

Hello Colloquium Readers!

First of all, thank you for taking the time to read this chapter and hear about my dissertation at the colloquium. You are getting the first look at the first draft of the first chapter I've written, although it is the last chapter in the dissertation. In order to situate this chapter in the larger project, I've provided a brief synopsis of the preceding chapters here to give you a sense of the arc of the project as a whole (but this is subject to change as the project develops).

### **Dissertation Overview**

This dissertation is a study of the transformation of select food assistance programs as a window into the changing public/ private welfare states of the U.S. and Britain. With the ascendance of national conservative political movements and governments in both the United States and Britain during the 1980s, this period has come to be understood as one of central government retreat and service privatization. In this telling, lower public expenditures were meant to promote self-reliance among the able-bodied while prompting private agencies and charities to do more to help the poor. However, my research reveals that this narrative is too simplistic. The reality was not a mere transfer of services from the public to private sector, but a complex reconfiguration mediated by the state. At the center of this dissertation is an interest in understanding the reasons policymakers give to support privatization and how these change over time. I then compare these stated reasons with the reality of privatization on the ground. This includes how program changes impact service delivery and change future funding patterns, while also exploring if privatization actually privatized provision, or merely shifted the way public funds supported food welfare. I use Britain as a counterpoint to illustrate an alternative approach to provide for the hungry. While Britain did not have the same kinds of food assistance programs as the U.S. because of its smaller agricultural sector and different approach to income policy, it offers an interesting comparison to the U.S. precisely because of this divergence.

#### Chapter 1: Food Welfare and Public/ Private Welfare Changes in U.S. and Britain, 1960s

**Central questions:** What did food programs look like by the late 1960s and how did they come to take the form they did? What conditions/ forces created the atmosphere of innovation in public/ private partnerships during the 1960s?

This first chapter will provide background on food welfare legislation from the 1930s through the early 1960s, with an emphasis on how hunger was characterized and the kinds of responses it necessitated. In addition, this chapter will situate the history of food welfare within the development of the welfare state more broadly, tracing the move to in-kind assistance in the U.S. compared to income supports in the U.K.

#### Ch. 2: Expanding Entitlement, 1968-1974

**Central Questions:** What were the conditions that led to expanding anti-hunger legislation, and anti-poverty legislation more broadly? How were hunger and poverty framed and who or what was seen as responsible in the eyes of policymakers and the public to solve them?

The early 1970s represent a moment of massive growth in public spending on food programs in the U.S., an expansion of the market for U.S. grown crops worldwide, and continued concern about benefit levels and fairness in Britain. There seems to have been real concern that those

entitled welfare were receiving benefits that made them feel like equals in society, with extensive discussions of the “poverty trap.” What was interesting about archival finds is that this was not framed as a disincentive to work, but as an unfortunate effect of all or nothing programs that should be modified to a step system, where only part of benefits are cut as people have more income. In the U.S., the food stamp program and school lunch program go national, Congress lowers eligibility requirements for all food programs, and WIC starts as a national program. This is a big moment of change in the size and scope of public programs which I will explore with attention to the ways the private sector was – or was not – involved in the expansion.

### Ch. 3: Social Spending in an Age of Limits, 1973-1979

**Central Questions:** What are the questions and scenarios policymakers in the 1970s are using to make changes, often cuts, to welfare program?

Falling public revenues start to cause problems for welfare. In the U.S., domestic food programs are seen as a prime target for cutting social spending (both Ford and Carter administrations are explicit in this). Food stamps in particular are slated for major reforms, with child nutrition programs also on the chopping block. In Britain, there is a rapid series of changes in spending on social insurance programs, with many cash transfers aimed at families turned into tax credits.

### Ch. 4: A Case Study of Privatization: School Meals 1980-1983

**Central Question:** How well does contracting out for services work in school meals, and in welfare more broadly? What are the forces behind it?

This chapter focuses on the 1980 school meal cuts in the U.K., and the reaction of one action campaign, the Lancashire School Meals campaign, contrasting this with cuts to child nutrition and in particular school lunch in the U.S. in 1981 under Reagan. This chapter also gets at the differences in the move to contract out in the U.S. and U.K. in meal provision. While this is extended as an option in the U.K., only one local education authority undertakes this by 1985. In the U.S. where there is much more successful contracting out and also more private food chains allowed to move into lunchrooms.

Which brings us to Chapter 5, the last chapter here. Since I’ve only recently started the writing phase, I’m really looking forward to your feedback. One weakness of the chapter now is that I haven’t framed it adequately within the secondary literature. I’m also wondering how to best frame the comparative element of the dissertation, in this chapter and more broadly. Any and all questions, suggestions, and comments will be really useful as I revise this, and I look forward to hearing from you on May 5<sup>th</sup>!

Thank you again and looking forward to the colloquium,  
Caitlin Rathe

## Chapter 5

### **Disentitling Assistance: Food Banking and Public Subsidies in Welfare Privatization**

In a speech early in his first term, Reagan extolled the virtues of voluntary action, “The challenge before us is to find ways once again to unleash the independent spirit of the people and their communities. That energy will accomplish far, far more than government programs ever could.”<sup>1</sup> He celebrated the private sector’s potential to meet the nation’s needs, while minimizing public sector growth. “Unleashing” the power of voluntary citizens would produce a flowering of civic action, meeting welfare needs more effectively and efficiently. The welfare state has long been understood as a partnership between public and private actors, but this reformulation that welfare would be increasingly provided by the private sector, with decreasing support from public programs, marks a new period in thinking about public/ private welfare provision. To illustrate this move to private assistance in food welfare, this chapter explores the founding and expansion of food banking in the U.S., comparing this to discussions of privatization in the U.K. in the early 1980s. Using the lens of food banking, I compare policymakers stated reasons to rely on private assistance to the reality on the ground, while also tracing the variety of private and public funds that made food banking possible. Privatization was framed as a public good, benefiting both the government and the people by allowing diverse needs to be met by organizations that already existed to meet specific needs. However, the reality, at least with privatized food assistance through food banking, does not fit this picture.

Reagan’s call for a small state working in partnership with community and voluntary efforts marks a new phase in the long debate over the proper mix of public and private welfare. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, nonprofits, policymakers, and the public in both the U.S. and

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at the Annual Meeting of the National Alliance of Business,” (Washington, D.C., October 6, 1981), Reagan Library, <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1981/100581a.htm>.

U.K. grappled with how and to what degree private, charitable action could, or should, partner with state programs. In the U.K., the *Seebohm Report*, published in 1968, outlined why voluntary activity should continue to expand along with broadening state social service provision. This report sparked another study group in the early 1970s, with their findings published in the *Wolfenden Report* in 1978. And in 1973, Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath announced the creation of a Cabinet Minister for Voluntary Social Services.<sup>2</sup> In the U.S., the Great Society programs of the 1960s enshrined the role of local actors through the Community Action program while changes in social security in this decade allowed for public welfare needs to be met through contracting with nonprofit providers.<sup>3</sup> But where these earlier efforts were carefully stated to be complements to government action and assistance, Reagan and Thatcher in the early 1980s were calling for, at least rhetorically, the substitution of private for public action.

There has been a long scholarly debate on the public/ private state. First, institutional scholars rethought the idea of a ‘weak’ American state, uncovering an associational state that grew through expanding state capacity as private actors undertook statist responsibilities.<sup>4</sup> The next wave of scholarship rethought the public/ private state by analyzing welfare capitalism.<sup>5</sup> Acknowledging the long tradition of private actors providing social services, scholars began to

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<sup>2</sup> Speech, Edward Heath, “Buckinghamshire Conservative Associations,” 13 July 1973, T 353/106, The National Archives (TNA).

<sup>3</sup> Earlier chapters will go into more details on the various reports and programs here that supported the use of localized, volunteer and charitable action along with state programs to meet social needs.

<sup>4</sup> See Ellis W Hawley, “Herbert Hoover, the Commerce Secretariat, and the Vision of an ‘Associative State,’ 1921-1928,” *The Journal of American History* 61, no. 1 (1974): 116–40; Brian Balogh, *A Government Out of Sight: The Mystery of National Authority in Nineteenth-Century America*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); and Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

<sup>5</sup> See Sanford Jacoby, *Modern Manners: Welfare Capitalism since the New Deal*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Marie Gottschalk, *The Shadow Welfare State: Labor, Business, and Health-Care Policy in the U.S.*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000); and Jennifer Klein, *For All These Rights: Business, Labor and the Shaping of America’s Public-Private Welfare State*, (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2003).

pay closer attention to the shift during the 1970s to contracting out public service provision through private, non-profit organizations. Debates over this emerging arrangement and its impacts took off during 1980s while Reagan was in office. Scholars including historian Peter Hall, political scientists Stephen Smith and Michael Lipsky, and Lester Salamon theorized the relationships between the state and non-governmental and non-profit organizations.<sup>6</sup> This ‘sectoral’ analysis of public/ private welfare treated the interdependence of public and private welfare programs not as anomaly counter to broad trends in U.S. state development, but as a deliberate design. Just no one was paying attention as this partnership developed. Salamon describes that by the late 1970s, the private non-profit sector served as the main vehicle delivering government-financed human services.<sup>7</sup> Smith and Lipsky focus on the potential compromises this arrangement can impose on the mission and scope of non-profit organizations.<sup>8</sup>

While welfare reform during the 1980s is often framed as government retreat from service provision and pushing services onto the private sector, here I trace a story of government actively partnering with both nonprofit providers and for-profit producers to make the ‘privatization’ of food provision possible. Both non-profit charities as well as for-profit businesses – were conscripted by the state to meet social welfare needs all while adhering to ideas of market efficiencies. Specifically, this chapter explores how food banks, and the public subsidies that support them, became an entrenched part of the food welfare landscape and what this says about changes in the public/ private welfare state. After exploring the roots of food

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Dobkin Hall, *Inventing the Nonprofit Sector and Other Essays on Philanthropy, Voluntarism, and Nonprofit Organizations* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Steven Rathgeb Smith and Michael Lipsky, *Nonprofits for Hire: The Welfare State in the Age of Contracting* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993); and Lester M Salamon, *Partners in Public Service: Government-Nonprofit Relations in the Modern Welfare State* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Salamon, *Partners in Public Service*, 1.

<sup>8</sup> Smith and Lipsky, *Nonprofits for Hire*, i.

banking, from the first food bank in Phoenix to an early food bank in Baltimore, the chapter turns to the resurgence of hunger in the U.S. in the early 1980s. One solution to this problem comes in the form of new federal programs routing surplus government-owned commodities to food banks, calling into question how ‘private’ a solution was food banking. Lastly, the chapter explores changes in the framing of public/ private welfare in Britain in the early 1980s, drawing contrasts to the U.S. experience. However, a network of food banks emerged in the U.K. in 2000 demonstrating a similar turn to privatized food assistance.

### **Food Banking Origin Story**

Before the early 1970s, there was no such thing as a food bank. Communities have had localized systems of getting food to the hungry in various shapes and scopes for as long as people have been hungry. Churches and other community organizations may have had a small food pantry to hand out a few days supply of groceries to a family in emergency need, while a homeless shelter could operate a soup kitchen to ensure folks get at least one hot meal a day. Unlike pantries and soup kitchens, food banks do not provide food to individuals. Instead, each food bank (usually covering a region, like a large metro) provides food and other aid to hundreds of smaller non-profits in the communities where they are based, who then provide this food to their clients. The ubiquity of food banks today makes it easy to forget their relatively recent invention – the coordinating network for foodbanks, Feeding America (formerly Second Harvest), ranked as the third largest charity in 2016 in the nation, behind only the United Way and Task Force for Global Health, but was only founded in 1976.<sup>9</sup> Feeding America is the

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<sup>9</sup> For the first time in 2016, Feeding America surpassed the Salvation Army. William P. Barrett, “The Largest U.S. Charities for 2016,” *Forbes*, 14 December 2016, accessed 16 April 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/williampbarrett/2016/12/14/the-largest-u-s-charities-for-2016/#2d23aee34abb>.

central, coordinating body for over 200 food banks in the U.S. They carry out national fund drives, set standard policies for the network, and work with national food manufacturers to secure and distribute large donations. However, at Second Harvest's beginning, there were no hopes for national expansion or lofty goals to be among the largest charities in the nation. And in addition to being a fairly new kind of charity, food banks, heralded as model private and charitable responses to hunger, as not as private as most people think.

As food banking lore has it, John Van Hengel founded the first foodbank in 1966. A corporate history from Second Harvest lays out a linear path from van Hengel's discovery of hunger to founding the first food bank. Dubbed the "Godfather of food banking," Van Hengel found his calling to feed the hungry later in life. He was in his mid-40s in 1965 when he began work at a charity dining room, St. Vincent de Paul Soup Kitchen, in Phoenix. To get more fresh food into this kitchen, and other soup kitchens in the city, Van Hengel began to salvage local fruit from around the Phoenix area. As the Second Harvest narrative tells it, "using an old milk truck, an old flatbed truck and a team of volunteers, John began picking citrus at private homes, delivering the fruit to inner-city missions. Finding that system to be inefficient, he began looking for a centralized location to which the agencies could come and pick up what they wanted."<sup>10</sup> However, this origin story of food banking lays out a rather Whiggish history. The direct path between this salvage work, the founding of a food bank, and later a food bank network, involved a lot more happenstance and luck than this official history acknowledges.

The first big break for van Hengel occurred when the Franciscans of St. Mary's Church acquired an abandoned bakery. Van Hengel had been asking around nonprofits in Phoenix for a space to use for his food salvage operations when he got a call from St. Mary's. The Franciscans willed the space to him and provided a \$3000 loan for a telephone, utilities, and conversion of a

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<sup>10</sup> "The History of Food Banking and Feeding America," Version – March 29, 2013, 1.

bake room to a walk in cooler.<sup>11</sup> In 1966, this opened as St. Mary's Clearinghouse. It wasn't until 1968 that the food operation at St. Mary's was called a food bank. As myth has it, a young mother of ten let Van Hengel in on the secret of how she kept her family fed. She stopped daily at the garbage bins behind a local grocery store, finding items such as still frozen food, day old bread, and loose carrots.<sup>12</sup> Second Harvest's corporate history has it that she told Van Hengel, "'There should be a place, kind of like a bank, where you can go for food, where people make donations and other people can take it out.'"<sup>13</sup> Thus Van Hengel renamed the distribution warehouse "St. Mary's Food Bank." Like modern food banks, St. Mary's did not primarily give food to individuals. Instead, the food bank donated larger quantities of grocery salvage and other food donations to a wide range of charities, from community-based soup kitchens to the emergency pantries of religious organizations. In its first full year of operation, St. Mary's Food Bank distributed 275,000 pounds of food to community organizations.

Van Hengel was adamant that the food bank remain independent and cooperative. He did not want to step on the toes of existing charities, so made it clear the food bank only sought donations in kind, not cash. Even so, unsolicited cash donations quickly paid back the \$3000 loan from the Franciscans. He also, at first, refused to use government funds. Reflecting on the birth of food banking in a piece for the first issue of his new magazine, *The Clearinghouse*, John

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<sup>11</sup> "A Second Harvest," *Los Angeles Times*, Lifestyle/ Trend, Sunday January 12, 1992, E7.

<sup>12</sup> "A Second Harvest," *Los Angeles Times*, Lifestyle/ Trend, Sunday January 12, 1992, E7; "The History of Food Banking and Feeding America," Version – March 29, 2013, 1.

<sup>13</sup> "The History of Food Banking and Feeding America," Version – March 29, 2013, 1-2. I'd like to do more digging into the food bank as a term, its marketized connotations. Interesting side bar, in Chicago, the food bank for the city had wanted to register as the Greater Chicago Food Bank, but when the applied for a state charter to become a nonprofit corporation, the name was rejected on the grounds it sounded too much like a financial institution, settled on Greater Chicago Food Depository instead. See Connie Lauerman, "WASTE NOT, WANT NOT: Feeding the Hungry with Millions of Pounds of Good Food--from Dented Canned Goods to Mislabeled Gourmet Entrees--That Would Otherwise Be Discarded," *Chicago Tribune*, November 20, 1988, sec. 10.



van Hengel emphasized his desire for food banks to remain separate from statist programs. In 1975, a friend in Phoenix who worked for the Community Services Agency (CSA), unbeknownst to van Hengel, wrote a \$52,000 grant to provide St. Mary's with increased operating funds for the next year and seed money to start consulting to get other food banks started. Van Hengel recounted that the board flat-out refused the grant "because of the paperwork involved and the possibility that we would lose the autonomy and freedom of development that was proving successful."<sup>14</sup> However, the food bank's grant writing friend was persistent, and when a second CSA grant was approved for \$45,892, van Hengel and the board obliged, especially when the CSA threatened to start their own program to instruct would be food banks how to get off the ground. On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1976, Second Harvest came into being in a small office on North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in Phoenix.<sup>15</sup> Shortly after van Hengel set up shop, Pasadena opened as the second food bank in the Second Harvest network, followed by San Diego, San Jose, and Portland, Oregon.

The corporate history goes on to note a further CSA grant of \$100,000 in 1977 helped boost the network from 5 to 18 food banks by 1979. But the narrative quickly pivots from this public grant support to van Hengel's outreach soliciting donations from the 'Big Three' food manufacturers – Kraft, Beatrice Foods, and CPC North America.<sup>16</sup> This meant scaling up the operation from local grocery salvage to include what was once thrown out from manufacturing. Tractor trailers full of mismarked or short weighted packages of processed foods along with failed product lines or flavors were being dumped, but van Hengel hoped to secure this erstwhile

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<sup>14</sup> "Food Banking – It's Roots," *The Clearinghouse "Thoughts for Food" From Foodbanking, Inc.*, Vol. I, No. 1, Jan 1986; 2. Langsdale Library, University of Baltimore, Maryland Food Bank Papers, Series II, Box 2, Folder "General 1987-1989", Maryland Food Bank Papers.

<sup>15</sup> "Food Banking – It's Roots," *The Clearinghouse "Thoughts for Food" From Foodbanking, Inc.*, Vol. I, No. 1, Jan 1986; 2. Langsdale Library, University of Baltimore, Maryland Food Bank Papers, Series II, Box 2, Folder "General 1987-1989", Maryland Food Bank Papers.

<sup>16</sup> The History of Food Banking and Feeding America," Version – March 29, 2013 , 2.

waste as donations.<sup>17</sup> Beyond describing a new and growing source of donations, this turn to focusing on the food industry marks a self-conscious move on the part of Second Harvest to highlight the role of private industry in this network. Much like Van Hengel's sentiments in his initial refusal of CSA funds, it seems that Second Harvest's biographer was uncomfortable describing the reliance of the organization on public funds. The remainder of this corporate history does not mention any other direct government grants that made the continued expansion of the food bank network possible.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, I was interested to see that Second Harvest's 1981 Annual Report noted "as in the past," the organization was "funded primarily" by the federal Community Services Administration. The annual budget showed that Second Harvest's operating budget for 1981 was a little over \$480,000 with \$450,000 of their funding coming from a CSA grant. Despite van Hengel's aversion to relying on public support, Second Harvest relied almost totally on public funds for its operation budget. They received a \$400,000 CSA grant for the next year, but were left scrambling with the closing of the CSA by the Reagan administration in 1982.<sup>19</sup>

Van Hengel founded Second Harvest on a desire to make use of what he saw as needless waste in the system of food production and distribution and with a commitment to do this independently and charitably. However, the origin story told to the press by van Hengel as well as from the corporate offices of Second Harvest glosses over the continued role of federal funds

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<sup>17</sup> "A Second Harvest," *Los Angeles Times*, Lifestyle/ Trend, Sunday January 12, 1992, E7.

<sup>18</sup> The corporate history *does* describe the donation of surplus government commodities, dairy in the early 1980s, TEFAP commodities beginning in 1983, and "Operation Desert Share" MRE donations in the early 1990s. But there are no other references to grants. Neither are there any mentions of this public funding on Feeding America's "Our History" page, <http://www.feedingamerica.org/about-us/about-feeding-america/our-history/>.

<sup>19</sup> "Second Harvest National Foodbank Network: 1981 Annual Report," Dole Senate Papers - Legislative, Box 142, Folder 3, Robert J. Dole Archive and Special Collections, University of Kansas. Grant could have been for \$500,000 with \$50,000 refunded to CSA, unclear from details provided in report (see p. 20-21 in this folder for budget information). After the CSA closed, it seems like Second Harvest received grants from Department of Health and Social Service, but haven't found source material on this.

in growing the food banking network. But my ability to track the motivations behind the growth and expansion of the Second Harvest network, and in particular van Hengel's thoughts on this, are limited by my source material.<sup>20</sup> To better understand why and how food banks began emerging at an increasing rate in the late 1970s and early 1980s, I explored the early history of the Maryland Food Bank (MFB) based in Baltimore. The MFB was the first food bank on the east coast and one of the first 18 food banks under the Second Harvest network by 1979.

### **Hunger in Baltimore**

The founding of St. Mary's and Second Harvest reads as abstract and disconnected from events on the ground, or even the poor. The materials from Second Harvest do not really place the growth of the food bank in terms of rising hunger until they describe the early 1980s. But hunger was identified as a problem in the U.S. much earlier, coming to the public's attention by the end of the 1960s. To better understand the conditions that necessitated food banks, I explored the records of the Maryland Food Bank (MFB) based in Baltimore.<sup>21</sup> These are the only publicly available records of a food bank in the U.S. making it an ideal case to study. In addition, the University of Baltimore has an impressive regional studies collection that allowed me to place the growth of the Maryland Food Bank in the context of changing welfare programs across the city, state, and nationally.

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<sup>20</sup> After repeated attempts, I was unable to connect with anyone at Feeding America who knew if or where they had any kind of corporate archive, so my telling here has been pieced together by primarily press accounts and then any information about Second Harvest found in archives of Congress.

<sup>21</sup> These papers are available at the University of Baltimore's Langsdale Library and are just one part of a rich collection of city and regional non-profit and community records. Thanks to the University of Baltimore for its Fellowship on Structural Inequality for providing me the time to do this research.

In November of 1979, *The Baltimore Sun* ran a story titled, “Unusual bank deals in food, not money.”<sup>22</sup> This headline marks the opening of the Maryland Food Bank following more than ten years of work around hunger in the region. In 1969, the Maryland Food Committee emerged out of a task force on hunger in the Mayor’s office, morphing into an interfaith working group on hunger in the city of Baltimore and its surroundings. Attention on hunger was on the rise nationally at this moment. In 1968, hunger tours by Robert Kennedy on the presidential campaign trail and the creation of the Senate Select Committee on Hunger and Human Needs, chaired by George McGovern (D-NJ), serve as other indicators of the increased prominence of domestic hunger on the public consciousness. In that same year, CBS produced and aired the documentary, “Hunger in America,” to critical acclaim and public outrage at the severity of hunger in the nation’s midst. As the *New York Times* described it, the documentary showed “the devastating physical and mental consequences of lack of food,” and presented the Department of Agriculture in particularly damning light. Apart from showing dire need, the documentary demonstrated the “callous indifference” on the part of the USDA, which was not “using all the funds at its disposal to relieve man’s most elemental form of suffering.”<sup>23</sup> Nicholas Kotz’s book *Let Them Eat Promises* brought further attention to this problem when it was first made available for sale at the 1969 White House Conference on Food and Nutrition, which incidentally was the first conference Richard Nixon held in office.<sup>24</sup> It was in this moment that Ann Miller, a central figure in the founding of the MFB, turned her attention to hunger.

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<sup>22</sup> “Unusual bank deals in food, not money,” *The Baltimore Sun*, November 4, 1979, p.TR6.

<sup>23</sup> Jack Gould, “Hunger Is Not for Quibbling,” *The New York Times*, 23 June 1968, D19. The documentary was released on May 22 of that year.

<sup>24</sup> Judith Randal, “A Book for Today: On the Plight of the Hungry,” unmarked news clipping, annotated to say “The book is available for sale in Room M-280, Sheraton-Park Hotel. Maryland Conference of Social Welfare Records, Series 1 Box 13, Langsdale Library, University of Baltimore [IMG\_7283].

Miller was working in the Baltimore Health Department's day care division when she became interested in hunger among the poor.<sup>25</sup> She served on the Mayor's Task Force on Nutrition and then, along with a few other women from the task force, founded the Maryland Food Committee during the summer of 1969.<sup>26</sup> Early concerns of the MFC included expanding access to free and reduced price school meals to all students in the Baltimore City School District. Many schools in the district didn't make use of the federal school lunch program at all, in effect leaving money on the table to feed poor children. With this first goal in mind, Miller recalled in 1986 that the purpose of the Maryland Food Committee "was to see that there would be no more hunger in Maryland – and in 1969, that really seemed possible."<sup>27</sup> First, they would ensure every child in the city have access to a free or reduced price school meal, and then they would move on to the next task from there. But little did the committee members know how difficult solving hunger would be.

Part of the difficulty in solving hunger stemmed from deciding 1) who was hungry, 2) who was responsible to feed the hungry, and 3) who was responsible to provide emergency services more broadly. As late as 1967, there was no official measure of hunger. A former USDA staffer, Judith Segal, combined statistics from the Current Population Survey and the National Household Food Consumption Survey to create her own measure of 'deficient diets,'

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<sup>25</sup> Frederick N. Rasmussen, "Ann Miller, Md. Food Bank founder," *The Baltimore Sun*, July 19, 2013, accessed February 22, 2016, <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/obituaries/bs-md-ob-ann-miller-20130719-story.html>

<sup>26</sup> "The Maryland FOOD Committee was incorporated. It is progressing well." This note appeared in "Baltimore Task Force on Nutrition: Minutes of the Ninth Meeting," 9 July 1969. Maryland Conference of Social Welfare Records, Series 1 Box 13, Langsdale Library, University of Baltimore.

<sup>27</sup> Quote from a 1986 *Baltimore Sun* article, cited in Frederick N. Rasmussen, "Ann Miller, Md. Food Bank founder," *The Baltimore Sun*, July 19, 2013, accessed February 22, 2016, <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/obituaries/bs-md-ob-ann-miller-20130719-story.html>

and found that based on data from 1965-66, 10 million people were not getting enough to eat.<sup>28</sup>

In Baltimore as in most cities, emergency feeding centers, including churches along with community and homeless shelters, provided grocery bags with a few days supply of food to individuals and families in desperate need. The MFC involved itself in supporting and coordinating these centers by the mid-1970s. However, they recognized the inherent risk, “in funding a ‘social band-aid,’” even when the quick fix was as desperately needed as emergency food. They feared that by helping provide this service, “it [was] possible to mask the real causes of the problem.”<sup>29</sup>

This emergency food center coalition, coordinated by the MFC and the Health and Welfare Council of Baltimore, brought together private food distribution centers in Baltimore City along with the city Emergency Services team within the Department of Social Services. The coalition aimed to coordinate efforts and work with the city and state to define the role of these centers. The MFC worked to push responsibility for feeding the hungry onto the public sector and made headway on this when in September 1975, the state made private Emergency Centers eligible for Purchase of Service Agreements under Title XX of the Social Security Act, providing block grants to social service providers. While this would allow sorely needed funds to emergency centers, the MFC noted a significant drawback of this development. Federal funds “would undoubtedly require additional staff for the increased paper work entailed in government accountability,” but on another positive note, they would also, “guarantee centers a supply of

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<sup>28</sup> Judith Segal, *Food for the Hungry: The Reluctant Society*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 15-18. She even states, “No one and no government agency has ever examined on a nation-wide basis how our diet has affected our health,” Ibid., 18.

<sup>29</sup> “The Maryland Food Committee, Inc., Fifth Annual Report,” June 1974; Maryland Conference of Social Welfare; Series 6, Box 1, folder “Maryland Food Committee;” University of Baltimore Langsdale Library Special Collections.

food and would provide some jobs in low-income neighborhoods.”<sup>30</sup> In a city-wide food drive leading up to the holidays in 1975, the MFC again expressed reticence at participating in charitable food provision. When the project was proposed to the MFC in October 1975, they emphasized the importance of sending both a political and charitable message, “MFC’s role is to make clear that the drive is necessary because the State does not provide adequately – welfare grants are too low and insufficient funds are provided for emergency services.”<sup>31</sup> In the minutes for the following board meeting, some questioned participating in this drive at all, citing concerns that “this drive may be seen as supporting the concept that responsibility for emergency food lies with the private sector – when in fact it belongs with the proper government agencies.”<sup>32</sup> This sentiment reflected changing attitudes and growing concern about the relationship between public and private welfare provision more broadly, and reasonably so given recent changes to the ways public and private services could work together.

The 1967 Social Security Amendments reintroduced purchase of service agreements with voluntary organizations, meaning federal and state governments could contract out welfare services through private agencies, providing up to 75% matching funds for social services. This amendment passed with little fanfare as the 1967 amendment also implemented workfare requirements for all welfare recipients, including those on AFDC. Adding workfare requirements was a controversial move according to many social and welfare service providers given many recipients of AFDC were single mothers caring for their children; a work requirement would take

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<sup>30</sup> [MFC] Executive Director’s Report, page 2, September 10, 1975; Maryland Conference of Social Welfare; Series 6, Box 1, folder “Maryland Food Committee;” University of Baltimore Langsdale Library Special Collections.

<sup>31</sup> Minutes Maryland Food Committee, October 15, 1975; Maryland Conference of Social Welfare; Series 6, Box 1, folder “Maryland Food Committee;” University of Baltimore Langsdale Library Special Collections.

<sup>32</sup> Minutes Maryland Food Committee, November 19, 1975; Maryland Conference of Social Welfare; Series 6, Box 1, folder “Maryland Food Committee;” University of Baltimore Langsdale Library Special Collections.

them out of the home with what provision for their children's care? While the workfare requirement was more widely discussed, the introduction of social service matching grants (called Title IV-A funds) ended up being more significant. There was no cap on the amount the federal government would match; and as word circulated among social service providers of their availability, spending on Title IV-A grants grew from \$354 million in 1969 to \$1.69 billion by 1972.<sup>33</sup> In 1972, matching funds for social services were folded into the federal Title XX program.<sup>34</sup> Unlike the idea of privatization today (and by the early 1980s) as a means to cut costs, awards were not often based on competitive bidding and these agreements did not require the contract recipient to provide services more cheaply than a welfare agency.<sup>35</sup>

Reflecting concerns around who was responsible to fund both public and private welfare, there was growing concern about the provision of emergency services more broadly. A 1976 MFC grant application noted that the provision of emergency services, including food, clothing, and housing, was "a tangled mess delivered in bits and pieces by the Department of Social Services, voluntary agencies, ethnic organizations, churches, and others," going on to say, "there is no clear policy of whether the public or voluntary agencies are the first line of defense."<sup>36</sup> The stress on these emergency services mounted during the 1970s. A 1977 study in Baltimore City showed that 180,000 people sought emergency food assistance at some point during the year.<sup>37</sup> And this occurred at a time when the population of Baltimore was a little over 800,000, meaning

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<sup>33</sup> Andrew J. F Morris, *The Limits of Voluntarism: Charity and Welfare from the New Deal through the Great Society* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 198-199.

<sup>34</sup> Salamon, *Partners in Public Service*, 70. Need to add more on how these titles work!

<sup>35</sup> Andrew J. F Morris, *The Limits of Voluntarism: Charity and Welfare from the New Deal through the Great Society* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 207.

<sup>36</sup> "Preliminary Proposal for Emergency Services Project for Baltimore City by Maryland Conference of Social Concern," 1976; Maryland Conference of Social Welfare; Series 6, Box 1, folder "Goldseker Foundation;" University of Baltimore Langsdale Library Special Collections.

<sup>37</sup> Andrea Pawlyna, "Food donations 'banked' for needy," *The Baltimore Sun*, November 23, 1980, p. T1.



more than 1 in 5 residents relied on emergency food at least once during the year.<sup>38</sup> Food prices were increasing more quickly than other sectors of the economy. In 1978, food prices rose at an annual percentage rate of 16.4%, far higher than consumer price index at 9.3% (which had also accelerated from the previous year).<sup>39</sup> In 1979, this trend continued while non-food costs, especially for shelter and utilities, grew more quickly than expected.<sup>40</sup> The creation of the MFB in 1979 was a direct response to increasing accounts of hunger and the trouble to make ends meet but also the result of years of preparation by the Maryland Food Committee.

In May of 1979, the Maryland Food Bank opened its doors to the community at 5213 Farilawn Avenue in Baltimore.<sup>41</sup> Ann Miller, who was named acting director, introduced the new concept for both food producers and neighborhood emergency centers to Mr. Hettleman, Secretary of the Baltimore City Department of Human Resources. She described that for emergency centers, “food will be available without the can drives and soliciting efforts which now take up so much agency time,” while food producers could donate large quantities and receive a 150% tax deduction of appreciated value for the food.<sup>42</sup> But the purpose of her letter was to request funds.

Like Second Harvest before it, the Maryland Food Bank got off the ground thanks to a combination of public and private money. An Urban Services grant provided \$48,000 to

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<sup>38</sup> [www.census.gov/quickfacts](http://www.census.gov/quickfacts)

<sup>39</sup> W. Carl Biven, *Jimmy Carter's Economy: Policy in an Age of Limits* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 134–135.

<sup>40</sup> Food prices had increased 20.7% since 1977. Statement of Jim Williams, Deputy USDA Secretary, before Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations, and Nutrition, Committee on Agriculture, U.S. House of Representatives,” 1, 4. Edley, Human Resources, folder “Food Stamps – Implementing Reform,” Box 34; Domestic Policy Staff Files, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

<sup>41</sup> Pamphlet, “Food: For Thought” Maryland Food Bank, undated; Maryland Conference of Social Welfare, Unprocessed Series, Box 5, Folder “Maryland Food Committee;” University of Baltimore Langsdale Library Special Collections.

<sup>42</sup> Letter, Ann Miller to Kalman Hettleman, 4 May 1979; Maryland Food Bank Records, Box 2, Folder “General, 1979-1986;” University of Baltimore Langsdale Library Special Collections.

purchase equipment, including a walk-in freezer, refrigerator, and a truck while support from the Presbyterian Church of Baltimore covered rent, utilities, and building maintenance.<sup>43</sup> The biggest need was for staff. As the Maryland Food Committee planned for the food bank with community partners, it was “expected that CETA workers would be available.”<sup>44</sup> The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) of 1973 was a national jobs bill that provided 12-24 months of full-time work, plus job training, to build employment skills. This was only one of a few public work programs. The proposed 1979 budget for the food bank included projections for two CETA workers, two work incentives network (WIN) employees, and 10 maintenance and repair jobs financed by the youth employment plan (YEP). However, proposed cuts in Carter’s 1980 budget created uncertainty, and when the food bank opened only one CETA position received funding. There was no money allocated to hire any other staff.<sup>45</sup> Eventually, the food bank was to be self-supporting. Instead of charging a membership fee to community organizations that used food bank food, local agencies paid a flat ‘poundage’ rate for the food they picked up. However the rate was classified as a donation to work within charitable law, but this donation seemed rather mandatory. The poundage fee was initially set at \$.05 per pound but by November of 1980 had increased to \$.09 per pound. And while I could not find Mr. Hettleman’s letter back to Ann Miller, it does seem that the food bank was able to secure more staff. As one board member noted in late 1980, “The success of the food bank is due in no small measure to the efforts of CETA workers who have come to the food bank on CETA financed

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid; and Andrea Pawlyna, “Food donations ‘banked’ for needy,” *The Baltimore Sun*, November 23, 1980, p. T1.

<sup>44</sup> Maryland Food Bank, Budget 1979, Proposed; Records of the Maryland Food Bank, Series II, Box 1, Folder “Board General 1979-83;” University of Baltimore Langsdale Library Special Collections.

<sup>45</sup> Maryland Food Bank, Budget 1979, Proposed; Records of the Maryland Food Bank, Series II, Box 1, Folder “Board General 1979-83;” University of Baltimore Langsdale Library Special Collections.

jobs and have worked positively and effectively to perform all the tasks asked of them.”<sup>46</sup> In addition to the infrastructure and salaries being largely government subsidized, operations like the Maryland Food Bank were also made possible by changes to the tax code in 1976, which Miller had described to Hetlleman in her letter asking for funds. These changes codified making certain in-kind charitable donations tax-deductible, including the remains of food manufacturing and grocery salvage.<sup>47</sup> Between public grants, public works programs, and the tax code, all of these programs together demonstrate that food banks were not a purely voluntary response to hunger. As one board member of the MFB heralded, “it is a graphic example of private enterprise working with government programs to yield an economical and efficient way to combat poverty.”<sup>48</sup> But moving further into the 1980s, it is harder to see the economies and efficiencies of food banks taking into account the experiences of these organizations and the people they fed.

It’s important to acknowledge that the growth in emergency food provision during the late 1970s, with the founding of food banks like the one in Baltimore, took place in a moment of *expansion* of the food stamp and other national food programs. Between 1970 and 1980, spending on food stamps grew from \$575 million to \$9.2 billion annually while average monthly participation climbed from 4.3 million to just over 21 million individuals.<sup>49</sup> If the need for emergency food was expanding *with* growing public food programs, imagine what would happen when those public food programs began to shrink. This decade of public program expansion

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<sup>46</sup> Irv Rubenstein (MFB board members), “Letter to the Editor: The Food Bank,” *The Baltimore Sun*, December 13, 1980, p.A19.

<sup>47</sup> Tax Reform Act of 1976, Sec. 2135, Summary for MFB; Records of the Maryland Food Bank, Series II, Box 1, Folder “Board General 1979-83,” University of Baltimore Langsdale Library Special Collections.

<sup>48</sup> Irv Rubenstein (MFB board members), “Letter to the Editor: The Food Bank,” *The Baltimore Sun*, December 13, 1980, p.A19.

<sup>49</sup> “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation and Costs,” <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pd/SNAPsummary.pdf>

came to a grinding halt with the election of Ronald Reagan. And he brought with his administration an alternative approach to feed the hungry.

### **Hunger Nationally, 1980-1983**

In the midst of this rediscovery of hunger, political responses varied wildly.<sup>50</sup> In a 1974 letter to President Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, then Governor of California, noted that among welfare programs, “the major problem of today lies in the area of food stamps.”<sup>51</sup> According to Reagan, food stamp regulations were much more lax than other welfare programs leading students, single mothers, and striking workers to receive more than their fair share.<sup>52</sup> When Reagan was elected President in November of 1980, he ensured that he would tighten domestic spending, in particular around non-entitlement welfare programs like food stamps. And his administration followed through on these promises once in office, while the President noted to the press that he was ‘perplexed’ by accounts of hunger.<sup>53</sup> In contrast, others in the nascent emergency feeding sector saw the necessity of the work they were doing. Ann Miller of the Maryland Food Bank explained, “The way the economy is today, anybody who’s living on Social Security or the minimum wage and nothing else can’t make it.”<sup>54</sup> Inflation was a problem for both the working class and anyone living on a fixed income. In both cases, your dollar could

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<sup>50</sup> Earlier chapters will deal with this. Conservative reaction to food programs is not all mean-spirited don’t want people to eat, but also a fiscal reaction to just how big and expensive programs like food stamps became. I posit that because the extent of hunger was so poorly understood at the outset of these programs, the growth and cost of these programs in a decade or so was really surprising.

<sup>51</sup> Digitized Letter, Gov. Ronald Reagan to President Gerald R. Ford, “Welfare Reform” December 20, 1974, folder “Welfare Reform — Ronald Reagan Letter and Report” box 13, Richard B. Cheney Files, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, <http://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/0005/1561608.pdf>.

<sup>52</sup> Gov. Ronald Reagan, “California’s Blueprint for National Welfare Reform: Proposals for the Nation’s Food Stamp and Aid to Families with Dependent Children Programs,” September 1974, Sacramento, CA; *i.*

<sup>53</sup> Steven R. Weisman, “Reagan Calls for ‘No Holds Barred’ Examination of Hunger Reports,” *New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast)*, August 3, 1983, sec. B.

<sup>54</sup> Andrea Pawlyna, “Food donations ‘banked’ for needy,” *The Baltimore Sun*, November 23, 1980, p. T1.

purchase less each month, and food prices were particularly inflationary. As a Carter Administration task force on food price inflation noted, food prices had increased at on average 9% annually since 1967, far higher than the 2.5% average from 1950-1966. And the average masks wide variation, for example in 1973 and 1974, retail food prices increased by 14%.<sup>55</sup>

By the late 1970s, food banks existed on both coasts and in metro centers of the Mid-West and South. Hunger was a national phenomenon. On the West coast, the Seattle Coalition of Food Banks described how rising need from food stamp cutbacks in January 1979 translated into double the number of families seeking emergency food. 20 emergency feeding centers in the city were working to coordinate their efforts and share data, but this responsibility primarily fell to only one staffer at the local Second Harvest affiliate, Second Northwest Harvest, Ruth Sterling. In order to be better able to coordinate among emergency food centers in the region, the Coalition requested funds for two additional staff people in a 1980 community services block grant application, with the hope of getting emergency food to 20,000 families/ month. Additional staffers were necessary, according to the application, given the crisis conditions in the region. The application noted there were “enormous numbers of clients, lack of sufficient community donations to purchase food, lack of consistent food resources, and lack of staff to be able to adequately provide the service of ‘food delivery.’”<sup>56</sup> The need for emergency food and services continued to grow nationally through 1980, with the press recounting tales of ‘heat or eat,’ where people had to choose between paying heating bills or having money to buy food, or making the

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<sup>55</sup> “Food Inflation Task Force Report,” December 1978 (draft 12/29/78), p3. Lynn Daft Subject Files, Box 34; Domestic Policy Staff Files, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

<sup>56</sup> “1980 Block Grant Program Plan: Food Resources Network,” Box 29, Folder 3, Department of Community Development, Community Development Block Grant Project Records, 1971-1988, Record Series 1605-02, Seattle Municipal Archives.

equally difficult decisions between food and medicine.<sup>57</sup> However, Reagan and other leaders in Washington did not see the problem of hunger through this same lens.

The administration took a very different tack when explaining the root causes of, and solutions to, poverty and in particular hunger. Instead of looking to structural causes of poverty, Reagan and the conservative think tanks he relied on for knowledge, pointed to changing family structure toward single-mother headed households and welfare “dependency” as the key problems of the poor.<sup>58</sup> The way to reform welfare, and food assistance programs in particular, was to make sure they served only the truly needy.

However, the way Congress enacted changes to food programs is worth discussing. The Heritage Foundation released *Mandate for Leadership*, a 3,000 page policy study published in late 1980 that became equated with the Reagan agenda. At its core, this document advocated for “supply-side” economics.<sup>59</sup> The Reagan administration and Republican majority in the Senate talked about winning a conservative mandate to govern in the 1980 election; however, most change in welfare policies and spending resulted from new Congressional rules and procedures including the newly created Senate Committee on the Budget.<sup>60</sup> “The Budget Committee was being used by the administration to spearhead a sharp, programmatic change” in the way

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<sup>57</sup> For example, see Ann D. Kirkwood, “Heat or Eat Dilemma Spreading in West: Statewide Groups Springing Up to Fight What Is Called Rising Hunger Problem Incomplete Source,” *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*; *Los Angeles, Calif.*, February 17, 1980; B. H. Fussell, “Of Farms, Hunger and Poverty,” *New York Times*, 1979, sec. New Jersey Weekly; Vertis Thompson, “Poor Can’t Afford Both Medicine and Food,” *The Skanner (1975-1988)*; *Portland, Or.*, November 12, 1980; and Leslie Berkman, “Portrait of the Smith Family...: ... and the 183,000 Others Who Have One Thing in Common--Poverty amidst Orange County’s Affluence. Poverty in Orange County,” *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*; *Los Angeles, Calif.*, December 21, 1980, sec. Orange County.

<sup>58</sup> Alice O’Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 243, 260.

<sup>59</sup> O’Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*, 250 and Donald T. Critchlow, “Think Tanks, Antistatism, and Democracy: The Nonpartisan Ideal and Policy Research in the United States, 1913-1987,” in Michael J. Lacey and Mary O. Furner, eds., *The State and Social Investigation in Britain and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center and Cambridge University Press, 1993), 315- 317.

<sup>60</sup> Fenno, *The Emergence of a Senate Leader*, 49.

Congressional spending worked.<sup>61</sup> Instead of making cuts outright, the administration pressured Congress to decrease expenditures through the farm bill using budget reconciliation instead of outright cutting funds.<sup>62</sup> The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry oversees the farm bill which includes most federal nutrition programs. Recommended cuts in budget outlays for this committee were \$1.9 billion for FY 1982, \$2.6 billion in 1983, and \$3 billion by FY 1984.<sup>63</sup> As one chronicler of food policy notes, lacking overwhelming public support to carry out his broad plan for welfare reform, “It is not surprising that the budgetary process became the instrument for presenting the Reagan administration’s first year legislative program to Congress.”<sup>64</sup>

To meet these reduced spending targets, Food and Nutrition Services within the USDA, which oversees all federal food assistance and nutrition programs, made many changes to the FSP, limiting eligibility and lowering benefits for those that remained eligible. The gross income eligibility standard was set at 130% of the poverty line, prohibited strikers from participating if they weren’t eligible before the strike, pro-rated the initial months allotment if the household did not participate for a full month, expanded reasons for disqualification from the program to include any action that violated a State statute, and created a block grant the FSP in Puerto

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<sup>61</sup> U.S. Senate Committee on the Budget established by the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974. This committee was to draft the Congressional budget, does not make law, but passes concurrent resolutions on the budget setting standing committee spending limits for later years. Sets the blueprint that other committees, like Finance and Appropriations, actually enact. Fenno, *The Emergence of a Senate Leader*, 51-2.

<sup>62</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, *History of Agricultural Price-Support and Adjustment Programs, 1933-84: Background for 1985 Farm Legislation*, Agriculture Information Bulletin 485, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1984), 36.

<sup>63</sup> Ruth R. Harkin and Thomas R. Harkin, “Roosevelt to Reagan’ Commodity Programs and the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981,” *Drake Law Review* 31, no. 3 (1982): 509.

<sup>64</sup> Maney, *Still Hungry after All These Years*, 134.

Rico.<sup>65</sup> The change in the income eligibility standard alone was predicted to knock 400,000 households from the program, saving \$275 million – or \$22 per person per month.<sup>66</sup>

In the food stamp program, expenditures fell from \$11.2 to \$10.8 billion between 1981 and 1982 while average monthly participation in the FSP declined from a peak of 22.4 million in 1981 to 21.6 million by 1983. These figures were surprising because unemployment rose from 6.5% to over 10% in these two years, marking the only time food stamps have not served as a countercyclical spending measure to combat a recession in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>67</sup> Reports from across the country spoke of a rampant rise in hunger in the early 1980s stemming from recession, but exacerbated by the Reagan administration's 16% cut to the food stamp budget in 1980. Additionally, this new class of the working poor complicated the racialized and gendered notions of hunger. Hunger was tolerable among women and children on welfare, but as soup lines became “as one nun put it... ‘whiter, younger, and more obviously full of former workers’,” media and politicians began to pay more attention to the problem.<sup>68</sup>

The *New York Times* opinion pages by 1983 described a new class of the poor, “Many [emergency welfare] centers, which once served mainly the 'hard-core poor' and people hit by emergencies, also report that they are now serving many people who were making it financially just a short time ago, but who are now out of work.”<sup>69</sup> After being “perplexed” by accounts of

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<sup>65</sup> “Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981,” [http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pl\\_97-35.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pl_97-35.pdf).

<sup>66</sup> “Alert- Reagan Budget Cuts,” Food Research Action Center, 19 February 1981; Records of the Center for Poverty Studies, Series I, Box 6A, Folder “FS Hist/ Fed Budget Cut Effects,” University of Baltimore Langsdale Library.

<sup>67</sup> “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation and Costs,” <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pd/SNAPsummary.pdf>; Mike Shedlock, “The Food Stamp Recession,” *Finance.townhall.com*, accessed April 14, 2014, [http://finance.townhall.com/columnists/mikeshedlock/2011/12/08/the\\_food\\_stamp\\_recession](http://finance.townhall.com/columnists/mikeshedlock/2011/12/08/the_food_stamp_recession).

<sup>68</sup> “Hunger and the Media,” Food Research Action Council, May 1984.

<sup>69</sup> Leon E. Panetta Committee., California Democrat Leon E. Panetta, and nutrition of the House Agriculture, “Feeding Our Hungry: [op-Ed],” *New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast)*, September 23, 1983, sec. A. See also Janet Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity*, 3-4.



rising hunger in the aftermath of his administration's cuts to food stamp and other nutrition programs, Reagan called together a task force on food assistance. But the conclusions of this task force gave many anti-hunger advocates pause.<sup>70</sup> "What blind luck!" explained a sarcastic opinion piece upon the release of the report, the task force recommendations "distinctly resemble President Reagan's earlier proposals for block grant distribution of food and nutrition programs."<sup>71</sup> However, continued accounts of rising hunger did push the President to act in other ways. Instead of providing more funds for public food programs that helped individuals purchase groceries, the administration channeled money into what had been the shrinking sector of commodity distribution.

### **Distributing Commodities: The Special Dairy Distribution Program (SDDP) and Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)**

In an executive order just before Christmas 1981, Reagan authorized the distribution of 30 million pounds of government owned cheese to the needy. Reagan pushed for cheese to be distributed by charitable and non-profit organizations creating a new configuration of public and private organizations taking part in food assistance. The cheese was to be distributed from the Commodity Credit Corporation to the states through nonprofit organizations, like soup kitchens

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<sup>70</sup> The task force also followed some pretty questionable practices. For one, the task force never met in full. Instead, members were brought to Washington independently to express their views to staff because had there been a quorum of members, they would have been subject to a law that would require them to transact business in public. They also only had one day to review the final report before it was made public. See "Hunger and the Media," Food Research Action Council, May 1984, 14-15. And the committee was stacked with members who had little experience with hunger, including J. Clayburn La Force, a Heritage Foundation scholar and member of the Mont Pelerin Society, and Midge Decter, executive director of an anti-communist think tank and wife of Norman Podhoretz. See Robert Pear, Special To The New York Times, "U.S. Hunger on the Rise Despite Swelling of Food Surpluses," *The New York Times*, July 19, 1983, sec. U.S., <http://www.nytimes.com/1983/07/19/us/us-hunger-on-rise-despite-swelling-of-food-surpluses.html>.

<sup>71</sup> Unattributed article in the *Miami Herald*. Cited in "Hunger and the Media," Food Research Action Council, May 1984, 20.

and food banks.<sup>72</sup> This program, which came to be called the Special Dairy Distribution Program (SDDP), had been piloted one month earlier through three Second Harvest affiliated food banks.<sup>73</sup> After the successful pilot program, most network food banks took part in the distribution beginning in December. With cheese still pouring government into storehouses in early 1982, Reagan announced another 70 million pounds of cheese be distributed in that February.

At first, this program seemed an ideal, and novel, way to make use of U.S. surplus food by providing it to those most in need. However, commodity distribution was nothing new in the U.S. experience. The first commodity distribution programs emerged in the midst of the Great Depression. This program became necessary due to two factors: first, an agricultural glut that depressed the price of crops so significantly that farmers did not want to use the resources to bring them to market, and second, a lack of consumer demand to purchase food, even at low prices. Beginning in 1933, surplus agricultural commodities were distributed to state agencies that then distributed them as they saw fit. Some states chose to partner with local welfare organizations while others gave food directly to individuals. Surplus commodity distribution was not without problems; the most pressing issues being the control local administrators had over distribution and the fact that surplus goods could only be distributed when there was a surplus. During times of environmental or market disruption, food providers that had come to rely on surplus commodities were left without food to distribute.<sup>74</sup> And when there was adequate supplies of surplus, local administrators could decide to not use the funds allocated to them to purchase it.<sup>75</sup> In addition, states and localities could set their own eligibility standards, so long as

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<sup>72</sup> Ronald Reagan, "Statement about Distribution of the Cheese Inventory of the Commodity Credit Corporation," Dec. 22, 1981. <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1981/122281c.htm>

<sup>73</sup> "Second Harvest National Foodbank Network: 1981 Annual Report," p4, Dole Senate Papers - Legislative, Box 142, Folder 3, Robert J. Dole Archive and Special Collections, University of Kansas.

<sup>74</sup> Poppendieck, *Breadlines Knee-Deep in Wheat*, xiv.

<sup>75</sup> Poppendieck, *Breadlines Knee-Deep in Wheat*, 219.

they were consistent with public assistance standards, leaving wide latitude for local discrimination in food distribution.<sup>76</sup> Commodity distribution continued without much change from 1933 through the early 1970s, but this program was not known for its generous benefits. On average in the 1950s, individuals received \$2.20/ month in benefits, equivalent to \$20 in 2014 dollars, and were only provided a few, select commodities like flour, lard, sugar, and beans.<sup>77</sup> However, with the mandate that every county participate in the food stamp program completed by 1974, funds for commodity distribution were to be ended at some point in 1974. Switching to the food stamp program would solve perennial problems associated with distributing commodities: problems in administration, storage, and distribution. By 1974, only 2.5 to 3 million people received commodities in 400 different counties, compared to the more than 12.5 million people participating in the FSP.<sup>78</sup> It seemed that commodity distribution would be shortly replaced by the more generous, and efficient, food stamp program. Instead of delivering goods to households they could purchase most any food they liked using coupons at their local grocer. But the dairy distribution beginning in 1981 complicates this story.

The SDDP was not without precedent, but it harkened back to an earlier era of inadequate and unequal food aid. And this dairy distribution was not merely a program of good will that the President enacted to empower private initiatives to do more to help the poor, although it did fit into his the conservative ideology of relying on charity to meet the needs of the poor. Much like early commodity programs, which were designed primarily to draw down stores of surplus

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<sup>76</sup> Joe Richardson, "Background on the Termination of the Food (Commodity) Distribution Program for Needy Families and Individuals," 30 November 1973; CRS Publication 73-195 ED, 2.

<sup>77</sup> Jeffrey M Berry, *Feeding Hungry People: Rulemaking in the Food Stamp Program* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1984), 24.

<sup>78</sup> Joe Richardson, "Background on the Termination of the Food (Commodity) Distribution Program for Needy Families and Individuals," 30 November 1973; CRS Publication 73-195 ED, 3.

commodities, the SDDP served a producerist interest while secondarily getting food to the hungry.<sup>79</sup>

Throughout 1980 and 1981, growing stores of government-owned surplus crops were filling storehouses. This was the result of changes in domestic and global commodity markets. Increasing food production overseas coupled with the rising relative cost of the dollar meant a smaller export market for American farm goods. Dairy products in particular had high target prices, making them more expensive to consumers, at the same moment as research on the impact of fats in milk and cheese led to declining dairy consumption. This confluence of factors during the late 1970s and early 1980s led to soaring stocks of surplus dairy.<sup>80</sup> Total dairy inventories had climbed from 705 million pounds in 1979 to 2 billion pounds in 1981.<sup>81</sup> In 1979, the Government spent \$1.3 billion to purchase, transport, and store dairy products.<sup>82</sup> Unlike other price-supported crops, such as wheat, these surpluses were expensive to store since they required refrigeration and even when properly stored had a far shorter shelf life. Storage costs alone averaged \$11 million annually from 1977-1980, but had risen to \$24 million for the first 9 months of 1981.<sup>83</sup> By the end of 1981, over 560 million pounds of cheese had already been

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<sup>79</sup> Expand here on Kingdon, solution finding a problem.

<sup>80</sup> The form of farm supports has varied since commodity supports began in 1933. At first, supported crops only included basic field crops, like feed grains, cotton, rice, and peanuts. In 1948, a dairy title was added to the Farm Bill. At first, these supports took the form of price supports and production controls. But following WWII, income supports replaced these. Congress began making direct payments to farmers to make up the difference between a low market price and some 'target price' set in the farm bill. The dairy lobby in particular has remained very vocal about this target price, also called parity, requesting since the 1940s that it be set at 100% of cost to guarantee the don't lose money. Congress has often ended up setting dairy supports at 80-90% parity, much to the chagrin of farmers. See David Rapp, *How the U.S. Got Into Agriculture and Why It Can't Get Out* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1988), 10-14.

<sup>81</sup> Ending Inventories of Dairy Products, FY 1979-1983 (through first quarter), Box 483, File 2, Date 1983, Subject Heading 200 Panetta Administration Papers, Leon Panetta Institute. Fix citation

<sup>82</sup> AP, "As Big Dairy Surplus Grows, so Do U.s. Wishes to Shed It," *New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast)*; *New York, N.Y.*, October 4, 1981, sec. A.

<sup>83</sup> GAO Report to Don J. Pease, "Storage Cost Data on CCC-Owned Dairy Commodities (CED-81-157)," September 18, 1981, 1.

consigned to warehouses. Concerns over storage costs and led Reagan to explain, “more distributions may be necessary as we continue our drive to root out waste in government and make the best possible use of our nation's resources.”<sup>84</sup> Ideally, the government would not have to purchase these products, if the price to consumers fell or if the farm supports were lowered.<sup>85</sup> With the 1981 Farm Bill in the works, Reagan and his Secretary of Agriculture, John R. Block, were lobbying hard to lower farm prices supports and eventually lower stores, negating the need for a surplus distribution program. But these changes would take time, so in the short term, distribution to use in emergency feeding operations was the fastest way to draw down stores.

Despite these initial efforts distributing cheese in late 1981 through 1982, neither the problem of surplus stores nor domestic hunger was any closer to being solved. To codify a more permanent solution to too growing levels of government owned commodities coupled with persistent hunger, Senator Bob Dole (R-KS) proposed the Domestic Commodity Distribution and Food Assistance Bill (S. 17) on the first day of the legislative session in 1983. The bill proposed to make surplus commodities available to food banks, soup kitchens, churches, and other nonprofit charitable organizations, obviously in line with the precedent of Reagan’s cheese distribution. But in addition, this bill would prohibit states, which were responsible for distributing commodities to eligible organizations, from charging administrative costs to these organizations which up to half of them did. The federal government might even pick up 50% of that tab.<sup>86</sup> The Congressional Budget Office cost estimates for this program were very modest, if

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<sup>84</sup> “ Ronald Reagan, “Statement about Distribution of the Cheese Inventory of the Commodity Credit Corporation.”

<sup>85</sup> But REALLY strong dairy lobby made this unlikely.

<sup>86</sup> Dole “Dear Colleague” Letter, S. 17, 17 February 1983; Senate Papers- Legislative Assistants Bolton Nutritoin, Box 135, Folder 6, Robert J. Dole Archive and Special Collections, University of Kansas.

the Act went into effect in July, program costs for 1983 would be only \$61 million, rising to \$103 million in 1984.<sup>87</sup>

In advance of proposing this legislation, Senator Dole held hearings before the Nutrition Subcommittee in February, and been in touch with charitable food providers even earlier. Jack Ramsey, executive director of Second Harvest, voiced concern about this program. Ramsey, along with other Second Harvest food bank directors, was worried that increasing commodity distribution to “pave the way” for additional cutbacks in the food stamp program. While Senator Dole was quite clear that that was not his intention, Ramsey feared, “there are others in the Senate who could well take advantage of Senator Dole’s good intentions and use the increased commodities as an argument to win additional cuts in the food stamp program – a program already crippled in terms of intended effectiveness.”<sup>88</sup> Even with these words of caution, the idea for an expanded commodity distribution gained popularity in Congress, and the majority of its provisions were folded into the Emergency Jobs Bill (P.L. 98-8) in early March.

Congress enacted the Emergency Jobs Bill in March 1983, including Title III, the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Act (TEFAA), creating the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). This authorized nine months of spending to distribute surplus crops to certified emergency feeding organizations. Similar to Reagan’s initial dairy distribution, TEFAP’s goal was to direct commodities declared in surplus to “emergency feeding organizations” (EFOs) and was intended as a one-time distribution. In contrast to the SDDP, TEFAP included increased administrative hurdles, primarily accounting that every single recipient meet national eligibility requirements for the program. TEFAP administrators had to

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<sup>87</sup> Memo, Mary Ann Curtin CBO to John Gordley and Christina Bolton, Dole Legislative Assistants; Senate Papers- Legislative Assistants Bolton Nutrition, Box 135, Folder 7, Robert J. Dole Archive and Special Collections, University of Kansas.

<sup>88</sup> Jack Ramsey to Christina Bolton, 13 January 1983, Dole Senate Papers - Legislative, Box 142, Folder 1, Robert J. Dole Archive and Special Collections, University of Kansas.

meet another hurdle, too. While the USDA is required to *consider* the impact on commercial markets whenever it makes commodities available. However, TEFAP was the only program by 1983 where there was specific language in the bill ensuring that donations of commodities would not displace commercial sales.<sup>89</sup> And based on reports of commercial displacement under the earlier dairy distribution, TEFAP limited monthly donations of cheese to 35 million pounds of cheese and butter to 12 million pounds.<sup>90</sup>

News of the smaller dairy distributions did not sit well with the public. 20 members of the Community for Creative Non-Violence began fasting outside government dairy caves in Kansas City, MO, beginning on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1983. Their goal was to bring attention to the dairy sitting in these caves, undistributed, and get it to people who needed it, regardless of whether or not it interfered with dairy sales.<sup>91</sup> These protesters were in effect saying that relying on the market to distribute goods to the poor was not an adequate solution to deal with hunger. Back in Baltimore, TEFAP foods were to be distributed through the MFB. This “one-time windfall” of cans of vegetables, fruits, and meat products were to be made available to soup kitchens and emergency shelters. Since the Maryland Food Bank already was in touch with 95% of soup kitchens in the state, it was decided that the food should be routed through them.<sup>92</sup> The 1983 director’s report also showed that in July, the food bank had distributed close to 250,000 pounds of food. A section titled “Ann’s Kitchen” described food the MFB purchased with funds

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<sup>89</sup> “A Study of the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP),” prepared by Quality Planning Corporation and Abel, Daft, & Earley, pg. I-5; Records of Food and Nutrition Services, Record Group 462; National Archives Building, College Park, MD.

<sup>90</sup> “A Study of the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP),” prepared by Quality Planning Corporation and Abel, Daft, & Earley, pg. I-5; Records of Food and Nutrition Services, Record Group 462; National Archives Building, College Park, MD.

<sup>91</sup> “20 on Fast to Release Extra Food,” *The New York Times*, July 19, 1983, pg. B7.

<sup>92</sup> Maryland Food Bank Director’s Report July 1983, 9 September 1983; Records of the Maryland Food Bank, Series II, Box 1, Folder “Board General 1979-83;” University of Baltimore Langsdale Library Special Collections. This also talks about FEMA food allocated under the same Bill, Emergency Jobs Bill, need to figure out exactly what this is.

from the Emergency Jobs Bill would provide enough three-day grocery bags to supply 9329 families. However, Ann cautioned that these commodities were only a short-term windfall and more sustained donations were necessary, “we hope that the upturn in the economy will make some of this unnecessary,” but increased need has meant that donated food has to stretch further.<sup>93</sup> Demonstrating just how much need there was in Baltimore alone, in the Maryland Food Bank’s first month in July 1979, it had distributed 30,000 pounds of food. By September 1983, distribution had grown to 220,000 pounds.<sup>94</sup> But still, this effort and many like it around the country were not enough to solve the problem of hunger.<sup>95</sup>

In September of 1983, TEFAA was amended and authorized for two more years as part of the Federal Supplemental Compensation Act of 1983 (P.L. 98-92). This extended the program until 1985 and made changes in the way distributing organizations would be reimbursed for delivering surplus commodities. TEFAP provided a convenient solution to the complex problems of farm surplus and hunger, drawing down surplus while distributing it to those in need, primarily through non-profits. However, extending this program did not mean that the administration was claiming responsibility to feed the poor. Robert Carleson, Reagan’s policy assistant on welfare, noted that continued demand at food banks and soup kitchens was not a sign of increased hunger. In a draft memo including potential questions and answers for the President when announcing the Task Force on Food Assistance in July 1983, Carleson included language carefully crafted to deflect blame from the administration: “Q: Aren’t the long lines at the free

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<sup>93</sup> Maryland Foodbank Notes, September 1983; Maryland Food Bank Records, Series 2, Box 2, Folder “General, 1979-1986;” University of Baltimore Langsdale Library Special Collections.

<sup>94</sup> Pounds Distributed by MFB- Baltimore, July 1979- June 1982; Maryland Food Bank Records, Series II, Box 1, Folder “Board General 1979-83;” University of Baltimore Langsdale Library Special Collections.

<sup>95</sup> Robert Pear, Special To The New York Times, “U.S. Hunger on the Rise Despite Swelling of Food Surpluses,” *The New York Times*, July 19, 1983, sec. U.S., <http://www.nytimes.com/1983/07/19/us/us-hunger-on-rise-despite-swelling-of-food-surpluses.html>.



food distribution centers a sign of widespread hunger? A: I don't know. A good share of the people in the lines, I'm sure, have no other alternatives. But for others, I imagine, the lure of free food may be offer too good to resist."<sup>96</sup> Edwin Meese, another counselor to the President expressed similar sentiments in late 1983. When asked by reporters why folks were still going to soup kitchens over the holidays he replied that the President was spending more on food assistance than any President in history and that allegations of hunger were "purely political."<sup>97</sup> The administration was willing to superficially study the problems of hunger and malnutrition, but not able to draw any meaningful conclusions about those studies, even in the face of what seemed to be overwhelming evidence to the contrary of their findings.

### **Limits of Voluntarism**

The Task Force on Food Assistance championed the services of private food assistance through soup kitchens, food banks, and food pantries, which served as "models of compassion and efficiency."<sup>98</sup> The food stamp program, they reasoned, could not possibly meet the diverse client needs of the hungry, therefore more efforts needed to be made through private, localized responses. They also suggested block granting the FSP, or at least providing states with more authority and discretion in administering the program while at the same time increasing penalties for fraud and abuse, something the task force declared a rampant issue.<sup>99</sup> And in some aspects, the turn to emergency food was working and bringing out the best in communities as well as the

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<sup>96</sup> Memo, Robert V. Carleson and Kevin R. Hopkins to Edwin Meese, July 20, 1983, folder "Hunger (3 of 4)" box OA 9594, Robert Carleson Files, Ronald Reagan Library, 4.

<sup>97</sup> Robert D. McFadden, "Comments by Meese on Hunger Produce a Storm of Controversy," *New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast)*, December 10, 1983, sec. 1.

<sup>98</sup> United States and President's Task Force on Food Assistance, *Report of the President's Task Force on Food Assistance*, 29.

<sup>99</sup> Two years earlier, it was mandated that all stores display a sign with information on how to report abuses they saw in the FSP (PL 97-98, 1981 Ag Act, Title XIII, Section 1314 amending Section 9(c) of the FSA of 1977).

businesses that supported food banking. For example, the American Trucking Association in 1982 took it upon itself to conduct a survey of motor carriers to see which of them would be willing to truck food to food banks in their regions, either for free or at a reduced rate. A carrier in Maryland, Preston Trucking Co., it was reported was already working with the Maryland Food Bank to transport a half trailer load of food weekly from the main food bank to a new, satellite of the MFB in Salisbury, Md. As Bill Ewing, who succeeded Ann Miller as Director of the MFB noted, “It’s goodness on the part of the people that makes this program a success.”<sup>100</sup> Grocery chains and large food manufacturers were fast becoming big donors to food banks nationally.<sup>101</sup>

Behind this ‘win-win’ picture of food banking portrayed by the Task Force on Food Assistance and in accounts of corporate benevolence, were signs that the attack on hunger was less compassionate. *Newsweek* conjectured that the 1983 Task Force on Food Assistance was merely a way to manage “a campaign vulnerability” during an election year. They also described how the administration concealed the task force from important Senators like Bob Dole, the chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Nutrition.<sup>102</sup> He first learned about it from a television announcement signaling that nutrition experts and advocates both within and outside government would likely be excluded from the administration’s look into problems of hunger. In addition to drawing on the good in people and in corporations, companies were effectively compensated for donating their products to food banks. Thanks to reforms to the tax code in 1976, companies donating food would receive a substantial tax break. Food producers making in-kind donations to charitable organizations could deduct 100 percent of the cost plus 50 percent of the appreciated

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<sup>100</sup> Barbara Kinney, “Hauling for Food Banks, Carriers Harvest Good Will,” *Transport Topics*, 7 June 1982; Records of the Maryland Food Bank, Series II, Box 2, Folder “General (1987-1989),” University of Baltimore Langsdale Library. IMG\_0794 in 2.22.16 folder.

<sup>101</sup> MFB sources on partnership with Giant Stores, Seattle on program with Safeway.

<sup>102</sup> “The Hunger Commission’s Near Miss,” *Newsweek*, August 15, 1983, 15.

value of the foodstuff from their taxes, up to 5 percent of their annual income.<sup>103</sup> In effect, companies were still making a profit on donating food by covering all costs of production plus half of the remaining value of the items they donated, which would count against tax liabilities come the end of the year.

In many ways, as described in the origin stories for Second Harvest and the Maryland Food Bank, these institutions were not merely the coalescing of voluntary forces. While volunteer and charitable action were a large part of the success of early food banks, equally important to this committed group of individuals coming together to end hunger in their community was the role of public money, in the forms of both grants and loans, that made the growth of food banks possible. St. Mary's Food Bank in Phoenix likely would not have become the starting point for Second Harvest had it not been for an initial Community Services Administration grant and continued funding from this federal program until its demise in 1983. In all, the CSA provided \$1.4 million in grants to Second Harvest.<sup>104</sup> The same goes for the Maryland Food Bank, which received Urban Services Grants, CETA and WIN workers, and a Community Development Block Grant in 1980. These public funding sources were key to getting food banks off the ground, but not sufficient to ensuring they remained in operation. Tenacious staff and patrons were another key ingredient in early food banking. As one board member of the Maryland Food Bank put it, the organization was only able to thrive because of the skill of its founding director. Ann Miller had the necessary skills to keep the operation running, "Unquestionably, the driving force behind the food bank has been the ability of Ann

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<sup>103</sup> Andrea Pawlyna, "Food donations 'banked' for needy," *The Baltimore Sun*, November 23, 1980, p. T1. See also "Tax Benefits Resulting from Charitable Contributions of Certain Inventory Items" Report from Price Waterhouse and Co., 9 March 1981; Records of the Maryland Food Bank, Series VII, Box 5, Folder "Maryland Food Bank," University of Baltimore Langsdale Library.

<sup>104</sup> Jeffrey H. Birnbaum "Bitter Harvest: Charity That Delivers Surplus Food to Needy Is Split by Accusations," *Wall Street Journal*; *New York, N.Y.*, October 25, 1982, sec. 1.

Miller to run the food bank as efficiently as a well managed private company. Her organizational ability and management capabilities would be the envy of many in the private sector.”<sup>105</sup>

Accounts on the achievements of voluntarism ignore the herculean efforts undertaken by Ann Miller and others like her. When the Task Force on Food Assistance heralded the ability of food banks to continue to do more to help the poor, its members were erasing the work these organizations had to do just to stay afloat. Surplus distribution programs were shifting and hiding the costs of ‘free’ provision, with the sheer dispersion of the system allowing these costs to shift from direct government expenses to invisible costs of time, energy, and efforts from a huge volunteer network, poorly paid staff, and corporate donations that made up the emergency food network.

In addition to the work necessary to keep the emergency food system up and running, there were many problems with distribution that ultimately hurt the people who relied on food banks. For one, there was a lot of uncertainty around what kinds of products a food bank would have at any given time. Ann Miller described this drawback in late 1980, “the Maryland Food Bank can never guarantee that it will have certain foods on hand. Hamburger buns may arrive today and tonic water tomorrow.”<sup>106</sup> The food bank worked hard to provide ideas for what to do with certain products. For example, along with the 5-pound blocks of cheese distributed under the SDDP, the food bank gave out recipe cards for cheese loaf and tomato and cheese soup.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Irv Rubenstein (MFB board members), “Letter to the Editor: The Food Bank,” *The Baltimore Sun*, December 13, 1980, p.A19.

<sup>106</sup> Andrea Pawlyna, “Food donations ‘banked’ for needy,” *The Baltimore Sun*, November 23, 1980, p. T1.

<sup>107</sup> “Facts About Pasteurized Process American Cheese,” n.d.; Records of the Maryland Food Bank, Series X, Box 179, no folder; University of Baltimore Langsdale Library. My favorite note on here is, “if you are on a low-fat or low-salt diet, you may want to limit the amount of process cheese you eat in a day.”

Linked to the uncertainty of supply, there were also problems in providing nutritious food. In a Congressional hearing on hunger and malnutrition shortly after TEFAP passed Congress, Sister Marilyn Therese Rudy of St. Joseph Center in Venice, California described:

We participate in the federal processed cheese and butter surplus program. We would ask that the Federal government not use the poor to alleviate its conscience. It appears that the surplus program so far has not been established to help people's nutrition but rather to cover an embarrassing governmental secret. The cost of keeping the subsidized products stored opened the door to distribute this surplus. However, the cheese has caused blood pressure problems for senior citizens. We need nutritional food for each person, old and young... We ask for quality food.<sup>108</sup>

In addition to health complications stemming from government dairy distributions, the Second Harvest network found the logistics of distribution "less than satisfactory from several standpoints." First, there were no provisions to cover administrative costs for local distribution, and second, the quality of distribution varied widely from state to state.<sup>109</sup> While some states, like Maryland, had a strong food bank that, as noted earlier, had the reach to supply 95% of soup kitchens in the state, there were other states without a Second Harvest network bank, and hence did not have the program know-how or expertise to make use of programs like the subsidized dairy giveaway. And just a short time later, in the spring of 1985, the Maryland Food Bank withdrew from TEFAP due to changes in auditing requirements that were too onerous for its primarily volunteer staff to comply with.<sup>110</sup>

Changes at Second Harvest headquarters in Phoenix left founder of the network, John van Hengel, behind. A rift grew between the early founders of St. Mary's and more business-oriented staff working within Second Harvest, which some speculate led Van Hengel to quit in

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<sup>108</sup> Testimony, Hearing on the Issues of Hunger and Malnutrition, Presented by Sister Marilyn Therese Rudy, C.S.J., April 30, 1983; Box 483 Hunger, File 2, Date 1983, Subject Heading 200 Panetta Administration Papers, Leon Panetta Institute.

<sup>109</sup> Jack Ramsey to Christina Bolton, 13 January 1983, Dole Senate Papers - Legislative, Box 142, Folder 1, Robert J. Dole Archive and Special Collections, University of Kansas.

<sup>110</sup> "The problem was paperwork," *The Baltimore Sun*, 25 March 1984, pg K2.

1982. Although he has never personally told the story of why, reports from around his departure describe that he felt Second Harvest served big business needs over those of the hungry. In the early 1980s, there were allegations that major food manufacturing companies were attempting to control the distribution of their products so they would be eligible for the maximum tax benefits.<sup>111</sup> The other side of this debate posits that van Hengel poorly managed the network. A Community Services Administration performance study cited shoddy management and recommended any future federal funding be made contingent on van Hengel's being removed from the executive director post.<sup>112</sup> This dispute led St. Mary's Food Bank in Phoenix to withdraw from the Second Harvest Network, and van Hengel to found Foodbanking, Inc., which advocated for grassroots food banking domestically and abroad.

Most broadly the, emergency designation changed the way the nation thought about getting food to the hungry, shifting ideas of responsibility from public to private programs. TEFAP recipient organizations were defined as agencies providing "nutrition assistance to relieve situations of emergency and distress through the provision of food to needy persons, including low-income and unemployed persons."<sup>113</sup> So this program, that was serving legions of the new poor, explicitly stated it was only to serve those who were suffering in 'emergency' situations. Hunger was a temporary problem to be met with emergency measures, not a sign of systemic failure of the larger political economy to provide households with enough money to buy food. Emergency feeding operations were also stretched for resources. A Government Accounting Office Report noted the severity of the problem of limited funds at the 33 emergency

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<sup>111</sup> Marina Dundjerski, "Food Banks' Creator Leads a Quiet Life Apart from the Network He Established," *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, March 23, 1996, p46; in Series 2 Box 402, loose in box, Papers of the Maryland Food Bank, Langsdale Library, University of Baltimore.

<sup>112</sup> Jeffrey H. Birnbaum "Bitter Harvest: Charity That Delivers Surplus Food to Needy Is Split by Accusations," *Wall Street Journal; New York, N.Y.*, October 25, 1982, sec. 1.

<sup>113</sup> Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983, Section 201A.3, 201A.4.

food centers consulted. The rising need far outpaced these organizations ability to respond, more could be done if there was more money for collecting, processing, and distributing food, along with money for, “at least, a core of paid staffers adept at getting the most out of very limited resources.”<sup>114</sup> Echoing this report a few years later, political scientists Michael Lipsky and Steven Smith explored the meaning of huge increases in emergency services in the context of social policy broadly.<sup>115</sup> They argue that the whether someone needs police protection or annual medical checkups depends on the social consensus about the need.<sup>116</sup> If the administration successfully redefined hunger as an emergency, then emergency provision of food would seem to fit that need. Reagan asked small, local, and grassroots private organizations to fill in a huge public need. This led to large burdens on emergency food providers; instead of serving as a supplement to a robust public system, they were the only source of aid for some, and a second-class substitute for inadequate assistance to others.

As Janet Poppendieck, a prominent historian of food programs notes, “The growth of the emergency food phenomenon did not do away with the major public programs that had developed in the earlier decades, but it transformed the dominant image of anti-hunger activity

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<sup>114</sup> United States General Accounting Office, *Public and Private Efforts to Feed America's Poor: Report to the Honorable Dennis E. Eckart, House of Representatives* (U.S. G.P.O., 1983). In folder "Hunger (4 of 4)" box OA 9594, Robert Carleson Files, Ronald Reagan Library.

<sup>115</sup> For a discussion of how charity displaces public aid by calling things emergencies see, Michael Lipsky and Steven Rathgeb Smith. “When Social Problems Are Treated as Emergencies,” *Social Service Review* 63, no. 1 (March 1, 1989): 5–25. This paper points to three key criteria in labeling something an emergency: 1) claims by a group that they confront life-threatening circumstances, 2) ambiguous eligibility criteria, leading to 3) uncertain size of potential beneficiary pool. These three conditions were met by the hunger crisis of the early 1980s. For the inadequacies of emergency responses in food provision see Janet Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity?: Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement*, (New York: Penguin, 1999). Former President Harry Truman expressed a similar sentiment in his joint signing statement with President Johnson on Medicare/ Medicaid; “Not one of these, our citizens, should ever be abandoned to the indignity of charity. Charity is indignity when you have to have it. But we don't want these people to have anything to do with charity and we don't want them to have any idea of hopeless despair.” Lyndon B. Johnson: "Remarks With President Truman at the Signing in Independence of the Medicare Bill.," July 30, 1965. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=27123>.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

from lobbying and budget politics to charity and donation, from food as a right to food as a gift.”<sup>117</sup> She argues that hunger was depoliticized, and that it “became detached from issues of rights and entitlements and taxes and fairness, and became attached instead to canned goods drives, walk-a-thons, food festivals and corporate public relations.”<sup>118</sup> While I agree with this characterization of the shift in visibility around hunger, I would add to this that instead of depoliticizing hunger, it was *repoliticized* as within the bounds of moral and individual activity, all while it was quietly subsidized by public funds. The submersion of public money behind private organizations delegitimized claims for the national state to take responsibility for hunger, primarily through public food programs. In this way, hunger was recast as an emergency to be met through irregular funding for this temporary problem.

### **Transatlantic Discussions of Privatization**

While the public image, if not totally the distribution system, of food assistance was privatized in the U.S. during the early 1980s, policymakers and the public in Britain experienced a similar rethinking of the role of private charity in relation to public sector welfare provision. The nation experienced similar economic challenges, entering a recession in 1980 where unemployment rose from 5% in 1979 to 12.5% by 1983.<sup>119</sup> Some compared these changes in the economy to an earlier period of recession during the ‘Hungry ‘30s.’ But one news account pointed out that much like the 1980s, the 1930s was a moment when there were two distinct experiences in Britain: one of record unemployment, hunger, and deprivation in the industrial regions of Scotland, Wales, and northern England, compared to peaceful middle-class

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<sup>117</sup> Janet Poppendieck, “The USA: Hunger in the Land of Plenty,” in *First World Hunger* ed. Graham Riches, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 138.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Paul Pierson, *Dismantling the Welfare State?: Reagan, Thatcher, and the Politics of Retrenchment*, (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 105.



suburbanization elsewhere.<sup>120</sup> It was within these two Britains, much like the U.S. and the hidden paradox of hunger amidst plenty, that debates emerged over the role and place of the voluntary sector. Contemporary discussions of public/ private partnerships are often discussed as stemming from the Wolfenden Report, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust and findings published in 1978. But there were a number of earlier studies, including the Jellicoe Committee report of 1971, which explored the possibility of integrating the voluntary sector with state services to provide a broader coverage of social needs.

The Conservative government in the early 1970s voiced support for voluntary social service work. Prime Minister Edward Heath gave a speech to the National Council of Social Services, saying his government was, “committed to releasing the energy and enterprise of men and women so that they can build a better life for themselves, their families and their community as a whole,” and that voluntary action enriched, “the very life of the nation.” Additionally, Heath reaffirmed the role of the state in relation to voluntary action, “Of course, the State has an obligation to provide the framework and the basic standards of social care in our society. There is no getting away from that. There is no shifting of responsibilities here.”<sup>121</sup> Unlike later calls for voluntary action, Heath’s words show that the state and voluntary action were meant to work in partnership. In this speech, Heath estimated that the government had contributed £2.5 million to voluntary social services in 1971-72, and pledged £3.5 million for the next year with an additional £3.5 million to spend between by 1975-76.<sup>122</sup> While this would double total

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<sup>120</sup> Leonard Downie Jr Washington Post Foreign Service, “‘30s Are Much on Britain’s Mind: Some Britons Recall ‘30s Fondly,” *The Washington Post* (1974-Current File); *Washington, D.C.*, May 9, 1980.

<sup>121</sup> Speech, P.M. Edward Heath at the Annual General Meeting of the National Council of Social Service, Senate House, University of London, 8 December 1971, pp 1-2; The National Archives of the UK (TNA): PREM 15/1609.

<sup>122</sup> Speech, P.M. Edward Heath at the Annual General Meeting of the National Council of Social Service, Senate House, University of London, 8 December 1971, p 3; The National Archives of the UK (TNA): PREM 15/1609.

government spending on voluntary organizations by 1976, this pales in comparison to the almost \$1.7 billion in federal contracts with charitable and voluntary providers in the U.S. by 1972.<sup>123</sup> In addition to the idea that the state was obliged to provide a basic minimum for British citizens, the terms over debate over poverty diverged from U.S. norms

In the early 1970s, extensive debates emerged on the issue of the “poverty surtax,” also referred to as marginal tax effects. This was the effect of the total withdrawal of selective or means-tested benefits once an individual or family passed the income eligibility limit for a particular means-tested program. In such a case, a family could be receiving £30/ week in a given benefit, when a small increase in wages (as little as £0.50) pushes them over the benefit threshold. They are then out £29.50 and in addition could be liable for greater income tax and national insurance contributions. An official working party within the Treasury discussed options of dealing with this, by for example changing in kind-benefits like free school meals and free welfare milk, to cash transfers which could be ‘stepped’ as families earned more income. Another proposed solution was to allow for annual benefit eligibility, so small fluctuations in wages throughout the year would not impact a family’s receipt of certain benefits.<sup>124</sup> However, by the latter 1970s these concerns about equity and fairness in welfare programs had transformed into concerns about the size of social spending more generally.

With Conservatives elected in 1980, there was a resurgence in discussions on the role of voluntary organizations. The Home Office Minister of State, Timothy Raison, extolled the virtues of voluntary action when speaking to the York Conference of Councils for Voluntary Service. The government “welcomes unreservedly” the resurgence of the voluntary sector, “In

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<sup>123</sup> Andrew J. F Morris, *The Limits of Voluntarism: Charity and Welfare from the New Deal through the Great Society* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 198-199.

<sup>124</sup> Report by Official Working Party, “Means-Tested Benefits and Wage Earners- Mitigation of Cumulative Withdrawal Effects,” 19 May 1972, pp 1, 6-8; The National Archives of the UK (TNA): MH 156/538.

every sphere we need to roll back the frontiers of the state and liberate the energies of ordinary people... I make no bones about saying that in the present economic climate, your work is going to be more important than ever.”<sup>125</sup> The Director of the National Council of Social Services responded to this idea with skepticism. While she “welcome[d] this appreciation,” from the Conservative government, she also expressed concern at declines in public expenditures. A £44 million cut to the Special Temporary Employment Programme had let some voluntary organizations to fold, while the requirement to ‘pass on’ expenditure reductions from local authorities to the voluntary organizations they contracted with had “severely limited” the work of many.<sup>126</sup> A report from the Liverpool Council for Voluntary Service echoed these concerns, citing fears that the Government saw its election in 1979 as a turning point for welfare services, bringing with new ideas on the appropriate mix of public and private action. The report goes on to note that the Government, “has a very particular view of how it might develop and their notion is definitely not the mixture as before.”<sup>127</sup> In the span of 10 years, Conservatives shifted from declaring the primary role of the state as welfare provider to questioning this arrangement. Margaret Thatcher in the Conservative Manifesto of 1979 declared that “the balance of our society has been increasingly tilted in favour of the State at the expense of individual freedoms”

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<sup>125</sup> “Minister Endorses Voluntary Sector’s Contribution,” Press notice of National Council of Social Service 7 September 1979; London Metropolitan Archives, City of London LMA/4016/IS/A/09/022, Records of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

<sup>126</sup> Letter from Sara Morris, National Council of Social Service Director to State Ministers, 11 January 1980; London Metropolitan Archives, City of London LMA/4016/IS/A/09/031, Records of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

<sup>127</sup> “Developing Local Voluntary Action,” 23 April 1981, Liverpool Council for Voluntary Service; London Metropolitan Archives, City of London LMA/4016/IS/A/09/012(1), Records of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. IMG 5161-5167.

and went on to say that for health and welfare programs in particular, the nation must “encourage the voluntary movement and self-help groups working in partnership with statutory services.”<sup>128</sup>

Along with the changing ideas about the role of voluntary social services in service provision broadly, the Conservative government legislated changes in statutory income support programs. While there were not big cuts to income support programs like insurance benefits and family benefits, changes came instead in the form of, as political scientist Paul Pierson described, ‘death by a thousand cuts.’<sup>129</sup> Similar to the budget mechanisms employed in the U.S., the Thatcher government employed a less visible way to defund these programs by letting inflation cut into the real value of benefits. By slowing the rate of uprating (bringing benefits in line with inflation) or freezing this process altogether, indexation effectively shrunk benefit rates.<sup>130</sup> And in making many slight changes over time to unemployment insurance and child benefit, the Government slowly, but steadily, eroded the value of both of these universal programs. The problem with public cuts given the larger scope of the voluntary sector was, its ability to ‘make do.’ While it “gave parts of the voluntary sector new ammunition against the state,” it ironically, “strengthened its own position as an attractive alternative form of provision” and increasing numbers of statutory programs wrote in a role for the voluntary sector.<sup>131</sup> These public/ private partnerships had shifted in scope from areas of experimentation in service delivery to being a routine way to get public services to the people, and with fewer public funds behind them. Cutting public welfare expenditures along with shifting boundaries of public and private action

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<sup>128</sup> Margaret Thatcher, Speech “Conservative Manifesto, 1979,” 11 April 1979.

<http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/110858>

<sup>129</sup> Paul Pierson, *Dismantling the Welfare State?: Reagan, Thatcher, and the Politics of Retrenchment*, (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 101.

<sup>130</sup> Paul Pierson, *Dismantling the Welfare State?: Reagan, Thatcher, and the Politics of Retrenchment*, (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 108-9.

<sup>131</sup> *Voluntary and Statutory Collaboration: Rhetoric or Reality?* Diana Leat, Gerry Smolka, Judith Unell, p3, 1981; London Metropolitan Archives, City of London LMA/4016/PA/C/01/201, Records of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

in welfare was accompanied by swift privatization of nationalized industries. By the end of 1981, British Petroleum, British Aerospace, and the British Sugar Corporation had all been sold off to private firms. The Thatcher government, upon its reelection in 1983, quickened the pace of privatization, with a key symbol of privatization being British Telecom's sell off in 1984.<sup>132</sup>

## Conclusion

The changing mix of state and private action to meet welfare needs, including food, resonates in Britain today. The first network of food banks opened in 2000. While the Trussell Trust first operated overseas, they began domestic operations in response to rising hunger at home. Recent research on emergency feeding in the UK notes the charitable sector's role in realizing – or hindering – the universal human right to food. Hannah Lambie-Mumford of the Sheffield Political Economy Research Institute describes the state in retreat, “from its duty to respect, protect and fulfill the human right to food and emergency food provision is assuming the responsibility to fulfill this right.” She points to recent welfare reform, notably cuts in social security, the “driving the need for and influencing the shape of emergency food provision.”<sup>133</sup> Much like food stamp cuts and the growth of food banking in the U.S., Lambie-Mumford tracks the close relationship between welfare reform, in the shape of funding cuts, and the rise of food charity. Parliamentary committees have also looked into hunger recently. The 2014 Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry Into Hunger in the United Kingdom sought to find out why so many people had to rely on a food bank in 2014.<sup>134</sup> The recommendations include creating a

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<sup>132</sup> Eric J. Evans, *Thatcher and Thatcherism*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 27

<sup>133</sup> Hannah Lambie-Mumford, “Addressing Food Poverty in the UK: Charity, Rights and Welfare,” Sheffield Political Economy Research Institute (SPERI), 2015, Paper No. 18; 1.

<sup>134</sup> All-Party Parliamentary Groups are similar to Select Committees in Congress in the U.S. They can suggest policy, but have no powers to introduce proposals to the legislature. “A strategy for zero hunger

network called Feeding Britain, perhaps a play on Feeding America, but also recommend the establishment of an Office for Living Standards within the Treasury and inquiries into benefit delays and cuts.

More recently in the U.S., an internal study done by Feeding America found that in 2010, the food bank network provided food to 37 million Americans, an increase of over 46 percent since 2006 when it fed 25 million people.<sup>135</sup> And TEFAP still exists today, routing commodities primarily through the nonprofit sector. In FY 2011, approximately 85% of TEFAP foods were distributed through the Feeding America network.<sup>136</sup> In two of the most prosperous nations on the planet, food shortages do not cause hunger; rather the maldistribution of food through the market is the problem. And the story I've charted here of relying on markets, whether they be agricultural or for voluntarism, demonstrates their inadequacy today to meet the needs of those who are hungry.

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in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland,” The report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger in the United Kingdom.

<sup>135</sup> “The History of Food Banking and Feeding America,” Version – March 29, 2013, 5.

<sup>136</sup> “The History of Food Banking and Feeding America,” Version – March 29, 2013, 3.