a shift in the visibility of hungry children who needed U.S. aid, as well as a shift in attitudes toward foreign aid expenditures during the postwar period. This narrative was effective precisely because, as established in previous chapters, Americans had been building a national and global identity based on humanitarianism after World War II. Many Americans continued to call attention to the needs of war refugees, especially children; however, attitudes toward foreign aid were more reserved in light of domestic economic problems, concerns about returning veterans, and the increased awareness of poverty at home. Policymakers and the American public thus wanted to shift their priorities regarding domestic and international

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[423] "Hunger: An Underdeveloped Country," *Time,* Feb. 28, 1969; Patricia Krizmis and Angela Parker, "A Sad Story of Hunger and How Children of Chicago's Poor Suffer," *Chicago Tribune,* April 19, 1970, p. 1.
[424] Of course, the presence of hunger at home was not necessarily "unrecognizable" to postwar Americans; for those who had experienced the Great Depression, the public sight of hunger and economic hardships remained in their memory. After World War II, some commentators expressed their concern that a similar economic downturn would make a comeback in the postwar years. See: Carey McWilliams, "Poverty Follows the Crops," *Nation,* March 23, 1946; Patricia Krizmis and Angela Parker, "A Sad Story of Hunger and How Children of Chicago's Poor Suffer," *Chicago Tribune,* April 19, 1970, 2; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "All-Network TV Interview," The White House Memorandum for the President, December 15, 1962, 4 pp., Collection: The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962. For earlier representations of poverty in American media and literary sources, see Gavin Jones, *American Hungers: The Problem of Poverty in U.S. Literature, 1840–1945* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008).

crises. In addition, fiscal conservatives' calls to "get the government off our backs" and the financial challenges caused by the Vietnam War prompted funding cuts to social programs.[425] By the 1970s, Americans' willingness or confidence in the ability of the U.S. to send food and supplies to hungry children abroad, as well as accepting needy children into the U.S., would wane.

Children, this time American children, were once again central figures in these debates. With children appearing both abstractly as "the next generation" and concretely as the recipients of U.S. aid, concerns about national strength and decline were often invoked in these discussions. However, the various stakeholders— diplomats, antipoverty activists, policymakers and constituents— defined "national security" in different ways. Scholars have pointed out the choice that President Lyndon B. Johnson had to make between the domestic and foreign realms regarding U.S. funding: whether to focus on the Great Society program or the war against Communism in Vietnam (or the guns vs. butter debate). Critics and antipoverty activists similarly saw these two "wars" at odds with one another: the U.S. could either fight a war against poverty at home or continue its war against Communism. They could either strengthen the political and economic position of the U.S. by building a strong foundation at home and investing in the next generation of American children and youth, or they could build diplomatic alliances abroad by investing in military prowess, food aid, and developmental aid— but as critics argued, the latter would only exacerbate the problem by failing to address both the domestic and foreign problems.

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[425] Brad Whorton, *The Transformation of Refugee Policy: Race, Welfare, and American Political Culture, 1959-1997* (PhD dissertation, University of Kansas, 1997).

This rhetoric contributed to a shift in Americans' understandings of foreign aid, a reconsideration of the extent of U.S. intervention abroad, and a questioning of the federal government's responsibility to non-citizens, which would set up the environment for the debates about refugee assistance. Antipoverty activists, welfare recipients, and critics of the war referenced U.S. foreign aid programs to place domestic aid programs in perspective, but were not necessarily calling for an end to foreign aid. These links between the foreign and domestic spheres helped activists argue that hunger and poverty, regardless of their locale, were human rights issues, and that the state had a responsibility to provide basic safety nets and resources for its citizens if it had the resources to support needy people abroad. Other taxpayers used the comparisons between the foreign and the domestic to clarify which recipients— citizens or non-citizens—should have priority access to U.S. aid. Fiscal conservatives would also use this rhetoric to argue *against* aid programs, including aid to refugees, and to call for the prioritization of state responsibility to the needs of citizens before those of non-citizens. Although the latter often deployed the stories and images of low-income and impoverished Americans in their criticisms of foreign aid or refugee assistance programs, they were not necessarily proposing actual policy changes in funding for welfare programs.

While these critics saw connections between domestic and foreign assistance, the debates over American welfare recipients were contested in themselves, imbued with a long-running emphasis on self-sufficiency and concerns about economic dependency in American public discourses about welfare. As illustrated by the debates over school lunch and daycare programs, the language of "dependency" that was central to the arguments in favor of foreign and humanitarian aid expenditures abroad was the very

fodder for the case *against* welfare aid at home. However, many refugees were welfare recipients as well, and they too were part of the welfare recipients in the U.S. who lost out as a result of funding cuts to social programs.

The following sections will first examine the early postwar expectations for the direction of U.S. aid abroad, and then the shifts in public debates regarding poverty in America and the calls for redirecting aid in the 1960s and 1970s. Next, the chapter will consider the voices of low-income parents and families who would have been affected by the potential funding cuts in the 1970s. It will conclude with questions of whose responsibility it was to address the needs of low-income and poor American children that underlay these debates from the start.

**Declaring War on Poverty Abroad: Expectations for U.S. Involvement in Global Aid Programs**

As discussed in previous chapters, American humanitarian workers, diplomats, and politicians assumed that the U.S. was in a position to generously send foreign and humanitarian aid abroad after World War II, without risking its funding for domestic programs. According to *Washington Post* writer Marquis Childs, foreign aid programs such as the Marshall Plan, with their emphasis on economic aid and trade, was a counterpart to the increase in militarization; these programs would help establish "a peaceful world in which there is an ever-increasing exchange of foods and services."[426] Journalists further observed that the Truman administration was consciously shifting its

[426] Marquis Childs, *Washington Post,* May 13, 1947; Martin Agronsky, *ABC,* May 9, 1947; Jennings Perry, *PM,* May 13, 1947, quoted in the Report on "Initial Press and Radio Reaction to Under Secretary Acheson's Speech at Cleveland, Mississippi on May 8, 1947," May 15, 1947, Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, Truman & the Marshall Plan Collection.

emphasis to the "positive economic problems of reconstructing Europe" due to an "emotional response here and abroad" to the military and ideological emphases of the Truman Doctrine. With the argument that food aid could serve as a "weapon" itself, or an alternative to military force as a way of maintaining global stability, journalists described the State Department's initiative as a move to use "billions instead of bullets."[427]

Developmental aid was thus another key component of the Cold War foreign policy, in addition to refugee, medical, and short-term food aid. To garner public support for these programs, U.S. administration officials and nonprofit organizations utilized the language of universal human rights to articulate a vision of a shared international responsibility to meet basic human needs, not only in situations of postwar relief, but also in conditions of global poverty.[428] Just as nonprofit organizations, United Nations representatives, and political figures had invoked human rights rhetoric to advocate assistance for refugees,[429] longer-term recipients of food and developmental aid were also

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[427] Later in 1968, Senator Claiborne Pell (R–Rhode Island) would also describe a similar vision in his proposal for "The Renewal of America, Draft of a Democratic Platform," stating that "food, not guns, is the most useful weapon of peace in this age of rising expectation." His proposal "pledge[d] to review the substance and purpose of our present aid programs to insure that they shall be focused more directly toward meeting such a need." See: "The Renewal of America, Draft of a Democratic Platform – 1968," proposed by Senator Claiborne Pell (R-RI), p. 4, Box 188, Folder 1, Platform Statements, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers, Collection no. 0218.1, Regional History Collections, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

[428] Walter H. Waggoner, "To Free the World From Hunger," *New York Times,* May 19, 1946, SM 50.

[429] With regards to immigration, President Truman used similar rhetoric: "I consider that common decency and the fundamental comradeship of all human beings require us to do what lies within our power to see that our established immigration quotas are used in order to reduce human suffering." See: "Truman Statement on Displaced Persons," *The New York Times,* December 23, 1945, p. 10; United Nations, Office of Public Information. *What the United Nations is Doing for Refugees and Displaced Persons* (Lake Success, NY: United Nations, 1949); American Jewish Committee, *A World Charter for Human Rights; The Story of The Consultants to the American Delegation to the United Nations Conference on International Organization and Their Historic Achievement - The Inclusion of Human Rights Provisions in the Charter of the New World Organization*, 1945. Also discussed during the war: United Nations Information Office, *Post-War Migrations: Proposals for an International Agency*, 1943.

recognized as deserving a human right to "decent living conditions."[430] Fred K. Hoehler, the director of the United Nations Rehabilitation and Relief Association (UNRRA) in Germany and Austria, urged Americans to respond to the "pleas for the survival of society in a democratic state and for the essential rights of mankind," even if this required "some sacrifice of our conveniences and privileges." He also noted that there were people in "countries like China, North Africa, and the Balkan States" who had needed American assistance before the war; "after the war, that situation spread to millions of people and the destruction was unbelievable."[431]

While emphasizing universal rights and needs that transcended nation-state boundaries, this global anti-poverty rhetoric was imbued with geopolitical meaning. The first two Director-Generals of the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), Sir John Orr and B.R. Sen, saw larger implications of these efforts to "bring about the maximum production of food, the best use of what is produced, and proper distribution to the places where the need is most urgent." With the belief that international stability depended on the cooperation over issues of food distribution and sustaining the global economy, Orr argued that multilateral and international agencies such as the FAO would be the way to address the challenges of maintaining postwar peace. As he argued in 1946,

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[430] National Conference on UNESCO, *America's Stake in International Cooperation: a Report of the Fourth National Conference of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO* (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Sept. 15-17, 1953). Also discussed during the war: United Nations Information Office, *A Start Toward Freedom From Want; the Story of the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture,* 1943.

[431] Fred Hoehler, "Faith for Living," notes for a commencement talk at North Shore Country Day School, June 13, 1947, Fred Hoehler papers, Articles, Speeches, and Related Material, April 1947-1948, Box 28, Folder 288, Social Welfare History Archive, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

"If the people of the world cannot cooperate on something as basic as food, then we might as well sit back and wait to be destroyed."[432]

The U.S. State Department had more specific concerns about the potential for starving peoples, especially peasants, to fall under the "wrong influence." Drawing upon the expertise of academic and foreign policy specialists, diplomats and government officials understood international aid services as meeting the physical and material needs of peoples in underdeveloped regions, and subsequently, removing the incentives to turn to political ideologies "under the whip of hunger."[433] Support for the economic recovery of Western and Eastern Europe was intended to achieve a similar result; as *ABC* journalist Martin Agronsky explained in 1947, the administration officials now believed that "the best way to defeat communism is by making democracy work where American intervenes abroad."[434] These diplomatic and political figures thus promoted the FAO and other forms of international cooperation as ways of ensuring a peaceful future for the next generation of leaders.

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[432] Walter H. Waggoner, "To Free the World From Hunger," *New York Times,* May 19, 1946, SM50.
[433] For example, the director of the U.S. Information Agency George Allens, referring to the recently decolonized countries after World War II, argued that political and economic independence were linked. "Becoming free" did not merely consist of declaring political independence, for complete freedom included breaking the bonds of "hunger, disease, poverty, and ignorance." Along similar lines, Tad Szulc, a news correspondent based in Latin American countries, observed that a region's inadequate supply of resources could leave its "underfed, unemployed people" with few options but to turn to "demagogues" and "skilled politicians" who promised jobs and food. Dr. Cuthbertson of the Rowett Research Institute simply characterized hungry people as "angry people" in his talk before the Fifth International Conference on Nutrition, and argued that "liberation" from basic, physical and material needs as the path to securing and maintaining *political* autonomy. See: Dan Q. R. Mulock Houwer, "Children—A Universal Concern," *Children* 9, no. 3 (May-June 1962): 93; Tad Szulc, "Basic Questions About Latin America," *New York Times,* Feb. 21, 1960, SM11; also voiced by social professionals such as Wilma D. Brewer in "Report of the Fifth International Congress on Nutrition: World View of Nutrition," *Journal of Home Economics* 53, no. 1 (January 1961): 15. For more on the links between developmental aid and the war against Communism, see Nick Cullather, *A Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).
[434] Martin Agronsky, *ABC,* May 9, 1947; James Reston, *New York Times,* May 9, 1947, "Initial Press and Radio Reaction to Under Secretary Acheson's Speech at Cleveland, Mississippi," May 8, 1947, filed May 15, 1947, Subject File, J. M. Jones Papers, Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, Truman and the Marshall Plan Collection.

Despite this confidence in Americans' ability to send aid abroad, concerns about the costs of U.S. foreign assistance were consistently present, not only in the minds of policymakers and members of Congress, but also in the minds of social workers and the American public. As mentioned in Chapter 2, policymakers stressed the distinction between "emergency" programs and long-term programs in the discussion of funding for foreign aid programs. Regarding assistance to refugees and displaced persons after World War II, social workers also expressed concern that these programs might take funds and personnel away from domestic programs, and they insisted that domestic welfare recipients receive priority in the agencies' caseload. In response, the U.S. Committee on the Care for European Children clarified that this concentration on assistance abroad would not compete with the efforts to address social problems at home. While many social workers were involved in both foreign and domestic welfare programs, the Committee assured the American public that the "added responsibility" for European children in war-devastated areas would "in no way detract from or diminish efforts to meet the needs of American child — governmental and private — which must be maintained and expanded wherever they are inadequate."[435] Rather, the Committee was confident that American agencies could mobilize enough resources to provide for both needy children in the U.S. and in Europe.

[435] Truman also reassured the public that assisting European displaced persons and child refugees would not touch the resources for returning veterans, stressing that "nothing in his directive will 'deprive a single American soldier or his wife or children of a berth on a vessel homeward bound, or delay their return.'" See: "U.S. Opens Immigration Gate to 39,000 War Victims Yearly: America to Set World Precept, Truman States," *Los Angeles Times,* Dec 23, 1945, p. 1.

In fact, social workers and legislators initially did not see domestic and foreign programs at odds with one another; rather, they were able to complement each other.[436] At the 1947 FAO conference on the UN International Children's Fund, advocates of expanding postwar relief programs planned to apply School Lunch Program practices used at home—especially the reliance on surplus agricultural commodities from American farmers—to the food relief programs abroad.[437] Longer-term foreign aid programs that had been established before the war were already serving as an outlet for these goods as well. According to Robert M. Stern, a professor of economics and public policy, the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act (PL 480) enabled the exchange of surplus goods for the "imports of strategic materials, foreign relief shipments and donations and, most significantly, sales for the local currency of importers."[438] By 1960, the act earmarked an additional "3.3 billion dollars worth of surpluses" for 28 nations, with the goals of expanding the global trade market and strengthening relations between the U.S. and developing nations.[439] Policymakers thus viewed this "outlet of distribution" as having an impact on market prices and strengthening the domestic economy. Furthermore, foreign aid assistance was initially considered, or intended to be, parallel to the war on Communism: the former was a strategy in sustaining the latter and

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[436] Welfare practices from the U.S. were also applied to international social agencies, or "world social welfare." See "Welfare Plan to Guide UNO World Policy," *The Christian Science Monitor,* Dec. 22, 1945, p. 9.

[437] Joint Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization, Interim Commission*, Report on Child Nutrition*, *prepared for the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund* (1947).

[438] Robert M. Stern, "Agricultural Surplus Disposal and U.S. Economic Policies," *World Politics* 12, no. 3 (April 1960): 422-433.

[439] Research had also been conducted on malnutrition abroad (in Chile and Cape Town) in the 1950s, which informed the proposals for amendments to the school lunch programs in the 1960s and 1970s.

an investment in U.S. relations with future global partners, rather than a source of competition for domestic resources.

**The "Discovery" of Hungry American Children in the 1960s:**

Despite these expressions of confidence in the U.S. ability to assist the needy both at home and abroad, social workers and policymakers recognized early on the challenges of providing for children's welfare domestically. Scholars have discussed the "discovery" of poverty in America, or at least the public's exposure to poverty, prompted by Michael Harrington's 1962 book, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States,* the campaigns of antipoverty activists such as the Poor People's Campaign, and increased media attention to poverty throughout the 1960s.[440] While this postwar moment may have been the turning point for the *public* awareness of poverty, social workers and policymakers were aware of the financial challenges early on. The 1940 White House Conference on Children in a Democracy had previously identified the basic provisions that a child needed: home life, material security, education, health, "and general preparation for the responsibilities of citizenship." The conference report then posed the following challenge: "Can a free people by conscious effort and thoughtful planning make certain that the needs of all their children will be met? …Can they bring up children who in turn

[440] These scholars have also discussed the potential for mass media to hinder the activists' efforts by simplifying and diluting issues (class- and race-based) that were at the core of the movement. See: Laurie Greene, "Hunger In America And The 'Power Of Television': The Politics Of Hunger In Spring 1968," University of Minnesota Quadrant: Health and Society, 2011; Gordon Mantler, "The Press Did You In": the Poor People's Campaign and the Mass Media," *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics and Culture* 3, no. 1 (June 2010): 33-54.

will maintain and cherish their freedom?"[441] According to one conference speaker, the federal government's duty was to provide "maximum individual freedom with maximum opportunity" for its citizens, including its future citizens.[442]

These questions were revisited by a Children's Bureau publication distributed by the Department of Labor in 1944, and later at another White House Conference in 1950. As suggested by its title, the 1944 publication "Our Concern—Every Child: State and Community Planning for Wartime and Post-War Security of Children" outlined its plans to address the interests of children from a variety of family backgrounds and individual needs with community services and state welfare programs. Acknowledging that "[d]uring wartime there is particular danger of forgetting the needs of children whose care and protection are the immediate responsibility of State and local public agencies," the publication stressed the importance of planning for the postwar period and ensuring that the interests of children in the U.S. were not lost during the "transition from war to peace." In fact, this was Americans' obligation of the U.S. to their own children and a way to compensate for the wartime years, during which their needs had been "slighted."[443] The plans and concerns articulated at these Conferences reflect both a commitment to confronting these issues and uncertainty about the nation's capacity to meet these expectations.

Twenty years after the 1940 White House Conference, Eveline M. Burns, a professor of Social Work at Columbia University, evaluated how well the White House

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[441] "Children in a Democracy: The Goals of Democracy," *Children in a Democracy: General Report Adopted by the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy, January 19, 1940* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1940), 4.
[442] Ibid., 3.
[443] Emma O. Lundberg, "Our Concern—Every Child: State and Community Planning for Wartime and Post-War Security of Children," Bureau Publication 303 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor and Children's Bureau, 1944), 21.

upheld its promises to ensure children's access to economic opportunities and material security. At the 1960 White House Conference on Children in a Democracy, Burns reminded her audience that the previous White House Conferences had made several "pledges" to the next generation of children and youth: "We will protect you against exploitation and undue hazards and help you grow in strength," "We will help you develop initiative and imagination, so that you may have the opportunity freely to create," and "We will work to raise the standard of living and to improve our economic practices, so that you may have the material basis for a full life."[444] Burns' assessment, however, was that the results were not satisfactory. By 1960, the needs of children who lived on farms, in states such as Mississippi and Arkansas, and in minority communities were still left inadequately addressed.

The growing visibility of poverty in the media throughout the late 1950s and 1960s, especially the visibility of poor children, further challenged the promise to meet the basic needs of disadvantaged American children and prompted policymakers and legislators in Congress to respond. In an article published in 1957, *Washington Post* and *Times Herald* reporter Eve Edstrom used the figure of the child to highlight the

[444] According to social workers Frances K. Kernohan and Eveline M. Burns, the basic rights and provisions entitled to children and individuals in all parts of the world included the following: "a reasonable freedom from preventable disease; a diet adequate to physical well-being; a dwelling that meets basic human needs; the education necessary for improvement and development; and conditions of work that are technically efficient, economically rewarding, and socially satisfactory." See: Frances K. Kernohan, "The Impact of the United Nations on Poverty, Ignorance, and Disease," *Social Service Review* 29, no. 1 (March 1955): 14; Eveline M. Burns, (Professor of Social Work, Columbia University), "Children and Youth in an Affluent Society," *Children* 7, no. 3 (May-June 1960): 105-109.

prevalence of hunger and the gravity of its effects on impoverished families in Washington, D.C.:[445]

> Hunger haunts the young in Southwest Washington. It is no ghost. It can be seen at every step. It is in the listless body of the 4-year-old whose head and hands droop forward after he delivers his mother's note which says: 'Would you lend me two car tokens to go to the welfare?' It is in the none-of-your-business attitude of the 11-year-old who, in desperation, was asked: 'How, how can you be reached?' 'Fear or cookies— that's how you'll reach me,' he replied.

Despite the absence of visual images to illustrate such scenes, Edstrom's rhetorical strategy aimed to visualize the "face" and presence of hunger, as well as the lack of options for children in poverty. In this scene, hunger is an active character that imposes emotional and psychological effects as well as material effects on low-income and impoverished children and families. In the first case, hunger is a stronger force than the four-year-old, who is depicted as a victim of poverty and the welfare system, despite his actions to acquire aid on behalf of his family. In the second case, Edstrom presented the eleven-year-old as a "hardened" adolescent, presumably as a result of his experiences in the "poverty trap" and his understanding of the few options that are available to him. Although these scenes portray the children as actively acting on behalf of their families and their own needs, they also portray the agency of children and youth as constrained by their conditions of poverty.

Edstrom's child-centered article prompted the convening of a Senate hearing on "The Problems of Hungry Children in D.C.," in which the Subcommittee on Public

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[445] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the District of Columbia, *Problems of Hungry Children in the District of Columbia: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Public Health, Education, Welfare, and Safety, on Mar. 26, 27, 29, Apr. 4, 5, 1957,* 85th Cong., First Session (1957), 6.

Health discussed the possibility of implementing a free school lunch program in order to ensure that all children and youth, regardless of their socioeconomic background, had access to nutritious meals. According to Edstrom and other advocates of the program, this policy would enable students to remain at school during lunchtime, rather than walking home for lunch; it would also ensure that children from low-income families had at least one nutritious meal a day.[446] In both the *Washington Post* article and her statement before the Subcommittee, Edstrom pointed out the shortcomings of the welfare system and its role in providing assistance to working parents, reminding the Committee that: "[school children] get no lunch whatsoever, either because there is no one at home to prepare it, or because with the less-than-minimum subsistence allowed under the relief budget, there is no food available."[447]

Calling upon a variety of witnesses to share their encounters with hungry children, or their expertise as to why such a program was necessary, the senators at this committee began to outline the issues at stake. Throughout the session, volunteer workers, physicians, teachers, and social workers shared case studies and personal accounts of witnessing or overhearing children recognizing their persistent lack of food, or on the other hand, their hopes for a satisfying meal. One common appeal in these testimonies was to the children's jeopardized health, ranging from malnourishment to increased susceptibility to illnesses such as tuberculosis and measles.[448] Malnutrition also affected their academic performance in school and, in most cases, limited students'

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[446] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the District of Columbia*, Problems of Hungry Children in the District of Columbia,* 6.
[447] Ibid.
[448] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare*, Examination on the War on Poverty: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Employment, Manpower, and Poverty of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, on Examining the War on Poverty, Part 12, Los Angeles, California, May 12, 1967,* 90th Cong., First Session (Washington: U.S. GPO, 1967), 7.

access to economic opportunities.[449] According to the various arguments exchanged during this conference, hunger was a symptom of poverty related to the children's other physical, emotional, and psychological needs.

Expressing their disbelief with the sights of hungry children in their district, the witnesses and senators at the hearing noted that this issue was not a problem of availability of resources, but rather the mismanagement of state and federal funds and a failure in the distribution of resources to the children and families who needed them the most.[450] Some discussants also made comparisons with foreign aid expenditures and the resources that were being sent abroad. One volunteer at the Barney Neighborhood House, a settlement house in a redevelopment area with low-income children and families as its occupants, pointed out the discrepancy between the lack of provisions secured for children "in the shadow of the Nation's Capitol" and the provisions that were sent to people in countries miles away. In a letter to Hobart M. Corning, the District of Columbia School Superintendent, she wrote that although she believed that surplus food should be sent abroad, it seemed "all the more wicked and incredible" that "young children should find it necessary to be out at night scavenging in garbage pails for food."[451] Senator Hubert Humphrey (D-MN) agreed with her sentiment, expressing shock that "in a country of our abundance, children should be neglected within the shadow of the very

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[449] One *Los Angeles Times* writer similarly argued that the malnutrition and hunger limited the intellectual development and opportunities for children in "slums." While the article itself tried to raise awareness of "the many "adverse circumstances that are piled up before them," some of the doctors interviewed revealed their assumptions about "slum children" and their families. See: George Getze, "Kids' Lesson in Slum Schools: They'll Never Make It In Life," *Los Angeles Times,* April 7, 1967.

[450] Mentioned in these debates were underserved urban areas with predominantly African American, Latino, and Native American communities, as well as poor black and white families in rural communities and the Appalachians. As for gender dynamics, media reports focused on single-parent households, particularly single women with children.

[451] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the District of Columbia*, Problems of Hungry Children in the District of Columbia* (1957), 4.

Chamber where we are gathered. We have provided for making our surplus foods available throughout the Nation and throughout the world to combat hunger, yet we find it existing in our own backyard."[452]

Due to his involvement in crafting legislation that enabled the distribution of surplus food abroad, Humphrey was aware that the U.S. had "all of the legislative authority in the world to feed any human being that God ever created in this country or anyplace else…We have authorized the use of American food in every nook and cranny of God's creation and not only do we authorize it, we will seal it, process it and deliver it and it can be almost spoon fed under the existing legislation." The receiving countries included Yugoslavia, Sudan, and South Africa, and he noted with a reference to the Cold War, "now we are making it possible to send it behind the Iron Curtain countries."[453] Humphrey assumed that with all this abundance, there was no need to make a "stop in America," which may explain his following expression of shock to hear of the district's failure to provide meals for its children. Pointing out the availability of surplus agricultural goods that could be directed toward the school lunch program, he argued that the solution was "as simple as calling up the Secretary of Agriculture and asking for the right official to come on over and figure out how we are going to get food into a community house." Evidently, it was not a matter of resources, and Humphrey asserted that the failure to ensure that "any child, regardless of race, color or creed, national origin, or economic or social status… go without adequate food and [sustenance] in America" was "either a testimony to the apathy and the indifference of our public

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[452] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the District of Columbia, *Problems of Hungry Children in the District of Columbia* (1957), 15.
[453] Ibid., 15.

officials or to unbelievable bureaucracy."[454] Just as "the District participates fully in these food-distribution programs helping to alleviate human suffering elsewhere,"[455] Humphrey called for public officials to take similar measures to provide food for children in the district's own backyard. He was not calling for an end to foreign aid programs, but rather demanded a reorientation in the state's policies toward prioritizing American children's welfare.

Humphrey further argued that this story would undermine the nation's credibility on the international stage. As a member of the Committee on Foreign Relations, he had inside knowledge of what this story might do to the national image projected abroad, especially during the Cold War. He predicted that "If anybody abroad would see this story 'Hunger Stalks Children in Southwest as Volunteers Plead for Food,' and we hear at the same time that we want to get rid of our surplus food he would think we had lost our minds and that we are without soul or spirit." As Humphrey implied, the gap between Americans' capacity to give and the needs they were failing to meet threatened to undermine the credibility of their claims to valuing economic equality and "individual freedom with maximum opportunity" for the "common man."[456] Humphrey, as well as other politicians and policymakers, was thus reframing anti-poverty programs, as well as domestic social policy in general, as a key component of foreign policy.

[454] Ibid., 19.
[455] Ibid.,15.
[456] Ibid., 20.


Figure 8. The Great Society Meets Vietnam

***Figure 7***: "The Great Society Meets Vietnam," undated cartoon in the *San Francisco Sun-Reporter*[457]

## A "Domestic Marshall Plan": Calls for Shifts in America's Domestic & Foreign Priorities

These concerns about domestic welfare programs, as well as taxpayers' own experiences of financial strain, not only prompted policy-level changes and a shift in Americans' attention to social policy, but also influenced public opinion about foreign aid. In particular, the different attitudes of the American public toward previous aid programs in hindsight and current aid programs reflect both the change in Americans' confidence to give and in their understandings of the geopolitical atmospheres between the early and later Cold War years. Public opinion polls conducted by the Gallup Organization, Roper Organization, and the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations indicate that the Americans who were surveyed generally perceived the Marshall Plan as a success and a necessary move on the part of the U.S. In January 1950, when a Gallup poll asked respondents to define the Marshall Plan, 40% of the respondents stated the "Charity Concept" (that it had sent money and supplies to European countries and fed

[457] Cartoon by Eleanor Ohman, from Lawrence Allen Eldridge, *Chronicles of a Two-Front War: Civil Rights and Vietnam in the African American Press* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011), 143.

Europe), while 25% identified the "Rehabilitation Concept" (that the Marshall Plan would "help Europe get back on her feet" by lending money and helping the countries' economies through trade).[458] The remaining responses, all less than 3%, identified international projects such as international cooperation and "defense against communism," or reflected more cynical views such as "blackmail and waste." The Roper Organization also attempted to gauge Americans' perspectives on the Marshall Plan in retrospect, asking for their assessments in 1952 and 1975. In August 1952, the majority (57%) indicated that they thought it was a "good thing," while 12% stated that it was a mistake and 14% said it was neither.[459] Although some were skeptical of the program, the majority of the surveyed Americans' responses confirm the publicized goals of the Marshall Plan.

These numbers remained relatively consistent in the 1970s. In 1975, in time for the Roper Organization's bicentennial historical review, which asked for Americans' opinions about major events in the past few decades, the Roper Report asked whether the respondents believed the U.S. had made the right choice in "Deciding to help reconstruct Europe with the Marshall Plan." Forty-five percent said it was the right decision for the U.S., while the remaining (not more than 20% in each category) stated that it was "somewhere in between" or a mistake.[460] The majority did see the program as an

[458] Gallup Organization, Gallup Poll (AIPO), Jan. 1950, USGALLUP.425K.QK03A, iPOLL Databank, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, Cornell University, Ithaca.
[459] Roper Organization, Roper Commercial Survey, Aug. 1952, USROPER.RCOM52-060.Q14F, iPOLL Databank, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, Cornell University, Ithaca.
[460] Roper Organization, Roper Report, June 1975, USROPER.75-6.R31C, iPOLL Databank, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, Cornell University, Ithaca.

important and successful policy move and, as a 1974 Harris/CCFR Survey indicated, perceived the Marshall Plan as a "proud moment in American history."[461]

Later in the 1970s and 1980s, the reactions would be less positive when it came to evaluating the purpose and effectiveness of current foreign aid programs.[462] One Roper survey in December 1979 attempted to gauge Americans' attitudes toward government expenditures on foreign aid programs, asking the respondents to indicate "whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money or about the right amount." In a national sample of 2,003 adults interviewed via telephone, 72% of the respondents felt that the government was spending too much on foreign aid programs at the time, while 5% deemed the amount too small and 18% believed the amount was just about right.[463] In 1984, when a survey conducted by the Interaction & Overseas Development Council, asked 2427 adults the question, "What is the most important reason to you for opposing foreign aid?", 57% of the respondents indicated "Domestic poverty concerns,"

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[461] 56% of its respondents saw it as a "proud moment," while 6% saw it as a "dark moment." 15% said "neither," and 23% were not certain. See: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, Harris/CCFR Survey of American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy, Dec. 1974, USHARRIS.74CFR.Q07CK, Louis Harris & Associates [producer], iPOLL Databank, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, Cornell University, Ithaca.

[462] As one survey conducted by the Presidential Commission on World Hunger indicates, the respondents may have had different definitions of "foreign aid" in mind. In response to the question, "What do you think of when I say 'foreign aid'?", some respondents thought of concrete categories or types of aid, such as food/food supply, money to other countries, military aid (including arms and ammunition), helping foreign countries, aid to underdeveloped countries (including agricultural tools and supplies), medical aid and health care, and clothing. Others expressed their evaluations of such aid programs, or what they assumed were the outcomes of such aid, from a positive outlook ("helping people," "help for starving," "give money," "helping countries that are allies") to more cynical assessments ("waste of money," "giving too much," "give money to countries who misuse," "more taxes," "waste," and the sense that motivations for giving was to "help ourselves first"). 1% of the respondents thought of a specific group of refugees: Cambodian refugees. See: Presidential Commission on World Hunger, "World Hunger And U.S. Role," Nov. 1979 [conducted between Nov. 28–Dec. 14, 1979, based on telephone interviews with a national adult sample of 1,200], USMOR.79HUNG.R12C, iPOLL Databank, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, Cornell University, Ithaca.

[463] Roper Organization, Roper Report 80-1, Dec. 1979 [conducted between Dec. 1 and 8, 1979, based on telephone interviews with a national adult sample of 2,003], iPOLL Databank, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, Cornell University, Ithaca.

while the rest of the respondents (with each category not exceeding 15%) stated the following: "Doesn't do any good/poorly handled," "nothing in it for us," the U.S. budget deficit, and "They should solve their own problems."[464] These polls are just samples of the American public, but they do reflect a move toward public disillusionment with aid programs and foreign intervention by the 1980s, especially with the costs and skepticism about their efficacy.

What factors account for this general shift in attitudes between the 1950s and the late 1970s and 1980s? Before the end of the Vietnam War, critics in the 1970s had been questioning the prioritization of military aid and foreign aid, in addition to developmental aid, over domestic welfare aid.[465] Critics also asked more pointed questions about where the taxpayers' money was headed, and who ultimately paid financially and physically for the costs of foreign aid expenditures—which, as most of these arguments pointed out, turned out to be children. Since it was not a question of supply, these critics argued that change could only be effected if the U.S. government considered hunger and poverty at home an important issue that demanded immediate attention, just as much as, or more

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[464] Interaction & Overseas Development Council, Development & U.S.-Third World Relations, April 1986 [conducted by Strategic Information Research Corporation between April 7 - May 6, 1986, based on telephone interviews with 2,427 adults nationally], USSIRC.86ODC.R06AO, Strategic Information Research Corporation [producer], iPOLL Databank, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, Cornell University, Ithaca.

[465] One 1979 poll aimed to gauge the public opinion about the current spending on developmental aid and made direct connections to the available funds for welfare: "The United States spends about $1-1/2 billion dollars per year on economic and technical aid to increase the ability of less developed countries to feed their populations and another $1-1/2 billion on direct food assistance. For comparison, the U. S. spends $114 billion dollars on the entire national defense budget and over $40 billion dollars on Medicare and Medicaid costs. The Presidential Commission on World Hunger recommends a substantial increase in the amount of economic and technical aid provided to other countries.)... Would you agree or disagree with increasing funds for economic and technical aid if it meant less money for welfare in the U.S.?" 44% agreed, while 52% disagreed. See: Presidential Commission on World Hunger, "World Hunger And U.S. Role," Nov. 1979 [conducted between Nov. 28–Dec. 14, 1979, based on telephone interviews with a national adult sample of 1,200], USMOR.79HUNG.R12C, iPOLL Databank, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, Cornell University, Ithaca.

than, issues of foreign intervention. In his 1970 *Hunger in America* public pamphlet, economist Maxwell Stewart reminded readers that hunger is not "a problem that will simply go away. It will not be solved by increasing food production… Hunger is intimately associated with poverty, and the causes of poverty are deeply imbedded in the structure of our society." Rather than waiting for a "restructuring of society before providing enough food for the children who constitute our next generation," Stewart insisted that Americans reframe their understanding of hunger and treat it as "an immediate 'national emergency'" and a "threat to America's future."[466]

Other critics made similar demands upon Congress and policymakers to declare war on domestic poverty, not just on political instability and poverty abroad. Sociologist and economist Gunnar Myrdal called for a "Marshall Plan" at home that would redirect U.S. aid to a different target, and for the government to transfer its Cold War strategies from the international realm to the domestic realm. By directly referencing the postwar foreign aid program that aimed to help recovering nations reconstruct economically and politically after World War II, Myrdal argued that the domestic situation of poverty needed a similar response with "deliberate public policy" and funds to encourage economic growth at home. Myrdal also contrasted the amount of money spent on the war on poverty to the amount of money the administrations dedicated to "the rehabilitation of Europe after World War II," highlighting the need for a greater commitment on the part of U.S. policymakers to "eradicating hunger."[467]

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[466] Maxwell S. Stewart, "The Poor Among Us—Challenge and Opportunity," *Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 362* (1970): 24, National Council on Family Relations records, Box 48, Social Welfare History Archives, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.
[467] "Hunger in the House," *New York Times,* Dec. 29, 1970, 24; also expressed by Whitney M. Young, Jr. (Executive Director, National Urban League) in "Platform Plan On Justice, In Relation To Law And Order,

Whitney M. Young, Jr., the Executive Director of the National Urban League, similarly believed that "the disorders and violence which distress us all could be eliminated almost overnight if America would establish a Domestic Marshall Plan," or at least could address the problem of poverty by "realistically implement[ing] with all the necessary resources and appropriations available in a rich nation and, most importantly, a viable timetable." Young described the present conditions of one post-World War II U.S. aid recipient, West Germany, as no longer having "slums and no unemployment" that characterized its early postwar years. Though he may have exaggerated the extent of its recovery to drive home his point, Young implied that these improved conditions were a result of such an investment by the U.S. Meanwhile, Young argued, the economic conditions in "the Harlems of this country, areas occupied by people who have given their blood, sweat and tears to the building of this country," were left unaddressed.[468]

Young, along with Alfred Moore, the Supervisor of Community Relations of the Office of Urban Affairs and L.A. City Schools, also emphasized the disproportionate effects on African Americans by highlighting the low wages for, and the historical exploitation of, black laborers. They both called specifically for a "Black Marshall Plan for the urban areas," framing the problem of poverty as a racial issue as much as an economic one. Moore acknowledged that such a large-scale program would be expensive, but "it will cost much more not to have it." Furthermore, he argued, if the U.S. saw importance in pouring "billions and billions of dollars into the economics of our allies

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As Requested by Panel I of The Platform Committee of The Democratic National Convention, Chicago, Il," August 23, 1968, Box 188, Folder 1, Platform Statements, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers, Collection no. 0218.1, Regional History Collections, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

[468] "Platform Plan On Justice, In Relation To Law And Order By Whitney M. Young, Jr.," August 23, 1968, Box 188, Folder 1, Platform Statements, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers.

and even our former enemies, how much more important that a domestic Marshall Plan be instituted to give to deprived Americans, black, brown, and white, a good job, decent housing, and quality education."[469] Political scientist Sanford M. Jaffe did not necessarily advocate a similar, large-scale program with the fiscal crisis in mind, but he too believed that the early postwar example was "indicative of what the American people can do if sufficiently aroused and motivated."[470]

As indicated by these comparisons between foreign and domestic expenditures for aid and welfare services, policymakers' understandings of foreign aid provided the context for approaching issues of poverty and welfare at home. The increasing visibility of hungry children in one's "own backyard" not only indicated the need to focus on domestic poverty; the heightened awareness of Americans as the ones in need of a "domestic Marshall Plan" also challenged the lines between donor and recipient nations that were clarified during the early postwar years. Approaching the 1960s and 1970s as a turning point in the debates about U.S foreign and domestic aid, the following sections will examine the criticisms that implied a tension between foreign and domestic expenditures for aid and welfare services, or the use of such rhetoric to highlight what was at stake in the allocation of taxpayer-funded resources.

### *Criticizing the Vietnam War: Who Pays for Foreign Aid Expenditures?*

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[469] Letter from Mildred Rogers, Chairman, to Yvonne Braithwaite, Box 188, Folder 2, Platform Statements 1968, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers, Collection no. 0218.1, Regional History Collections, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.
[470] "Statement of Sanford M. Jaffe," Box 188, Folder 1, Platform Statements, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers, Collection no. 0218.1, Regional History Collections, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

These policymakers and community leaders did not necessarily view the administration's domestic and foreign policies at odds with one another. Rather, they called for the U.S. to first "look to its own house" and build a strong domestic foundation *in order* "to be effective abroad."[471] Other critics began to question those very displays of "American generosity" abroad, particularly in Southeast Asia. These latter voices called for the U.S. to move away from military force, arguing that this approach was producing more harm than freedom in both domestic and foreign contexts. Senator George McGovern (D-SD), the director of the Food for Peace program from 1960-1962 and an anti-Vietnam War activist, called the war on Communism and the war on poverty a "twin burden on our back." As he stated at a 1969 Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) anti-hunger meeting entitled "Operation Breadbasket,"[472] the U.S. needed to "stop killing Asians and start feeding its millions of poor… it should choose instead a federal budget of life and not one of death."[473] Likewise, in a column of the newspaper *Afro-American*, civil rights activist (and later in 1986, U.S. Representative, D-AL) John Lewis questioned the priorities of "a country where we spend $30 billion to go to the

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[471] Statement by Roger Hilsman, before the Democratic Platform Committee on the United States Foreign Policy, chaired by Representative John E. Tunney, Los Angeles, CA, August 14, 1968, Box 188, Folder 1, Platform Statements, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers, Collection no. 0218.1, Regional History Collections, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

[472] This conference was sponsored by the Southern Christian Leadership Council and directed by Jesse Jackson. For Jackson and the anti-poverty activists at this meeting, the war against poverty was also a war for civil rights.

[473] Youth appear in another way in this article, implicating Congress' responsibility for the indirect effects on young black activists involved in the civil rights movement and the war on poverty. The article ended with a quote from Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, who was the head of Operation Breadbasket and had recently led a demonstration against House Speaker Ralph T. Smith's proposal to cut $125 million from the Illinois state welfare program. As a way of criticizing Smith in his speech at the Operation Breadbasket meeting, Jackson mentioned the recent death of a 17-year-old girl named Pamela Whitmore, who had been killed as she made her way to the Springfield anti-hunger demonstration. Jackson asserted that Pamela's death was "on House Speaker Smith's hands, for if it hadn't been for his proposed welfare cutback, Pamela would never have been going to Springfield to help somebody else." See: Faith C. Christmas, "Push War on Hunger: McGovern, Keep Up The Anti-Hunger Fight, McGovern Urges," *Chicago Daily Defender,* May 19, 1969, p. 4.

moon and many billions more to suppress the struggle of the Vietnamese people for self-determination."[474]

Other critics paid more attention to the financial costs incurred, arguing that the two wars could not be funded at the same time. Resources were limited, and the administrators needed to make a choice between the two. In 1969, a former economist for the President's Council of Economic Advisers (1947–1953) stressed this point in his letter to the editor of *TIME* magazine regarding the various causes of the economic downturn. He reminded the editor that the major source of the financial crisis was "primarily from our being at war," and someone had to pay for the costs of the war: "Wars cost money, and must be paid for in one way or another. If not through higher taxes, then through higher prices. But apparently no administration is willing to take any overt step that would case any financial strain or inconvenience to the voters."[475]

As this economist pointed out, all American taxpayers would have to pay for the war's costs; however, anti-poverty activists saw more specific groups of people who would have to bear the brunt of the "twin burdens": veterans (particularly African American veterans), the poor, and the next generation of American citizens. Making explicit connections between the "generosity" displayed abroad in Vietnam and the underwhelming display of generosity at home, activists and members of the public expressed outrage at the fact that funding for the war often preceded the funding for aid programs at home. In a letter to the editor applauding Senator Ernst Holling (D-SC) for publishing an article that called attention to the presence of hunger in Southern states, *TIME* reader Mary Jane Mason questioned: "While the U.S.'s foreign aid hand stretches

[474] Quoted in Eldridge, *Chronicles of a Two-Front War,* 165-166.
[475] Letter to editor, "History Lesson," *TIME,* March 28, 1969.

out unselfishly, its domestic aid hand slouches lazily in its pocket. Does this hand realize the difficulty in developing potential on an empty stomach?"[476]

Dr. Ralph David Abernathy, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and leader of the Poor People's Campaign,[477] expressed such sentiments at the 1968 Democratic National Convention's "Hearings on the Democratic Party Platform" in Chicago, asking the panel to imagine several scenarios in which underserved communities and underrepresented American citizens were placed. For instance, he asked: "If you were subjected all your life to brutality, racism, exploitation, hunger, sickness, unemployment, under-education — and were ordered to fight and possibly die across the seas for 'freedom', 'justice,' and 'the American way of life' — what would you think of America?"[478] Abernathy proceeded to describe the specific experiences of individuals, such as migrant workers who were "paid very little for your hard labor and told not to organize your fellow workers"; "a young Puerto Rican man or a young black man in a Northern ghetto" whose "parents have been scorned for accepting the vicious abuse that goes with welfare payments," despite their labor to earn "slave wages"; and

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[476] Some writers identified the wealthy as another "recipient" of the funds that could have been directed toward ending poverty, in addition to foreign aid recipients. For example, John W. Mover from Michigan City, Indiana, questioned: "Sir: How can any group of men, the elected representatives of the people of America, vote themselves a salary increase of $12,500 and then turn around and cut appropriations directed toward the feeding of the hungry of our nation? America, the richest nation on earth, still votes billions to care for other peoples of the world while our own unfortunates—white, black, Indian and others—suffer. How can these same men go to bed each night with a full stomach in comfortable homes with this on their minds, or don't most of them give a damn?" See: John W. Mover, Letter to editor, "On the Other Hand," *TIME,* March 28, 1969.

[477] For more information about his role in the Poor People's Campaign, see Vincent J. Burke, "Abernathy Leads Poor People to Convention Hall: Wins Admission for 43 After Covered Wagon Trip, Hotel Demonstration," *Los Angeles Times,* Aug 7, 1968, 2; Gordon Mantler, "The Press Did You In": the Poor People's Campaign and the Mass Media," *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics and Culture* 3, no. 1 (June 2010): 33-54; Rudy Johnson (Special to NY Times), "Poverty Protest May Draw 40,000: ' Solidarity Day' Tomorrow Seeks To Advance Goals," *New York Times,* June 18, 1968, p. 28.

[478] Statement by Dr. Ralph David Abernathy (President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference), Hearings on the Democratic Party Platform, Democratic National Convention in Chicago, IL, August 22, 1968, p. 6, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers, Collection no. 0218.1, Regional History Collections, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

"the American Indian woman who joined the Poor People's Campaign because her children and grandchildren are starving and her son is fighting in Vietnam."[479]

Using children to stand in for the conditions in which these families lived, he painted a picture of "your daughter running to school on an empty stomach, trying to keep warm because she has no coat; and then you recall that this nation is spending billions of dollars to get to the moon. I ask you, what would you think of America?"[480] As for older youth on the brink of adulthood, he wondered about their options for the future, particularly for male youth: "If you dropped out of a maddening, crowded, poorly taught high school in order to get bread for your younger brothers and sisters, and then you were drafted into the Army— and you know of the millions of wealthy students who are safely in college— what would you think of America?" In presenting these examples, Abernathy described both the conditions in which the individuals faced obstacles to make a living wage, as well as the impediments to their struggles to fight back, such as big corporations and employers who took advantage of low wages and politicians who failed to deliver on their promises to address the conditions of inequality. Abernathy's final scenario asked the audience to consider both the priorities reflected in the nation's domestic and foreign policies:

> [I]magine yourself as a young American who is attracted by the basic decency and idealism that we claim to pursue in America. You see America supporting a corrupt and unrepresentative regime in Vietnam. You see the assassination of three of our greatest leaders. You see 50 million citizens living in poverty. You see cities in flames and no honest attempt at the obvious solution of rebuilding our cities and providing real equality and opportunity for their inhabitants. I ask

[479] Ibid., 5.
[480] Ibid., 4-5.

> you, Mr. Chairman and members of this panel, what would you think of America?[481]

Seeing these circumstances as evidence of the failure to ensure basic needs for citizens at home, Abernathy implied that the war expenditures enabled or contributed to the violation of citizens' rights to economic opportunity and "basic decency." But Abernathy was suggesting that the contradiction or failure to uphold these ideals would ring false not only to those disadvantaged individuals, but also to the youth of the nation who would need to confront these inequalities as adults.

According to John Kenneth Galbraith, professor at Harvard University and the National Chairman of Americans for Democratic Action, this was also a matter of image control on the global stage. Galbraith argued that the "old liberal formula in the United States" was "to spend a modest amount to combat suffering and discrimination here at home and a great deal to combat communism abroad." As he explained to the Committee on Resolutions and Platform, the problem with this formula was that it "assumed that the poor would be infinitely patient and appreciate the greater urgency of our police tasks abroad." Now, he argued, "this formula has now run out. Our poor have ceased to be patient." Furthermore, Galbraith argued, "The Vietnam war has shown our police pretensions to be absurd. Our platform must make clear the new liberal priority. This is to insure salvation of our own still viable democracy before worrying about a purely theoretical manifestation elsewhere in the world."[482]

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[481] Ibid., 6.
[482] Testimony by John Kenneth Galbraith (Professor at Harvard University and National Chairman of Americans for Democratic Action), before the Committee on Resolutions and Platform, Democratic National Convention, Washington, D.C., August 20, 1968, Box 188, Folder 3, Platform Statements,

These responses echo the scholarship on antiwar activism and the reverberating effects of the civil rights movements in the U.S. on the international stage. Scholars of social movements and grassroots activism have also studied the reactions of the public and antipoverty activists to the contradictions within the government's domestic and foreign policies—or more specifically, the visibility of inequalities in the U.S. and its claims to championing the ideals of freedom and equality— and their awareness of the Vietnam War's role in perpetuating the financial crisis at home. Historians such as Marilyn Young, Julian Zelizer, and George McTurnan Kahin have also examined the political and administrative workings that led to Johnson's decision to prioritize "guns" over "butter," or to continue funding the Vietnam War at the expense of his domestic social programs. Scholars have additionally argued that Johnson intended to transport his Great Society program *abroad* with foreign aid programs.[483] Despite his ambitions to see both campaigns as compatible, he could not fight both wars at once. The "paradox of poverty amid affluence" thus led Americans to question the projected image of the U.S. as an abundant nation that was in a position to share its resources, and to call for policymakers to reevaluate the nation's priorities.[484]

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Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers, Collection no. 0218.1, Regional History Collections, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

[483] Kristin L. Ahlberg, *Transplanting the Great Society Lyndon Johnson and Food for Peace* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2008).

[484] For the connections between the domestic and international politics, especially in terms of race, see Lawrence Allen Eldridge, *Chronicles of a Two-Front War Civil Rights and Vietnam in the African American Press* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2012); Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001). For anti-war protests and movements, see "'Hey, Hey, LBJ!': Vietnam and the Antiwar Movement", in *"Takin' It To The Streets": A Sixties Reader*, ed. Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines, 3rd Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); "Part VI: The Movement Against the War," Marvin E. Gettleman, *Vietnam and America: A Documented History* (New York: Grove Press, 1995), 295-336; Paul Joseph, "Direct and Indirect Effects of the Movement against the Vietnam War," Ch. 10 in *The Vietnam War: Vietnamese and American Perspectives*, 165-182,

In addition to framing domestic poverty as a foreign policy issue, or at least directly connected to foreign policy, activists aimed to broaden the vision of civil rights to include equality in economic opportunity and "the right to basic decency" as part of human rights rhetoric.[485] However, the efforts to specify who deserved aid even within nation-state boundaries complicated these universalist definitions of human rights, a tension I will outline in the next section.

### *Protesting Funding Cuts to Social Welfare Programs & Children's Developing Potential*

The notion of hunger inhibiting the "developing potential" not only referred to the development of the nation-state during the Cold War, but also to the developing potential

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ed. Jayne S. Werner and Luu Doan Huynh (1993). For the "guns v. butter" debate within the administration, see Marilyn B. Young, *The Vietnam Wars: 1945-1990* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 106-107, 160; Edward P. Morgan, *The Sixties Experience: Hard Lessons About Modern America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 252, 127; Godfrey Hodgson, *America in Our Time: From World War II to Nixon--What Happened and Why* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, reprinted 2005), 245-246; George McTurnan Kahin, *Intervention: How America Became Involved in Vietnam* (New York: Knopf, 1986); "Part VII: The Decisive Year: 1968," Marvin E. Gettleman, *Vietnam and America: A Documented History* (New York: Grove Press, 1995); *Arsenal of Democracy: The Politics of National Security - From World War II to the War on Terrorism* (New York: Basic Books, 2010). For discussions of the "paradox of plenty" in America in the 1960s, see *Conference on Poverty-in-Plenty: the Poor in our Affluent Society [Georgetown University, 1964]*, ed. George H. Dunne, foreword by Sargent Shriver (New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1964); Leo Fishman, *Poverty Among Affluence* (West Virginia University Conference on Poverty Amid Affluence, 1965).

[485] It is interesting to consider how different stakeholders conceptualized human rights and how the "universalist" dimension of children's and refugees' needs helped further develop this discourse in the early and late Cold War years. On one end of the spectrum, activists used the language of human rights to argue that Americans had a moral responsibility to respond to the plight of needy people abroad, including those who sought refuge in the U.S. On the other end of the spectrum, critics of social welfare programs in later years employed this rhetoric to argue that *because* the refugee crisis was a human rights issue that transcended national boundaries, the responsibility for the humanitarian response should be delegated to international agencies and organizations. The term "human rights" thus has the potential to absolve Americans of the responsibility to respond to international crises, or at least to take a major part in leading the relief and resettlement processes. To add another layer to this issue of human rights discourse, both activists and critics of welfare programs in the U.S. generally did not think of domestic poverty and welfare in terms of human rights. In other words, they designated the responsibility to the federal and state governments within nation-state boundaries, though their opinions on the proper level of federal involvement differed. Indeed, part of the backlash against refugees who resettled in the U.S. was that they were now clearly a "domestic issue."

of American children who would grow up to become future adults and citizens. Parents, community leaders, and teachers who were concerned about the resources available for children's development voiced their concerns in various outlets, including public media and local community forums. A number of these voices, at least of residents in California, are documented in letters sent to Congresswoman Yvonne B. Burke, in which the writers implored Burke and her colleagues to reconsider the nation's priorities and to prevent funding cuts to welfare programs. Herbert Leong, the President of the Asian American Education Commission of the L.A. Unified District, urged Congressman Casper Weinberger (R-CA) and his colleagues "to change America's priorities according to needs, and we must remember that our future strength lies with our children of today. This is an investment which will be repaid many times over…"[486] A letter from a woman who identified herself as a "concern[ed] mother" posed a similar question to Burke: "Don't children come first in a nation who puts such stress on the future. I care about my child's welfare and well being. The child care centers care also. How about you?"[487]

By 1973, a number of voices were increasingly protesting the amount of foreign aid expenditures at the expense of American veterans and taxpayers. Congresswoman Yvonne B. Burke was one of the political figures who questioned why more money was being spent on bringing young Vietnamese refugees to the United States—not as refugees, but to be educated and return to their own countries as future political leaders—than on providing aid to struggling families in America. As the first female

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[486] Letter from Herbert Leong, President of the Asian American Education Commission of the LA Unified School District, to Casper Weinberger, March 16, 1973, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Box 21, Folder 2, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers, Collection No. 0218.2, Regional History Collections, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

[487] Letter from "a concern[ed] mother," April 5, 1973, Health and Welfare Child Care III, Poverty Programs, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Box 21, Folder 2, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers.

Assemblywoman in California and one of the three African American women serving in Congress in the 1970s,[488] Burke was known for her anti-poverty activism and her support for School Lunch and daycare programs. In 1975 she aimed to draw attention to the needs of black working families and veterans on the Senate floor.

Burke argued that African Americans had paid the costs of the war in more than one way: paying with their lives through military service, contributing taxes to support the South Vietnamese government (which, as Burke pointed out, constituted "more money than the combined earnings of every Black in this country for the last four years"), witnessing the sacrifice of their own War on Poverty, and now dealing with the effects of inflation "started by that war."[489] Not surprisingly, Burke argued, "Black people of America are properly disturbed by Mr. Ford's exhortations that the U.S. has 'special obligations' to the South Vietnamese." After all, did the U.S. not have special obligations to the "thousand Black soldiers" who were returning home from Vietnam "in metal boxes," or the "8 million U.S. citizens…presently looking for work with no relief in sight?'"[490] Was this commitment to a "foreign military dictator," who apparently did not reciprocate the commitments to the U.S., "more valid than our own Constitution and the Black citizens of his country?"[491]

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[488] She was one of three black Congresswomen elected in 1973 (out of 13 between 1971–1973). See: Dewey M. Clayton and Angela M. Stallings, "Black Women in Congress: Striking the Balance," *Journal of Black Studies* 30, no. 4 (Mar., 2000): 574.
[489] "News Release: Vietnamese Evacuation, 1975 April 22 1975," Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers: Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Box 21, Folder 2, Collection No. 0218.2, Regional History Collections, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.
[490] While speaking out against the prioritization of foreign policy over the needs of citizens, Burke and other political figures recognized that Vietnamese civilians were victims of these policies as well. See: Memorandum to Mrs. Burke, "Re: Approval of Questions for the Record," February 21, 1978. For more on the responses of African Americans to the disproportionate numbers of black men serving in a war they considered immoral, see: Lawrence Allen Eldridge, *Chronicles of a Two-Front War: Civil Rights and Vietnam in the African American Press* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2011).
[491] "News Release: Vietnamese Evacuation, 1975 April 22 1975," Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers.

These questions about where the taxpayers' money was going also applied to debates about bringing refugees of this war to the U.S. In their letters to Burke, the Congresswoman's constituents raised such issues, particularly about the priorities of the federal government and how it intended to carry out its plans in a practical way to provide services for incoming refugees. In addition to voicing the concerns of African Americans, Congresswoman Burke also represented the concerns of working parents in California who were on the borderline of going on welfare to support their families. As indicated by the demographics of the letter-writers, Burke served as a channel for the voices of constituents who identified as single working mothers or fathers, community leaders of low-income immigrant families, teachers, daycare center volunteers, migrant workers, and parents of physically challenged children. Some were not from Burke's district, but they addressed their concerns to her anyway because they believed she would understand or be more responsive to their situation.

According to these constituents, the U.S. financial involvement in Southeast Asia was not problematic because it assisted needy children and civilians abroad. Rather, their main concern was that policymakers were diverting resources *away* from needy American children and cutting federally funded programs that supported needy children's physical, emotional, and educational development while their parents were at work. In 1973, Weinberger, as the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), considered cutting the funds for these child care programs in order to balance the limited budget and to deal with the financial crisis— which, as Burke had argued, were caused by the war itself. Likewise, one letter to Burke expressed anger over the fact that the funds geared

toward the war could have been used to continue these programs.[492] Writing on behalf of low-income, single working mothers in her community who faced the option of leaving their jobs or leaving their children unattended at home, one woman explicitly connected the funding cuts to the war:

> [It] does not seem fair to scrap these domestic social programs and at the same time ask taxpayer support for billions of dollars to fund aid to the Viet-Nams and Southeast Asia. I am opposed to financing any more 'unselfish' missions abroad at the expense of 30 million or so Americans who live in or near poverty.[493]

In addition to expressing skepticism of the humanitarian nature of these missions abroad, or perhaps that these cuts were being made in the name of helping people abroad, her letter pointed out that impoverished American families and children were the ones who had to pay.

Others did not explicitly draw connections between their situations and the war; instead, they described the concrete effects of the funding cuts on their families, especially their children. Children received regular meals at these centers and had a safe place to remain while their parent(s) were away at work.[494] Parents and daycare volunteers testified that the centers met other needs that extended beyond their physical and nutritional needs. One working mother relied upon the daycare center to "[give] my

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[492] Marilyn B. Young, *The Vietnam Wars: 1945-1990* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991); Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines, *"Takin' It To The Streets": A Sixties Reader*, 3rd Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[493] Letter to Burke from Marjorie B. P., Feb. 27, 1973, Health & Welfare / Poverty Program, 1973, Folder I, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke Papers, Collection no. 0218.2, Regional History Collections, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

[494] Others stressed that this support was particularly necessary for migrant workers, who formed the basis of California's economy. See: Letter to Brathwaite-Burke from Frank R. Marshall of the Covenant Presbyterian Church, LA, March 9, 1973; Letter to Brathwaite-Burke from Juanita Barnett, March 20, 1973; Letter to Burke from "A Very Worried Mother," Lorraine Palmier, March 5, 1973, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke Papers.

child a home away from home," providing her child with social contact and emotional support that she could not provide during the day.[495] Other constituents who were not on welfare used similar arguments in support of child care programs. One woman stated that her taxes were currently being "spent constructively" for these programs, for they provided education, supervision, and meals for the children, while freeing up mothers and single parents to work and attend courses.[496] In making this argument, some working parents distanced themselves from welfare dependency, or from welfare recipients whom they criticized for "sit[ing] back and wait[ing] for the 1st and the 15th for their checks in the mail."[497] Identifying themselves as low-income workers who preferred to work and relied upon the current child care programs only to support their families temporarily, these writers argued that they would not become dependent on the state nor the federal government to raise their kids; rather, they would use the support from daycare centers to secure their families' independent income, without incurring large child care expenses along the way.[498]

The letters further argued that the cutbacks would be counterproductive, forcing working parents to leave work and rely on welfare rather than enabling them to stay off

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[495] Letter to Congressman Casper Weinberger from Helen Ann Hagood, March 7, 1973 and letter addressed to "Sirs" from Mrs. Joycelynn (or Jaycelynn) Alexander, Los Angeles, March 5, 1973, in Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers.

[496] Letter to Yvonne Burke from Josephine B. McDavid, March 3, 1973, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke Papers.

[497] But others spoke on behalf of the welfare recipients, pointing out that "the only *for sure* appointment they have is the mailbox on the dates the CHECK arrives." Letter to Augustus F. Hawkins from Deweylene Barker, Venice, March 12, 1973, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke Papers; Letter to Brathwaite-Burke from Frank R. Marshall of the Covenant Presbyterian Church, LA, March 9, 1973; Letter to Burke from Mrs. Gloria Hall, March 1, 1973; in Los Angeles, Health & Welfare / Poverty Program Child Care, March 16, 1973, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke Papers.

[498] In these arguments, letter writers also stated that the proposed cuts would take away their sense of pride acquired through work: "Won't you please help me and other mothers like myself keep our dignity and children centers open… Please help those of us who want to get off welfare, have good jobs and be able to have a self-pride in ourselves." See: Letter to Burke from Mrs. Anna M. Mores, March 5, 1973, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke Papers.

of the support.[499] One mother exclaimed, "How absurd—if I stay home and collect welfare I can have my child attend the center he would no longer need!"[500] Another mother similarly expressed confusion with the Nixon administration's reasoning behind these cutbacks,[501] pointing out that "He claims he want to cut the Welfare," but it "seems to me he is creating more, much more of a welfare problem than he realizes."[502] The dilemma faced by low-income working parents was also a problem of welfare categories and the qualifications for aid. One woman stressed that she did not want to "remain a welfare recipient all [her] life" and intended to "work up to a salary where I cannot be categorized as low-income." However, if the new regulations were passed, she would no longer be eligible for even partial aid. As this letter-writer argued, the proposed cuts were providing an "ultimatum" to people like herself, or "the incentive to become dependent financially and then destroy[ing] this entirely."[503]

The letter writers also applied these concerns to the development of the children themselves: how could the "next generation" apply the "bootstrap policy" to their own lives if they lacked the socioeconomic opportunities to learn or develop it? In his letter to Burke's colleague Congressman Casper Weinberger, Herbert Leong, the President of the Asian American Education Commission of the LA Unified School District, observed that

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[499] Letter from Herbert Leong, President of the Asian American Education Commission of the LA Unified School District, to Casper Weinberger, March 16, 1973, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers: Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Box 21, Folder 2, Collection No. 0218.2, Regional History Collections, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.
[500] Letter to Yvonne Burke from Ms. Jan Carmichael, Health & Welfare / Poverty Program Child Care, March 16, 1973, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke Papers.
[501] But the Nixon administration seems to have shifted its position from just a year prior to these proposed funding cuts—he had apparently called for increased funding for child nutrition programs in 1972. See: *Wall Street Journal* Staff Reporter, "Nixon to Seek School Lunch Reform, Ask $44.5 Million More for Child Nutrition," *Wall Street Journal,* May 8, 1972, p. 11.
[502] Letter to Burke from Ms. Regina Barnes, March 1973 (received March 23), Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Box 21, Folder 2, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers, Collection no. 0218.2, Regional History Collections, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.
[503] Letter to Burke from Mrs. Anna M. Mores, March 5, 1973, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke Papers.

"Instead of following our President's 'work-ethics' decree, this is definitely taking steps backwards."[504] The writers further argued that children and their parents were not the only ones benefitting from the programs; the Child Care Centers offered an environment where they could develop into "[intelligent], broad minded future American citizen[s]" with a "place in tomorrow's society."[505] By depriving them of the teachers, supportive programs such as Head Start, and the opportunity to engage with peers, the funding cuts were also depriving low-income children of "a starting place for them to learn and become better citizens in the future; something this country wants and needs."[506]

It is difficult to determine the extent to which these letters played a role in shaping Burke's activism, though her statements before Congress do suggest that she took these families' and community members' concerns into consideration. But as author Arundhati Roy has pointed out, "There's no really no such thing as the 'voiceless.' There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard." Along these lines, it is important to consider how welfare recipients and community members understood these funding cuts and the connections they saw between the domestic and foreign spheres, whether or not policymakers and legislators listened to their voices. Moreover, their reactions point out the contradictions within politicians' statements or justifications for proposed funding cuts, as well as the potential implications of these policy-level decisions for their families and community members.

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[504] Letter to Casper Weinberger from Helen I. Gates, received March 26, 1973, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Box 21, Folder 2, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers.
[505] Letter to Casper Weinberger from Richard and Mildred Sterz, self-identified as a "conservative Los Angeles family of three: father—a student at UCLA School of Medicine; mother—a staff nurse in the Center for the Health Sciences; child—a toddler enrolled in the ASUCLA Child Care Center on campus," March 13, 1973, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Box 21, Folder 2, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers.
[506] Letter to Yvonne Brathwaite-Burke from Pauline A. Shaw, Los Angeles, March 23, 1973, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Box 21, Folder 2, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers.

**Understandings of Poor Americans' Children's Dependency:**

While emphasizing the importance of surrounding environments and opportunities for children's growth, some of these comments were informed by broader debates about poverty. To an extent, the letter-writers who emphasized the "bootstrap policy" reinforced the stigma attached to welfare dependency, even as they requested more aid. But they were responding to existing assumptions and ideas about welfare recipients. For example, fiscal conservatives and critics of welfare programs insisted upon making a distinction between the "taxpayers" and the "tax eaters," though as the previous section has demonstrated, there were low-income taxpayers who were labeled as "tax eaters."[507] Other assumptions revolved around the issue of whether or not the *parents* deserved aid, based on their characters and their life choices.[508] One common response is epitomized in a San Antonio county commissioner who was interviewed for the CBS *Hunger in America* documentary. In response to the interviewer's question about the possible causes of poverty, the commissioner responded:

> Well, why are they not getting enough food? Because the father won't work—and I mean won't work. And when they won't work, do you expect the taxpayer to raise all the kids? First you do something with the daddies, and then you ask about the kids…. that's really the problem of the father. Now what to do about them, I don't know…

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[507] Molly C. Michelmore, *Tax and Spend: The Welfare State, Tax Politics, and the Limits of American Liberalism* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

[508] For examples of the debates and comments, see: John Herbers, "Moynihan Hopeful U.S. Will Adopt a Policy of Promoting Family Stability," *New York Times*, Special to The New York Times, Dec 12, 1965, p. 74; Jean M. White (Washington Post Staff Writer), "National Family Allowance to Aid Poor of Slums Urged by Moynihan," *The Washington Post, Times Herald,* Dec 14, 1966, A1; George Getze (Times Science Writer), "Kids' Lesson in Slum Schools: They'll Never Make It In Life," *Los Angeles Times,* April 7, 1967.

In response to a follow-up question about whether poverty would "always exist" as a result, he replied, "Yes, you'll always have [poverty] because some men just aren't worth a dime. Will there always be hunger? Yes."[509] In addition to viewing the problem of poverty as a problem of individual characters and understanding welfare dependency as a deliberate *choice* made by the recipients, the commissioner's response reflects a gendered understanding of self-sufficiency and breadwinner roles in the household. According to Marisa Chappell, the media's overrepresentation of children born out of wedlock and single mothers inadvertently enabled critics of welfare programs to depict the AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) as *encouraging* fathers to abandon their wives and children.[510] The commissioner's reaction was thus in line with other criticisms of the AFDC that portrayed welfare programs as exacerbating the problem of poverty rather than alleviating it. Furthermore, in contrast to the community activists' framing of poverty as an urgent problem that needed to be addressed, the commissioner did not consider this an "emergency" issue, but rather a long-term problem that was not the federal (nor state) government's responsibility.

Maxwell Stewart, the author of the 1970 pamphlet *Hunger in America*, agreed with the notion of poverty as a "trap," though he framed "choices" in the context of

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[509] "CBS Reports: Hunger in America," CBS News, produced by Martin Carr, 1968.

[510] For more details on the debates around AFDC and the "war on welfare," see Marisa Chappell's chapter "Legislating the Male-Breadwinner Family: The Family Assistance Plan," in *The War on Welfare: Family, Poverty, and Politics in Modern America,* 65-105 (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009). For more sources on how these debates were gendered and racialized, see: Jennifer Mittelstadt, *From Welfare To Workfare: The Unintended Consequences Of Liberal Reform, 1945-1965* (2005), 85-91; Lisa Levenstein, "From Innocent Children to Unwanted Migrants and Unwed Moms: Two Chapters in the Public Discourse on Welfare in the United States, 1960-1961," *Journal of Women's History* 11, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 10-33; Felicia Kornbluh, *The Battle for Welfare Rights: Politics and Poverty in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

poverty in a different way. Advocating higher wages for working mothers and fathers who were struggling to support their children, Stewart argued that the Bureau of Labor Statistics' low-income family budget in 1967 would provide a minimum income as cash payments "so as to assure people freedom of choice in their purchasing decisions."[511] These comments reflect two common understandings of the underlying sources of poverty, which would also shape the political and legislative discussions:[512] was poverty caused by pathological problems that could only be resolved by focusing on individual characters and family structure, as implied by the commissioner? Or was it a structural problem that required changes in the social and political economy and determined the allocation of funds, both within the family and between the family and the state?

The commentators, whether they were political figures, social scientists, volunteer workers, or media representatives, held particular conceptions of the poor and of children in poverty. On one hand, children were not held responsible for their circumstances; as child specialists such as Sidonie M. Gruenberg envisioned the "American child" in their writings, children were not expected to be "producers" yet, but were rather "completely dependent upon adults… [the child] 'consumes' for years before he is able to produce."[513] Furthermore, as Senator Wayne Morse (D-OR) argued, the children of the poor suffered as a result of the ambiguous categorization of parents' eligibility to receive funds. In his questioning of social workers during the Senate hearing in 1957, in which he asked for clarification on the various criteria that distinguished between families who

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[511] Maxwell Stewart, *Hunger in America,* (New York: Public Affairs Committee, 1970), 17.
[512] Also see Michael Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1986).
[513] Sidonie M. Gruenberg, "Money in their Jeans," *National Parent-Teacher,* February 1952, Child Study Association of America, Social Welfare History Archives, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

were deserving and undeserving of welfare, Morse raised the question, "Are we losing sight of the children? ... It isn't the kids' fault."[514] *Chicago Tribune* journalists Patricia Krizmis and Angela Parker expressed similar concerns, arguing that regardless of the reasons behind their impoverished conditions, children were ultimately the victims in a "game" in which the key players were "politicians, organization leaders, government officials, private agencies, and the poor." As it would become evident in congressional debates over the allocation of funds to welfare and school nutrition programs, the issue of feeding children was more than just a concern over children's physical and mental health;[515] it was also about competing political and agricultural interests, ideas about racial equality, and expectations of parental responsibility.[516] Ultimately, Krizmis and Parker identified "infants, children, and the elderly" as the "losers" who never had a chance to "play the game."[517]

The limited agency of the impoverished child, or the lack thereof, was thus invoked in these debates in order to portray the *child* as deserving of aid, if not their parent(s); these narratives also highlighted the costs and consequences paid by children

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[514] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the District of Columbia*, Problems of Hungry Children in the District of Columbia: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Public Health, Education, Welfare, and Safety, on Mar. 26, 27, 29, Apr. 4, 5, 1957,* 85th Cong., First Session (1957), 166.

[515] One mother who testified at the "Problems of Hungry Children in the District of Columbia" hearing in 1959 made a similar argument about the schoolchildren who were functioning on empty stomachs. She pointed out that the children were "doing fair in school, but you can't expect children in a poverty family to accomplish things that the parents really want them to accomplish. These children are oppressed and the family is oppressed, and actually they don't have the time to spend with these children they should have, and help them acquire the education they should have." See: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, *Examination on the War on Poverty: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Employment, Manpower, and Poverty of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, on Examining the War on Poverty, Part 12, Los Angeles, California, May 12, 1967,* 90th Cong., First Session (1967), 3833-3834.

[516] Susan Levine, *School Lunch Politics: The Surprising History of America's Favorite Welfare Program* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Marisa Chappell, *The War on Welfare: Family, Poverty, and Politics in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

[517] Patricia Krizmis and Angela Parker, "A Sad Story of Hunger and How Children of Chicago's Poor Suffer," *Chicago Tribune,* April 19, 1970, p. 2.

and youth, as a result of the government's failed attempts to address poverty. For instance, the CBS documentary *Hunger in America* presented warnings of what hunger "might drive a child to do." Depicting poverty as a trap for parents and children alike, the documentary included one account of an eleven-year-old girl who was pushed to desperate measures. As social worker Maria Garcia explained, she and other girls engaged in prostitution "so that they can get the money to buy food, because they don't have any at home."[518] With such examples,[519] the documentary aimed to convey how public policy and the failure to support struggling families limited the options available to children in poverty.

On the other hand, the concern remained that these children might grow up to become dependents on the state, as opposed to self-sufficient individuals and producers. The expectation was that the support provided by the government or social welfare agency for low-income and impoverished families would provide "provisional" or temporary support for families, but these families and individuals would eventually learn how to support themselves. Low-income American children and families on welfare were thus subjected to the same expectations as the refugees who were on temporary U.S. aid, and there was overlap between the two strands of debates about U.S. aid in the foreign and domestic spheres.

According to Frances D. Lesser, volunteer worker at the Barney Neighborhood House, improved legislation to address the needs of hungry children was not just for the sake of the child recipients themselves. Lesser argued that whether or not these children became public charges would have broader implications for other children in the country:

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[518] "CBS Reports: Hunger in America," CBS News, produced by Martin Carr, 1968.
[519] Social workers were also concerned about an increase in youth crime and delinquency.

"I have a stake in that future, because the world my children grow up in is the same world that these children will be growing up in, and my children's lives can't help but be influenced by the extent to which these children can be helped to grow into responsible adult citizens."[520] Her comments reinforce the notion of investing in the "developing potential" of the children who would make up the future of the nation, not only the children living in poverty, but also other children who would grow up alongside them. Lesser was thus using similar rhetoric as that used in previous chapters, that children were the future of the nation and the global community, but this time in a domestic context.

These children and their families were entangled in poverty discourse as much as conditions of poverty; however discursive they may have been, the debates over who received and deserved aid—and whether the recipients were located in one's backyard or in distant locales—provided the broader context in which children and families experienced material effects and consequences. As expressed by discontented voters, anti-poverty activists, and struggling, single working parents, the diversion of resources and funds to other places affected the well-being and health of children in the U.S. by denying them access to the opportunities for a "head start at becoming strong independent adults," or perhaps a "new start" to break away from the "cycle of poverty." These criticisms of the direction of U.S. funds thus reflect a move away from identifying failed postwar promises toward a portrayal of foreign expenditures as enabling a threat to,

[520] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the District of Columbia, *Problems of Hungry Children in the District of Columbia* (1957), 54.

or impingement on,[521] citizens' rights to "equal opportunity" — not only the rights of welfare recipients, working parents, and mothers, but also children's opportunities as future citizens.

**Conclusion: "Whose Budget Is It Anyway?"**

Although policymakers and activists attempted to address the problem of domestic poverty, these debates reflect how the underlying assumptions and language outlined in the latter half of the paper—about self-sufficiency, distinctions between the levels of dependency that deserved assistance and those that did not, and the limited agency of poor children and parents in poverty—helped shape the debates over domestic social policy for low-income and impoverished children and families. Often times, the questions were not so much about the level of need for more assistance, but rather about clarifying whose responsibility it was to provide the resources and funding for aid.

Foreign aid expenditures also continued to inform these discussions. Returning to Senator Morse's statements before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Public Health hearings (1957), Morse frequently made comparisons with foreign assistance programs to question whether "we are more exacting in our paper requirements, our administrative requirements, in our own country in the distribution of food to the needy than we are in some foreign places." He speculated that as foreigners, American policymakers and officials did not have precise "knowledge of the families" and the conditions in which the families lived. As a result, they adhered to less stringent criteria and allowed for "a

[521] Regarding "violations" of positive vs. negative rights, see: Emily Zackin, *Looking for Rights in All the Wrong Places: Why State Constitutions Contain America's Positive Rights* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); Thomas Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms* (Polity, 2008).

discretion of distribution by foreign citizens that results in their having greater leeway than distribution by American officials."[522] Morse's statement first highlights the differences in the criteria applied to citizens and non-citizens as recipients of U.S. aid, though there were similar expectations of "deservedness" and self-sufficiency as the end result in both the foreign and domestic contexts. It was important to establish that the recipients in both contexts were not responsible for their circumstances (whether the identified cause was their political regimes or their individual family contexts), as a qualification for receiving full or partial assistance.[523]

Morse's comparisons, as well as those of other critics quoted in this paper, also raise questions about the relationship between locale, access to resources, and responsibility in the debates over welfare.[524] With the argument that American policymakers needed to make sure one's house was in order before meddling in another, or that they should offer assistance to those at home before displaying generosity abroad, these statements articulated the expectation that citizenship status promised basic entitlements and obligations from the government. On one hand, the calls for prioritizing American citizens' access to U.S. resources, or redirecting U.S. aid from the foreign to the domestic sphere, implied (or in some cases, explicitly stated) that recipients within

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[522] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the District of Columbia*, Problems of Hungry Children in the District of Columbia* (1957)*,* 120.
[523] These questions are drawn from the work of Michele Landis Dauber, *Disaster Relief and the Origins of the American Welfare State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).
[524] This topic is also interesting to consider in more contemporary debates about the shifting sites of poverty, or the relationship between residence and access to resources. See: Janet E. Kodras, "The Changing Map of American Poverty in an Era of Economic Restructuring and Political Realignment," *Economic Geography* 73, no. 1 (Jan., 1997): 67-93; Kieran Oberman, "Immigration, Global Poverty and the Right to Stay," *Political Studies* 59 (2011): 253–268; *Children Without a State: A Global Human Rights Challenge,* ed. Jacqueline Bhabha (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011); Cindy Hahamovitch, *No Man's Land: Jamaican Guestworkers in America and the Global History of Deportable Labor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

nation-state boundaries should be prioritized to receive these benefits. On the other hand, the reasoning behind these arguments was not that the needs of peoples abroad did not deserve attention, but rather that the *responsibility* for addressing global poverty and inequalities should be delegated to international actors and institutions (and the need for the U.S. to withdraw or minimize their involvement in these affairs).

Finally, Senator Morse's statement identified one major roadblock to addressing the inefficiencies of distributing aid: the failure or inability to focus on the recipients themselves. Urging his colleagues to "[cut] down to the essentials of this problem," he argued that "the more this evidence accumulates in this hearing, the more convinced I am that we have been inclined to *not see*. And I am not talking about it as a relief to agriculture; I am talking about it as a relief to kids."[525] As indicated by the complications with distributing aid and the politics of identifying the children and families in need, the assessments of domestic social welfare programs were not only shaped by Americans' "knowledge of the conditions" of poverty at home, incomplete as this information may have been. These evaluations were also shaped by the knowledge that policymakers, social agencies, media outlets, and community members *did* have about other politicized issues: international interests, assumptions about the locales of domestic and global poverty, expectations for American family structures, notions of work ethic and individual responsibility, and ideas about the appropriate relationship between the state, the family unit, and taxpayers within the U.S.

Americans' calls for a redirection of policymakers' attention to social problems at home in the 1960s and 1970s continued into the 1980s, as social activists raised further

[525] Emphasis added; U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the District of Columbia, *Problems of Hungry Children in the District of Columbia* (1957), 120.

questions about the obligations of the federal government to needy families and children *within* the national community. For example, in a 1982 short film co-produced by the American Friends Service Committee (National Action/Research on the Military Industrial Complex) and the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, activists expressed concerns about the Reagan administration's funding cuts to social programs. They asked what the federal budget was paying for and "whose budget is it anyway?" The film pointed out high unemployment rates, especially among minorities, women, and youth, as well as the social programs that would affect the sick, the poor, and the elderly. As the narrator explained: "These cuts are only the beginning...Cutting social programs means cutting housing subsidies for people who can't afford to pay more rent. More than 2 million people are losing their food stamps, and another 21 million are getting less." Although the vulnerable groups of people identified in the film were U.S. citizens, they were not receiving the assistance they needed. Most of all, the film explained, "The kids will pay for it. When the government cuts back on school lunches, that means some kids are losing their only hot meal."

This last example encapsulates the main tensions and concerns I have outlined in this chapter: critiques of the war as draining taxpayer funds, the questioning of national and geopolitical priorities, the perception of competing interests among vulnerable populations, and the visibility of children as the victims of policy-level decisions. As the next chapter will argue, the shifts in Congressional and public attitudes toward foreign and domestic aid expenditures influenced not only American investments in long-term developmental aid and relief work, but also how legislators and policymakers approached the influx of refugees into the U.S. in the 1970s and 1980s, many of whom would join

American aid recipients on welfare rolls. The concept of Americans' "global responsibility" would further change in light of the direct U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia, as refugees migrating to the U.S. became temporary and/or permanent residents—or in other words, as an international refugee problem became a domestic challenge for social services at home.

## Chapter 5

## Redefining Americans' Obligation to Give: Responses to the Southeast Asian Refugee Crisis after the Vietnam War, 1975–1989

***Figure 8**:* Photo of Vietnamese girl published in *The Chicago Tribune* (1970), with the caption: "The eyes of a refugee girl tell the story of the war and its bittersweet moments. Some refugees believe their plight was caused by the American presence."[526]

### Introduction:

In response to a picture of a Vietnamese girl featured in a 1970 article entitled "Home Is Where The War Is: A Photographer's Impressions of South Viet Nam," one *Chicago Tribune* reader explained that he had seen refugee children from the Korean War, but those images "didn't seem to bring the feeling of not being able to help as those haunting eyes have done." With hopes of doing *something*, he inquired about adopting an orphan, sharing his qualifications as a single, 37-year-old employed man. He also decided to financially support two orphans in Korea and India through a missionary group. This one image of the child with "haunting eyes" had convinced him that he, and other Americans, needed to do more: "Those eyes seem to tell me it is not enough. Not enough by far."[527]

[526] "Home is where the war is: A photographer's impressions of South Viet Nam," *Chicago Tribune*, June 14, 1970, J32.
[527] Lawrence Langman (from Gary, IN), "Where to Get Refugee Children," letter to the editor, *Chicago Tribune*, August 9, 1970, J5.

This photograph was one of many images of Southeast Asian children and civilians that prompted public debates about the Vietnam War and the refugees it was creating. The conflict in Vietnam, extending into Cambodia and Laos, was very present and visible in the American public's mindset, as the first televised war and as a war that had dragged on since the U.S. first became (officially) involved in 1954, after France withdrew from the region after years of colonialism.[528] With images of children as unarmed civilians, victims of bombing, and refugees during and after the war, including images of the My Lai massacre (1968), the "napalm girl" (1972), and the airlifting of presumed "orphans" out of South Vietnam during "Operation Babylift" (1975),[529] children continued to serve as a moral barometer of U.S. intervention abroad and prompted questions from the American public about how "humanitarian" the presence of the U.S. was in Southeast Asia.[530] As Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites have observed about the "napalm girl" photograph, "The image of the little girl running from

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[528] See *Vietnam and America: A Documented History*, ed. Marvin E. Gettleman (Grove Press, 1995); Marilyn B. Young, *The Vietnam Wars 1945-1990* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991); George McTurnan Kahin, *Intervention: How America Became Involved in Vietnam* (New York: Knopf, 1986); James William Gibson, "The Green Machine," in *The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2000).
[529] For more in Americans' interest in "saving children" and "Operation Babylift," see, for example: Kathleen Ja Sook Bergquist, "Operation Babylift or Babyabduction?: Implications of the Hague Convention on the Humanitarian Evacuation and 'Rescue' of Children," *International Social Work* 52 (2009): 621-633; For transnational adoption during the Cold War in general, see Jodi Kim, "An 'Orphan' with Two Mothers: Transnational and Transracial Adoption, the Cold War, and Contemporary Asian American Cultural Politics," *American Quarterly* 61, no. 4 (Dec., 2009): 855-880.
[530] Media reports on Southeast Asian refugees began as early as the 1950s, just as the U.S. was increasing its involvement in the region. See, for example: "Help For Vietnam Asked: U. N. Children's Fund Urged to Aid Refugees From North," *New York Times*, September 10, 1954, p. 3; Marion Bell Wilhelm, "International Social Worker Watches Over Homeless Children of the World," *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 28, 1972, p. 10; Richard D. Lyons, "Private Efforts Stressed: Aide Says U.S. May Bring 3,000 More Youngsters," *New York Times,* April 9, 1975, p. 1.

her pain became a moment when the Vietnam War crystallized in U.S. public consciousness."[531]

Amidst public calls for increased refugee assistance in the aftermath of the war, American policymakers also called for an increase in funding for foreign aid programs in Southeast Asia, arguing that Americans had a moral responsibility to respond. During a Senate subcommittee hearing in 1978, Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) argued that "The United States can no longer stand aside and ignore the humanitarian problems of the Indochina Peninsula and the international appeals in behalf of suffering and needy people in Vietnam."[532] Although the U.S. political and economic interests in the region served as a major impetus for Kennedy,[533] he also emphasized that Americans were indirectly and directly responsible for the displacement of thousands of people in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, in an attempt to draw a connection to the past record of American humanitarianism throughout the post-World War II period, Kennedy stated that inaction was "contrary to the humanitarian traditions of our country and to the active support the

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[531] See Hariman and Louis Lucaites, "Trauma and Public Memory: Accidental Napalm," in *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 171-207.

[532] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Refugee and Humanitarian Problems in Vietnam: Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary, on S521-67, August 22, 1978,* 95th Cong., Second Session (1978), 36.

[533] For example, legislators wanted to prioritize American agricultural imports, U.S.-Vietnam "business ventures," technical machines, and support for agricultural academic institutions, in addition to food aid. See section on "Food as a Weapon," which references "the moral credit of the United States that we have been the bulwark of the world against starvation since World War II," in U.S. Congress, Senate, *Refugee and Humanitarian Problems in Vietnam: Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary, on S521-67, August 22, 1978,* 95th Cong., Second Session (1978), 6-18. U.S. foreign policy toward Southeast Asian countries in the late 1980s also depended on their economic systems. According to Norman Kempster, "Shultz Reaffirms U.S. Commitment to Indochinese Refugees," *Los Angeles Times*, June 19, 1987: "The ASEAN nations—Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand—are among Washington's favorite countries because of their resolutely capitalistic economic systems."

American people have always given to the provision of humanitarian assistance to people in need throughout the world."[534]

At the same time, the media reported that Americans were suffering from "compassion fatigue" by the mid-1970s.[535] Policymakers and the public alike recognized the continued need for U.S. aid for refugees from subsequent wars, but as established in the previous chapter, attitudes toward foreign aid and the allocation of taxpayers' dollars were in flux during this period. Americans' disillusionment with changes in the cultural, political, and economic spheres of the 1970s—including the U.S. involvement in (and the withdrawal from) the Vietnam War, the recession from 1973-1975, the oil crisis, the lag in productivity, and growing mistrust of the government—led many to "withdraw from the frustrations of the public realm."[536] Furthermore, Natasha Zaretsky and Robert O. Self have argued, Americans' anxieties about national decline were articulated via anxieties about the decline of the American family and family values. These sentiments, setting the scene for the Reagan administration in the 1980s, encouraged a desire to focus

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[534] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Refugee and Humanitarian Problems in Vietnam: Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary, on S521-67, August 22, 1978,* 95th Cong., Second Session (1978) (Statement of Senator Edward M. Kennedy, "Recommendations Submitted by the Study Mission," summary of Recommendations by the Study Mission sent to Vietnam), 36.

[535] Scholars and the media began to use this term, "compassion fatigue," in the early 1980s and throughout the 1990s, though we can also see early traces in the 1970s. See: Susan D. Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue: How The Media Sell Disease, Famine, War, and Death* (New York: Routledge, 1999); James M. Freeman, *Changing Identities: Vietnamese Americans 1975-1995* (Needham Heights, MA: Pearson, 1996), 38-39; "Compassion Fatigue," *New York Times*, November 18, 1983, A34; "'Compassion Fatigue,'" *Los Angeles Times,* Dec. 25, 1987, A6; "Boat People and Compassion Fatigue," *New York Times*, July 14, 1988, A28; "Compassion Fatigue," *The Christian Science Monitor,* April 6, 1989, p. 20; "A Cure for Compassion Fatigue," *New York Times,* June 14, 1989, A26; "A Cure for 'Compassion Fatigue,'" *Los Angeles Times,* June 24, 1989, p. 42; Abigail Trafford, "A Collective Case Of Compassion Fatigue?", *The Washington Post*, Oct. 11, 1994, p. 6.

[536] Thomas Borstelmann, *The 1970s: A New Global History from Civil Rights to Economic Inequality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 63; Freeman, *Changing Identities,* 38-40.

on restoring the American family (or "fixing" poor families) and turning inward toward the individual and the private sphere.[537]

The influx of Southeast Asian immigrants into the U.S. during the late 1970s and the 1980s also coincided with the constriction of welfare accessibility to both citizens and non-citizens. The challenge was figuring out how to additionally fund programs for Southeast Asian refugees at a time when local and state resources were strained in themselves. Policymakers, social agencies, and taxpayers debated the following questions: whose responsibility was it to fund and administer refugee assistance programs? Was it the obligation of the U.S. government, since it had played a key role in causing and perpetuating the displacement of Southeast Asian civilians abroad, or the responsibility of the American people to respond out of humanitarian concern (through collaboration with nonprofit organizations and donations to private agencies)? Secondly, could American taxpayers afford to take on such responsibilities, or would these costs perpetuate the inequalities that Americans were struggling to confront at home?[538] Various stakeholders in this debate held different ideas about how much Americans should help refugees and the form that this assistance should take: senators and Congressmen/women who represented states that were receiving the majority of the incoming refugees; media journalists who wanted to publicize the conditions in Southeast Asia; politicians, social workers, and low-income individuals who were invested in

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[537] Natasha Zaretsky, *No Direction Home: The American Family and the Fear of National Decline, 1968-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 130; Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012).
[538] Mitchell Lynch, "U.S. Effort to Settle Vietnam Refugees Gets Going Amid Confusion and Anger," *Wall Street Journal,* May 2, 1975; David Nyhan, "A Questionnaire Welcome for the Wave of Refugees," *Boston Globe*, May 4, 1975, quoted in Barry N. Stein (Associate Professor, Department of Social Science, Michigan State University), *Occupational Adjustment of Refugees: The Vietnamese Refugees in the United States*, Refugee Studies Center, Box 8, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

federally-supported welfare programs; and taxpaying Americans who wanted to see their dollars put to effective use.

With emphasis on refugee children and families whose visibility served as reminders of failed Cold War agendas and troubled the meaning of American benevolence,[539] this chapter continues to examine shifting American attitudes toward foreign intervention, domestic social problems, and U.S. refugee policy. While the previous chapter demonstrated how American policymakers' and taxpayers' awareness of social inequalities at home led them to question U.S. intervention abroad, this chapter considers how Americans' understandings of the nation's involvement in Vietnam complicated the distinction that was being made between the foreign and domestic spheres. In particular, the meaning of "U.S. global responsibility" to needy children and families abroad had changed in the context of the Vietnam War. It was no longer merely that Americans had a stake in supporting their allies and neighbors as a global partner; the U.S. was financially and militarily involved in Southeast Asia, and had experienced economic and personal losses that could be felt directly by the American people.

American policymakers and taxpayers reframed the refugee crisis in terms of *Americans'* rights and responsibilities, thus shifting the focus of the debates from the refugees who needed aid to the role of Americans as benefactors and taxpayers. Some directed their frustrations toward incoming refugees and were unwilling to support refugees from an unpopular war, thereby undermining narratives about the U.S. as a "nation of refuge." While critics of the Vietnam War in the previous chapter were not

[539] It was not just Southeast Asian refugees, but also the influx of Caribbean migrants and refugees that spotlighted these policy failures. See: Yẽn Le Êspiritu, *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refuge(es),* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014), 26-48.

calling for denying or cutting aid to refugees, this chapter will examine the discontented taxpayers who *did* make such arguments. This connection between the war and the domestic economic situation led other Americans to recognize the refugees as victims of U.S. policies[540] and to question the priorities of the U.S. government—especially the drainage of funds and the investment in a war that resulted in deaths rather than investing in programs that supported livelihoods.[541] As this chapter argues, these contested notions of American responsibilities to refugees as non-citizens influenced the policy-level approaches to migrant communities from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos who came to the U.S. during the 1970s and 1980s. These multiple responses reflect the power of taxpayers to set the parameters of policy-level debates about foreign and humanitarian aid and to shape the decision-making process about refugee and immigration policy.

## Narrating U.S. Humanitarianism and Involvement in Vietnam

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[540] In a survey conducted by the Veterans Administration, 68% of the respondents (which included veterans, educators, and employers) identified the Vietnam War as having "caused the [Vietnamese refugee (the 'Boat People')] problem or contributed heavily to the problem," while 32% believed that the war had contributed slightly or had nothing at all to do with the problem (or had no response). The poll does not offer details on what else the latter respondents believed had caused this refugee problem, but policymakers identified other reasons for the migrants' flight (including migration for economic reasons, which most policymakers did not deem a legitimate reason for seeking refuge): "to escape persecution, to seek a better standard of living, or to join family members who have previously fled." See: The Veterans Administration, Attitudes Toward Vietnam Era Veterans Survey, Nov. 1979 [conducted between November 17-December 19, 1979, based on 2,563 personal interviews with adults nationally], USHARRIS.79VETS.R01B01, iPOLL Databank, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, Cornell University, Ithaca. The study also included separate samples of Vietnam Veterans, Vietnam Era Veterans, educators, and employers. See also: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary*, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy of the Committee on the Judiciary, Des Moines, Iowa, on October 9, 1981,* 97th Cong., First Session (Washington D.C., 1982), 29; U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary*, Annual Refugee Consultation: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy of the Committee on the Judiciary, on the Seventh Annual Consultation between the Administration and the Senate on Refugee Admissions, September 17, 1985*, 95th Cong., First Session (1986) (Statement of Secretary George P. Schultz, "Proposed Refugee Admissions for FY 1986").

[541] In particular, the Tet Offensive in 1968 marked a turning point in American public opinion toward the war. See: Matthew A. Baum, *Soft News Goes to War: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy in the New Media Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 86.

In the aftermath of the war, the U.S. faced the challenge of revitalizing its global image, both on the domestic and the international front.[542] As Heather Marie Stur has argued, one attempt to restore the "moral authority" of the U.S. was to present images of Americans welcoming and "rescuing" Vietnamese refugees by offering homes in the U.S.[543] Along with Stur, scholars such as Justin Hart and Yẽn Le Êspiritu have discussed "benevolent foreign intervention" in various forms, including foreign and humanitarian aid after the Vietnam War. As Le Êspiritu has argued, postwar refugee policy was complicit in selling the American "brand of 'freedom,'" first by perpetuating the narrative (or myth, according to Le Êspiritu) of the U.S. as a "nation of refuge" and the ideal site of resettlement for refugees.[544] In this narrative of "rescue and liberation," the Vietnamese are passive recipients of U.S. generosity rather than active historical agents.[545] Secondly, Le Êspiritu argues that this rhetoric has had a long-term consequence of enabling scholars, mainstream media outlets, the American public, and Vietnamese Americans themselves to re-narrate the role of the U.S. during and after the Vietnam War.[546] More specifically, the image of the U.S. as a refuge "smooths over the damage wrought by military intervention in parts of the world racialized to be always-already

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[542] With the "Vietnam Syndrome" in mind, U.S. policymakers also feared that "the perception of American weakness in Indochina would embolden Soviet and Communist aggression elsewhere. Yẽn Le Êspiritu, *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refuge(es)* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014), 27. Also see: Giles Scott-Smith, *Reasserting America in the 1970s: US Public Diplomacy and the Rebuilding of America's Image Abroad* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).
[543] The problem was that many Vietnamese refugees preferred to repatriate to their own country, which challenged the publicized narrative that was being circulated about U.S. humanitarian concern, that "the evacuation of Vietnamese was a necessary rescue operation motivated by humanitarian concern." See: Heather Marie Stur, "'Hiding Behind the Humanitarian Label': Refugees, Repatriates, and the Rebuilding of America's Benevolent Image After the Vietnam," *Diplomatic History* 39, issue 2 (April 2015): 223-244.
[544] Le Êspiritu also criticizes the literature on refugee camps because it "paired the construct of Vietnamese refugees as passive objects of sympathy with a plea for the West to 'assume an *active* role in caring, counseling, or intervening." See: Yẽn Le Êspiritu, *Body Counts,* 8, 22.
[545] Le Êspiritu, *Body Counts,* 79.
[546] Le Êspiritu, *Body Counts,* 2-3; 23.

'violent-prone.'" It also implies that "freedom is an indigenous property" in the U.S. (and that "freedom is a foreign principle" in Vietnam and other Asian countries).[547] This narrative of U.S. benevolence thus has the potential to erase the history of American violence in Southeast Asia.[548]

This chapter aims to build upon and complicate Le Êspiritu's and Stur's arguments about the contradictions within U.S. foreign and humanitarian policies. By analyzing the responses of American policymakers and the public who opposed Southeast Asian refugees' admission to the U.S., this chapter continues to reveal holes in the narrative of the U.S. as a "nation of refuge." In particular, it will reinforce these scholars' arguments about the contradictions between the official rhetoric about the U.S. as a benevolent nation and its policy toward Southeast Asian countries, including its military presence in South Vietnam and the secret bombings of Cambodia and Laos—or as Le Êspiritu has conveyed with a quote from Michel Agier, its policy of "striking with one hand, healing with the other."[549] As Jana K. Lipman has further argued, camps for Vietnamese (and Cuban) refugees—which were in fact military bases—were rhetorically disconnected from the war in Vietnam, as if the latter had not been responsible for creating the refugee crisis.[550]

As discussed in Chapter 4, when we look at the local level, we can see the efforts of Americans who pointed out the very contradictions within U.S. foreign and

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[547] Le Êspiritu, *Body Counts,* 78.
[548] If we also consider the first case study, there is a way in which historical or popular narratives can focus on the Marshall Plan and American goodwill after World War II and not the turning away of Jewish refugees.
[549] Michel Agier. "Humanity as an Identity and Its Political Effects (A Note on Camps and Humanitarian Government)," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 1, no. 1 (2010): 29-45, quoted in Le Êspiritu, *Body Counts,* 78.
[550] Jana K. Lipman, "A Refugee Camp in America: Fort Chaffee and Vietnamese and Cuban Refugees, 1975-1982," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 33, no. 2 (Winter, 2014): 63.

humanitarian policies from the start. American policymakers, community members, and activists with strong convictions about the immorality of the war did argue on behalf of incoming refugees, articulating the belief that the U.S. had a responsibility to open its doors precisely because of its military involvement in Southeast Asia. The controversial debates over the U.S. presence in Vietnam also had an impact on the direction of social work and humanitarian work abroad; as Sara Fieldston has observed, voluntary agencies working abroad (including in South Vietnam) began to "[reexamine] their relationship to the U.S. government and worked to disentangle overseas child welfare from U.S. foreign affairs."[551]

Yet the more hostile reactions to the presence of refugees in the U.S. reflect a general shift in American attitudes toward the war and defeat, which were part of a larger backlash against foreign aid expenditures. The discourses about poverty, dependency, and taxpayers' dollars during the late 1960s and early 1970s continued to run parallel to these debates about Vietnam, responsibility, and guilt. The concepts of welfare and foreign assistance, and the question of where American taxpayers' dollars should go, were consistently fraught with tension during the postwar period, but these debates became even more strained in the wake of the Vietnam War. The narratives about foreign and humanitarian aid shifted from being about a prosperous country helping the world to being the country that had its own suffering children and problems of hunger, poverty, and inequalities to resolve. The controversy over Southeast Asian refugees can thus serve as a lens for observing the changes that had taken place since the first case study, when the U.S. was emerging from a war labeled as a victory and could afford to be generous

[551] Sara Fieldston, *Raising the World: Child Welfare in the American Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 180.

and benevolent. However, members of the American public began to present these concerns and uncertainties about the limited resources as a zero-sum game. In their eyes, the refugees, as immigrants and welfare recipients themselves, were an additional burden that American taxpayers had to take on.

My primary contribution to this body of scholarship is to demonstrate how the focus on children in the media and policy-level debates helped cement these two narratives, illuminating how benevolent and violent policies came hand in hand, and pushed Americans to confront underlying tensions. The ways in which the American public and policymakers filtered the aftermath of the Vietnam War, including their disillusionment with foreign and domestic social policy and their reactions to the images of Southeast Asian children and hungry American children as victims, prompted changes in policy-level debates.

## U.S. Immigration Policies toward Refugee Families & Unaccompanied Children

### *The U.S. as Part of the International Response to the "Boat People":*[552]

To provide a sense of the scale of the refugee crisis, this section will provide an overview of the "boat people" and their options for resettlement. Refugees departed and arrived in countries of asylum in five waves, starting in 1975 after the fall of Saigon and tapering off in 1988/1989. The UNHCR was at first slow to respond to the refugee crisis, but in 1979 negotiated the Orderly Departure Program (ODP) with the Vietnamese government and the UNHCR, which allowed "qualified persons" to be resettled in countries such as the U.S. and Canada. Later in 1989, the UNHCR held a multinational

[552] James M. Freeman, *Changing Identities: Vietnamese Americans 1975-1995* (Needham Heights, MA: Pearson, 1996), 10.

conference in Geneva, at which 79 nations signed and adopted the Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA), with the designated cutoff date for asylum seekers set at March 14, 1989 (June 6, 1988 for entry into Hong Kong).[553]

As for U.S. refugee policy, temporary legislation enabled the entry and resettlement of Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian refugees under parole authority, though Congress had to wait until the number of refugees in need "reached crisis proportions" in order to label it an "emergency."[554] The Indochinese Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 permitted the entry of over 205,000 Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees and provided financial assistance. This Act was followed by an amendment in 1976 to extend these provisions to refugees from Laos.[555] The following year, another act was passed to allow these refugees to acquire permanent residence status and access to domestic resources, including welfare aid and educational resources, through the Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program (IRAP).[556] These programs built

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[553] Freeman, *Changing Identities, 1975-1995,* 39.

[554] "The Proposed Refugee Act of 1979 – Meeting the Need for a Comprehensive Long-term Policy on Refugees," Public Welfare Department, Refugee Programs Office Records, 128.E.8.1B, Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

[555] The Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 [H.R. 6755]: An Act to Enable the United States to Render Assistance to, or in Behalf of, Certain Migrants and Refugees, Public Law 94-23, 94th Congress, *U.S. Statutes At Large* 89 (May 23, 1975): 87-88, available at the University of Washington-Bothell Library; *Amendment to the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1976: An Act to Amend the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 to Provide for the Inclusion of Refugees from Laos [S. 2760],* Public Law 94-313, *U.S. Statutes At Large* 90 (June 21, 1976): 691-692, at 691. Public Law 94-330, enacted on June 30, 1976, amended the Foreign Assistance Appropriation Act (PL 94-24) to allow for current refugee program funds to be used for refugees from Laos. See: Letter from Clyde V. Downing (Regional Commissioner of the Department of HEW) to Mrs. Vera J. Litkins (Commissioner of the MN Department of Public Welfare), June 12, 1976, Public Welfare Department, Refugee Programs Office Records, 128.E.8.1B, Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

[556] *Amendment to the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act: An Act to Authorize the Creation of a Record of Admission for Permanent Residence in the Cases of Certain Refugees from Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia, and to Amend the Indochinese Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 to Extend the Period During Which Refugee Assistance May Be Provided, And For Other Purposes [H.R. 7769],* Public Law 95-145, *U.S. Statutes At Large* 91 (Oct. 28, 1977): 1223-1226; U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary*, Review of U.S. Refugee Resettlement Programs and Policies: A Report prepared at the*

upon previous refugee resettlement programs, particularly the agencies, institutions, and funding structure used for the Cuban refugee program under the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act in 1962.[557] The main difference between the approaches to these two groups of refugees was that, with the sudden influx of large groups of Southeast Asian migrants, "We do not have the cushion which camps for displaced persons in Europe provided or the flexibility which the gradual arrival of Cubans over a period of several years afforded us," as Ambassador L. Dean Brown reminded U.S. governors and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1975.[558] The costs of the Cuban refugee program also served as a model from which policymakers took lessons; though they viewed it as largely successful, it was important to make sure that the Southeast Asian program did not overextend itself into a long-term program.[559]

Southeast Asian refugees continued to be admitted under the special parole powers of Presidents Ford and Carter throughout the 1970s until the passage of the Refugee Act of 1980. The scale of the refugee crisis forced changes in refugee

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*Request of Senator Edward M. Kennedy [Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary], by the Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress,* 96th Congress, First Session (July 1979). For educational services for children, see: The Committee on Education and Labor, *Indochinese Refugee Children Assistance Act of 1975*, H.R. Rep. No. 94-719 (December 12, 1975); Indochina Refugee Children Assistance Act of 1975, 94th Cong., First Session, October 22, 1975, S. Rep. 94-432, Box 55, Folder 9/10/76, White House Records Office: Legislation Case Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

[557] Earlier acts and directives from 1945–1970, which set the standards and precedents for handling refugees' admission and visa applications (while continuing to be modified throughout the postwar period), included the following: the Presidential directive of December 22, 1945, the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, the Refugee Relief Act of 1953, the 1958 Hungarian Refugee Program, the 1957 Refugee-Escape Act, the Cuban Refugee Program and the Presidential directive of May 23, 1962, the Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1965, and the Refugee Fair Share Law (Act of July 14, 1960), which established a permanent provision for the admission of refugees to the U.S. on a conditional basis.

[558] Indochina Refugee Children Assistance Act of 1975, 94th Cong., First Session, October 22, 1975, S. Rep. 94-432, Box 55, Folder 9/10/76, White House Records Office: Legislation Case Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

[559] Norman L. Zucker, "Refugee Resettlement in the United States: Policy and Problems," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 467, The Global Refugee Problem: U. S. and World Response (May, 1983): 172–186, at 175.

legislation, as policymakers quickly realized that "a steady, fairly predictable stream of refugees" would be entering the U.S. and that they needed to formalize a procedure for their admissions.[560] Although the Act seemed to offer an opportunity to finally establish a comprehensive U.S. refugee policy, the admission procedures continued to function as a patchwork and case-by-case system.[561] The Act also gave Congress more control over this process by redefining the legal definition of a refugee. According to Senator Kennedy, the Vietnamese refugees evacuated in 1975 would not have qualified as a refugee under the U.N. definition, had it not been for the parole authority that permitted their entry. The new definition broadened to encompass more situations of displacement, political persecution, and detainment, beyond those defined under the U.N. Convention. This revised definition also aimed to get rid of the "geographical and ideological restrictions now applicable to conditional entrant refugees under section 203(a)(7) of the Immigration and Nationality Act," and to codify an ad hoc process of admitting refugees in emergency situations. At the same time, Kennedy stressed, this new definition would

[560] The 17,400 limit was "always oversubscribed," with 133,000 refugees paroled in 1975, as well as 11,000 in 1976. An additional 25,000 refugees were authorized to enter the U.S. between June 1978 and May 1979, and an additional parole of 21,875 had been announced in December 1978. See: "The Proposed Refugee Act of 1979 – Meeting the Need for a Comprehensive Long-term Policy on Refugees," Refugee Acts of 1979 and 1980 folder, Public Welfare Department, Refugee Programs Office Records, 128.E.8.1B, Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society.

[561] As Senator Dick Clark, the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs, pointed out, refugee laws since World War II were piecemeal and "makeshift," responding to the influx of refugees and international crises as they came up. Edwin B. Silverman (the Director of the Illinois Governor's Center for Asian Assistance) hoped that the 1980 Act would serve as the "first national refugee policy, policy that might have saved countless lives in World War II." See: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary*, Review of U.S. Refugee Resettlement Programs and Policies: A Report prepared at the Request of Senator Edward M. Kennedy [Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary], by the Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress,* 96th Congress, First Session (July 1979), 12; Edwin B. Silverman, "Indochina Legacy: The Refugee Act of 1980," *Publius* 10, no. 1, The State of American Federalism, 1979 (Winter, 1980): 27-41; Zucker, "Refugee Resettlement in the United States," 177-178.

not enable an unlimited number of refugees to enter the U.S., and the priority was on refugees "of special concern to the United States."[562]

Families and individuals who entered the U.S. under the ODP were thus processed either as refugees under the Refugee Act of 1980 or as immigrants under the Immigrant and Nationality Act.[563] In hindsight, this was a large refugee program, with an estimated 1.32 million people from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos coming to the U.S. between April 1975 and September 1994.[564] Yet the debates over the admission of Southeast Asian refugees questioned how much it was the responsibility of the U.S. to take in refugees as opposed to an international responsibility, as I will discuss later in this chapter.

***The Role of Family Ties and Age in U.S. Refugee Policy:***

Much like previous refugee legislation such as the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 and Refugee Relief Act of 1953, the Refugee Act of 1980 continued to place emphasis on family reunification and admitting minors under age 21 who had relatives in the U.S.[565] Yet aid workers and officials reported discrepancies between refugee policy and its application on the ground. For example, having family ties in the U.S. sometimes worked

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[562] "Refugee Act of 1979," Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 96th Congress, First Session, vol. 125, September 6, 1979, No. 112, Public Welfare Department, Refugee Programs Office Records, 128.E.8.1B, Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society; see also Zucker, "Refugee Resettlement in the United States," 177.

[563] Freeman, *Changing Identities,* 34-35. The Refugee Act of 1980 broadened the definition of a refugee to include asylum seekers not just from Communist regimes, but other "oppressive regimes."

[564] Freeman, *Changing Identities,* 3; According to a Library of Congress study on "Refugees in the United States: Laws, Programs, and Proposals" in March 28, 1979, about 188,000 arrived from 1975-1979. See: U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, *Study: Refugees in the United States: Laws, Programs, and Proposals*, by Catherine McHugh (March 28, 1979).

[565] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary*, Review of U.S. Refugee Resettlement Programs and Policies* (July 1979); The Refugee Act of 1980.

*against* Vietnamese refugees, for Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) officers assumed that the refugees wanted to join their American relatives rather than being motivated by "a 'well-founded fear of persecution in the home country.'" According to one U.S. official, the irony was that these applicants would have qualified for resettlement in the U.S. if they were processed as ordinary immigrants rather than as refugees. Furthermore, the official explained, a rejected applicant was in a Catch-22: "once a fellow is turned down by the U.S. and has family there, he's not of interest to other countries. This leaves the fellow in a worst situation than if he hadn't said he has family in the U.S. The fact that he's got family in the States put him out of court for everybody else."[566] In response to other cases, legislators also recognized that refugees were "hostage to a system that necessitates that their plight build to tragic proportions so as to establish the imperative to act."[567] The application of refugee policy on the ground depended on the discretion of immigration officers and their categorization of refugees as "legitimate" and "deserving" applicants for refugee status. However, this policy was sometimes executed in ways that seemed to contradict its very emphasis on family reunification.

While most refugees migrated together as family units, especially young couples with children, some families sent their older children as unaccompanied minors in the mid to late 1970s and early 1980s. As it was the case with the Displaced Persons program, refugee legislation after the Vietnam War aimed to prioritize Southeast Asian

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[566] William Branigin, "U.S. Rejection Of Some Cases From Indochina Dismays Other Refugee Aides," *The Washington Post*, Washington Post Foreign Service, Jan 25, 1983, A8.
[567] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary*, Review of U.S. Refugee Resettlement Programs and Policies* (July 1979).

children and youth for admission.[568] For example, two Senate Committees, the Foreign Relations and the Judiciary, held hearings in 1972 to discuss, respectively, the creation of a temporary "orphans' agency" and the impact of U.S. bombings on North Vietnamese civilians.[569] The resulting bill (S. 2497) established a temporary "Vietnam Children's Care Agency" to assist Vietnamese orphans under age 16 by supporting existing daycare and feeding programs, orphanages, hostels for self-supporting orphans, and training for child care professionals. However, this agency was to be dismantled if President Ford was able to convince an international or UN agency to take responsibility for it. Other responses to the plight of children were attempts to achieve "quick solutions" that ultimately ended up harming rather than helping families and children—such as Operation Babylift—or were bogged-down efforts to work through the immigration system.[570]

Children in refugee camps were subject to the same screening process as adult refugees, and those who arrived after the designated cutoff date had to "prove they qualified for refugee status." As refugees awaited the screening process, they were temporarily placed in refugee camps, including camps in Bangkok and in the U.S. Illustrating the militarization of U.S. refugee and migration policy, military bases served as refugee camps for Hungarian, Cuban, Vietnamese, and (later in the 1990s) Haitian refugees. For example, Fort Chaffee and Fort Smith in Arkansas had been turned into a camp for Vietnamese refugees in 1975, and this function continued for Cuban refugees

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[568] Daniel J. Steinbock, "The Admission of Unaccompanied Children into the United States," *Yale Law & Policy Review* 7, no. 1 (1989): 137-200.
[569] "Vietnam Orphans," *CQ Almanac 1972*, 28th ed., 05-766-05-767 (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1973), http://library.cqpress.com/cqalmanac/cqal72-1249198.
[570] Kathleen Ja Sook Bergquist, "Operation Babylift or Babyabduction?: Implications of the Hague Convention on the Humanitarian Evacuation and 'Rescue' of Children," *International Social Work* 52 (2009): 621-633.

from 1980-1982.[571] The nature of these camp locations—as well as the conditions of the refugee camps that subjected refugee children to more trauma, where children made up roughly one half of the camp populations—raises questions about U.S. aid as inherently benevolent.

While their cases were evaluated (and appealed), both adult and child asylum seekers were locked away for 2-5 years. Children under age 16 who were in the camps without parents "were evaluated by a Special Committee, comprised of a child expert, a UNHCR official, and immigration officials of the country of asylum, to determine if resettlement or repatriation was in their best interests." On one hand, UNHCR officials believed that these young refugees needed adults to make decisions on their behalf. The UNHCR thus appointed a Special Committee to make appeals on behalf of minors "in their best interests."[572] However, as a 1975 *New York Times* article reported, UNHCR officials and members of the President's Interagency Task Force on Indochinese Refugees did not know how to deal with the more than 300 unaccompanied children at Camp Pendleton, a marine base in Southern California. Without adequate staff and personnel, the interagency could not confirm whether or not these children had parents in Vietnam.[573] Some children approached the UNHCR representatives and asked if they

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[571] According to Jana K. Lipman, these camps had a longer history in the U.S. Jewish refugees had also been placed on an army base in Oswego, New York, during World War II. See: Jana K. Lipman, "A Refugee Camp in America: Fort Chaffee and Vietnamese and Cuban Refugees, 1975-1982," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 33, no. 2 (Winter, 2014): 57-87.
[572] Freeman, *Changing Identities*, 39-40; Carl J. Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate: the United States and Refugees during the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).
[573] These children were also described as distinct from the children of Operation Babylift (the 2000 "orphans"). See: Douglas E. Kneeland, "Unaccompanied Children Pose a Refugee Problem: Resettling of Refugee," *The New York Times*, Jul 28, 1975, p. 1.

could return to Vietnam, but then changed their minds. As one official sympathetically remarked: "how does an 11-year-old child make up his mind?"[574]

Yet young refugees faced more rigid definitions of "unaccompanied" children, as well as an inefficient system of processing migrants. Furthermore, by the 1980s, the State Department decided to assign the lowest priority level to unaccompanied minors without relatives in the U.S.[575] UNHCR officials ultimately determined whether or not unaccompanied children in refugee camps were orphaned and, if they found this not to be the case, planned to send the children back home. Some officials were suspicious of unaccompanied minors' claims about their familial circumstances. According to a 12-year-old boy who was interviewed in the camps, orphaned children were afraid to request a review of their cases because the "UNHCR doesn't believe them… It's funny, they risk their lives to get freedom, but they're afraid to talk to those officials."[576] These types of questions—which prioritized refugee children's identities as immigrants over their status as dependents—prolonged the screening process. As a result, refugee children, including those who were legitimately orphaned, were forced to wait several years for their visas to be approved.

At the same time, officials understood that inquiries into the children's family background could place their family members back home in jeopardy. The status of unaccompanied children was defined by their family's whereabouts, and in turn the mobility of unaccompanied children limited or broadened the immigration options for

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[574] But the decision to stay or leave was often not up to the children alone; in most cases, this was a family decision, with the parents consciously sending their children abroad without them.
[575] Barry Wain, "UN Agency, in Policy Change, to Return Refugee Children to Parents in Vietnam," *Wall Street Journal*, April 27, 1982, p. 34.
[576] Interview with Tai, 12-year-old, in James M. Freeman and Nguyen Dinh Huu, *Voices from the Camps: Vietnamese Children Seeking Asylum* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 72.

their relatives. In an effort to adhere to the "best interests" policy for both children and their families back home, some officials decided that it was best not to place the children in any permanent situation, though they continued to look into various alternatives: processing children with blood relatives, whenever possible; persuading non-relatives to take the children with them and consider adoption; and arranging foster homes in various cities.[577] UNHCR officials in refugee camps throughout Thailand took a case-by-case approach to Southeast Asian refugees, treating unaccompanied minors who displayed "mature and independent judgment" as adults and those who did not display such maturity as children who needed to be placed with parents.[578]

These cases illustrate some of the tensions in how immigration officials and social workers understood the status of young refugees as child dependents and as potential public charges in the U.S. First, refugee policy, when executed on the ground, was not always prioritizing families in practice and offered limited options to refugee families who were seeking a safe home for their children. Secondly, the existence of family ties determined whether or not the child refugees were legitimately economic dependents who needed U.S. aid, because family units were considered (or expected to become) self-sufficient economic units. If children arrived without their parents or relatives in the U.S., social agencies needed to find American sponsors or adopting families to support them so that they would not become public charges. If they still had parents in their home

[577] The State Department only accepted those who were approved by the UNHCR to receive resettlement assistance. Freeman and Dinh Huu, *Voices from the Camps,* 36.
[578] Barry Wain, "UN Agency, in Policy Change, to Return Refugee Children to Parents in Vietnam," *Wall Street Journal*, April 27, 1982, p. 34.

country, they needed to be sent back home.[579] The policy of returning refugee children to their parents was in the name of "family reunification," though families decided to separate in order to get around the limitations of immigration policy in the first place.[580] This policy reflects continuity from the first case study with Jewish refugees: the question of family ties was in fact a question of who would assume financial responsibility of the children as non-citizens in the U.S., at least in the eyes of resettlement officers who were carrying out refugee policies on the international front. Finally, this was a moment when international and American officials were redefining the category of the refugee by clarifying the circumstances under which the "refugee" and the "unaccompanied minor" were qualified to enter the U.S.

***The Resettlement of Unaccompanied Minors, 1975-1980s:***

Although there were just as many, if not more, legal barriers for Southeast Asian refugees than for European refugees, the number of unaccompanied children who arrived from Southeast Asia in the 1970s and 1980s was greater than those who arrived during the early postwar period. According to legal scholar Daniel J. Steinbock, 1275 children came under the 1945 Truman Directive, 3037 under the 1948 Displaced Persons Act, and 4000 under the 1953 Refugee Relief Act, with a combined total of 8312 children.[581] This number does not include the 3500 children who came under the Refugee-Escapee Act of 1957 and the Hungarian Refugee Program. In the case of Southeast Asian refugees, 2547

[579] In both cases, sponsors and social agencies worked hard to find ways to let the children stay in the U.S. In the European refugee case, social agencies understood that some parents could not support their children and often encouraged these parents to send their parents abroad.
[580] Barry Wain, "UN Agency, in Policy Change, to Return Refugee Children to Parents in Vietnam," *Wall Street Journal,* April 27, 1982, p. 34.
[581] Daniel J. Steinbock, "The Admission of Unaccompanied Children into the United States," *Yale Law & Policy Review* 7, no. 1 (1989): 137-200, at 141.

children came to the U.S. under Operation Babylift, 800 under the 1975 Indochinese Refugee Program, and 8000 under the 1979–1980 Indochinese Refugee Program, with a total of 11,347 children.[582] This sum does not include the 300 children who came under the Amerasian program. By 1980, an estimated 33,000 unaccompanied children, including the numbers mentioned here as well as the children from Cuba and Haiti, had entered the U.S. since the end of World War II. These numbers suggest that the public support for foreign aid may have declined, and support for refugee programs may have wavered, but the emphasis on children persisted among the public and policymakers.

Admission of Unaccompanied Children

| Program | Date | Number of Children | Origin | Age Limits | Status of Admittees |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Wagner-Rogers Children's Bill)* | 1939 | (20,000) | Germany | (0-14) | (proposed legislation) |
| Evacuation of British children | 1940 | 861 | UK | 5-14 | Immigrants & Visitors |
| | 1940 | 450 | UK | | Quota Immigrants |
| Child refugees on the Continent | 1942 | 110 | Europe** | | Quota Immigrants |
| Truman Doctrine of 1945 | 1945-48 | 1,275 | Europe*** | | Preference for Refugees & Displaced Persons within National Quota |
| Displaced Persons Act of 1948 | 1948-52 | 3,037 | Europe**** | 16 | Non-quota Immigrants |
| Refugee Relief Act of 1953 | 1953-56 | 4,000 | Asia & Europe† | 10 | Non-quota Refugee |
| Refugee-Escapee Act of 1957 | 1957-59 | 2,500 | Asia & Europe†† | 14 | Non-quota Refugee |
| Hungarian Refugee Program | 1956-57 | 1,000 | Hungary | 18 | Non-quota Refugee & Parole |
| Cuban Refugee Program | 1960-67 | 8,000 | Cuba | 6-18 | Nonimmigrant (student & visitor) |
| Operation Babylift | 1975 | 2,547 | Vietnam | 0-12 | Parole |
| Indochinese Refugee Program | 1975 | 800 | Vietnam | 18 | Parole |
| Indochinese Refugee Program | 1979-Present | 8,000 | Indochina††† | 18 | Parole & Refugee |
| Amerasians | 1982-Present | 300 | Indochina†††† | 18 | Non-quota Immigrants & Refugee |

* Never Adopted.
** Most from Poland.
*** Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Germany, Rumania, Lithuania, Estonia, in descending order of numbers of children.
**** Germany, Greece, Poland, Italy, Yugoslavia, and Austria.

† Japan, other Asian countries, Greece, Italy, and Austria.
†† Korea, Japan, Italy, and Greece.
††† Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos.
†††† Most from Vietnam.

***Figure 9***: Numbers of children admitted under U.S. refugee programs. Table compiled by Daniel J. Steinbock.[583]

The main difference between the early post-World War II case and the post-Vietnam case is that adoption and resettlement programs for unaccompanied children shifted from being mostly privately funded (by voluntary agencies and individuals) to

[582] Silverman, "Indochina Legacy: The Refugee Act of 1980," 140.
[583] Daniel J. Steinbock, "The Admission of Unaccompanied Children into the United States," 141.

being mostly federally and state-funded, under the supervision of the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor or the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW).[584] Because the refugees were eligible for the Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program (IRAP), through which the U.S. State Department provided $350 for each refugee who needed resettlement, sponsors did not have to take financial responsibility for the refugees.[585] This division of labor reinforced state involvement in the refugee assistance program, though Congress still designated the task of processing children and youth at refugee camps and arranging their home placements to two religious organizations: the U.S. Catholic Conference and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services.[586]

However, social agencies encountered similar challenges as in the first case study with Jewish child refugees when discussing the home placement of unaccompanied minors. Legal questions about parental authority and consent also crossed borders and created complications: what was the role of the birth parents who were alive and waiting in camps? How did local courts define parents, especially when extended and nontraditional families were common among Southeast Asian families? What would happen to the minor's placement with extended or foster families if the natural parents later arrived in the U.S.?[587] While the majority of the unaccompanied minors were between ages 14 and 17, there were concerns about refugees over age 19 participating in

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[584] Edwin B. Silverman, "Indochina Legacy: The Refugee Act of 1980," *Publius* 10, no. 1 (1980): 159.
[585] Daniel Pederson, "A Warm Iowa Welcome for Boat People: 196 Vietnam refugees arrive in Des Moines," *The Des Moines Register,* April 30, 1979, Press 1979-1980 folder, Public Welfare Department, Refugee Programs Office Records, 128.E.8.1B, Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society.
[586] Notes for Keynote Address, by Tran Minh Tung, MD, November 14, 1984, Folder: Voluntary Agencies, 1985, Public Welfare Department, Refugee Programs Office Records, 128.E.8.1B, Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society.
[587] Notes for Keynote Address, by Tran Minh Tung, MD, November 14, 1984.

these programs.[588] The problem was not only the possibility that older adolescents and young adults were taking the spot of another needy child or youth; if they were placed in a foster family, older refugees were often unhappy with the arrangements due to the different expectations for children and young adults. Age categories, especially the legitimate age limit for receiving financial assistance, thus remained a contentious issue among social workers and policymakers.

Another difference was the deliberate agency policy to break up ethnic enclaves by placing Southeast Asian children with white families. For unaccompanied minors and orphans, social workers believed that such arrangements would help Southeast Asian refugee children learn English and assimilate more quickly, whereas the primary goal of agencies in the Jewish refugee case was to keep children with families of their religious and cultural backgrounds (whenever possible), while encouraging their mingling with non-refugee children as their point of entry into American culture. Supported by federal funding, the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and the U.S. Catholic Conference placed over 90% of unaccompanied Vietnamese children and adolescents with white families between 1975 and 1987.[589] Some of these placements aimed to adhere to this policy of assimilation, while in other cases it was a necessity due to a shortage of available "ethnic" homes. Group homes with their Vietnamese peers and foster homes with Southeast Asian families served as alternatives, but the latter case was uncommon because many Southeast Asian families had been recently resettled

[588] Letter from Noel T. Koenigs, MSW (Social Service Supervisor) to Ms. Joan Rudnik, MSW (Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota), Re: Unaccompanied Minors Program, July 12, 1985, Folder: Voluntary Agencies, 1985, Public Welfare Department, Refugee Programs Office Records, 128.E.8.1B, Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society.
[589] Zelda Porte and Judith Torney-Purta, "Depression and Academic Achievement among Indochinese Refugee Unaccompanied Minors in Ethnic and Nonethnic Placements," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 57, no. 4 (October 1987): 536.

themselves. Furthermore, it was "not the tradition in Asia, particularly in Vietnam, to absorb an unrelated person into the family circle." While the assimilationist plan may have worked in forcing the unaccompanied minors to adjust faster to American culture, psychologists and social professionals who conducted studies with these children later in the 1980s noticed higher levels of depression among youth who had been placed in "nonethnic" (or non-Southeast Asian) familial situations than those who had been in "ethnic" familial situations.[590]

These efforts reflect voluntary agencies' emphasis on turning immigrants into Americans, which would continue in subsequent refugee cases. This method of immersion and assimilation—by removing refugees from their home cultures—was also connected to a broader cultural imagination of Southeast Asian peoples and culture. For example, popular culture and literary representations during the Cold War marketed Southeast Asian countries as exotic and tourist sites for middlebrow American consumers and servicemen, as Scott Laderman and Christina Klein have discussed.[591] While this type of fascination may have contributed to a benign understanding of cultural and ethnic differences, the American public's response to refugees was also part of a larger shift in immigration politics before and after the end of the Vietnam War. Immigration restrictions between 1965 and 1980 continued to open and close doors to refugees and immigrants, including the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 and the Refugee Act of 1980. By replacing the national origins quota system with a system that allocated visas

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[590] Zelda Porte and Judith Torney-Purta, "Depression and Academic Achievement," 537.
[591] See: Mark Bradley, "Slouching toward Bethlehem: Culture, Diplomacy and the Origins of the Cold War in Vietnam," in *Cold War Constructions: the Political Culture of United States Imperialism, 1945-1966*, ed. Christian G. Appy (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 11-34; Scott Laderman, *Tours of Vietnam: War, Travel Guides, and Memory* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

based on hemispheres, the 1965 Act enabled a shift in the demographics of immigrants to include greater numbers of migrants from East and Southeast Asia.[592] This shift prompted Americans, especially those with nativist sentiments, to express concerns about ethnic and cultural differences, which not only had implications for immigrants, but also for refugees. These changes shaped how social workers, immigration officials, and the American public understood the presence of Southeast Asian refugees as permanent residents and potential citizens, and evaluated their potential to fit into American society and to contribute to the nation-state.

## Americans' Responses to the Refugee Crisis: Redefining U.S. Humanitarian Obligations

On the domestic front, American policymakers and taxpayers debated the extent and limits of their responsibility to respond to the refugee crisis, based on their expectations and understandings of Americans' role in the Vietnam War and on the global stage.[593] Policymakers first strove to clarify the boundaries of the American government and taxpayers' obligations to address the international "refugee problem" and the Southeast Asian recipients of aid who were "dependent" on the U.S. and the international community. One question to clarify was the role of the U.S. in the broader international response to the movement of Southeast Asian refugees. While the American

[592] Erika Lee and Judy Yung. *Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 316-317; Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Carl J. Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate: the United States and Refugees during the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).
[593] For example, Senator Edward M. Kennedy highlighted "our responsibilities as a nation in helping the people of these countries to rebuild their homes and normalize their lives." See: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Human Resources, *Indochina Refugee Children's Assistance Act Amendments of 1977*, *The Committee On Human Resources, on S. 2108, A Bill to Amend The Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 to Extend the Period During Which Refugee Assistance May Be Provided, and for Other Purposes, September 22, 1977*, 95th Cong., First Session (1977).

public was responding to images of children, policymakers were responding to other issues and interests as well.

### *"It's an International Problem": Clarifying the Boundaries of American Responsibilities*

Some policymakers and taxpayers saw the "people problem" in this region as an international matter whose costs and provisions should have been shared with other countries. At a 1977 Senate Committee on Human Resources hearing regarding the possibility of extending the period during which Southeast Asian refugees could receive assistance (amending The Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975), Philip C. Habib, the Undersecretary for Political Affairs and the Chairman of the President's Task Force on Indochina Refugees, argued that policymakers should "look upon this as an international problem, and we have tried to emphasize the international character of the problem."[594] As pointed out by the Coalition for the Effective Resettlement of Indochinese Refugees, who reported to this Senate Committee, the U.S. was also not "the largest relative accepter of Indochinese refugees… While we continue to have an obligation and a concern, we must recognize that other countries are indeed responding in a humane and effective way."[595] One *LA Times* reader argued that it was the designated responsibility of the UN, UNHCR, and international agencies to take the lead in refugee assistance, especially their resettlement. "If the United Nations is such a

[594] Also the interrelatedness of the refugee problem in Thailand: while it was "a local problem…for the Thais because of the numbers involved and the character of people," it was ultimately "a problem which we have sought to share with other countries who have somewhat the same humanitarian concern we have for these people." Funding for the DP camps in Thailand was "under the umbrella of the UNHCR, it is a combined effort with the Thai Government." See: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Human Resources, *Indochinese Refugee Children's Assistance Act Amendments of 1977*, 19.
[595] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Human Resources, *Indochinese Refugee Children's Assistance Act Amendments of 1977*, 20.

failure in carrying out its obligations to the needy," he asked, "then where the heck is all the money going that we keep shoveling out to this organization? If it cannot be of use why support it?"[596] These responses thus called for clear limits to the extent of American responsibility for the resettlement of Southeast Asian refugees.

However, supporters of increased federal aid to Vietnam such as Senator Alan Cranston (D-CA) argued that the U.S. government did have an obligation to respond precisely because "The tragic folly called Vietnam was and remains a consequence of Federal decision-making."[597] As Cranston implied, federally supported refugee assistance could serve as one way of compensating for the political and humanitarian suffering the U.S. had caused. Cranston's argument also reflects a different definition of Americans' "global responsibilities" to respond to refugees, now steeped in the direct involvement of the U.S. in creating displacement through military and foreign aid.[598]

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[596] Benjamin Allan (Los Angeles), Letter to the Editor, *Los Angeles Times*, July 1, 1979, F4; Some nonprofit humanitarian organizations also argued that this was not just an American responsibility, not because there was a separate institution to deal with the issue, but rather because the issue was one that crossed international boundaries. W. Stanley Mooneyham, president of World Vision International, stated in 1978 that it was necessary to "internationalize this problem. America has a unique and specific responsibility to these debris of the war, but so does mankind. To abandon these boat people now is an unconscionable act." See: Peter Arnett, "Refugee 'Boat People' Given Food, Aid at Sea: Mercy Ship Helps Refugee 'Boat People,'" *Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 1978, B1.

[597] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee On Labor and Public Welfare, *Indochinese Refugee Children Assistance Act, 1975: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Education of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, on S. 2145 [To Provide Federal Financial Assistance to States in order to Assist Local Educational Agencies to Provide Public Education to Vietnamese and Cambodian Refugee Children, and for Other Purposes]*, *September 9, 1975,* 94th Cong., First Session (1975), 3.

[598] Some policymakers and journalists also expressed a sense of guilt of abandoning their South Vietnamese allies: "Many worthy and unfortunate people are among the numerous Indochinese still desperate to leave their homelands. But this single small group of Vietnamese in 'reeducation camps' is special. Its members relied on the United States; they put their fate and fortune on the line, and they were abandoned. To no group of people anywhere do Americans have a deeper moral obligation." See: "An American Obligation," *The Washington Post,* Sept. 5, 1984, A18.

Other politicians went beyond the war itself and invoked the "historical tradition"[599] of American generosity in sending assistance abroad and welcoming "refugees [who] fled here for sanctuary," as exemplified in the response to refugees who were displaced during World War II. Earlier, in a 1975 White House statement, President Gerald Ford had deplored the House of Representatives' rejection of assistance to South Vietnamese refugees,[600] arguing that "refugees have fled from the Communist take-over in Vietnam. These refugees chose freedom. They do not ask that we be their keepers but only, for a time, that we be their helpers." He also invoked the inscription on the Statue of Liberty[601] to assert that the House vote "does not reflect the values we cherish as a nation of immigrants. It is not worthy of a people which has lived by the philosophy symbolized in the Statue of Liberty. It reflects fear and misunderstanding, rather than charity and compassion." Ford then concluded his statement by urging the House of Representatives

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[599] Senator Edward M. Kennedy often referred to the historical precedents of the displaced persons after World War II, the Hungarian refugees in 1956, and the Cuban refugees. Kennedy was also urging the U.S. to respond to the long-term humanitarian issues of food shortage and economic development in South Vietnam (as well as the business interests American corporations had in the region). In his opening statement before the Senate Committee on Human Resources, Kennedy implored: "Although our primary focus this morning is on the continuing movement of refugees to the United States and the Indochina refugee assistance program, we cannot ignore the many other immediate and longer term humanitarian problems remaining in Southeast Asia." See: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Human Resources, *Indochinese Refugee Children's Assistance Act Amendments of 1977: Hearing before the Committee on Human Resources, on S. 2108, A Bill to Amend the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 to Extend the Period during which Refugee Assistance May Be Provided, and for Other Purposes, September 22, 1977,* 95th Cong., First Session (1977), 1, 3.

[600] On May 1, 1975, the House of Representatives rejected the Vietnam Humanitarian Assistance and Evacuation Act (H.R. 6069), a bill to authorize the sending of humanitarian assistance to refugees and "other needy people who are victims of the conflict in South Vietnam." U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, *Vietnam Humanitarian Assistance and Evacuation Act: A bill to authorize funds for humanitarian assistance and evacuation programs in Vietnam and to clarify restrictions on the availability of funds for the use of U.S. Armed Forces in Indochina*, 94th Cong. (1975); also see: Gerald R. Ford's appeal to Congress: "Letter to the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate Transmitting Proposed Legislation To Assist the Republic of Vietnam," April 11, 1975, available online at The American Presidency Project, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=4829.

[601] "Give me your tired, your poor / Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, / The wretched refuse of your teeming shore, / Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me: / I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

and the Senate to approve legislation providing assistance to Southeast Asian refugees that would reflect (rather than "repudiate") "the finest principles and traditions of America."[602] However, these types of arguments disconnected the violence of the U.S. wartime actions abroad from the benevolence of its humanitarian actions.

This "track record" of humanitarian assistance was highlighted not only by American politicians and relief organizations, but also by Vietnamese representatives who were aware of both the coercive and humanitarian sides of American aid. At a hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary United States Senate on August 22, 1978, Dr. Jean Mayer, the president of Tufts University, raised the following question, which he claimed was being asked by many Americans: "After the bitter conflict between our two countries…why should the United States provide direct food and agriculture assistance, particularly at a time of inflation and retrenchment here at home? The Vietnamese have their own answer." Mayer then quoted a high official of the Foreign Ministry who told him: "You [Americans] have been so generous to Japan after World War II. We hope that you would assist us, too.' And then he added, after a pause, 'Of course, the Japanese had the good taste to lose the war."[603]

Mayer's statement—and the Vietnamese officials' hope that they could expect the same level of assistance from the U.S. after a war, albeit with strings attached—reflects the recipients' recognition of the politicized nature of foreign aid, as well as the emphasis on self-sufficiency at the level of nation-states. Mayer himself emphasized the

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[602] White House Statement by the President on House Action Rejecting Vietnam Humanitarian Assistance and Evacuation Legislation, May 1, 1975, digitized from Box 10 of the White House Press Releases, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

[603] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Refugee and Humanitarian Problems in Vietnam: Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary, on S521-67, August 22, 1978,* 95th Cong., Second Session (1978) (Statement of Dr. Jean Mayer, President of Tufts University, Medford, MA), 17.

geopolitical consequences of *not* giving, or the need for the U.S. to maintain ties and improve relations with the South Vietnamese government and civilians. Within the context of the Cold War, Mayer argued that "we have an opportunity at this point to bolster the independence of Vietnam by giving another source of help besides the Soviet Union. They very much desire it." Referencing the historical relations between Vietnam and other countries—including the periods of French and Chinese colonization that explained their desire to end their dependence on other countries—Mayer suggested that U.S. support would allow the Vietnamese to be "an independent power with whom we can initiate useful relationships"[604] (though, of course, this relationship-building process was still not without strings).[605] As one Washington Post writer stated in 1979, the "Failure of the United States and the free world to provide sufficient help to the Republic of Vietnam to make these aspirations a reality could result in our winning the war but losing the peace."[606]

While the primacy of geopolitical concerns may have remained consistent throughout the postwar years, what *had* changed among American policymakers by 1979 was the political interest in South Vietnam as a recipient of aid.[607] Senator Kennedy

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[604] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Refugee and Humanitarian Problems in Vietnam*, 18.

[605] And this was recognized by members of the American public as well: in the World Hunger And U.S. Role [November, 1979] survey by Presidential Commission on World Hunger, 72% of the respondents said yes to the question: "Which of the strings or restrictions should there be on the country receiving development assistance (i.e., non-military foreign aid from the U.S.). Should the receiving country... be non-communist?" See: Presidential Commission on World Hunger, "World Hunger And U.S. Role," Nov. 1979 [conducted between Nov. 28–Dec. 14, 1979, based on telephone interviews with a national adult sample of 1,200], USMOR.79HUNG.R12C, iPOLL Databank, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, Cornell University, Ithaca.

[606] William Chapman, "Refugee Transit Camps in Vietnam Pose Moral Dilemmas," *The Washington Post*, August 2, 1979, A28.

[607] Voluntary agencies such as CARE started relief efforts in Vietnam in the mid-1950s. See: CARE Food Packages Available for Vietnam, *The Washington Post and Times Herald,* Aug 1, 1954, M17; Frank Robertson, "CARE Buoys Asian Pupils," *The Christian Science Monitor,* Sep 26, 1957, p. 10; Mary

recalled the urgent calls for assistance to refugee camps and orphanages during the earlier years of U.S. involvement in Vietnam: "we were saying— and I listened to Government witnesses speak for hours and hours from all administrations— 'We're doing it, Senator, because we're concerned about the Vietnamese people and their needs.'"[608] However, "the day after Saigon fell" this level of support shifted. There remained "the same children; they need the same amount of food; they are being taken care of by the same people, the same Catholic sisters; but suddenly, there's no way we're going to respond to these basic and fundamental humanitarian needs. And we ignore the needs of the same Vietnamese people."[609] Emphasizing the refugees' plight as an apolitical humanitarian issue, Kennedy attributed this neglect to policymakers' deliberate decision to not recognize (or deciding *when* to recognize) the needs of certain refugee groups according to geopolitical interests.

With regard to the Southeast Asian refugees, Kennedy also attributed the political inaction to American laypeople's unawareness about the refugees' situation. Because many Americans assumed that this was a temporary dilemma, he explained during his

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Hornaday, "Vietnam Refugees Get Milk From UN: Other Refugees Other Agencies," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Oct 16, 1954, p. 2.

[608] U.S. Congress, Senate, *Refugee and Humanitarian Problems in Vietnam: Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary, on S521-67, August 22, 1978,* 95th Cong., Second Session (1978) (Statement of Senator Edward M. Kennedy, "Recommendations Submitted by the Study Mission," summary of Recommendations by the Study Mission sent to Vietnam), 34.

[609] On the other hand, Congresswoman Yvonne Brathwaite Burke (D-California) observed that political interests prompted the administration's *prioritization* of Southeast Asian refugees over other refugee groups. In preparation for a Foreign Operations Subcommittee Hearing on Migration and Refugee Assistance on February 21, 1978 for fiscal year 1979, Burke asked for clarification on how the administration was allocating funds to various categories of aid recipients. The administration had requested Congress to provide $7,500,000 to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to support the "Indochinese program." This amount was nearly twice the amount of the funds allocated to other refugee programs: "only $3,225,000 for African refugees and $800,000 for Latin American refugees." Burke wondered: "Why is the Administration making a difference of some $4,000,000 in the amount it's asking for refugees in Africa and those from Indochina?" Re: Approval of Questions for the Record, February 21, 1978, and "For FY 1979 Congressional Submission – Jim Carlin, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Refugee and Migration Affairs," Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers, Collection no. 0218.1, Regional History Collections, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

appeal to Congress to increase funding for immigration-related programs, "there are a certain number of Americans who are under the impression that once we took the first group of 130,000 Indochina refugees, that that was sort of it."[610] According to a 1979 *Chicago Tribune* article, one "volunteer housewife" who formed a local group called "World Relief" to help Cambodian refugees believed that it was not a mere lack of awareness, but rather apathy: Americans were growing "weary of hearing horror stories about starving refugees in Cambodia."[611] The problem was that Americans were "Accustomed to quick solutions to big problems." Once they believed that "the crisis is over, that enough aid has been sent," they quickly forgot about the refugees' plight. She recalled the frenzy over "the boat people," when "Everybody got all excited about that for about three months— and that was it."[612] As the article pointed out, the level of public interest was the main challenge with convincing Americans to continue giving.

### *"It's Our Responsibility": The American Public's Response to the Refugee Crisis*

On one end of the spectrum, media reports about the plight of the "boat people" emphasized the persisting public interest in children as refugees and victims, despite the shifts in geopolitical interests. As media scholar Matthew A. Baum argues, the prevalence and accessibility of war-related images through media outlets made the

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[610] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Human Resources, *Indochinese Refugee Children's Assistance Act Amendments of 1977: Hearing before the Committee on Human Resources, on S. 2108, A Bill to Amend the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 to Extend the Period during which Refugee Assistance May Be Provided, and for Other Purposes, September 22, 1977,* 95th Cong., First Session (1977), 16.

[611] These comments also echo the newspaper reports on "donor fatigue," which would become a common phrase in the late 1980s and the 1990s.

[612] Mary Elson, "Quiet crusader brings refugee crisis home," *Chicago Tribune,* November 25, 1979, p. 4; Also see Robert Ostmann Jr., "As public interest in refugees lags, his [Stanley Breen of the American Refugee Committee] grows keener," *The Minneapolis Star*, March 28, 1979, Public Welfare Dept, Refugee Programs Office Records, 128.E.8.1B, Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society.

average American an "accidental observer" of current events abroad.[613] In response, Americans' offers of help to their foreign neighbors and incoming Southeast Asian refugees continued, or even increased, in the early years after the U.S. pulled out of Vietnam. According to Vernon Lyon, a representative of the State Department's international disaster relief center, "The response [from the American public] has been greater than any we've ever received," with people calling their office with offers to send food, clothing, and medical services.[614] Public attention to the refugees did prompt some action on the part of the State Department, who decided to establish "a 30-member Indochina Emergency Committee" in order to manage these inquiries and "offers of assistance" from many Americans.[615] For some donors, this was a personal issue because they had Vietnamese friends and relatives in the military.[616] For others, as Lyon explained, their humanitarian impulses were triggered by the role of television and the media: "[Americans] watch pictures on television, see a hell of a mess and they want to help."[617]

In addition to spotlighting the displacement of Southeast Asian children and families, the mainstream media focused on American families and church groups taking in the "boat people." For example, the plight of unaccompanied minors prompted

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[613] Matthew A. Baum, *Soft News Goes to War: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy in the New Media Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 19-33.
[614] These relief centers often recommended financial donations rather than food and supplies. According to the U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam, Graham Martin, local relief agencies had sufficient supplies and food. Also see statement by Senator Kennedy in "Refugee Act of 1979," Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 96th Congress, First Session, vol. 125, September 6, 1979, No. 112, Public Welfare Department, Refugee Programs Office Records, 128.E.8.1B, Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society.
[615] The Task Force is the same as the one mentioned in earlier sections. See: Edwin B. Silverman, "Indochina Legacy," 27–41.
[616] Sharon LaFraniere, "600 Protesters Seek Wider Gates for Indochinese Refugees," *The Washington Post,* March 28, 1988.
[617] Ron Shaffer, "Offers to Aid Vietnamese Pouring In: Help Offered to Vietnamese," *The Washington Post,* Apr 3, 1975, A1.

families such as the Degnon family to take in multiple unaccompanied youths. As Robert and Kathleen Degnon recalled, "Back in 1978, my wife read an article about these kids leaving Vietnam and needing help. She said it's a pity they had to suffer so much. Our son, Brian, said, 'Either we do something about it, or we don't talk about it.' We decided to help." The Degnons contacted a Vietnamese Catholic priest in New Jersey and ended up caring for more than 30 foster children between 1979 and 1988.[618] With responses from church groups, sponsors, and families such as the Degnons, five states (Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Iowa, Washington, and California) received over 100 unaccompanied minors, with 555 in California and 306 in Minnesota by 1979.[619]

Much like politicians, editorial pieces used not only the child figure, but also human rights rhetoric and the "historical tradition" of American humanitarianism to argue on behalf of the "boat people." For example, one *Baltimore Sun* writer called for "A Law to Conform to Ideals," criticizing the current refugee policy for using a narrow definition of the term "refugee" and limiting the number of qualified applicants for entry into the U.S. to 17,400. As the writer argued, this law hindered rather than channeling Americans' efforts to help "those people fleeing from tyranny and upheaval." He recognized that the number of refugees who were eligible to enter would not significantly increase, but at least the processing of their applications would be "more orderly and fair

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[618] "Program Provides a Haven for Asian Refugees," *The New York Times,* April 17, 1988, Section 12, 1, p. 27.

[619] Julia Vadala Taft, David S. North, and David A. Ford, with the research and editorial assistance of Robin Wagner and Deacon Ritterbusch, *Refugee Resettlement in the U.S.: Time for a New Focus* (Washington, D.C.: New TransCentury Foundation, July 31, 1979), 8-9, Refugee Studies Center, Box 8, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

for those seeking a haven here." After all, the writer argued, "A nation with a human rights mission needs a humane and wise refugee law."[620]

In fact, humanitarian actions and efforts on the ground were already in the works, though they were not adequately reflected in or facilitated by policy. For example, activists and labor organizations advocated the opening of doors to refugees by emphasizing a labor-based definition of a refugee. In particular, they pushed against the concerns about the costs of refugee resettlement, especially concerns about the refugees' economic dependency. For example, the AFL-CIO spoke out on behalf of Southeast Asian refugees before Congress, emphasizing the potential contributions of the refugees to American communities. In statements submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee, the labor federation first expressed their support for increased refugee admissions and protested proposed legislation to end federal assistance to refugees after they had been in the country for two years.[621] As they argued, many refugees would get off assistance before the two-year deadline on their own initiative, and the cuts were unnecessary. The proposed Act "impose[d] a limit, albeit a reasonable one, where limits do not presently exist."[622] Furthermore, the U.S. would be missing out on the labor skills the refugees had to offer. In Minnesota, for example, farmers made the case that refugees from Southeast Asia could apply their agricultural skills and fill a gap in the state's labor force and

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[620] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *The Refugee Act of 1979, S. 643: Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary, March 14, 1979,* 96th Cong., First session (1979) ("A Law to Conform to Ideals," *The Baltimore Sun,* March 15, 1979), 186.
[621] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *The Refugee Act of 1979: Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary on S. 643, March 14, 1979,* 96th Cong., First session (1979) (Statement by the AFL-CIO Executive Council on Indochinese Refugees, Bel Harbour, FL, February 26, 1979), 183.
[622] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *The Refugee Act of 1979* (Statement by the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations Submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee on the "Refugee Act of 1979," March 29, 1979), 180.

economy. Finally, the AFL-CIO argued, opening doors to refugees was part of the United States' international responsibility.[623]

Communities that understood the plight of the refugees, whether they had been similarly dispossessed or forced to flee their countries, also spoke out on behalf of Southeast Asian refugees. In particular, black servicemen who had served in Vietnam spoke out in the name of civil and human rights. Facing racism in the military, black soldiers were once again "fighting on two fronts," as they were in World War II: against Communist forces abroad and their second-class status at home.[624] Black leaders and communities at home recognized the discrimination and inequalities similarly faced by Vietnamese refugees and vocalized their support for incoming Southeast Asian refugees. Norman Hill, the executive director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute who expressed his support for the Refugee Act of 1979 before the Committee on the Judiciary, pointed out that African Americans in the U.S. "live in constant struggle. We hunger for freedom. We understand what it means to be pushed aside and forgotten." As a result, Hill explained, "The black community has a deep and continuing interest in the fate of political refugees, whether they be victims of South Africa's apartheid, Pol Pot's perverse paranoia, Idi Amin's atrocities, Soviet inhumanity, or Vietnamese retribution." On behalf of Southeast refugees who were awaiting admission into the U.S., more than 90 black leaders "from

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[623] The AFL-CIO were critical of undocumented immigrants at the same time and wanted to prioritize political refugees, drawing a connection between the two groups in the following quote: ""To fail to live up to our international responsibility to grant resettlement opportunities to political refugees because we have failed to prevent millions of illegals from entering is myopic at best, and perverse at worst." U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary*, The Refugee Act of 1979,* 180.

[624] Also see James E. Westheider, *Fighting on Two Fronts: African Americans and the Vietnam War* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

civil rights, labor, business, community and professional organizations" showed their support by signing and publishing a statement in the *New York Times.*[625]

Hill drew further connections between the political and economic struggles of refugees and African Americans in relation to the U.S. government: "Through our struggle for civil, political, and economic rights in America we have learned a fundamental lesson. The battle against human misery is indivisible. If our Government lacks compassion for these dispossessed human beings, it is difficult to believe that the same Government can have much compassion for America's black minority or America's poor." If the African American community allowed the "linkage between our continuing struggle for economic and political freedom and the struggles of political refugees to be broken," it would "surely diminish our own chances for success." This was the reason why black leaders intended to continue supporting the opening of "America's doors to greater numbers of political refugees, whether they be Indochinese, Cubans, or Eastern Europeans."[626] The refugees' fight in the geopolitical and the domestic political spheres was their fight as well.

Religious organizations, such as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), Council of Jewish Federations, Inc., and the Quaker organization American Friends Service Committee, also stated their support for the newly arrived refugees in light of their previous efforts to help refugees (including the current flight of political Jewish refugees from the Soviet Union).[627] In a statement before the Subcommittee on

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[625] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary*, The Refugee Act of 1979: Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary on S. 643, March 14, 1979,* 96th Cong., First session (1979) (Statement of Normal Hill, Executive Director of A. Philip Randolph Institute, on behalf of Bayard Rustin), 41-43.
[626] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary*, The Refugee Act of 1979,* 41-43.
[627] Ibid., 148-158.

Immigration and Refugee Policy in 1981, Kathy Harpster, a representative of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), emphasized the "Jewish community's longstanding commitment to refugee resettlement [that] was born out of necessity, the necessity to provide a home for people fleeing from persecution." Providing a quick historical overview of the organization's work, starting in the 1880s, when it first began to provide meals and employment counseling to refugees who came to the Castle Garden and Ellis Island in New York, Harpster described the expansion of HIAS into an international agency that assisted migrants from Europe, North Africa (particularly Egypt), Latin America (Cuba and Chile), and Southeast Asia.[628] HIAS, as well as other Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, and Quaker organizations, intended to continue and expand private efforts to incoming and future refugees, and did not see a reason for Congress to stop funding these efforts.

Refugee communities and individuals, such as the American Jewish Committee and Rudy Boschwitz, a Jewish senator of Minnesota (R-MN), also saw similarities and connections between their respective wartime and postwar experiences. As David Harris, the Washington Representative of the American Jewish Committee, reminded Congress, "In a very real sense, we are all boat people." Speaking on behalf of the American Jewish community, he noted that the first reports in the 1970s about refugees fleeing Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos "struck a very special and poignant chord" in the community, triggering memories of "boats being turned back from safe heaven, of people dying at

[628] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Hearing before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy, Des Moines, Iowa, October 9, 1981,* 97th Cong., First Session (1982), 46-47.

sea," which "reminded many of us of our own tragic experiences just 35 years before."[629] Harris also reminded Congress of refugees' contributions to dispel the notion that refugees would only take resources: "let's be clear. Advocates of a generous refugee policy need not be defensive. Every study has shown that refugees give back to their adopted country much more than they have ever taken."

Senator Boschwitz had a similar reaction, drawing upon his personal family experiences. "As a refugee myself—in fact, the only refugee Senator," he explained that his own family history, in which his father went to great ends to bring his family to the U.S. in 1935, made him feel a "special kinship" with the Southeast Asians who were seeking a refuge. As he pointed out, "Most countries—including the United States—were closed to us initially" in the 1930s, and only 10% of the U.S. immigration quotas were filled. Because he knew the consequences of these policy-level decisions—"Hundreds and thousands of people were stranded in Europe, only to be victims of brutality"— he expressed his concerns about the "rumored forced repatriation of 38 Hmong refugees," as well as Thailand's decision to close the Khao I Dang, a Cambodian refugee camp that was labeled a "door of hope" by the media. The closing of the camp meant that more than 26,000 Cambodian refugees would be displaced, and that they would lose their status as refugees.[630]

In order to ensure that these refugees living on the border of Thailand would be protected and that they would have an option in the U.S. for resettlement, Boschwitz

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[629] Statement of David Harris [Washington Representative Of The American Jewish Committee], "American Jewish Committee Support Of Indochinese Refugees," April 21, 1988, Congressional Session: 100-2, vol. 134 no. 52, E1186.
[630] Barbara Crossette, "Thai Refugee Camp, Door Of Hope, Will Be Closed," *New York Times*, December 30, 1986.

decided to write a letter to President Ronald Reagan and to co-sponsor the Indochinese Refugee Resettlement Act (S. 814), proposed by Senator Mark Hatfield (R-OR). As Boschwitz argued, this piece of legislation would "send a strong signal of our continuing interest and support of the refugees in Southeast Asia," and he himself intended to "continue working to ensure the just treatment of those who seek refuge on our shores and the protection of those who flee from persecution abroad."[631] Much like African American leaders and the HIAS, Boschwitz referenced his own experiences, as well as his links to the history and experiences of the dispossessed, to call for American responses to the plight of Southeast Asian refugees.

These examples provide snapshots of various moments and arguments in support of a more flexible refugee policy in the debates about Southeast Asian migration between 1979 and 1989. While children and families were not always at the center of the appeals, these statements do reflect an emphasis on terms and narratives that were frequently deployed to make a case for refugee assistance. The images of children served as the instigation for the public debates about the refugee crisis, but the child figure was not the only universal issue; human rights was another one, as reflected in the statements about political dispossession, the precedents established by previous refugee crises, and the reminder that the U.S. government's Cold War project was questionable. However, these very terms—dependency, responsibility, and rights—could also be used to make the case against refugee assistance, as the next section will explore.

[631] Letter to the Lutheran Social Services, Rudy Boschwitz [U.S. Senator, R-MN], April 6, 1987, Letters And Misc. 1987, Refugee Studies Center, IHRC, UMN Special Collections.

***"Who Pays the Bill?": Setting Limits to American Taxpayers' Responsibility for Refugee Resettlement***

On the other end of the spectrum, the media reported Americans' expressions of hostility toward the incoming Southeast Asian refugees. In a random telephone survey of 80 Americans conducted by the American Refugee Committee in 1979, almost half of the respondents expressed "negative feelings" and hostility toward the incoming refugees.[632] Citing another newspaper poll, the Committee reported that 838 respondents (as opposed to 55) "overwhelmingly rejected the idea of the U.S. accepting more Indochinese refugees." Some of the respondents made comments that disturbed the survey conductors: "There's room for 1,000 in [Jonestown], Guyana," and "I hereby volunteer to start sinking boats."[633] Other critics used racially-charged language to express their disapproval. Robert Ray, the governor of Iowa, noted that while his office received calls from American volunteers and families who wanted to help the incoming refugees, he also received about "100 phone calls and letters of a less humane variety." Although he reminded Iowans of "our own origins, (to recall that) most of our ancestors were boat people of some kind… America's doors were opened to them. They worked hard," these critics insisted that "'Many of these people are Communists'…'and they are all undesirable, as are any kind of yellow gook.'"[634]

Racism and Cold War-driven rhetoric were not the only factors in the decline in public support for incoming refugees. Starting in 1975, government officials and voluntary agencies sensed the growing "citizen resentment over the [Southeast Asian]

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[632] But 45% of the respondents also indicated that if more refugees from Southeast Asia were admitted to the U.S., they were willing to "welcome them in their city."
[633] American Refugee Committee, Secretarial Report: Indochinese Refugee Assessment, September 28, 1979, p. 12, Refugee Studies Center (RSC), Box 2, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.
[634] Daniel Pederson, "A Warm Iowa Welcome for Boat People: 196 Vietnam refugees arrive in Des Moines," *The Des Moines Register,* April 30, 1979.

immigrants and the costs of caring for them."[635] The number of Southeast Asian refugees by mid-1975 was not significantly larger than the number of other immigrant groups[636] (with over 100,000 Cuban refugees arriving in 1959 and about 600,000 Cuban refugees in the U.S. by 1975, and about 50,000 Hungarian refugees since 1956).[637] Yet with the costs of transporting and caring (including housing, medical care, and social services) for the incoming group of 55,000 Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees estimated at over $300 million, one official admitted: "We're getting a lot of pressure from Congress to keep it down." According to the director of the humanitarian organization International Rescue Committee, "public enthusiasm" had compensated for the limited federal funds in previous years, even during the times of recession; now he was both skeptical and hopeful that private contributions would continue to pull them through: "I hope compassion is not dead in the United States."[638]

These responses were part of a larger trend of Americans' disillusionment with foreign aid, as discussed in Chapter 4. Fiscal concerns about long-term dependency were always present in debates about aid, but these concerns were exacerbated with media reports of non-governmental organizations' (NGOs) administrative inefficiencies and the

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[635] Paul E. Steiger, "Expense of Refugee Care Could Top $300 Million," *Los Angeles Times*, April 30, 1975, A1; Mitchell Lynch, "U.S. Effort to Settle Vietnam Refugees Gets Going Amid Confusion and Anger," *Wall Street Journal*, May 2, 1975, and David Nyhan, "A Questionnaire Welcome for the Wave of Refugees," Boston Globe, May 4, 1975; American Refugee Committee, Secretarial Report: Indochinese Refugee Assessment, September 28, 1979, Refugee Studies Center, Box 2, IHRC, UMN Special Collections.

[636] But by 1986, approximately 750,000 refugees had arrived in the U.S. See: Robert L. Bach and Rita Carroll-Seguin, "Labor Force Participation, Household Composition and Sponsorship among Southeast Asian Refugees," *The International Migration Review* 20, no. 2, Special Issue: Refugees: Issues and Directions (Summer, 1986): 381-404.

[637] Paul E. Steiger, "Expense of Refugee Care Could Top $300 Million," *Los Angeles Times*, April 30, 1975, A1.

[638] Ibid. Also see: Robert Ostmann Jr., "As public interest in refugees lags, his grows keener," *The Minneapolis Star,* March 28, 1979.

South Vietnamese government's mishandling of funds.[639] Some critics were concerned that "tens of thousands of nonexistent ghost refugees" were being "fed at American expense," with the money actually flowing into the pockets of Vietnamese government officials or going to households that were exaggerating their need (for example, by claiming to have more family members in order to secure larger quantities of food).[640] Other aid workers and U.S. State Officials were concerned that voluntary agencies in the U.S. were misrepresenting the actual numbers of refugees needing placement while receiving federal funds, such as by making duplicate reports about the numbers of refugees who were successfully resettled.[641] As expressed by Tran Nguon Phieu, the Social Welfare Minister in Vietnam, both American and Vietnamese officials and social workers worried that these maneuverings, especially the growing media attention to such occurrences, would convince American donors that their taxpayers' dollars were not being put to effective use: "'one day America will say that now it will wash its hands of Vietnam'… the principal harm done by the corruption and the cheating may be to hasten that day."[642]

The contested political debates about limited resources and domestic social policy also led some taxpayers to express concern that refugees who were coming to the U.S.

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[639] Daniel Southerland [staff correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor], "U.S.-Saigon refugee program criticized: U.S-Saigon refugee aid draws 'insider' criticism," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Dec. 24, 1973, p. 1; Bill Richards [Washington Post Staff Writer], "Financial Irregularities Found in Refugee Program," *The Washington Post,* May 6, 1977, A3. Also noted in public opinion polls such as Presidential Commission on World Hunger, "World Hunger And U.S. Role," Nov. 1979, USMOR.79HUNG.R12C, iPOLL Databank, Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, Cornell University, Ithaca.
[640] Henry Kamm, "Horde of Ghost Refugees Get U.S. Food in Vietnam, *New York Times*, March 8, 1973, p. 1; Also later in the 1980s: Mark Arax, "Crackdown on Welfare Fraud by Southeast Asian Refugees Urged," *Los Angeles Times,* May 25, 1987, OC A7.
[641] There were also earlier concerns about resettling refugees in areas whose living conditions were not suitable for settlement. See: "Refugee Aid Scandal in Vietnam," *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 20, 1967, A4.
[642] Henry Kamm, "Horde of Ghost Refugees Get U.S. Food in Vietnam," *New York Times*, March 8, 1973, p. 1.

were competing with Americans, including hungry children, for resources.[643] In response to a 1979 *Los Angeles Times* article that appealed to Americans to support more refugee assistance (Dennis Prager's "Will We Ignore This Holocaust, Too?: Refugees' Plight Offers Chance to Atone for 40-Year Crime Against Humanity"), one reader expressed in his letter to the editor: "As long as there is a hungry, needy American child or old person we do not have any excess money, food or room."[644] These comments stemmed from his own circumstances, for he himself was on the poverty line. Identifying himself as a taxpayer nonetheless, he questioned: "I continue to give to this government through the taxes I pay to have it given to the needy in other countries. Now, it is suggested that we bring them in and share our homes with them. Are the Americans to give, give, give until we end up where we will have to beg?"[645]

While this *LA Times* reader disagreed with the article's argument that Americans had a humanitarian responsibility to be more generous, he agreed with its general portrayal of the U.S. as a "giving nation" that had "gone to [refugees'] aid in every way that could be expected of a God-loving, richly blessed, affluent nation." The reader called for a limit to how much they could give: "We keep bringing them in— wave after wave of these unwanted hordes of humanity. Where does it end? We can only do so much for the less fortunate peoples of this earth." He drew the line at the funding of social services once they entered the U.S., at the taxpayers' expense. Similarly drawing upon the "nation of immigrants" historical narrative, he argued that "There was a time when we needed

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[643] These arguments continue to be used today. See Claudia Strauss, *Making Sense of Public Opinion: American Discourses About Immigration and Social Programs* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
[644] Dennis Prager, "Will We Ignore This Holocaust, Too?: Refugees' Plight Offers Chance to Atone for 40-Year Crime Against Humanity," *Los Angeles Times*, June 21, 1979, D7.
[645] Benjamin Allan [from Los Angeles], Letter to the Editor, *Los Angeles Times*, July 1, 1979, F4.

more people," and that "we welcomed them because they came here and tried to change to fit into our life style." However, the issue with the incoming group of Southeast Asian migrants was that "Now we are to accept their ways— pay to accommodate them."[646] One newspaper reader from California similarly set the limit at immigration, advocating the delivery of temporary aid abroad, but not on U.S. soil:

> "Let's set aside the overworked words of love, compassion, concern and be realistic. America no longer needs 'The Huddled Masses' to survive. We already have 10 to 12 million 'illegal refugees' that the authorities choose not to do much about. We are a nation of 220 million people with great problems of our own. In fact, in most parts of our country, it's getting very overcrowded. Let's help these people by sending money and food, but please no more refugees."[647]

One *New York Times* article reported that legislators in Congress were similarly debating the limits of U.S. responsibility in 1981, mainly by questioning the lines between "refugee" and "immigrant":

> Among the questions are these: If the United States has a special responsibility to the people of Southeast Asia arising from its involvement in the war there, how long does the responsibility last? Is it important for the United States to provide a non-Communist alternative to the peoples of Indochina? Do generous opportunities for resettlement stimulate the exodus of people from Vietnam and other countries of Indochina? At what point does the flow of refugees become simply a steam of immigrants?[648]

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[646] Benjamin Allan [from Los Angeles], Letter to the Editor, *Los Angeles Times*, July 1, 1979, F4.
[647] Roy Farrell [from Shafter], Letter to the Editor, Los Angeles Times, July 1, 1979, F4.
[648] Robert Pear, "U.S. Uncertainty Stalls Thousands of Asia Refugees," *New York Times,* May 16, 1981, Refugee Studies Center, Box 8, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

Both the *LA Times* reader and the *New York Times* writer were willing to support refugees temporarily as *non-citizens*, but not as *immigrants* who intended to stay. According to U.S. State Department officials and Congressional representatives involved in this debate, it was important to clarify whether or not the incoming refugees were truly political refugees, relatives of American citizens, or "persons of 'special concern' to the United States." After all, the criteria established by Congress in 1978–79 for admitting large numbers of Southeast Asian "boat people" had been on the basis that they were *refugees* in need of a home.[649] However, these distinctions aimed to determine how "deserving" the reasons were for the refugees wanting to enter the U.S. or the validity of their refugee status. The tensions regarding the resources available for both incoming refugees and long-term residents in the U.S. thus becomes visible with the debates over immigration—once the refugees were perceived as potential competitors for the same resources, once it seemed that an unmonitored and unlimited influx of refugees were entering the U.S. and overwhelming domestic agencies and taxpayers, and once it seemed possible that the refugees' reliance on U.S. assistance would not be temporary, but rather

[649]According to Senator Alan Cranston, the refugees were the ones who lost out on welfare assistance due to rigid categories: "Unfortunately these programs result in discriminatory treatment of refugees depending on whether or not they happen to be members of the defined group of refugees. If they come from somewhere else and do not fit the definition, they do not get assistance, which is patently unfair and unjust to them and creates a problem for local taxpayers in many cases." See: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Human Resources, *Indochinese Refugee Children's Assistance Act Amendments of 1977: Hearing before the Committee on Human Resources, on S. 2108, A Bill to Amend the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 to Extend the Period during which Refugee Assistance May Be Provided, and for Other Purposes, September 22, 1977,* 95th Cong., First Session (1977), 41. Another earlier example of categories determining which social services were available and accessible to specific refugee groups is the case of Haitian immigration since 1972. The refugees were often were classified as "economic refugees" rather than "refugees seeking political asylum," despite their documentation from Amnesty International and other organizations. As a result, "instead of the warm welcome extended the Cuban and Indochinese refugees, the Haitians have often been jailed on bond, denied due process, and financial assistance." Re: Approval of Questions for the Record, February 21, 1978, and "For FY 1979 Congressional Submission – Jim Carlin, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Refugee and Migration Affairs," Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers, Collection no. 0218.1, Regional History Collections, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

on a long-term basis.[650] Although refugee assistance had long provided a platform for projecting the narrative of "we are a Nation of immigrants and refugees,"[651] the scale of immigration and the numbers of refugees that needed to be "absorbed" into the host community seemed too large to policymakers, administrators, and welfare agencies, particularly on the state and local level.[652] In this sense, as Senator Kennedy pointed out, the refugee problem—"especially the movement of refugees to the United States"—was not a distant problem, but rather had direct implications for Americans on the ground and was clearly a domestic issue.[653]

As indicated by these responses, refugee policy and programs were framed in terms of taxpayers' dollars, or even as taxpayers' rights. Refugee programs since the end of World War II had depended on the benevolence of individual citizens, churches, and

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[650] Although this is later in 1992, one *Pioneer Press* reader argued in a letter to the editor that the funds used to assist Southeast Asian refugees should have been directed toward another (and as he implied, more deserving) recipient: "For many years American men and women have been called upon to fight for the cause of freedom, always on foreign soil. Flip the coin and you see refugees from Vietnam being treated both financially and medically like kings. They are being rewarded for fighting—not on foreign soil, but on their own soil. It is quite possible some of these refugees were fighting Americans on the side of the Viet Cong [editor's note: The Viet Cong fought against Americans in the Vietnam war. Hmong soldiers, from the highlands of Laos, fought with Americans]. If this newspaper wants to champion a cause it should be for restoring monies to the Veterans Administration Medical Center—not funding for Hmong refugees." See: Richard Mund [North St. Paul], Letter to the editor, *Pioneer Press* (St. Paul, MN), August 5, 1992, Refugee Studies Center, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[651] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Refugee and Humanitarian Problems in Vietnam: Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary, on S521-67, August 22, 1978,* 95th Cong., Second Session (1978) (Senator Edward M. Kennedy, "Recommendations Submitted by the Study Mission," summary of Recommendations by the Study Mission sent to Vietnam), 1; also in Kennedy's introduction to the *Review of U.S. Refugee Resettlement Programs and Policies* (July 1979), 1.

[652] Estimates in 1954-1955 included 300,000 civilian refugees; in 1975, the number of displaced persons included 135,600 of Khmer origin, 25,810 of Chinese origin, 170,300 of Vietnamese origin, and an estimated 2 million South Vietnamese refugees "from the Communist Easter offensive." See: Ron Shaffer, "Offers to Aid Vietnamese Pouring In: Help Offered to Vietnamese," *The Washington Post,* April 3, 1975, A1; Mary Hornaday, "Vietnam Refugees Get Milk From UN: Other Refugees Other Agencies," *The Christian Science Monitor*, Oct 16, 1954, p. 2; Gertrude Samuels, "On the World's Conscience: Fifteen million refugees," *New York Times,* Jan. 16, 1955, SM13.

[653] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Human Resources, *Indochinese Refugee Children's Assistance Act Amendments of 1977: Hearing before the Committee on Human Resources, on S. 2108, A Bill to Amend the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 to Extend the Period during which Refugee Assistance May Be Provided, and for Other Purposes, September 22, 1977,* 95th Cong., First Session (1977) (Opening Statement of Senator Edward M. Kennedy).

synagogues, as well as on state benevolence. As mentioned earlier, the primary source of funding for Southeast Asian refugee and resettlement programs had shifted from private pockets to federal pockets, though federal funds were channeled to local government agencies, voluntary agencies, and religious organizations who carried out the assistance and resettlement programs.[654] This shift may explain why taxpayers became particularly vocalized during this post-Vietnam period: discontented Americans were beginning to perceive refugee assistance programs as coercive benevolence and taxation, rather than a "voluntary" act. These concerns were once again connected to the sustainment of the nation-state; as Molly C. Michelmore has pointed out, Americans' obsession with taxes "paralleled the growth of the modern state," especially after World War II.[655] As this chapter (and the previous chapter) has argued, the concept of Americans as taxpayers as having the right to decide how the money should be spent in the domestic and foreign spheres, and to whom these funds should be distributed, became prominent in the late 1960s and continued to gain traction into the 1970s and 1980s. But while critics portrayed this issue as a zero-sum game between citizens and refugees, Brad Whorton has pointed out that a shift in this equation did not result in more aid for the "the American disadvantaged but—simply less aid for refugees." Southeast Asian refugees would receive "a much pared-down assistance program which largely mimicked the existing

[654] Robert G. Wright, "Voluntary Agencies and the Resettlement of Refugees," *The International Migration Review* 15, no. 1/2, Refugees Today (Spring -Summer, 1981): 157–174; Norman L. Zucker, "Refugee Resettlement in the United States: Policy and Problems," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 467, The Global Refugee Problem: U. S. and World Response (May, 1983): 172–186.
[655] Molly Michelmore, *Tax and Spend: The Welfare State, Tax Politics, and the Limits of American Liberalism* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); also see Romain Huret's *American Tax Resisters* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), which narrates a longer history of this obsession with taxes (or the resistance to taxes).

welfare programs available for American citizens (AFDC and Medicaid)," as I will explore more in the next chapter.[656]

**Conclusion:**

Taxpayers' responses to both images of children as the reminders of the Vietnam War and domestic economic concerns shaped policy-level responses to Southeast Asian refugees. While many Americans initially welcomed the refugees in 1975, and the overall numbers of refugees from Southeast Asia admitted to the U.S. from 1975–1989 were large, the later years (starting in 1979) saw a decline in support and more hostile sentiments toward the incoming waves of refugees. Along these lines, one official of the Indochinese Refugee Task Force, Shawn Ortiz, cited a recent Gallup Poll in 1979 that indicated that 6 in 10 people did not mind having refugees as their neighbors, but nonetheless opposed increasing federal support for refugees. How do we explain this change? I would argue that the shift away from private funds to government funds enabled the admission of Southeast Asian refugees in spite of dwindling public support for foreign aid and refugee programs, but this shift also prompted more criticism and questions about taxpayers' dollars that were being invested in these recipients. While some Americans certainly used Southeast Asian refugees as scapegoats for domestic and foreign failures, including the lost war that created the refugee crisis in the first place, it was not necessarily that the majority of Americans expressed less compassion for families and children from this war. Rather, there was more controversy over who exactly would pay for their resettlement and aid programs. Ortiz encapsulated the main dilemma

[656] Brad Whorton, *The Transformation of Refugee Policy: Race, Welfare, and American Political Culture, 1959-1997* (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 1997), 117.

in a statement in 1979: "Beyond humanitarian issues and emotionalism, there is a hard issue called 'who pays the bill?' And that issue will be here on…(Election Day).[657]

The policy-level debates discussed in the second half of this chapter were responding to, and also reinforcing, the various narratives about the U.S. tradition of assisting peoples and refugees in the transition from dependency to self-sufficiency. For example, the imagery of Vietnamese children as dependents helped establish the urgency of finding homes for the refugees or reconnecting them with families and relatives. Whether the narratives presented refugee assistance as an international problem, a geopolitical move, a humanitarian cause, or a child-centered issue, they aimed to convince American legislators and the public that they had a stake in going beyond the boundaries of their domestic community and investing in refugees overseas.

However, the militarization of U.S. refugee policy, as well as the move toward more restrictive policies regarding assisting refugees, pushed back against these humanitarian impulses. While the refugee programs in the first case study with European Jewish refugees had affirmed public narratives about U.S. global power and humanitarianism, we can see a chiseling of the effectiveness of such narratives. This tension is highlighted in a comment by Edwin B. Silverman, the director of the Illinois Governor's Center for Asian Assistance, who noted: "There is some irony in the United States being a land of immigrants and finding itself struggling, even now, toward a national refugee policy." But he still maintained optimism about the American people's responses: "the fact that Americans have arrived at this point—responding to the

[657] Patrick Oster, "Indochina Refugees Face Some Resentment in U.S.: Officials Fear Growing Anger as Immigrants Seek More Jobs, Public Services, REFUGEES: UNCERTAIN WELCOME," *Los Angeles Times*, Nov 22, 1979, M8; Daniel Pederson, "A Warm Iowa Welcome for Boat People: 196 Vietnam refugees arrive in Des Moines," *The Des Moines Register,* April 30, 1979.

dramatic needs of the 'boat people' and the democratic urging of a broad-based coalition of support—is testimony that America can still work."[658]

This chapter has looked at the debates around refugee families and unaccompanied children at the level of public discourse and policy-level discussions. The child figure, as well as humanitarian aid, offered one channel for some American policymakers and taxpayers to address the loss of the Vietnam War. More specifically, they critiqued and reformulated narratives about American benevolence, as well as the criteria for enabling displaced families and children to immigrate to the U.S. But the move from the emphasis on voluntary to "coerced" contributions (as they were perceived) also prompted a backlash among taxpayers, at times with reference to narratives about hungry American children and families, as discussed in Chapter 4.

The next chapter will examine how these different responses played out on the ground, specifically the experiences and the reception of Southeast Asian refugees, as they become neighbors, welfare recipients, and community members sharing, and contributing, resources. Now Americans had to think about refugees as potential fellow citizens, not just as distant or abstract recipients of a charity. Americans' perceptions of the differences in ethnic and racial composition, as well as their understandings of the loss in Vietnam, would continue to play a role in these reactions.

[658] Edwin B. Silverman, "Indochina Legacy: The Refugee Act of 1980," *Publius* 10, no. 1 (1980): 27–41.

## Chapter 6

## "An Uncertain Welcome" in the U.S.: Southeast Asian Refugee Families & Children as Welfare Recipients, Non-Citizens, and Future Citizens, 1975–1989

> "This is our second home… but first home for our children." (Vietnamese Refugee quoted in the Indochinese Refugee Assessment's Secretarial Report, Sept. 28, 1979)[1]

### Introduction:

"Knock on a door in a certain part of Pomona, a Los Angeles suburb, or in the Linda Vista housing project here, and chances are that a little Asian child will answer the door while adults hover in the shadows inside. The children go to school and learn English and must face the outside world for their parents." This 1979 *New York Times* article proceeded to discuss the need for language education services for refugees, for "all the agencies have found that after finding housing and food, learning English is the biggest problem facing the newcomers."[659] Children and youth seemed to be the most promising members of the household, the ones who could assimilate more easily and help their families adjust to "American life," or at least serve as a mediator between the households and their new surroundings. However, additional language programs posed challenges for American schools that barely had enough staff and resources for "native-born" students, particularly with the fiscal crisis of the 1970s. According to Senator Alan Cranston (D-CA), who proposed the Indochina Refugee Children Assistance Act (S. 2145) in 1975 to reimburse schools with federal funds for refugees' education,[660] parents, school officials, and taxpayers were concerned that the costs of "the job of educating

[659] Iver Peterson, "'Boat People' Find Hardship in U.S., but Also Hope,'" *New York Times*, Jan. 28, 1979, p. 1.
[660] The number of refugee children enrolled in American schools by 1975 was estimated at 40,000, with 23% of these children resettled in California.

Vietnamese refugee children was theirs with the clear implication that the costs would be borne by them."[661]

Paying for educational and social services for refugees was part of a larger debate about U.S. expenditures for refugee assistance during the 1970s and 1980s. In addition to state-subsidized education for refugee children in American schools, debates among policymakers and news media addressed funding for resettlement assistance and social services available to eligible Southeast Asian children and families. On one hand, Americans' perception that refugees posed competition for resources persisted throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, and is clearly illustrated not only in public criticisms of refugee programs, but also in housing discrimination and debates about public housing projects. On the other hand, local community members and organizations stepped up to help refugees cultivate their own networks and communities in their new homes.

Using these debates, this chapter aims to address Yẽn Le Êspiritu's argument that the "Vietnamese have always been inside of and played absolutely critical roles in the building and sustaining of the U.S. nation-state"[662] (and that in recent years, "popular narratives of *Vietnamese refugees* have been deployed to rescue the Vietnam War for Americans").[663] As Le Êspiritu and other refugee studies scholars have argued, "refugees are a 'problem' not because they are pathetic victims who drain the state's resources but

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[661] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee On Labor and Public Welfare, *Indochinese Refugee Children Assistance Act, 1975: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Education of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, on S. 2145 [To Provide Federal Financial Assistance to States in order to Assist Local Educational Agencies to Provide Public Education to Vietnamese and Cambodian Refugee Children, and for Other Purposes]*, *September 9, 1975,* 94th Cong., First Session (1975), 3.
[662] Yẽn Le Êspiritu, *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refuge(es)* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014), 23.
[663] Le Êspiritu, *Body Counts,* 83.

because they make visible 'a transgression of the social contract between a state and its citizen.'" Because the refugee is "someone 'out of place'—that is, without the protection of the state—a refugee is an anomaly whose status needs to be brought back into place by either naturalization or repatriation."[664]

Although this chapter will demonstrate that some Americans *did* believe that refugees "drain[ed]… the state's resources," it builds upon Le Êspiritu's argument by focusing on the refugees' liminal positions—in between the status of immigrant/refugee, citizen/non-citizen, and adult/child—in this narrative *before* being "brought back into place" and successfully integrating into American society. As discussed in Chapter 5, policymakers and the public insisted on clarifying the distinction between the Southeast Asian "refugee" and "immigrant" to indicate who deserved to have priority access to federal aid. First, this distinction was important to highlight because policymakers and taxpayers associated different forms or levels of "American responsibility" to respond to the needs of their domestic and international communities. Was it the responsibility of the U.S. to respond to refugees, as non-citizens, or was this the responsibility of the broader international community? Secondly, the immigrant status raised questions about who had the potential to belong to the "domestic community" *within* the nation (as opposed to temporarily staying in the U.S. and belonging to the international community *outside* of the nation). The shift in the migrants' status as temporary refugees to residents and/or citizens—and the transition of the "refugee problem" from an international to a domestic issue—influenced American attitudes toward incoming Southeast Asian refugees. But did

[664] Le Êspiritu, *Body Counts,* 12.

the same criteria apply to immigrant children, who were perceived as both public charges and innocent victims caught in the midst of national and international political conflicts?

This chapter considers these questions through the lens of children and the family unit. On the national and federal level, children were once again the rallying point around which policymakers and individual donors were willing to make exceptions and compromises, particularly when discussing the sending of aid abroad and providing additional social services to support refugees in the U.S. These discussions hinged upon policymakers' and legislators' understanding of children as victims of war and the choices of the adults around them (including family members and politicians).[665] On the local level, the role of children and youth in the household determined a family's eligibility for aid, first as an economic dependent and secondly as a source of financial support for the household. While these were general characteristics of welfare distribution in the U.S., social agencies particularly envisioned refugee children, especially older youth, as key actors in helping their families make the transition to "self-sufficiency," when they would no longer need assistance, and to assimilation into American society.

Continuing the themes of the previous chapters, this chapter analyzes how Americans used their understandings of refugee children, Western notions of family units and age categories, and economic dependency as a way of figuring out their priorities for domestic programs and redefining welfare categories. As this chapter argues, Americans' assumptions about the ability of refugees to assimilate, which were tied to ideas about

[665] Luanne Nyberg, the director of the Minnesota Fund, quoted in Rosalind Bentley, "Beating the Odds: 4 area students to be honored for their 'right choices,'" *Star Tribune* [Minneapolis], April 4, 1993, Refugee Studies Center, Box 12: Lao Economic Self-Sufficiency folder, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

age-based and financial dependency, shaped whether or not they believed refugee families should access the assistance they needed. Furthermore, the financial viability of the refugees and their ability to contribute to capitalism and the nation-state, continued to carry importance in these debates. Although this chapter focuses on Americans' reactions to public assistance for Southeast Asian refugees, it also aims to include the perspectives and the agency of Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, and Hmong families to complicate these assumptions.

### A "Band-Aid Program": Designating Federal, State, and Local Responsibility for Refugee Assistance, 1975-1980

Nearly all Southeast Asian refugee families who began their lives in the U.S. received some form of assistance during the first few years, even if a household member obtained employment fairly quickly.[666] With the Indochinese Migration Assistance Act in 1975 and the Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program (IRAP) in 1977, refugees were eligible to acquire permanent residence status and gain access to domestic resources, including financial assistance, training in Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL), driver's education, and language interpretation/translation services.[667] These

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[666] 2/3 of the refugee respondents surveyed by the American Refugee Committee in 1979 stated they were on welfare at some point; 70% of former and current welfare recipients were receiving aid for 8 months or less. Long-term recipients were usually elderly heads of households with large families who lacked English and job skills. See: Secretarial Report, September 28, 1979, Indochinese Refugee Assessment, American Refugee Committee, Refugee Studies Center, Box 2, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis; Nathan Caplan, John K. Whitmore, and Quang L. Bui, "Economic Self-Sufficiency among Recently-Arrived Refugees from Southeast Asia," *Economic Outlooks USA* 12, no. 3 (1985): 60–63, at 61. In Oregon, 45% of Southeast Asian refugees were receiving some form of public assistance. See also: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *The Refugee Act of 1979: Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary, on S. 643, March 14, 1979*, 96th Cong., First Session (Washington, DC: 1979) (statement of Leo T. Hegstrom, Director of the Department of Human Resources, Oregon, to Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary), 164-165.

[667] Under PL 94-23; Edwin B. Silverman, "Indochina Legacy: The Refugee Act of 1980," *Publius* 10, no. 1 (1980): 27–41, at 32.

services required the participation of organizations and agencies at multiple levels, including the Department of State, the Immigration and Naturalization Services, Public Health Service, Department of Labor, local and state governments, voluntary agencies (with social workers recruited from the Southeast Asian community), child welfare organizations, and education agencies.[668] These programs were expected to provide a temporary source of support for newly arrived refugees.

Although the multiple decision-makers and departments seemed to show wide-ranging cooperation, it became one of the major weaknesses of refugee programs, and refugees did not receive many of the services they needed and for which they qualified.[669] This inaccessibility to resources was either due to a lack of coordination between voluntary agencies and local service providers, or because services were insufficient in quality, whether they were provided by the private sector or by the Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) Department. According to Edwin B. Silverman, the director of the Illinois Governor's Center for Asian Assistance, the Refugee Act of 1980 was supposed to "mark an important transition from a resettlement process that traditionally has relied on voluntary agencies to a full-fledged partnership among all planes of governmental and voluntary agencies in the American system."[670] However, as one report on the "Indochinese Refugee Assessment" explained, "there [was] no uniform approach or

[668] Silverman, "Indochina Legacy," 39.
[669] Available programs included AFDC and IRAP cash assistance programs, but these were only useful in circumstances when an office had bilingual workers under the Work Incentive Program (WIN) and Employment Security (ES). Some refugees also did not qualify for AFDC because both parents were present. See: Nathan Caplan, Jon K. Whitmore, and Quang L. Bui, *Southeast Asian Refugee Self-Sufficiency Study: Final Report*, prepared for the Office of Refugee Resettlement, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (University of Michigan Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, 1985), 4.
[670] Silverman, "Indochina Legacy," 27–41, at 27.

policy for resettlement services,"[671] and the creation of separate programs "on an ad hoc basis" resulted in inconsistences.[672] Likewise, Senator Dick Clark (D-Iowa), later the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs in 1979, pointed out that these programs were a "'crazy quilt' assemblage of overlapping and frequently competing programs that have resisted reorganization, central direction and reform at least since 1972."[673] The result was that these "Ongoing programs bear little relationship to established need and have perpetuated inexplicable inequities in the types and levels of assistance to which individual refugees are entitled."[674]

After resigning later in 1979, Clark would claim that the federal resettlement program was "more successful than most of us thought it would be, bringing in this many people, having most of them employed—and with relatively few incidents of great concern." But one volunteer refugee coordinator in Denver strongly disagreed with this assessment, calling the federal efforts "the most jerry-built, Band-Aid program I've ever seen." The main problem was that the federal government had "abdicated its responsibilities in resettling refugees, letting nine member groups of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies" decide where to place the refugees and how the money

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[671] Secretarial Report, September 28, 1979, Indochinese Refugee Assessment, American Refugee Committee, Refugee Studies Center, Box 2, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis, 10.
[672] Silverman, "Indochina Legacy," 27–41, at 34
[673] Senator Kennedy, while he firmly believed that "Over many years we have responded generously and compassionately to the needs of homeless refugees, and our national policy of welcome has served our country and our traditions well," also believed that "for too long our policy toward refugee assistance and resettlement has lacked effective programming and planning," which is why he commissioned a review of past and existing refugee programs. See: Introduction to U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary*, Review of U.S. Refugee Resettlement Programs and Policies: A Report prepared at the Request of Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, by the Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress,* 96th Congress, First Session (July 1979), 1.
[674] Re: Approval of Questions for the Record, February 21, 1978, and "For FY 1979 Congressional Submission – Jim Carlin, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Refugee and Migration Affairs," Yvonne Brathwaite Burke papers, Collection no. 0218.1, Regional History Collections, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

would be spent, without sufficient accounting of these funds and enough staff to properly execute the job. The decision of the federal government to take a hands-off approach "stemmed from the agencies' historical experience with refugees and the government's inexperience." However, as one *Los Angeles Times* writer noted, "it also reflected a belief that the refugee program was temporary, requiring no more than an ad hoc approach."[675]

This minimal investment in the refugee program was exacerbated by the disagreement among federal and local agencies over whose responsibility it was to fund and distribute refugee aid, or the question of who should pay for the programs. The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) had administered programs for assistance to refugees since 1961, with the support of appropriated foreign relations funds. This program continued into the 1970s with the Indochinese Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975, which designated HEW with the responsibility of reimbursing state and local agencies for allocating cash assistance, medical assistance, and social services to the refugees.[676] The State Department and HEW also relied upon private voluntary organizations to distribute these services, with the goal of "promot[ing] refugee self-reliance." Yet there were concerns about the costs of refugee assistance being concentrated in one state, city, or district. As Senator Alan Cranston argued before a Subcommittee hearing on Indochinese Refugees in 1977, this possibility was precisely why it was important to establish a *federal* policy for refugee assistance: to "spread the

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[675] Patrick Oster, "Indochina Refugees Face Some Resentment in U.S.: Officials Fear Growing Anger as Immigrants Seek More Jobs, Public Services, REFUGEES: UNCERTAIN WELCOME," *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 22, 1979, M8.

[676] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Review of U.S. Refugee Resettlement Programs and Policies: A Report prepared at the Request of Senator Edward M. Kennedy [Chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary], by the Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress,* 96th Congress, First Session (July 1979), 17.

cost and responsibilities for these newcomers fairly." Otherwise, the brunt of the costs would fall onto the state and local taxpayers.[677]

The quality and quantity of services also varied by state, and the amount of aid offered to refugees depended on their site of resettlement. For example, the states of Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa were the most accommodating to incoming refugees, and as a result, the refugees in these states reportedly made faster progress in adjusting to their lives in the U.S.[678] Other states, such as Texas, had services that were available but not always accessible to the refugees who needed them. Among social agencies, Texas was known for the "anti-welfare attitude of the state government and the citizenry of Texas," for they did not offer general assistance to refugees and enforced stringent requirements to qualify for federal assistance. Although social workers tried to justify the Texas Welfare Department's policies as reflecting "a high regard for self-reliance," others criticized the policies for "discouraging people from public welfare even if they are legally entitled and in need of it."[679] With the knowledge that "welfare [was] a very unattractive alternative," resettlement agencies deliberately tried to either steer refugees away from settling down in Texas or, if they did remain in Texas, tried to discourage them from applying for public welfare.[680] The lack of employment

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[677] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Human Resources, *Indochinese Refugee Children's Assistance Act Amendments of 1977: Hearing before the Committee on Human Resources, on S. 2108, A Bill to Amend the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 to Extend the Period during which Refugee Assistance May Be Provided, and for Other Purposes, September 22, 1977,* 95th Cong., First Session (1977), 41.
[678] Silverman, "Indochina Legacy," 32.
[679] Southeast Asian Refugee Studies Project, commissioned by the Office of Refugee Resettlement in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, 4.
[680] Bruce T. Downing [PhD], "The Hmong Resettlement Study Site Report: Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas," April 30, 1984, p. 29, Southeast Asian Refugees Studies Project, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, UMN, for the Office of Refugee Resettlement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington DC, Refugee Studies Center, Box 15, Folder 63 [Dallas—final report – ORR – 1984 (master copy June 1984)], IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

opportunities, or at least opportunities for employment training, increased the need for secondary migration to places where refugee families hoped to have more options to establish themselves as self-supporting units.[681]

In states that absorbed large numbers of immigrants and refugees, there were still concerns among policymakers and social agencies about refugees' dependency on welfare, which had apparently increased from 13% in 1978 to 36% in 1981. In particular, policymakers expressed concerns about the concentration of refugees in "a few enclaves in the country," which they feared would cause "economic or social service hardship" for one particular state or county.[682] For example, California's popularity with new refugees, due to its well-established Southeast Asian communities,[683] provoked responses from state representatives and residents who worried about financing the majority of the costs.[684] In response to reports that "the problem in Southeast Asia is not expected to decline by 1979," Congresswoman Yvonne Brathwaite Burke (D-CA) raised the question: "How many more refugees do you anticipate the U.S. absorbing through 1979?

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[681] Another motivation for secondary migration was a lack of existing community ties, as well as hostility toward incoming refugees, in the cities in which they were placed. Refugee families wanted to move to larger urban areas with larger Southeast Asian populations and communities to which they could belong. See: "Hmong Resettlement Study Data," Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, Folder 19, IHRC, UMN Special Collections; also in newspaper clippings in Boxes 10-11; Vang Bee Group Meeting [About 11 people talked at the meeting], December 11, 1982, Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[682] Indochina Refugee Children Assistance Act of 1975, 94th Cong., First Session, October 22, 1975, S. Rep. 94-432, Box 55, Folder 9/10/76, White House Records Office: Legislation Case Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

[683] Other states with high numbers of Southeast Asian immigrants included Illinois, Pennsylvania, Texas, Florida, New York, and Washington. According to the 1990 U.S. Department of State Bureau for Refugee Programs report on refugee populations by state, California had the largest intake of refugees, with 39.4% resettled in the state. See: Refugee Reports, American Public Welfare Collection, Box 3, and U.S. Population Stats 1970s-1990s, Box 1, Refugee Studies Center, IHRC, UMN Special Collections.

[684] Statement of Wilson Riles, Superintendent, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Accompanied by David W. Gordon, Special Assistant to the Superintendent, 1975; Memorandum to Mrs. Burke, "Re: Approval of Questions for the Record," February 21, 1978, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke Papers, Collection no. 0218.2, Regional History Collections, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California.

How does this square with the gradual scaling down of Vietnamese refugee assistance through HEW to states like California which must ultimately bear the burden of the cost?"[685] Furthermore, the amount of federal support for refugee services was not proportionate to the intake numbers; by the 1980s, California received over 60% of refugees nationwide (according to the Office of Refugee Resettlement), but received only 34% of federal reimbursements.[686] In this case, services for refugees were relatively accessible but not sufficient to meet the demand. Although federal, state, and local agencies were all involved in refugee programs, the financial responsibilities for refugees were not equally distributed, as state and local representatives pointed out. As these debates indicate, the reception of Southeast Asian refugees were bounded by efforts to set limits to federally- and state-funded resettlement assistance.

**Refugees as "Child-like" Welfare Recipients: Concerns about Economic Dependency**

In response to these concerns about overburdening one source of refugee assistance, policymakers and resettlement agencies encouraged the dispersal of refugees across states and communities. Rather than resettling them with other refugees, two-thirds of Vietnamese refugees were first resettled in communities where there were fewer

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[685] Memorandum to Mrs. Burke, "Re: Approval of Questions for the Record," February 21, 1978, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke Papers.

[686] Discussions among the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), the State Department, and the Office of the U.S. Coordination for Refugee Affairs continued throughout the 1980s regarding domestic resettlement costs. In 1981, California representatives planned to request $135 million in refugee cash and medical assistance and state administrative costs for FY 1982. In 1982, representatives from the three departments/entities met in Los Angeles, expressing concerns that the costs "could run as high as $1.5 billion annually by FY 83 if welfare dependency among refugees continues at its present rate." See: American Public Welfare Association, "Secondary Migration Affects Population," *Refugee Reports* II, no. 28 (July 10, 1981): 3-4; American Public Welfare Association, "Consultation on Resettlement Takes Place in Los Angeles," *Refugee Reports* II, no. 29, Refugee Studies Center, Box 3, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

than 500 refugees. However, most of them relocated to Gulf Coast cities or California for better economic opportunities, particularly in farming or fishing. A number of families also experienced "secondary migration" to smaller cities as part of refugee policy: after their initial resettlement in a large city, the Office of Refugee Resettlement and welfare agencies asked a number of families to move from urban centers to smaller cities and/or rural areas, for the sake of distributing resources and spreading out large refugee communities, though the agencies' reports stated that the moves aligned with the refugees' own preferences and difficulties adjusting to city life.[687]

Although many Americans clumped together the incoming refugees as Vietnamese, the demographics of the migrants varied, including refugees from Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and ethnic Chinese communities in Vietnam. The majority of the earlier "boat people" who arrived in the U.S. between 1978 and 1982 were ethnic Chinese, though they were categorized as Vietnamese.[688] There were many variances within ethnic groups as well, including different tribes, regional backgrounds, and linguistic groups, such as the White Hmong (Hmong Daw) and the Green/Blue Hmong (Hmong Njua). The tendencies of Americans to label these refugees as one ethnic and cultural group resulted in generalizations about the refugees' needs, and subsequently, the failure to address their specific needs. For example, the first wave of refugees came from urban areas in Vietnam, and because most were literate and had arrived with vocational skills, they were able to adapt relatively quickly to the American job market. However, their jobs were entry-level positions and they were still not earning enough to support

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[687] "Secondary Migration Affects Population," *Refugee Reports,* Vol. II, No. 28 (10 July 1981): 3-4, American Public Welfare Association, Refugee Studies Center, Box 3, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.
[688] Freeman, *Changing Identities,* 33.

their large families after two years. As non-citizens and non-native English speakers, they were also the most vulnerable employees and the first to be fired if employers had to reduce their workforce. For the subsequent waves of refugees, the refugees were mostly from the lowlands and rural areas, did not have opportunities to develop literacy skills, and thus did not have the vocational skills for non-agricultural positions. As Edwin B. Silverman pointed out, the limitations Congress placed on the refugees' eligibility to receive assistance "seem[ed] to have been arrived at without careful consideration" of the refugees' circumstances and the differences in their demographics.[689]

Concerns about dependency rates also prompted legislative debates and proposals throughout the late 1970s and 1980s about setting limits to how long a refugee could stay on welfare.[690] While there were no limitations on the assistance to "children who are coming into this country unaccompanied" in 1979, programs for adult refugees had a three-limit restriction,[691] thus illustrating the exceptional status of children in refugee policy.[692] By 1982, Congress considered cutting the length of the time period when refugees could remain on welfare rolls from 36 months to 18 months.[693] The possibility

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[689] Silverman, "Indochinese Legacy," 37.
[690] More specifically, this limit was on how long after the refugees' arrival the states could be reimbursed by the federal government for the costs of resettling and assisting the refugees.
[691] The 3-year limit, along with a transitional period for the refugees after their arrival in the U.S., was a compromise between policymakers who wanted two years and those who wanted more years. Norman L. Zucker, "Refugee Resettlement in the United States: Policy and Problems," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 467, The Global Refugee Problem: U. S. and World Response (May, 1983): 172–186, at 178.
[692] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary*, The Refugee Act of 1979: Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary on S. 643, March 13, 1979,* 96th Cong., First Session (1979), 24.
[693] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Proposed Regulation Changes for Refugee Assistance: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy of the Committee on the Judiciary, February 9, 1982, Serial No. J-97-96,* 97th Cong., Second Session (1983) (Statement of Phillip N. Hawkes, Director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement, Department Of Health and Human Services), 3-42, esp. 3-8. Later in the early 1990s, the federal government considered making further cuts to the amount of time (for new refugees to receive federally-funded welfare and medical benefits) from 18 to 5 months. According to officials in St. Paul, the change in legislation would only affect refugees without

of funding cuts and more stringent criteria for receiving aid prompted Hmong, Lao, and Vietnamese community leaders and organizations to encourage their members to become self-supporting as quickly as possible.[694]

The refugee assistance program established in 1980 continued to make cash assistance, medical assistance, social services, and educational services accessible to refugees. Yet applicants still had to meet basic "financial eligibility tests," such as providing proof of employability or the desire to work and receive English language instruction. These provisions were granted with the understanding that they would be distributed for a finite, temporary period. The markers of the refugees' self-sufficiency were to "become financially independent," obtain U.S. citizenship, and give back to their host communities.[695] In other words, the route for refugees to gain citizenship and taxpaying status was to prove one's ability to "pay their own way."[696] Also embedded in this conception of civic identity, as Ajay K. Mehrotra has argued, was "the idea that each citizen owed a debt to society in proportion to his or her 'ability to pay.'"[697]

The problem was that refugees (and welfare recipients in general) were held to these expectations without having the resources and tools for making the transition to

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young children, since families with children usually qualified for regular welfare programs. The primary change was that the financial burden of subsidizing these costs would shift from the federal government to the local and state governments. See: "Refugee aid cutback would hurt St. Paul," *Pioneer Press,* March 3, 1993, Refugee Studies Center, Box 11, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[694] "Hmong Resettlement Study Data," Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, Folder 19, IHRC UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[695] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Hearing before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, Ninety-seventh Congress, First Session, Des Moines, Iowa, on October 9, 1981*, 97th Cong. (1982), 15.

[696] For example, waivers of financial eligibility were issued only when it was proven that the refugees were receiving English language or special employment training. See: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *The Refugee Act of 1979, Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary on S. 643, March 14, 1979, Serial No. 96-1*, 96th Cong., First Session (1979), 162.

[697] Ajay K. Mehrotra, *Making the Modern American Fiscal State: Law, Politics, and the Rise of Progressive Taxation, 1877–1929* (New York: Cambridge University, 2013), 13.

self-sufficiency. As Marion Woods, the director of the Department of Benefit Payments in the California Health And Welfare Agency, contended, the fact that refugees were receiving welfare was not so much the problem, but rather a *symptom* of the real issue: "the inability of the refugees to find employment," which she tied to the lack of language and job skills that could be transferred to the U.S. economy. According to interviews with Southeast Asian community members, discriminatory hiring practices also served as a barrier to employment. Therefore, the issue was not the refugees' work ethic, but rather the absence of programs and institutional structures to help them transition to the next stage of resettlement.[698] Furthermore, the Southeast Asian migrants' statuses as refugees/immigrants or adults/children, as well as the refugees' own expectations for family life, came into tension with the age-based and nuclear family-focused requirements built into the American welfare system.

One example that illustrates the gaps between the requirements for aid and the expectations for self-sufficiency is in the legal and employment status of a Hmong family who arrived in 1980 and lived on public assistance until the male head of the household obtained a job in 1982. Although the job was seasonal and did not provide work during the winter, thus providing insufficient support for his family, the refugee's AFDC and medical benefits were likely to be discontinued because he was employed. He also wanted to continue studying English courses, but "'the Welfare' wouldn't let him," either because he had already received 9 months of English instruction or because he was now

[698] According to a "Hmong Resettlement Study" conducted on behalf of the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, refugees who resettled in the Dallas-Fort Worth area generally had a "reasonably good" response, but they were subject to general discrimination toward Asians in the area. Social workers reported that employers valued their Southeast Asian employees for their reliability and diligence, but also recognized that Hmong men and women experienced discrimination in hiring practices and promotions. See: "Hmong Resettlement Study Data," Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, Folder 19, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

ineligible for welfare benefits.[699] This would become a common story among Southeast Asian refugees in the U.S.: they would receive public assistance for a limited time period and be expected to find jobs despite the need for long-term training and services to make the transition. Refugees who were no longer "newcomers," but not yet "permanent residents," were in a bind: they were not considered qualified enough for employment, yet they no longer qualified for welfare assistance.

However, the prevalent assumption was that refugees were staying on welfare rolls as long as possible because they *could,* as reflected in the statement of Stanley B. Breen, the Chairman of the Coalition for the Effective Resettlement of Indochinese Refugees, who argued that "the Administration proposal breeds dependency by handing out a welfare check without providing an incentive and mechanism for breaking the welfare cycle." Much like Breen, one social worker directly linked this "mentality" of dependency to the structure of the American welfare system, arguing that "The real fault in the system has been the philosophy that the refugees are entitled to a certain amount of time on welfare." The social worker claimed that the refugees had developed this assumption prior to their arrival in the U.S., and that it was "encouraged by most of the Americans in the public assistance programs." Describing welfare as a necessary but temporary safety net that "should be used as a tool to allow people to get training and adjust and get off as soon as they are able than when they have to by law," she thought that "gentle pressure" enforced by the recent welfare cutoffs was useful, for it forced refugees to "realize they really have to work at making it here." Though she recognized

[699] Hmong family interview with Lee Cha Yia (Downing and Pao Vang), December 14, 1982, "Hmong Resettlement Study Data," Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, Folder 19, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

that they needed time to adjust, she believed that they needed guidance because they lacked "the slightest idea on how to go about working to make their lives better here." While this social worker wanted to avoid long-term dependency and paternalism, she argued that a temporary amount of each was necessary for the refugees' transition to self-sufficiency.[700]

Social workers provided both an outlet for refugees' voices and a source of the assumption that refugees would become perpetually dependent if they had a choice, often using the figure of the child to describe the refugees' dependency. One social worker of the Lutheran Social Services warned that a sponsor could become "too paternalistic" toward a refugee family, which allegedly made "the Hmong even more dependent." As she observed, most aid recipients first turned to the agency for help before their relatives or community leaders. Although the academics who interviewed this social worker recognized that there may have been more at play here—"Some seem to have a falling out with the leader or other family members so they have no place else to go, others do not really have many relatives here"—the social worker believed that this either reflected the relatives' inability to help or a trend of "new dependency growing." Her conclusions were also shaped by complaints from individual and group sponsors, who claimed that "[the sponsors] have done so much for their family that [the refugees] have come to expect it." The social worker thus described the relationship between sponsors and

[700] Interview with Ellen E., Lutheran Social Services, November 30, 1982 (interviewed by Olney), Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

refugees as one of paternalism and dependency: "Some sponsors treat the refugees like children, others don't."[701]

The comparison of refugees to children was common. In a discussion about refugees applying for social services, a deacon and chairman of the Refugee Resettlement program in Randallstown, Maryland, explained the need for setting clear limits to how much they could claim: "I relate that to like raising children, and I am sure your children have come home and said everybody is doing it. Well, you are my child, and not their child, and we run into this situation where they say, well, everybody else is getting this from social services, or so forth. And we stay firm with them." By taking this "tough love" approach to "child-like" dependents, Deardon argued, the resettlement program would build up self-sufficiency in the refugees as aid recipients.

Journalists, academics, and policymakers also helped construct this notion of a "mentality of dependency," though they often located its source in cultural differences. In discussions about how long it would take for refugee families and individuals to make this transition, one perceived challenge was the Southeast Asian immigrants' potential for "integration" and "assimilation" into American society. In public debates about Southeast Asian immigration, the case for admitting more refugees was often not based on generational ties or immediate familial relations the American people may have had to the refugees (as it was in the European refugee case),[702] though the Southeast Asian

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[701] Sheryl B., Lutheran Social Services, November 23, 1983 (Americans in the Twin Cities, interviewed by Olney), Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[702] This does not apply to the cases of Amerasian or American-fathered children, though I am not considering these cases in detail. See: Steven DeBonis, *Children of the Enemy: Oral Histories of Vietnamese Amerasians and Their Mothers* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1995); Robert S. McKelvey, *The Dust of Life: America's Children Abandoned in Vietnam* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999); Trin Yarborough, *Surviving Twice: Amerasian Children of the Vietnam War* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2005).

community in the U.S. did rally in support of bringing in more refugees.[703] Both social workers and politicians claimed that Southeast Asian refugees were the "first substantial non-European or non-European culture" group of refugee immigrants,[704] and thus had difficulties adjusting economically and socially to their host communities due to language and cultural barriers.[705] Therefore, the emphasis was on the "outsider" status of the refugees, either to argue that the refugees did not belong there, or to make the case that it was a humanitarian obligation for Americans to incorporate the outsider into the domestic community.

**Refugees as Nontraditional Family Units and Dependents: Barriers to Receiving Welfare Assistance**

Refugees did encounter difficulties of adjusting financially and socially to their host communities due to language and cultural barriers, in addition to the traumas and personal family experiences the refugees were bringing with them from their home country.[706] Social workers and community leaders noted the refugees' wariness of Western medicine and health practices (including receiving vaccinations for measles,

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[703] Later in the 1980s, Vietnamese residents in the U.S. would also take action, protesting in front of the White House to ask the Reagan administration to pressure Thailand to accept more refugees. See: Sharon LaFraniere, "600 Protesters Seek Wider Gates for Indochinese Refugees," *The Washington Post,* March 28, 1988.

[704] This was not the case, with large numbers of refugees from Cuba entering the U.S. in the 1960s.

[705] Mitchell Lynch, "U.S. Effort to Settle Vietnam Refugees Gets Going Amid Confusion and Anger," *Wall Street Journal*, May 2, 1975, and David Nyhan, "A Questionnaire Welcome for the Wave of Refugees," *Boston Globe*, 4 May 1975, 14-15, Refugee Studies Center, Box 8, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis. This was also observed by Senator Alan K. Simpson (R-WY), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy, who stated in 1982 that the Indochinese refugees, along with Cuban and Haitian refugees, required the most public assistance compared to other refugee groups. Simpson attributed this difference to the "greater inner-support system" among the Polish and Jewish communities." See: U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Proposed Regulation Changes for Refugee Assistance: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy of the Committee on the Judiciary, February 9, 1982. Serial No. J-97-96,* 97th Cong., Second Session (1983), 11.

[706] For example, the family backgrounds and wartime traumas discussed by Judith Valente, "Refugee Pressures: Vietnamese Doing Well Economically, But Adjustment Problems Have Developed," *The Washington Post,* April 30, 1979, C1.

treatment for cancer, family planning, etc.) that made it difficult to distribute medical aid,[707] though interviews and studies conducted with refugee communities suggest that not all refugees held such views of Western medicine. In one study with a St. Paul refugee community, some respondents stated that they would have used Eastern medicines and herbs if they were available, but the majority of the respondents just wanted any form of medical care, while some preferred and visited the hospital regularly.[708] These studies *do* indicate that the interviewed Southeast Asian families felt misunderstood and disconnected from their American neighbors, but the presence and assistance of other Southeast Asian communities and organizations helped ease the transition.

Differences in family structures and expectations also created challenges for refugee families to prove their qualifications for aid. The majority of incoming refugees were young families with children (for the age of marriage for Hmong couples was quite young, at age 14 or so) or young widows with children (women who lost their husbands in the war). According to the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS), Southeast Asian refugees had the highest number of children compared to previous refugee groups (e.g. Hungarian, Cuban, and Haitian refugees). Of the refugee population in Minnesota, half were children; an additional 25% were single adults between ages 18 and 35, and

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[707] "Southeast Asians helped to accept Western medicine: Interpreters explain new procedures," *Pioneer Press* [St. Paul, MN], January 27, 1992. Articles attributed depression, suicides, psychological trauma, and high death rates to the long-term effects of living in refugee camps and the war zones, but also attributed these conditions to the fact that their bodies did not acclimate well to their new surroundings. See, for example: "Depression common among S.E. Asians," *W. Central Daily Tribune* [Willmar, MN], August 13, 1991.

[708] "Hmong Resettlement Study Data," Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, Folder 19, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

most were parents between ages 25 and 45.[709] Extended, multigenerational (considered "nontraditional") families were also common, with elderly family members who could not work.[710]

These demographic trends posed challenges for those who needed to apply for federal welfare aid and for employment. According to a study commissioned by the Office of Refugee Resettlement in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, with the goal of assessing the socioeconomic status of Southeast Asian refugees who resided in the U.S. since 1978, children played a major role in determining the flexibility of the parent(s) to work.[711] Because not all refugee families qualified for the Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, which required one absent parent or one parent to be "unemployable," the State Department later established the Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) in 1980 to accommodate the specific needs of refugee families

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[709] Julia Vadala Taft, David S. North, and David A. Ford, with the research and editorial assistance of Robin Wagner and Deacon Ritterbusch, *Refugee Resettlement in the U.S.: Time for a New Focus* (Washington, D.C.: New TransCentury Foundation, 31 July 1979), 8-9, Refugee Studies Center, Box 8, IHRC, UMN Special Collections; Memo from Nguyen Thi Tu [Resettlement Program of LSS] to Maria Gomez, Re: Survey of Indochinese Refugees in 1977, November 29, 1977, Public Welfare Department, Refugee Programs Office records, Administrative Files Co-W, 128.E.7.10F, Minnesota Historical Society Manuscript Collections, St. Paul.

[710] Notes for Keynote Address by Tran Minh Tung [MD], November 14, 1984, Voluntary Agencies 1985 folder, Public Welfare Department, Refugee Programs Office Records, 128.E.8.1B, Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

[711] Due to immigration regulations that prioritized the entry of families into the U.S., the majority of the sample included nuclear families. The sample size included 4160 adults and 2615 children under age sixteen (1429 boys and 1168 girls). 7069 of the respondents were Vietnamese, 836 were Chinese (from Vietnam), and 1230 were from Laos. As for the geographic range of the study, the researchers selected five sites that had a large number of migrants from Southeast Asia: Boston, Chicago, Houston, Seattle, and Orange County. They conducted interviews with families who had arrived from Vietnam, Cambodia, and the lowlands of Laos during three periods of mass migration: between October 1978 and June 1980, between July 1980 and September 1981, and between October 1981 and March 1982. The study identified some of the immediate challenges faced by Southeast Asian refugees on arrival, as well as the longer-range effects, living conditions, and experiences that were discussed in previous years and prompted public and Congressional efforts to address. See: Nathan Caplan, Jon K. Whitmore, and Quang L. Bui, *Southeast Asian Refugee Self-Sufficiency Study: Final Report*, prepared for the Office of Refugee Resettlement, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (University of Michigan Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, 1985), 36-37.

and "formalize federal involvement" in such programs.[712] Children as dependents in the household thus helped determine the family unit's status in the American welfare system.

Another study conducted by the Refugee Studies Center in the early 1980s illustrates how social workers' visions of a refugee household, and the proper roles of each family member, could create barriers to accessing aid. The Refugee Studies Center organized group meetings throughout the Twin Cities and interviews with 16 Hmong families,[713] as well as interviews with Hmong community leaders and American social workers, teachers, and community members who worked directly with the Hmong refugee community. In one interview with a 48-year-old widow who lived with her five children in a "large but dilapidated house" near downtown St. Paul, the oldest 15-year-old daughter was interviewed along with her mother, perhaps for reasons of English translation, or because she was the expected source of income after her graduation from high school. Their family was currently on welfare assistance because the mother was unemployed at the time of the interview and did not have a "man to be head of the household," for she lost her husband in Laos. When she first arrived in the U.S., the mother stayed at home to take care of the youngest child. During the second year, when all her children were in school, the Ramsey County Welfare Department offered assistance in finding a job, but she never heard back from them. Although she was referred to the Lao Family Community, they were overburdened with cases and could not find a job for her. As she explained to the interviewers, "The Welfare wants me to find a

[712] Ibid., 35.
[713] These interviews took place in the families' homes, with the male researcher interviewing the men and the female researcher interviewing the women with a female interpreter.

job now. But I don't speak English well enough. I would have to go to school some more in order to be able to have a job. And what about the children?"[714]

First, this family's story illustrates a case of children determining whether or not the mothers could work.[715] This St. Paul widow was one of many refugee women whose "family situation prevented them from getting jobs," or from participating in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses because they had small children and "no one to take care of them."[716] Secondly, this case illustrates the pressures and uncertainties faced by adolescents who had to balance work and school. When asked for her opinion, the daughter expressed concern that their family would not have enough money so that she could finish high school. Furthermore, because she had not taken English lessons before her arrival, she felt that she was "getting along all right, but my problem is that I don't know enough English to do well in school." She took three hours of ESL courses in addition to her regular classes and hoped to graduate within two years. However, she could not work during the school year, partly because it was too difficult to balance work and school, and partly because jobs were scarce for her age and qualifications. She hoped to eventually pursue higher education, but also recognized that she might need to work in

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[714] Hmong family interview with Yang Mee and Ge Her, December 4, 1982, "Hmong Resettlement Study Data," Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, Folder 19, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[715] It was especially difficult for widows; one widow with young children explained that "It is very hard for young widows with no grown children. Grown children can take care of you." She thus "[looked] forward to the time when my son will be good to me, and my daughter will help me." Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, Folder 19, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[716] A group of refugee women interviewed in St. Paul explained that government-sponsored job programs would help them, as well as child care support (such as AFDC support, which helped some families) that would enable them to take ESL classes (especially because their husbands were often at school all day). Their children's ages ranged from 2 to 16,and some women had up to 3 or 4 children. See: St. Paul Women's Meeting, Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, Folder 19, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

order to support her family—or rather, she preferred to work rather than her mother, who had medical problems and did not expect to be able to work for long.

Another Hmong family from Laos was in a similar bind, with an adolescent son who needed to work to support the family, but in exchange had to sacrifice his chance for an education. The family was living in subsidized housing with a 65-year-old father, an 11-year-old daughter, a 19-year-old son, and an 18-year-old son who was married with a newborn baby. As the father explained, he was glad that the family was able to come to the U.S. However, "now we don't have enough food. The only money we have is General Assistance. If my son works, then he cannot get an education. If he doesn't work, we don't get the money we need for food."

The father, as well as the social worker who interviewed the family members and wrote up the report, aimed to present a narrative of the Hmong family that served as a counter-narrative to the popular narratives about refugees' dependency. Initially, this family had been sponsored by an American family in St. Paul through the International Institute, who gave them clothes and still regularly visited them However, all of these sources of assistance were unable to provide further assistance: they had contacted the International Institute, the Catholic Charities, and sponsoring family, but "no one could help them." They also turned to the Lao Family organization, which was supposed to represent Lao families in Minnesota, but the organization was too disorganized at the time to help. The father expressed a "forlorn hope of returning to Laos, where he could be independent and self-sufficient," or at least to live near other Hmong families, since he was not finding such opportunities or sources of community support in his residence in St. Paul.

When asked for his opinion about the concrete steps that could be taken to address the family's predicaments, the father responded that "The government should give more in cases like theirs, at least until the sons are out of high school. This is only fair; Americans would be expected to finish high school earlier, but these boys were caught in the war, the escape and the refugee camp during the usual years of education."[717] As the father pointed out, the sons' ambiguous position between adolescence and adulthood, as well as their wartime experiences that interrupted the education they were supposed to have, was the factor that disqualified them from receiving the aid they needed to support the family. Furthermore, he pointed out that his children were being held up to standards for American children, without taking into account the particularities of the Southeast Asian refugee experience.

As these families' accounts suggest, the issue of "dependency" was in fact a problem of welfare categorization, for most refugees did not fit neatly into the established categories. Legislators and social workers recognized how the welfare system itself was "the culprit" that placed refugee families in a bind. In a hypothetical example presented by a Lutheran Social Services consultant for refugee resettlement before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy, a single, unemployable mother with four children who was sponsored by a church in Iowa might have applied for Medicaid for her family. In order to apply for Medicaid, she was required to accept Aid for Dependent Children (AFDC). However, if the church congregation refused to sign her up for AFDC, she would be ineligible for Medicaid. According to Johnson, "we, here in

[717] Hmong family interview with Song Ching and Sons (Downing and Pao Vang), from August 1982 Community Survey, December 2, 1982, "Hmong Resettlement Study Data," Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

Iowa, at least—in fact, I know we don't—encourage refugees to go on welfare. We discourage it." Yet, he argued, "the system may at some time force people to be on welfare."[718]

Age-based categories for welfare recipients also created a bind for youth who were legally children but considered themselves adults. As clinical psychologists pointed out, adolescence was a Western concept. In Southeast Asian culture, adulthood began at puberty. Many youth were the primary breadwinners or caregivers of their families, with the older girls taking care of younger children by age 12 or 13, and older boys becoming heads of households or primary wage earners. The dilemma was that on one hand, older children and youth could not fully benefit from the educational services available to refugee children. On the other hand, adolescents who might have been considered "children" themselves (in the eyes of American social workers and neighbors), yet had children due to earlier marriage trends, benefitted from being categorized as adults.

For example, the oldest teenager of one Hmong family was aware that welfare agencies expected him to find employment as an able-bodied adult at age 19, though he was unable to work because he was still in high school. Unfortunately, he was ineligible for cash or medical benefits "As a 'single'" adult. His younger brother was a year younger and, according to the interviewer, "a little luckier." While the brother also anticipated graduating high school at age 18 or 19, he was already married with a baby—and the presence of a child qualified his family for AFDC [Aid for Families with

[718] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Hearing before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy of the Committee on the Judiciary, Des Moines, Iowa, on October 9, 1981*, 97th Cong., First Session (1982), 63.

Dependent Children] benefits.[719] The relationship between "The Welfare" and adolescents on the brink of adulthood was complicated due to the discrepancies between the age-based welfare policies and the refugees' experiences. They were on the brink between childhood and adulthood, and the welfare system could only deal with them as one or the other.

These cases demonstrate how young refugees occupied ambiguous positions within the refugee/immigrant and the adult/child categories. As two psychiatrists observed about Southeast Asian youth in Minnesota, "Many refugee adolescents may feel that their 'life watches' are off time. On the one hand, they have become adults too soon, but on the other hand, they have become adults too late."[720] Older adolescents who arrived in the U.S. at age 19 or 20 also faced difficulties with figuring out their place in American culture. They were "ill-equipped to function as adults in this new world, and yet too old to be adolescents, too old to go back being students, too old to be just beginning the process of forming occupational and sexual identities." Although legislators and social agencies continued to make exceptions for children and youth when discussing funding for refugee programs, the familial roles of young Southeast Asian

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[719] According to the Minnesota Refugee Program in 1981, refugees over age 19 but under 21 who were attending school full-time were not considered employable and could thus qualify for benefits under the refugee program. But they could not qualify for AFDC benefits. If they were part of an AFDC unit, they would be considered as an individual separate from the AFDC unit. See: "Hmong Resettlement Study Data," Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, Folder 19, IHRC, UMN Special Collections; Memo from the Department of Health and Human Services to Steve Rhodes of the Minnesota Refugee Program, Department of Public Welfare, March 11, 1981, Public Welfare Department, Refugee Programs Office records, Box 1: Governor's Refugee Resettlement Office, Advisory Councils, Program History Files, Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

[720] Michael M. Messner [MD of the Department of Psychiatry and Psychology, Mayo Clinic and Mayo Foundation in Rochester, MN] and Norman H. Rasmussen [EdD], "Southeast Asian Children in America: The Impact of Change," *Pediatrics* 78, no. 2 (August 1986): 323-329, at 327.

refugees and conflicting conceptions of age categories complicated the processes of distributing refugee assistance.

**Refugees as "Economic Burdens": Sponsorship, Donor Fatigue, & the Limits of Americans' Humanitarianism**

In addition to barriers created by welfare categories, sustaining private sponsorship posed challenges for social agencies and refugee families alike. Although private sponsorship offered an alternative to federally funded assistance, local organizations and community members similarly set limits to their levels of financial and time commitment. Programs such as the Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Program, organized by the American Refugee Committee (ARC) in 1979, aimed to help refugees transition to economic self-sufficiency by offering material assistance. The ARC believed that "resettlement professionals were not alone in their concern for refugees, that the private sector must be involved if the final goal of refugee assimilation into American society can be realized."

According to a pamphlet advertising this Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Program, sponsorship was "a moral—as opposed to a legal—commitment." The first role of the sponsor was that of an "*enabler*, assisting the refugee with initial material needs and helping the refugee achieve economic self-sufficiency." The second role was to be a "*friend*, providing the crucial, emotional support and guidance needed by the refugee to meet the challenges of overcoming great personal losses and making the major adjustments to the new society." The third role was to be an "*advocate,* insuring just and decent treatment for the newcomer in this society and promoting respect for the cultural heritage and identity of the refugee." Some concrete actions included helping the refugee

acquire clothing and food allowances "without recourse to public assistance at least during the first 30 days," seek public or private health services, apply for a Social Security card and register their children for school, and obtain a "general orientation to the new community and society." As the pamphlet stated, "It is no accident that the American Refugee Committee (ARC) symbol is an ark—the symbol of life, a new beginning."[721] As illustrated by the responses of generous sponsors and residents who participated in the Lutheran Social Services programs, local community members and organizations stepped up to help refugees cultivate their own networks and communities in their new homes.

However, in continuing the appeals for aid and donations, social welfare agencies and organizations were still concerned about the burden falling onto one community or the same donors. As the director of the Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota's (LSS) refugee programs explained, State Department officials kept asking the organization (which connected incoming refugees to individuals or church groups) to take in more refugees, and at a faster rate, because they had displayed a remarkable "track record" in previous years. Unfortunately, the LSS director observed, "some sponsors are burned out because they have done it so many times; others don't think they can handle it."[722] Case managers tried different tactics, such as expanding the "pool" of sponsors to avoid asking the same people to volunteer, meeting individually with previous sponsors to persuade them to continue their participation in the programs, and emphasizing that sponsorship

[721] Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Program [based in NY], "From Despair to Hope: How Sponsorship Brings New Life to Refugees," Refugee Studies Center, Box 2, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.
[722] This observation continued into the 1990s. See, for example: DeAnne Hilgers, "Finding refugee sponsors becoming difficult," *The Forum* [Fargo/Moorhead], December 14, 1990.

was not "an all-or-nothing proposition" or a long-term commitment that required sponsors to take on full responsibility for the refugees. Rather, their role was to serve as the initial contact for refugees.[723]

These appeals insisted upon sharing the responsibility for the incoming refugees among private, public, and federal entities. Designating specific roles for organizations and individuals was a way to avoid overburdening one source of support, by establishing clear limits and boundaries for how much (or how long) one had to give. Social agencies also aimed to tread cautiously when requesting aid for refugees from local sources, not so much due to "donor fatigue" but rather due to questions about how "deserving" the refugees were of American taxpayer dollars. In the Dallas-Fort Worth area, social workers reported that the majority of residents were unaware of the Hmong presence, and much less of the distinctions between various groups of Asian immigrants. In fact, this ambiguity was encouraged by the Hmong community and resettlement agencies, for they "deliberately avoided calling attention to programs for refugees." When asked to explain, social workers explained that they needed to "be very careful about questions of equity with regard to other minorities." These tensions were attributed to how refugees were categorized and prioritized as welfare recipients. Due to refugees' financial circumstances, "single adults, childless couples, and unemployed parents in States without unemployed parents/AFDC programs" with refugee status were eligible to receive cash assistance "while their needy American counterparts in similar situations

[723] Sponsors met the family at the airport and helped find housing and furnishings for refugees. The minimum commitment was 3-6 months.

could not receive these benefits."[724] As shown in Chapter 4, the barriers to aid for domestic recipients were due to problems within the welfare system itself; nevertheless, Americans who were discontented with fiscal policies or domestic programs tended to conflate the refugees' presence with the problems of welfare distribution.

These remarks were in response to popular misconceptions among the public that refugees were competing for, or directly taking, the resources of domestic welfare recipients: "Americans resent the real and perceived government benefits to refugees. Indochinese refugees are treated differently in terms of certain welfare and program benefits; sometimes they are given priority in public housing. Other low income Americans, especially non-English speaking minorities, resent this special treatment." This view was shared by the State Department, which had "strong misgivings about continuing to provide assistance for refugees at a level above that available for needy Americans"[725] Other misconceptions were about the types of benefits the refugees were receiving. If a refugee could afford to buy "a car or fishing boat with cash," the respondents of one public opinion poll inferred, "the government gave him the money" to do so. As another poll respondent expressed: "I am annoyed at these refugees who drive around in Mercedes and take food stamps and welfare money out of a Gucci purse in supermarket lines." Finally, there was the familiar refrain of Americans "resent[ing] the use of their tax dollars to support refugees from an unpopular war." Regarding the range of these reactions, the American Refugee Committee concluded that "The IRAP

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[724] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *Hearing before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy of the Committee on the Judiciary, Des Moines, Iowa, on October 9, 1981*, 97th Cong., First Session (1982), 15.
[725] Ibid.

[Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program] program has not been adequat[e]ly explained to the American public."[726]

The financial challenges were not invalid concerns, and in articulating their concerns, critics placed American youth at the center of these debates to drive home their points. In Charlotte, North Carolina, a local group called the "Concerned Citizens" criticized the "preferential treatment" afforded to refugees: "A 16-year-old has to wait four or five weeks for his Social Security card. How does he feel when a Vietnamese can get a card on the first day [of work]?" The limited availability of public housing also created tensions and a sense of competition among low-income welfare recipients, and was exacerbated by the high influx of refugees. For example, Orange County had a "virtually nonexistent" refugee community in 1976, but had nearly 50,000 refugees living there by 1981, with new arrivals coming at a rate of about 1000 per month. These refugees were entering communities where "longtime poor and minority groups suddenly have a new factor thrown into the survival equation—competition with refugees for limited housing, jobs and social services." [727]

But other community members (often those who were *not* low-income residents) deployed the charged language of "parasite" to express their criticisms of the refugee program. For example, Sister Ann Wisda, the head of the U.S. Catholic Conference in Oklahoma, where the state had sponsored more than 5000 refugees since 1975, claimed

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[726] One Catholic social worker in Oklahoma expressed similar sentiments, with the assumption that refugees only wanted to "sit around drinking beer and driving the cars around town they bought with their welfare checks." See: American Refugee Committee, Secretarial Report: Indochinese Refugee Assessment, September 28, 1979, 12, Refugee Studies Center, Box 2, IHRC, UMN Special Collections; "Oklahoma Catholic Aide Calls Refugees 'Parasites,'" *New York Times,* June 23, 1982, Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

[727] Patrick Oster, "Indochina Refugees Face Some Resentment in U.S.: Officials Fear Growing Anger as Immigrants Seek More Jobs, Public Services, REFUGEES: UNCERTAIN WELCOME," *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 22, 1979, M8.

that 90% of the new arrivals after mid-1978 had "no intention of obtaining a job until they are forced to do so" and had "developed a welfare mentality." Xia Yang, a leader of the Laotian community in Lawton, Oklahoma, attempted to counter Wisda's assumptions by clarifying that these types of behaviors were the minority, and that "most refugees want to work and provide for their families."[728] Although Wisda did state that she was still willing to help "any family who legitimately needs it" and distinguished between the earlier arrivals from the later arrivals, who were from rural areas and arrived with a different skill set, Wisda disapproved of the new arrivals' questions about their first welfare check and food stamps "as soon as they leave the plane." She saw this eager questioning as motivated not by necessity or anxiety, but rather as evidence that "many of them have become 'parasites' who 'sponge off the American people.'" The response of one Vietnamese youth to this term perhaps points to how prevalent this language of "parasites" had become. When his foster family tried to explain to the boy that he needed to provide a stool sample so that the doctor could examine the parasites in his body, they looked up the word "parasite" together in a Vietnamese-English dictionary. When the boy read the definition, he cried because "He thought [the foster parents] were calling him a parasite—someone who was good for nothing and dependent on other people."[729] While this was simply an incident of miscommunication, he was clearly aware of the connotations of this charged language in the context of aid and sponsorship.

In response to these concerns, Southeast Asian community leaders and families, as well as newspaper reporters who were sympathetic to the refugees, stressed that

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[728] "Oklahoma Catholic Aide Calls Refugees 'Parasites,'" *New York Times,* June 23, 1982, Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota Historical Collections, St. Paul.
[729] Linda Villamor, "Program Provides Haven for Asian Refugee Children," *New York Times*, April 17, 1988, NJ1.

Southeast Asian refugees wanted to support themselves and not burden anyone else, nor incur resentment from their neighbors, by remaining dependent on U.S. aid. One *New York Times* article quoted a 43-year-old man with a wife and 3 children as stating: "we don't like to take [the money]. If the Vietnamese take welfare, it will make problems for the American people, and we want the Americans to like us."[730] Likewise, when social workers asked refugee families what they hoped to communicate to their American neighbors, their messages stressed that they were not in the U.S. to take other people's resources. They implored social agencies to "make the government understand that the refugees do not want to be on welfare. Most Americans complain that refugees moved to America to get welfare, but that is not true. They want to work hard."[731]

One Hmong man also drew upon cultural expectations in his community and family in an effort to counter misconceptions about refugee dependency: "'I feel bad about I cannot support myself. I feel I am not the good son of the family if I stay on welfare.'"[732] The American Refugee Committee's reports and studies often quoted Vietnamese refugees who wanted employment and English training in order to acquire jobs as soon as possible, become "productive American citizens," and "not be a problem to the government." According to one ARC report, these refugees did not want to ask for too much because they were already grateful "to the people of the United States and their

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[730] Iver Peterson, "'Boat People' Find Hardship in U.S., but Also Hope," Jan. 28, 1979, *The New York Times,* 1. Also common in articles from the 1980s-1990s, such as Jean Stockwell's "Hmong adjusting to American life," *Marshall Independent* [Marshall, MN], October 31, 1991: Although "As many as 60 percent are living on welfare," she emphasized, "they want to get off welfare, but many have big families and they do not make enough money."

[731] Vang Bee Group Meeting, 5-8 pm [About 11 people talked at the meeting], December 11, 1982, Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[732] Secretarial Report, September 28, 1979, Indochinese Refugee Assessment, American Refugee Committee, Refugee Studies Center, Box 2, UMN Special Collections, 9-11.

government for bringing them here and allowing them the opportunity for a new life." However, they still "acknowledge[d] that they need help."[733]

Voluntary agencies and sponsors also attempted to address these concerns about refugee dependency by stressing the distinctions between refugees and welfare recipients, arguing that refugees were "not *welfare* recipients, but are *temporarily unemployed;* thus they should be treated differently than welfare recipients." Voluntary agencies also discouraged sponsors from registering refugees for public assistance, and accordingly sponsors and churches preferred to provide direct subsidies to the refugees instead.[734] The efforts of the refugee communities, sponsors, and agencies aimed to avoid stoking the fire further in this backlash against refugees, thus working within the constraints of the domestic political environments. But their efforts also indicate the effectiveness of such rhetoric. As Edwin Silverman observed, initially these voluntary agencies wanted to establish a "separate, private welfare system [of distributing cash and medical assistance] just for refugees." Since this plan was not sustainable, they instead had to work within the existing welfare system, including "relying on conventional myths that surround the American public welfare system," specifically the discourse of employment and dependency.[735]

**Refugees as Unwanted Neighbors: Tensions in Housing and Neighborhood Interactions**

[733] American Refugee Committee, Secretarial Report: Indochinese Refugee Assessment, September 28, 1979, Refugee Studies Center, Box 2, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.
[734] Silverman, "Indochinese Legacy," 38, 37.
[735] Ibid.

Refugees encountered such tensions not only when interacting with the welfare system, but also in the rental market and neighborhoods where they strove to establish their homes. In the case of Minneapolis/St. Paul, landlords were concerned that immigrants would not take proper care of their housing units.[736] Landlords and social agencies apparently blamed Hmong refugees for "bringing roaches," although the residents "[knew] there were roaches here before they moved in. They are not Asian animals."[737] Ron Buzard and Bob Jones, staff members of the Catholic Social Services who helped refugees find housing, recognized the potential conflicts that could result from different housing and lifestyle expectations, but they also pointed out that the landlords' fears and stereotypes had developed from only "a handful of actual incidents." The reasons landlords provided for their hesitation prompted Jones to observe that "It's a given that landlords would rather rent to whites. I think it's a fact of life. People in business do not want to take risks." However, as Jones continued, "[The landlord] wants to minimize his risks, but he's hurting a lot of good families too."

Furthermore, landlords who were interviewed by journalists argued that neighbors and residents did not want Southeast Asians as neighbors. According to one landlady, Leona H., some neighbors went as far as physically harassing her Southeast Asian tenants and their apartments. Leona tied the neighbors' reactions to both class and race: "Nobody wants poor people. Was it racial? Yeah. Because there wasn't the harassment when there were white low-income people there." Becky B., a social worker who assisted refugee families in finding housing, also saw this as an issue of racial discrimination, recalling

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[736] James Walsh, "Housing discrimination does exist in Rochester," *Post Bulletin,* March 3, 1989.
[737] Vang Bee Group Meeting, 5-8 pm [About 11 people talked at the meeting], December 11, 1982, Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

how one landlady rejected a recently evicted Laotian family: "'We don't rent to Vietnamese,' she said. Becky explained the family of eight was from Laos, not Vietnam. 'I just don't rent to that kind of people,' the woman answered." As another symptom of the gendered welfare system, Southeast Asian women without husbands (often because they had lost their husbands in the war) were further disadvantaged when applying for housing. One single Laotian mother of four was on public assistance and used rent vouchers, but she could not compete for housing assistance with married people with cash: "They just assumed I would not be a good renter because I was not married." Once again, these landlords were unwilling to take risks on Southeast Asian families.[738]

In other interviews with refugee families and community leaders throughout Minneapolis and St. Paul, refugee children reported that American students often bullied them at school, though the immigrant parents instructed their children not to react and stir

[738] There were also reported tensions *within* federally subsidized, low-income housing projects, particularly in the projects that had previously housed African American families and now, with the influx of Southeast Asian immigrants throughout the 1980s, consisted predominantly of Southeast Asian families. Minneapolis Public Housing Authority officials reported that 67% of the families in these housing projects in 1986 were black and 18% were Southeast Asians. By 1991, the statistics were reversed—Southeast Asian residents outnumbered blacks by 4%, and almost 2/3 of the tenants at both projects were Asian. According to an article by Jon Jeter published in the *Star Tribune*, one housing project at Glenwood Lyndale "house[d] two different worlds" and was characterized by an "uneasy coexistence." Some of the Glenwood employees informed Jeter that "Many blacks believe that their Asian neighbors are considered 'model minorities' by housing officials, employers and society, and that they get better treatment." Meanwhile, as one former Hmong resident at a Sumner Olson housing project recalled, Southeast Asians were "leery and even fearful of their black neighbors," adopting and perpetuating stereotypical images of African Americans as "thieves and violent predators." Based on his observations of the interactions (or lack thereof) among the residents, one Minneapolis police officer who worked at the North Side housing projects assumed that "Blacks don't like Asians and Asians don't like blacks." Of course, this comment also disregarded the fact that black activists and organizations were central to leading the protests against the Vietnam War and the violence against Southeast Asian refugees. Finally, as part of the larger tensions between welfare recipient families/tenants, children and youth from both ends were influenced by and contributed to the stereotypes held by adults and the concerns about competing for resources. Workers at Glenwood Lyndale created "Asian Night" to designate the gym for Hmong and Laotian youth when the workers realized that they "would not play with blacks, and would use the gym only if time was set aside just for them. See: Jon Jeter, "An uneasy coexistence: Projects house two different worlds," *Star Tribune,* July 7, 1991.

up trouble.[739] Adult refugees, particularly women, also informed interviewers about random acts of violence or harassment on the streets, often imposed by American teenagers. The issue was not only that these incidents targeted the newcomers; police officers rarely responded to the refugees' requests for help, and crimes conducted *by* and *against* American and Southeast Asian children received unequal treatment and attention. As several refugees reported to social workers, American children and youth between ages 16-17 were able to "get away with crimes," mainly by adjusting the category of "the child" to fit the police officers' assessments of the crime. When an American child stole an item from a Hmong person, "the officer comes and says that the child is not 18 so they will not put it on his record." Yet when a Hmong child committed an alleged crime, the police "put everything on the [boy's] record."[740]

The example provided was of a Hmong child who found a discarded bicycle piece in the dumpster and decided to use it for his own bike. When the owner of that bike piece recognized the item, he accused the Hmong boy of stealing it from his bike and "told the boy if he did not admit he stole the bike they would kill him so the boy said yes he stole it… [It] seems the American invented the story to make trouble for the Hmong kid." In another cited incident in a public housing project, a 16-year-old girl threw a stone at a Hmong child and caused the child to bleed; although the child's family notified the police, the police did not charge the girl because she "was only sixteen." As a social worker described the refugees' reactions: "The Hmong do not understand why… police

[739] "Hmong Resettlement Study Data," Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, Folder 19, IHRC, UMN Special Collections; also in newspaper clippings in Boxes 10-11.
[740] Refugees seemed more willing to share their thoughts on these acts of discrimination when participating in community meetings with the social workers rather than in individual interviews, perhaps because they heard similar stories to validate their own thoughts and sentiments. They were also more likely to identify racial discrimination when the incidents were related to employment opportunities and work environments.

not do anything. When compare American and Hmong cases the police act differently."[741]

In addition to inaction on the part of adult authorities, city employees, and local residents, young (often male) American children and youth in multiple cities took the initiative in making the new immigrants feel unwelcome. In one incident in Buena Park, a group of "Anglo youths" ambushed an elementary school-level kid on his way home from school. Although the parents notified the police of the incident, the police dismissed it as "a school problem." After four more days of similar attacks—with air rifles shooting into the refugees' homes and the breaking of windows—the refugee child stopped attending school and the family soon left the community. Another small group of fifth and sixth grade boys in Orange County, California, had somehow acquired handguns, a shotgun, and a hand grenade and had "[taken] up posts lying in wait for refugees" on their way to school. In St. Cloud, Minnesota, 50 white teenagers "celebrated the Fourth of July by pushing a Vietnamese youth into a river and forcing him to stay there while they called him a 'gook.'" [742] Other youth added graffiti with similar racial epithets to neighborhood buildings and walls. As Elerth S. Erickson, former mayor of Garden Grove, pointed out: "Kids who write on the walls are reflecting what they see at home." Although some residents and city officials dismissed these incidents as "isolated case[s],"

[741] Vang Bee Group Meeting [About 11 people talked at the meeting], December 11, 1982, Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.
[742] Patrick Oster, "Indochina Refugees Face Some Resentment in U.S.: Officials Fear Growing Anger as Immigrants Seek More Jobs, Public Services, REFUGEES: UNCERTAIN WELCOME," *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 22, 1979, M8.

others saw these acts as the "most visible sign of a backlash that has sprouted with the increasing refugee migration."[743]


***Figure 10**: Reverend M. Fletcher Davis and church secretary Nguyen Nhu To-Oanh walk past anti-refugee graffiti on a building in Garden Grove.*[744]

The hostility toward newcomers through housing discrimination and public criticism of refugee programs, as well as the concerns about refugees' adjustment, reflect a larger trend in public opinion toward refugee communities, as policymakers and taxpayers considered refugees' place in American society as immigrants, neighbors, and permanent residents. These ideas about the refugees' potential to *belong* influenced how the American public understood the urgency or "deservedness" of Southeast Asian refugees' need for resettlement and for making a home in the U.S. Of course, the refugees arrived with their own ambivalent or mixed feelings about their homeland and the U.S. as their new home. On one hand, the war represented a "shattering experience that disrupted families and traditions," and the U.S. had been "a country which abandoned them at war's end." Some still felt sentimental attachments to their homeland. On the other hand, the U.S. "took them in as refugees, giving them political freedom and new educational

[743] Leo C. Wolinsky, "The Melting Pot Begins to Simmer," *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 11, 1981, OC_B1.
[744] Wolinsky, "The Melting Pot," *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 11, 1981.

and economic opportunities."[745] Yet on the ground, these incidents of neighborhood and community-level tensions illustrate some of the ways in which Southeast Asian refugees certainly did not feel "at home" with their new neighbors.

These tensions also reveal American residents' and refugees' understandings of what it meant to be a citizen, or the differences between citizens and non-citizens. As this section has demonstrated, Americans used the language of home, self-sufficiency, and dependency to clarify the lines between "refugees," "immigrants," and "citizens," and who should be entitled to receive aid. Refugees were allowed to be temporarily dependent on aid, but their continued dependency on the welfare system as *immigrants* was a potential problem. Tensions within the public housing projects also suggest that the broader welfare system was structured to pit marginalized groups against each other, as if they were competitors for resources. As the refugees quickly learned, along with long-residing welfare recipients, staying *off* welfare was the route to full citizenship and participation in American society.

As scholars of welfare policy have already documented, this reception of immigrants reflects existing discourses about immigrants and the persisting history of nativism in the U.S. Cybelle Fox has already outlined the different "worlds of relief" established for welfare recipients of different ethnic backgrounds, though she focuses on the New Deal era. Particularly, she notes how European immigrants fared better than African Americans and Mexican migrants within the welfare system. Furthermore, social workers helped create the myth of the "bootstrap policy" and the image of white ethnics as thrifty, hard-working, and assimilable, which was not as readily applied to nonwhite

[745] Freeman, *Changing Identities: Vietnamese Americans,* 6-7.

immigrants.[746] As indicated by the examples used in this section, Southeast Asian refugees and immigrants comprised another minority group that faced initial barriers and assumptions to overcome in order to access the aid they needed. These responses from the American public reflect broader problems within the welfare system, especially the ways in which agencies employed racialized categories to distribute aid.

Where did Southeast Asian refugees as immigrants fit into this larger structure? Though the position of Southeast Asian refugees in the welfare system was based on their status as aliens or non-citizens, they were not subject to deportation as migrant laborers and undocumented immigrants were, nor did their status highlight the paradox of having citizenship status yet being excluded from social citizenship, as illustrated in the case of African American migrants and welfare recipients. While they did face hostility as resident aliens and paternalistic assumptions about their assimilability, other American social workers and media outlets spoke out in support of Southeast Asian immigrants and circulated the success stories of the assimilated Southeast Asian immigrant in the late 1980s and early 1990s.[747] One unintended consequence of this portrayal of Southeast Asian immigrants was that this "model minority" narrative had the potential to gloss over the fact that many Southeast Asian families were low-income aid recipients. As Brad Whorton has argued, the number of Southeast Asian families on welfare assistance was the highest among the refugee groups that had entered the U.S. during the 1960s and

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[746] Cybelle Fox, *Three Worlds of Relief: Race, Immigration, and the American Welfare State from the Progressive Era to the New Deal* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012). These discourses have continued into the 21st century. For the categorization and analysis of different types of narratives and discourses, see: Claudia Strauss, *Making Sense of Public Opinion: American Discourses About Immigration and Social Programs* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[747] Rosalind Bentley [Staff Writer], "Beating the Odds: 4 area students to be honored for their 'right choices,'" *Star Tribune* [Minneapolis], April 4, 1993, Refugee Studies Center, Box 12: Lao Economic Self-Sufficiency, Immigration History Research Center, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

1970s.[748] Likewise, one *Los Angeles Times* writer pointed out in 1979 that "Individual Horatio Alger stories have made headlines… But the typical refugee, often young and unskilled… has taken an entry-level job with wages close to the minimum allowed by law."[749] Furthermore, most of these success stories focused on *young* Southeast Asians, including children and youth, and not on older family members and the elderly who still posed a major challenge to the project of assimilating refugees into American society.

## Refugee Children as Future American Citizens:

### *Southeast Asian Children & Youth's Potential to Assimilate*

In all of these policy-level debates and studies conducted by social professionals, the language barrier was identified as a major, if not the primary, obstacle in the social and economic adjustment of refugee families. Language skills determined how well refugees could execute daily activities, from shopping for food and traveling around the city to phoning the police, explaining health problems to a doctor, and applying for aid.[750] As researchers argued, these struggles highlighted the importance of investing in both adults' and children's second-language acquisition skills, in order to help them integrate into their communities and access job opportunities. Otherwise, the studies suggested, these households would never reach adequate levels of self-support, remaining

[748] Brad Whorton, *The Transformation of Refugee Policy: Race, Welfare, and American political culture, 1959-1997* (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 1997).
[749] Patrick Oster, "Indochina Refugees Face Some Resentment in U.S.: Officials Fear Growing Anger as Immigrants Seek More Jobs, Public Services, REFUGEES: UNCERTAIN WELCOME," *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 22, 1979, M8.
[750] Nathan Caplan, Jon K. Whitmore, and Quang L. Bui, *Southeast Asian Refugee Self-Sufficiency Study: Final Report*, prepared for the Office of Refugee Resettlement, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (University of Michigan Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, 1985).

perpetually dependent on welfare and federal support—which policymakers and social agencies both wanted to avoid.[751]

The school and the family were seen as the key gateways to assimilation. As social agencies recognized the clashes or tensions between their Western-focused policies and the refugees' familial and social expectations, they did try to accommodate the refugees' cultural framework. When working with family units that migrated together, social agencies focused on providing language services to the employable household members. For unaccompanied minors and orphans, however, the U.S. government and organizations such as the Lutheran Social Services arranged for these children and youth to be placed with white American families to facilitate their integration into American culture, as mentioned in Chapter 5. The primary goal was to help these young refugees adapt rapidly by immersing themselves in the American language and culture.[752] Reports on the success stories of children and youth who were adjusting rapidly, becoming fluent in English, and excelling in school seemed to attest to the effectiveness of these arrangements. Southeast Asian children were considered exceptional, promising cases within this refugee community, with the capability of becoming self-sufficient American citizens.[753]

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[751] Ibid., 16.
[752] Zelda Porte and Judith Torney-Purta, "Depression and Academic Achievement among Indochinese Refugee Unaccompanied Minors in Ethnic and Nonethnic Placements," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 57, no. 4 (October 1987): 536-537.
[753] "The future seems most promising for the young people," in interview with Diane Peccararo [Director of ESL for Refugees & Adult Basic Ed., Pratt School in Southeast Minneapolis], November 24, 1982, Refugee Studies Center, Box 15, Folder 26, IHRC, UMN Special Collections; Doug Grow, "Melting pot's youngsters learned to team up before they could fight bigotry. Call them a Fourth of July story," *Star Tribune,* July 4, 1986. Also emphasized in the 1990s, such as by Rosalind Bentley, "Beating the Odds: 4 area students to be honored for their 'right choices,'" *Star Tribune,* April 4, 1993; Mike Dougherty, "Students try to cross sea of language," Southeast Asians: Part of Rochester's fabric, *Post-Bulletin,* October 27, 1993; Jean Stockwell, "Hmong adjusting to American life," *Marshall Independent*, October 31, 1991,

However, articles and studies noted that younger household members' ability to adapt and assimilate quickly contributed to intergenerational conflicts between children, parents, and elders. In particular, Southeast Asian adults were concerned that their children and grandchildren were losing their native tongue and cultural traditions, or eschewing them for "American" culture. Community leaders were also concerned and intent on encouraging children and youth (including their own children) to continue practicing Hmong, Vietnamese, Lao, or Khmer. Interviews and studies with Southeast Asian families indicate that some parents were more understanding of this assimilationist trend than others, even encouraging it because they preferred that their children adapt to their environments than to remain culturally as outsiders.[754] As Dr. Yang Dao, the president of the Hmong American National Development Committee, observed, the roles of children and parental roles in the household were now reversed: "In their homeland, parents taught their children how to deal with life and people, but in this country, parents learn from their children."[755] Recognizing that language posed the main barrier to their own opportunities, these parents understood that language skills provided the gateway to assimilation and citizenship for their children, as much as it opened doors to employment.

### *Education as the Route to Assimilation & Self-Sufficiency*

Because the family unit could (presumably) serve as a barrier to assimilation, the school was seen as "the surest portal to acceptance in American society," especially for

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in Refugee Studies Center, Box 12: Lao Economic Self-Sufficiency, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[754] "Hmong Resettlement Study Data," Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, Folder 19, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

[755] Jean Stockwell, "Hmong adjusting to American life," *Marshall Independent* [Marshall, MN], October 31, 1991, Refugee Studies Center, Box 11, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

children and youth between ages 5-17 who were considered more malleable than adults.[756] Newspaper articles in favor of federal imbursements to accommodate larger numbers of refugee students presented stories and images of refugee children as "baffled" but earnest students in the classrooms who had an opportunity to adapt more quickly than their parents.[757] One article in 1975 described the efforts of "Tien," an eight-year-old boy from Saigon who excelled in mathematics, but was unable to "compete academically with his American school friends because he needs special training in English." According to the teachers at his elementary school, "how soon Tien is equipped to keep up with his new classmates is more likely to be shaped in Congress than in his classroom."[758]

Policymakers were generally willing to support these reimbursements in the name of children's needs and rights, but the politicians' primary motive was to maintain this issue as a *federal* and national responsibility rather than a state and local issue. Local and voluntary agencies administered the English language and employment training projects, which were federally funded and authorized by a 1977 amendment to the Indochina

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[756] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee On Labor and Public Welfare, *Indochinese Refugee Children Assistance Act, 1975: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Education of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, on S. 2145 [To Provide Federal Financial Assistance to States in order to Assist Local Educational Agencies to Provide Public Education to Vietnamese and Cambodian Refugee Children, and for Other Purposes]*, *September 9, 1975,* 94th Cong., First Session (1975) (Statement of Hon. John V. Tunney [U.S. Senator, CA]), 32.

[757] There was also concern about the adults' "lack of marketable employment skills," especially those from rural backgrounds, and their poor health. See: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Human Resources, *Indochinese Refugee Children's Assistance Act Amendments of 1977: Hearing before the Committee on Human Resources, on S. 2108, A Bill to Amend the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 to Extend the Period during which Refugee Assistance May Be Provided, and for Other Purposes, September 22, 1977,* 95th Cong., First Session (1977), 63-64.

[758] Gene I. Maeroff, "U.S. Schools Baffle Vietnamese Refugee Children," *New York Times,* Oct. 12, 1975, p. 1.

Migration and Refugee Assistance Act.[759] As Senator John V. Tunney (D-CA) stated before the Subcommittee on Education of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare in 1975, he believed "this is essentially a federal problem which must have a solution that is equally federal in scope." After all, Tunney pointed out, President Ford had assured Congress that local governments would not bear the brunt of these costs of bringing the refugees to the U.S.[760] Furthermore, state and local officials as well as communities had already "done their part" by establishing family aid and cultural centers, assisting with the refugees' transition from the camps to their sites of resettlement, and gathering the support of sponsors.[761] Wilson Riles, Superintendent of Public Instruction in California, made a similar appeal before the Subcommittee on Education of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare in 1975, recalling how residents in California had done their part in "[urging] our citizens and our schools to open their hearts and their doors to the refugees." They were still waiting for the federal government to follow through on its promises, or the "commitments yet unfulfilled, to provide us with the resources to enable us to respond to the emergency."[762]

The Ford administration particularly received criticism from senators and the public in 1975 for its reluctance to "take the lead" in assuming responsibility for refugee

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[759] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary*, Review of U.S. Refugee Resettlement Programs and Policies* (July 1979), 17.
[760] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee On Labor and Public Welfare, *Indochinese Refugee Children Assistance Act, 1975* (Statement of Hon. John V. Tunney), 30-32; Agencies that worked with refugees, such as the Saint Anselm Indochinese Refugee Community Center and the Orange County Southeast Asian Interagency Forum, also advocated "A larger proportion of [federal] funds [to] now be allocated for job development, education, and child care, as well as for welfare assistance." See: Samir J. Habiby, "Refugee Assistance," letter to the editor, *Los Angeles Times,* Feb. 27, 1977, OC2.
[761] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee On Labor and Public Welfare, *Indochinese Refugee Children Assistance Act, 1975* (Statement of Hon. John V. Tunney), 32.
[762] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee On Labor and Public Welfare, *Indochinese Refugee Children Assistance Act, 1975* (Statement of Wilson Riles, Superintendent, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, accompanied by David W. Gordon, Special Assistant to the Superintendent), 28-29.

education, though the administration had brought in 40,000 refugee children. As one *Los Angeles Times* article pointed out, "the government has accepted financial responsibility for resettlement—including health, welfare and social service costs," but it was "clearly shirking its responsibility to pay education costs." The article also drew comparisons with provisions for previous refugee communities: "The government's position is puzzling. Education costs for Cuban refugees were paid by the government. We cannot imagine why Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees would be treated differently."[763]

In 1975, a Senate Committee hearing on the reimbursement of school districts aimed to clarify who was paying for the costs of educating Vietnamese refugee children. A bipartisan group of nine Congressmen in California met with federal officials to discuss the $405 million refugee aid bill recently passed in May 1975, in which the administration had agreed to pay $6-10 million in federal education aid, with a one-time payment of $300-600 per child—at least, the Congressmen had assumed these agreements were included in the bill. However, administration officials informed them that only a small amount was allocated to education.[764] In the case of California schools, the threat of a presidential veto forced school officials on the ground to settle for a smaller amount ("several million dollars less than they had sought") in reimbursement funds.[765] With the efforts of Representative Al Quie (R-MN) and California Schools Chief Wilson C. Riles, a Senate-House conference committee approved a compromise bill in 1976, which secured funds to support the education of 40,000 refugee children

[763] "Refugee Education: Who Pays?", *Los Angeles Times,* Sep. 12, 1975, B6.
[764] Paul Houston, "9 Congressmen Urge New Refugee School Legislation," *Los Angeles Times*, June 7, 1975, OC1; "$15-Million Project Is Proposed to Help Refugee Children, *New York Times,* September 11, 1975, p. 27.
[765] David Winder, "Schools ask aid for refugee children," *The Christian Science Monitor,* Feb 12, 1976, p. 14.

(with 10,400 of the children residing in California). The bill authorized $16 million nationwide (particularly relevant to schools in Pennsylvania, Texas, Illinois, Florida, New York, and Washington) and $4 million for schools in California for 15 months.[766]

The calls for increased funding and education reform raised questions about the level of federal responsibility to local school districts and taxpayers. In promoting the Refugee Children Education Act (1975),[767] Tunney argued that "the best way that we can guarantee that the Vietnamese refugee children are not going to be discriminated against, that they are not going to be scapegoated against, and that the Vietnamese refugees will be accepted into society" was to make sure the federal government assumed the financial burden. Secondly, it was a question of responsibility to the children, both the children of refugees and of American citizens. For example, Tunney expected the refugee education bill to benefit all children in these schools. Since the main hindrance for all schoolchildren was the availability of funding, the latter group of children was only "going to be shortchanged on funds, if we do not pass this bill." While Tunney stated that this was for the refugees' sake—"Of course, we have to find a place for [the refugees] in our society"—he also saw an opportunity to remind the federal government that immigration and "the burden for schooling, at least for the next year or so" were "a matter of national policy" that needed to be "accepted as a national responsibility."[768]

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[766] Paul Houston, "Refugee School Fund Compromise Reached," *Los Angeles Times,* Jun 25, 1976, B3; The Transition Program for Refugee Children funded educational services for child refugees, arranging the transfer of funds from the Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement to states through the U.S. Department of Education. The department was supposed to distribute the funds to local school districts according to the number of enrolled refugee children in a district. See: Refugee Studies Center, Folder 90, Immigration History Research Center (IHRC), UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.
[767] Bill was co-written by Tunney and Cranston.
[768] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee On Labor and Public Welfare, *Indochinese Refugee Children Assistance Act, 1975* (Statement of Hon. John V. Tunney), 30-32.

The issue of education for refugee children brings together the various issues discussed in the previous sections: concerns about financial burden, the question of who pays, and tensions over cultural assimilation. Children as future American citizens seemed to offer the solution to these tensions and concerns. Of course, the availability of education for refugees depended on the particular situations of the children and youth. For example, two girls who called themselves cousins because they had arrived as unaccompanied children and were sponsored by the same uncle in St. Paul, Minnesota, had different options available to them. One girl had arrived in 1979 as a 10-year-old, and because she knew some English before her arrival, she was able to enroll in a nearby elementary school and take classes specifically designed for Southeast Asian refugee children. The second girl arrived in 1980 as a 14-year-old and found that the schools were too full to accept her as a student. She had to wait until the summer to enroll in school.[769] So while the 1975 act opened up doors for refugee children in the education system, it became difficult in later years as more refugee children arrived and needed spots in these schools as well. Furthermore, the familial conditions and age categories (whether young refugees over age 19 could still qualify as students) continued to determine whether these refugees could actually access educational opportunities. Yet policymakers, social agencies, and refugee families considered education—as the site of making new American citizens, or at least the space for negotiating multiple cultural identities—the most important component of refugee programs and policies, as indicated by the emphasis on providing language and educational services to adults and children alike.

[769] Interviews with Yia Vang (age 15) and May Chong Vang (age 16) in St. Paul, MN, December 10, 1982, interviewed by Mason, Refugee Studies Center, Box 16, Folder 19, IHRC, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

While there were concerns about integration for older refugees, young refugees, especially younger children, seemed to have the most promising chance of making this transition. In this way, age played a key role in the narratives about assimilation as the desired ends for refugee communities.

**Conclusion:**

This chapter has examined the sites of housing and neighborhood interactions, employment opportunities, welfare for families with children, and education as spaces for contesting the extent and limits of refugees' entitlements to American welfare assistance. The child figure appears in three forms throughout these debates, sometimes complicating and at other times clarifying the key issues at stake: the child as a welfare recipient, the refugee as a child-like figure, and the child as the promising exception or the refugee family's gateway to assimilation and belonging in American society. While in Chapter 5, the images of children as victims and aid recipients had prompted calls for bringing Southeast Asian refugees to the U.S., the refugees who did come to the U.S. encountered the limitations of age categories embedded within the resettlement program and Americans' assumptions about family roles for children and youth. In response to the public backlash against refugee programs due to concerns about the aid recipients' "child-like" dependency, we can also see how social agencies and refugees went to lengths to prove refugees' self-sufficiency.

Although children and youth were seen as promising future American citizens because they were malleable and not attached to a geographic, cultural, or linguistic home, older refugee children and youth, just as much as adult refugees, still occupied

liminal positions between adult/child, citizen/non-citizen, and refugee/immigrant. These ambiguous statuses prompted debates about the potential for Southeast Asian refugees to assimilate into American society, or how much Americans needed to accommodate the new immigrants. Although the differences in cultural expectations and language barriers posed real challenges, these concerns were also used to argue *against* refugee programs. Tied to visions of family units and of the "national family," these ideas about the refugees' potential to belong ultimately influenced how the American public understood the urgency of their need for resettlement in the U.S.

These reactions also reflect a larger shift in public opinion toward Southeast Asian refugee communities, compounded by the recent contestations over social welfare programs and foreign aid, as refugees were considered as immigrants, neighbors, and permanent residents. As stated during a hearing on the Refugee Act of 1979 before the Committee on the Judiciary, the financial aspects carried a lot of weight when considering refugee assistance that led one legislator to state: "We as a people have never placed a value on a human life; this is rightly so. But we cannot escape the reality that the burden of one who is being asked to assume an additional burden must be considered."[770] The problem was that these debates about accessibility to social services were often portrayed as a zero-sum game, drawing lines between the entitlements and rights for non-citizens and citizens within nation-state boundaries. However, as the interactions on the ground suggest, the lines between refugee/immigrant, citizen/non-citizen, and child/adult were not as clear-cut as articulated in these policies.

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[770] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *The Refugee Act of 1979: Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary on S. 643, March 14, 1979*, 96th Cong., First Session (Washington, D.C.: 1979), 3.

## Conclusion:


***Figure 11**: "Offer May Vary" cartoon by Clay Bennett,*
*The Christian Science Monitor (2002[?])*

**Defining Americans' Obligations to Help Refugees throughout the Cold War Years:**

As Edwin Silverman observed in 1980, "The emergency needs of refugee peoples has become a permanent fixture of the post-World War II era."[771] Although relief efforts and refugee policy started out as ad hoc and piecemeal measures, the displacement of people continued to take place after World War II, raising new challenges and consolidating the definitions of the "refugee," "child," "family," and "unaccompanied minor." By the late 1980s, these efforts and policies had become more institutionalized, producing a "humanitarian industry" that aimed to address the large-scale migration of refugees and their needs for new homes. As this dissertation has argued, the multiple channels of foreign and humanitarian aid enabled American donors and sponsors to imagine themselves as participating in international projects abroad and the expected

[771] Edwin B. Silverman, "Indochina Legacy: The Refugee Act of 1980," *Publius* 10, no. 1, The State of American Federalism (Winter, 1980): 27-41.

resolution of postwar issues. But new challenges and questions arose with subsequent refugee groups, and when dealing with the actual needs of children and changes within the domestic and international political environments, there was a constant negotiation between the humanitarian discourse and resettlement policy.

This dissertation has also examined the uses of both children and refugees to clarify national and geopolitical priorities, as well as to mark the differences between the federal government's obligations to citizens vs. non-citizens, during the early and late Cold War years. Which children are visible and when? Policymakers and taxpayers attempted to address these questions to clarify *to whom* American institutions and agencies were responsible: taxpayers and local school districts, specific groups of refugees to assist, or particular groups of children and families. These debates, as well as the policies designed and implemented, contributed to the process of designating different levels of responsibility for the refugees. Some believed it was the primary responsibility of the federal government and international/multilateral organizations, while others believed it was the duty of public and private agencies, local institutions, private sponsors, or the (male) head of the household to respond. These debates may have raised more questions about competing interests than resolutions to the problems of displacement and homelessness; the statements and policies that aimed to clearly demarcate these boundaries also left room for loopholes, for the issues and refugee needs that one agency or individual was not responsible for had the potential to be left unaddressed.

**Defining "Homes" for European Jewish and Southeast Asian Refugees**:

In addition to showing how "Americans' responsibilities" changed over time and bridging studies of foreign and domestic policy, this dissertation has placed the post-World War II case in conversation with the case of Vietnam in order to highlight shifting meanings of "home" in discussions about displaced persons and refugees. In particular, American policymakers, media outlets, agencies, and refugees themselves used various meanings of "home" to clarify what they viewed as the distinctions between the foreign/domestic and refugee/immigrant. As discussed in the previous chapters, home was important in postwar visions of resettlement for refugees, especially refugee children. The absence of a home marked children's dependency on adults as well as refugees' reliance on outside support, which justified the intervention of American policymakers, donors, and welfare agencies on their behalf. Since American social agencies and policymakers envisioned families as self-supporting units, finding permanent residences for refugee families and children indicated the end of their dependency on external support (and for the Southeast Asian refugee case, after a 36- or 18-month period of receiving assistance).

The search for homes for refugees was also tied to ideas about national belonging. For orphans and stateless Jewish refugees, the question of home was complicated: was it their prewar sites of residence, their wartime sites of refuge, or the newly established Jewish state? As refugees' writings and questionnaire responses suggest, their national affiliations shifted as a result of their experiences of displacement, whether they felt ambivalence about their affiliations or embraced their identities as Americans. While some children and youth had difficulties connecting with American children, the issue of

assimilation for European Jewish refugees was more a question of *when,* rather than *if,* they would grow accustomed to their new environments.

For Southeast Asian refugees, Americans bore much of the responsibility for the destruction of their homeland. Because many refugees did not have the option of returning to their respective countries, or did not want to return, the U.S. government offered a new national home for the refugees, or at least was debating the possibility.[772] Although the State Department still preferred the refugees' voluntary repatriation to their homeland, some senators argued in favor of increasing refugee assistance. Southeast Asian refugees were "refugees of special concern" to the U.S., whether this link consisted of "cultural, historical, or special family ties to the United States" or "a special responsibility because of previous U.S. political involvement with the refugee or his country of origin."[773] According to Hmong community leaders, refugee families wanted to work and establish a life in the U.S., even if they expected to return home eventually. However, Hmong families shared "a strong sense that Americans will not ever think of Hmong as Americans, and Americans will always feed other Americans first. Most Hmong do not feel comfortable here."

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[772] American Refugee Committee pamphlet, "To millions of refugees, it's a real jungle," Refugee Studies Center, Box 2, IHRC 2968, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.
[773] "Consultation on Resettlement Takes Place in Los Angeles," *Refugee Reports,* American Public Welfare Association [Washington, DC], vol. II, no. 29, Refugee Studies Center, Box 3, IHRC, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis; "An American Obligation," *The Washington Post,* Sept. 5, 1984, A18; "Refugee Act of 1979," Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 96th Congress, First Session, vol. 125, September 6, 1979, no. 112, Public Welfare Department, Refugee Programs Office Records, 128.E.8.1B, Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society.

For younger refugees who did not have long-term ties to their homes in Southeast Asia, their family's new homes in the U.S. were their "first home."[774] In fact, the two case studies share some similarities in that young Jewish and Southeast Asian refugees had not grown too attached to their countries of birth, either due to their age and the fact that children and youth are often socialized in ways that adults are not (though of course, older adolescents struggled with more ambivalence about national affiliations). With these factors in mind, social agencies in both case studies emphasized their potential to be molded into productive American citizens who would view the U.S. as their new home.

Ideas about race, ethnicity, and assimilation were also related to these conceptions of home, reflected explicitly and implicitly in the reactions of American policymakers and communities toward incoming refugees. In the early post-World War II years, policymakers and nonprofit organizations placed priority on the refugees of Eastern and Western European background, as well as relatives of American citizens. Advocates for DP legislation argued that these refugees should be admitted because they were like family members, either through blood relations or through "ancestral" (or racial) ties. In 1955, President Eisenhower described the 214,000 refugees who were authorized to enter the U.S. as "men and women of the same character and integrity as *their and our ancestors* who, generation upon generation, have come to American to find peace and work, to build for themselves new homes in freedom [italics added]."[775] Likewise, social welfare agencies stressed that European refugees were literally or figuratively the family

[774] Vietnamese Refugee quoted in the Indochinese Refugee Assessment's Secretarial Report, September 28, 1979, American Refugee Committee collection, Refugee Studies Center, Box 2, IHRC 2968, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.
[775] Quoted by Department of State, Division of Publications, Public Services Division, "The Refugee Relief Act of 1953: What It Is—How It Works" pamphlet, March 25, 1954.

members of the American people, and this expectation was built into refugee and immigration policy by prioritizing relatives of Americans for entry into the U.S.

Concerns about race and ethnicity raised new challenges for refugee policy toward Southeast Asian families and children, especially their options for resettlement. Family units and relatives of American citizens were still prioritized in immigration policy, and the Southeast Asian community in the U.S. did rally in support of admitting more refugees. Yet the case for admitting more refugees in the public discourse was often not based on generational or immediate familial ties the American people may have had to the refugee.[776] Social agencies and politicians noted that refugees from South Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and the Hmong lowlands did not have such connections, though a number of communities were already established in large metropolitan areas (particularly in California and New York).[777] Rather, the emphasis was on the "outsider" status of the refugees, either to argue that the refugees did not belong in the U.S., or to make the case that it was a humanitarian obligation for Americans to incorporate the outsider into the domestic community.

Finally, in domestic politics, "home" took on another meaning in terms of U.S. citizenship, with critics of foreign expenditures calling for the prioritization of citizens *at home* over non-citizens, including refugees who had not yet undergone naturalization, as

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[776] But the Orderly Departure Program did create a special category for relatives of American citizens. See: "The Orderly Departure Program: Legal Emigration from Vietnam to the United States," April 28, 1981, Box 1: Governor's Refugee Resettlement Office, Advisory Councils, Program History Files, Minnesota Department of Public Welfare, Refugee Programs Office Records, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul; William L. Mitchell, "The Cuban Refugee Program," *Social Security Bulletin* 25, no. 3, March 1962.
[777] Table 2: Indochina Refugees in the United States, December 1, 1976, Box 1: Governor's Refugee Resettlement Office, Advisory Councils, Program History Files, Minnesota Department of Public Welfare, Refugee Programs Office Records, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul; also see Refugee Studies Center records, Series 2. Statistics, Box 1, Folders 8-46, Immigration History Research Center, UMN Special Collections, Minneapolis.

aid recipients. As discussed in Chapter 4, welfare recipients were utilizing the concept of citizenship and home as a way of proving that they were deserving of aid—because we are taxpaying citizens, they argued, the government has a responsibility to support us in times of need. Yet both refugees and domestic aid recipients faced paradoxical expectations within the welfare system: U.S. citizens were expected to be self-sufficient and *not* need aid, while the backlash against refugees' access to aid was due to their non-citizen status. Furthermore, though legal immigrants qualified for public assistance immediately upon entry,[778] the ability for refugees to enter the U.S. in the first place depended on their likelihood to become citizens or on someone else's citizenship status: whether an American citizen vouched for them as a sponsor or relative. When entering the U.S., this sponsor had to verify that the refugees would not become a "public charge" by securing financial support for them, and that their reliance on aid would be temporary.[779]

By emphasizing that the U.S. was *not* the refugees' own homes, these latter arguments worked to posit refugees and non-citizens as competitors for American resources, or as potential "public charges" who would overburden American taxpayers and donors who did not necessarily have an obligation (at least, not a legal obligation) to support them. These various understandings of home thus influenced how various actors—donors, taxpayers, legislators, social workers, and refugee families—defined who "deserved" aid or could belong to the American community, and how they used welfare aid and social services to clarify these boundaries.

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[778] Diane Sainsbury, *Welfare States and Immigrant Rights: The Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 30.
[779] Sainsbury, *Welfare States and Immigrant Rights*, 29-31.

**Contemporary Relevance and Further Questions:**

While this dissertation has focused on two specific refugee groups, we may recognize similar questions and challenges for other refugee communities, including refugees from Haiti, Somalia, and more recently, Syria. Though unaccompanied children arrive without their parents, the possibilities for them to migrate and resettle in the U.S. are still determined by the status of their parents or designated guardians, whether they are missing, stateless, or in more recent cases, undocumented and labeled "illegal." And as these two case studies suggest, children's dependency and family units are not always prioritized—at least, not to the extent emphasized in policy-level discussions. In fact, these issues can be used to work against the immigration of refugee families.

Public debates about immigration and the resettlement of refugees also continue to place children at the center, whether their visibility is intended to highlight the implications of passing or blocking legislation, or to underscore a moral or ethical point in a political argument. As we have seen in the refugee crisis in Europe that became widely visible in the media in 2015, especially with an image of a dead three-year-old Syrian child who was washed up on the shores of a Turkish beach, images of children have the power to mobilize the international community and to push legislators and politicians to change their approaches to immigration policy. But as subsequent controversies and public debates over the refugee crisis overshadow the stories about refugee children, these calls for humanitarian responses often become lost in the discussions about economic and geopolitical concerns (or "risks") for the receiving country.

In particular, we can see a stronger emphasis on racial and cultural differences in these debates, especially the presumed incompatibility of religious values and lifestyles. But we can also see threads of similar narratives and concerns as the ones identified in this dissertation, including the emphasis on family units, children's vulnerability, the distinction between "refugee" and "economic migrant," and determining the "deservedness" of refugees to reside and receive aid in the host countries (Western countries, in this case). When we look at the local level, we can see the actions of individuals and communities pushing back against these calls to close borders; however, we can also see the backlash in political and public discourses, and the following question continues to be contested: whose responsibility is it to respond to these displaced persons—the U.N., the refugees' home country, the countries that have the resources to help, or the geopolitical actors that enabled these conflicts to take place, including the U.S.?

As indicated by the two case studies of Jewish refugees and Southeast Asian refugees analyzed in this dissertation, these types of narratives have been, and continue to be, constructed and reconstructed through public and policy-level debates. The primary goal of this dissertation has been to broaden our understandings of three common arguments in contemporary political debates: the narrative that the U.S. has always been a humanitarian, welcoming nation, the notion that Americans cannot help refugees because the U.S. has too many social problems at home, and the assumption that some refugees can be integrated into American society and that others cannot. I aim to push back against these narratives not because they are not real concerns and challenges, but rather because they are often used as a justification for inaction and because, in the case

of “we have our own problems,” these rhetorical arguments are not necessarily calling for solutions to those domestic problems.

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