

On November 9, 1943, the UNRRA Agreement was signed at the White House by the representatives of all the forty-four United Nations. The Agreement and the surrounding circumstances represented a triumph in the foreign policy of the United States and of the entire family of United Nations.

The Agreement had been the product of all interested parties. It was drafted by the U.S., Britain, the U.S.S.R. and China and submitted for discussion and amendment to all the nations. On the national side, members of the Foreign Relations and Foreign Affairs Committees gave the State Department the benefit of their advice while the Agreement was in draft stage. Amendments proposed by Senators Vandenberg, Connally and Green were incorporated into the Agreement and the Senators approved the final draft. The happy cooperation between the Senate and the State Department demonstrated that the Executive and Senate could amicably work out problems of foreign policy arising from the war, problems whose solution would be indispensable to the winning of the peace.

Immediately after the signing ceremonies, the representatives of the forty-four nations moved to Atlantic City and in three short weeks of constant work, welded together a comprehensive set of policies to govern the activities of UNRRA. That conference is remembered as the most fruitful international conference held to date. All the delegates fully and frankly discussed the problem of cooperative relief by the United Nations, a problem real and close to all of them, and they resolved their differences.

The approval of this preliminary work by the Congress was overwhelming. In March, 1944, the House and Senate approved a bill to authorize United States participation in the work of UNRRA by majorities of 6-1 and 3-1, respectively. In June the Congress appropriated \$800,000,000 as the first installment on the U.S. contribution of \$1,350,000,000. England and Canada appropriated their shares, \$320,000,000 and \$77,000,000 respectively, and other nations followed suit.

It was with good reason that UNRRA was regarded as non-partisan both on the national front and internationally. It was to help feed the 500,000,000 people in the 30 Axis-overrun countries. In the preamble to the Agreement, the signatory nations declared:

"Being determined that immediately upon the liberation of any area by the armed forces of the United Nations or as a consequence of retreat of the enemy the population thereof shall receive aid and relief from their sufferings, food, clothing and shelter, aid in the prevention of pestilence and in the recovery of the health of the people..."

The declared purpose of the Administration is:

"To plan, coordinate, administer or arrange for the administration of measures for the relief of victims of war in any area under the control of any of the United Nations through the provision of food, fuel, clothing, shelter and other basic necessities, medical and other essential services; and to facilitate in such areas, so far as necessary to the adequate provision of relief, the production and transportation of these articles and the furnishing of these services."

The Administration is to be financed by contributions from the non-invaded countries of 1% of their incomes for the fiscal year 1943. All the United Nations, without exception, contribute to the administrative expenses of the organization. Policy making is lodged in a Council on which sits one representative from each of the member countries, and in

the committees of the Council, but the task is to be done by an independent executive staff headed by a Director General and responsible to the United Nations through the Director General. The policies of the organization as to the equitable distribution of relief supplies are scrupulously fair. One of the basic resolutions provides:

"That, in any area where relief and rehabilitation operations are being conducted through the employment, in whole or in part, of the Administration's resources, relief and rehabilitation in all its aspects shall be distributed or dispensed fairly on the basis of the relative needs of the population in the area, and without discrimination because of race, creed or political belief."

Another resolution provides that "at no time shall relief and rehabilitation supplies be used as a political weapon". The organization was conceived to be non-political as well in its relations with governments:

"That in general the responsibility for the distribution, within an area, of relief and rehabilitation supplies should be borne by the government or recognized national authority which exercises administrative authority in the area".

UNRRA would only assist governments in the administration of relief, it would not attempt to maintain them in power, dominate them or to infringe upon their sovereignty. In short, the organization was auspiciously launched as a non-partisan, non-political international organization, with every hope for its success and its great significance.

The mitigation of the terrible hardships inflicted by the enemy on the people of the occupied areas was the principal objective to which UNRRA was dedicated, but it was not the only one. UNRRA was to be the first postwar organization of the United Nations, the first attempt at international cooperation for permanent peace and the forerunner of other such endeavors. This was in the minds of the legislators of many countries at the time they approved the creation of UNRRA. The reports of the Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations Committees of the Congress emphasized UNRRA's bearing on future international cooperation. It was said that we would learn to cooperate internationally only by doing so. It was most fortunate that the beginning of international cooperation should have so humane a purpose as the relief of war-torn Europe. Without question all the nations would give their ungrudging support to such an organization.

The work of UNRRA was begun early in the Spring of 1943. The estimation of need, the careful technical consultation between the receiving nations and the supplying nations, the recruitment of warehousemen, distribution officers, doctors, nurses, food and agriculture experts and numerous other technicians and experts, and their dispatch to London and Cairo for transfer into the liberated areas at the earliest moment - - all took time. These experts, who came to the organization sincerely inspired by the nobility of its purpose, did not mind waiting. They could not go into action until United Nations territory was taken from the enemy; but they are still waiting at a time when the Balkans are liberated, and large portions of Eastern Europe are also free. The delay is brought about by a fundamental error on the part of the leading United Nations in their present conception of UNRRA. Those nations were generous with money and early support. They gave UNRRA a promising start but their interest in UNRRA became less and less constructive.

Instead of being encouraged and aided to perform its assignment with dispatch and without regard to political consideration, UNRRA has been hampered at every step. It has been made subordinate to the current and changing foreign policy of the U.S. the U.K. and the U.S.S.R. UNRRA is permitted to do nothing - make no step - without endless negotiations

with political leaders who seem to be less impressed with the urgency of the relief problem. They are rather more impressed by the possibility that UNRRA will do something not entirely consistent with higher political objectives. The result of this fear is no action whatsoever. It now appears doubtful that UNRRA will do its job at all or, if it does get to work, that it will be permitted to do its job well.

There is no question of UNRRA being superior to any government or to its army, but the other extreme is the crux of the problem. UNRRA is being subordinated to the various powers according to the area, and is being used as an attachment to the armies of these powers. In the Balkans it is being used as the agent of the British Army, and in Eastern Europe it appears that it will be the agent of the army of the U.S.S.R.

Shortly after UNRRA arrived in Greece it was compelled to withdraw a substantial part of its mission and attach the remainder as individuals to another relief organization. UNRRA was in Greece as a part of and under the orders of the military forces in Greece. If it had been there as an independent organization, responsible only to authorities higher than the Army and permitted to do its job without regard to politics, UNRRA might have done the work for which it was created, at the very time it was most needed. If UNRRA returns to Greece as a part of the military, subject to its orders in every particular, it will become irrevocably identified with one side in a political conflict and civil war. If it returns with its independence assured, as a neutral organization, it will be able to give relief to the entire country efficiently and honestly.

In connection with Yugoslavia there has existed an even more striking illustration of the harm being done by the narrow conception of UNRRA as a servant of Allied Armies. Yugoslavia is fully liberated but has received no relief supplies. The U.S. - British military relief section, known as Military Liaison, or ML, after long negotiations with the Yugoslav Committee for National Liberation, reached a stalemate. Marshall Tito questioned the need for ML in Yugoslavia. ML, which controls the supplies, would not hand them over to the Yugoslavs, though UNRRA was prepared to go into the country to assure that the distribution is fair and equitable. The consequence was that the Yugoslavs were not being fed and UNRRA sat idly in Italy and Cairo. UNRRA has been seriously criticized for this in the world press, though without fault. It was necessary for the Director General of UNRRA, former Governor Lehman of New York, to issue an explanation that no disagreement exists between UNRRA and Yugoslavia and that UNRRA is prepared to go to work in Yugoslavia either with ML or directly under the Yugoslav Government. The supplies which ML declined to turn over were allocated to the army on the supposition that it, with the assistance of UNRRA, would be responsible for the first six months of the relief period. UNRRA will not have allocations of supplies until after that six months period. There is now some reason to believe that the deadlock will be broken, but the damage done to UNRRA's reputation is difficult to repair.

The domination of UNRRA and its subordination to politics threatens to create grave distrust of the entire organization. If UNRRA is a political weapon in its first area of operations and not an international, independent organization as it was planned, we can only expect that in other areas of the world it will be suspected as a political weapon.

It would be a catastrophe if UNRRA were to fail. Not only would the liberated peoples be denied the helping hand they have earned so nobly by their resistance to the Nazis, but the United Nations will be faced by the failure of their initial effort to cooperate in the postwar period.

UNRRA will surely fail if its important member nations continue to discourage it in its efforts to do its job independently and well. There must be a reorientation in the thinking as to the place of UNRRA in world affairs. No formal changes are necessary; the organization was intended to be non-political and technical. All that is required is that UNRRA be free and permitted to enter the liberated areas as an organization responsible to all the United Nations and not to one or two or three of them.

The Administration itself is deeply concerned about its future and is doing all that it can to bring about this reorientation. The staff in the Middle East and elsewhere is of the same view but, as individuals they can do little. What UNRRA needs is an informed interest in its future, an interest that can come only from leaders of opinion in the United States and England. If the members of the Congress of the United States who voted so wholeheartedly for the organization will examine UNRRA's progress and difficulties, we will be well on our way to success.

10 January 1945.

Signed.

David Schwartz, Legal Adviser, Greece Mission

George St. Louis, Bureau of Supply, Greece Mission

Evert Barger, Director, Displaced Persons Division,  
Greece Mission

John E. Ross, Chief Distribution Officer,  
Greek Mission

Jerome J. Jacobson, Price and Rationing Specialist,  
Greece Mission