Fundamental changes in United States international relief policy have become apparent during the past week. To obtain precise definition of the new policy, Food For Freedom acting with 16 other national organizations (list below) had an interview with Assistant Secretary William L. Clayton July 26, on the eve of his departure for the meeting of the UNRRA Council in Geneva. On August 1, Food For Freedom had an interview with Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson.

The United States international food relief policy now in effect appears to be:

1. UNRRA will terminate in Europe December 31, 1946 and in Asia March 31, 1947.

2. No successor international organization for food relief is needed. (Continuance of such apparatus is deemed inadvisable because it would encourage a "relief attitude" and requests by nations which, with one to three exceptions, can now procure, transport and distribute the necessary imported food. It is conceded that some nations may need money in loans or gifts for food imports.)

3. Money aid for food when and as needed can and will be supplied by individual nations. For this no international action or organization is required and none is desirable.

4. As the premise for United States food relief policy, Secretary Acheson subscribed to Mr. Clayton's statement: "I accept it as axiomatic that the world will not permit the people of any nation to starve as long as there is food enough to go around." Mr. Clayton said this on July 26th.

5. Disapproval of continued international food relief machinery is not to be interpreted as implying reservations regarding the need for the international machinery, which will be devised at the forthcoming FAO conference at Copenhagen to insure equitable distribution of the world's food supplies after the emergency is past.

This definition of policy is at once deeply disturbing and reassuring. It is reassuring in that the State Department has in effect denied a report that UNRRA was being liquidated partly because of a larger conflict among the major Allies.

It is disturbing because the policy as now delineated reverses in this field our support of international cooperative action and proposes to substitute bilateral action which would encourage the development of economic power blocs.

It proposes to go ahead without adequate provision, either national or international, for meeting money and food relief needs that will become apparent late in 1946 and increase in 1947 until the harvests of that year. If it is recognized that permanent international machinery for the distribution of the world's food is necessary, it would appear to be worthwhile to have temporary international machinery ready at hand for use during the intervening emergency period.
Denied assurance of international assistance and lacking practical assurance of aid by individual nations, it will seem to needy countries that the major powers are walking out on their wartime commitments. This feeling will be supported by UNRRA’s estimates that for the next 12 months the European UNRRA countries, in addition to what UNRRA can supply, will need imports costing at least 1 billion dollars. People who are to be adequately fed in the years to come must be kept alive next year.

Therefore, Food For Freedom has proposed to the State Department that the United States Delegation at the Geneva meeting of the UNRRA Council recommend immediate action to establish a United Nations Food Fund Board. Such action is a minimum insurance against widespread hunger in 1947.

A memorandum containing this proposal and supporting argument was presented to Mr. Acheson August 1 by Harold Weston, Executive Director of Food For Freedom, and a copy was dispatched July 31 to Mr. Clayton in Geneva. (Text attached.)

This plan was developed as a result of the interview with Mr. Clayton at which the following 17 organizations were represented:

American Federation of Labor  National Congress of Parents and Teachers
American Friends Service Committee  National Council of Catholic Women
American Legion  National Council of Jewish Women
American Unit for World Government  National Farmers Union
American Veterans Committee  National League of Women Voters
Baptist World Alliance  National Women’s Trade Union League
Food For Freedom  Union for Democratic Action
Jewish Welfare Board  Veterans of Foreign Wars
National Catholic Welfare Conference

It is hoped that all interested organizations willing to endorse this proposal will so inform the Department of State and notify Food For Freedom.

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While the publicity spotlight will probably continue to be turned on United Nations activities in New York during September, organizations interested in food, peace, and significant social progress would do well to keep an eye on events at the Food and Agriculture Organization Conference in Copenhagen, September 2-14. This organization, one of the specialized agencies of the United Nations, called a meeting last May which resulted in replacement of the unsatisfactory Combined Food Board with a new temporary agency (International Emergency Food Council) to handle world food allocations until the United Nations could set up permanent machinery equipped to do the job.

One of the most important developments in United Nations activities in the near future is likely to be the recommendation of FAO's Director General, Sir John Orr, for permanent machinery for handling market-breaking surpluses which occur in some countries at the same time that large-scale famines ravage other parts of the world. While it is still too early to predict what FAO's recommendations will be, we can judge from the discussion at the May meeting of the problems involved. The plan will face squarely up to the need to purchase foods in surplus at prevailing market prices, making them available to needy countries at possibly lower market prices, with some sort of international credit arrangement making up the difference. If such a plan could be put into effect, it would go a long way toward removing fears of market gluts which inhibit food production by farmers in all the big food-producing countries. It would also make extra food available to countries which are unable to produce enough to feed their people, and help rid the world of famine, thereby working to the advantage of both surplus and needy countries.

The importance of food as a world problem is indicated by the place that FAO and its program is commanding in world interest. Forty-two of the United Nations have joined FAO, a number more have indicated a desire to join, and word has now come from the conference headquarters in Copenhagen that sixty nations will be represented at the conference, with non-member countries sending delegates as observers. Total attendance is being limited to 500 though a larger number have expressed the desire to be present.

The Danish Parliament has postponed its opening date two weeks in order to make the Parliament building available to the FAO for its conference.

FAO is not only looking ahead on long-range problems but has actually started work on a specific program. This is the mission of experts recently sent by the FAO to Greece, at the request of the Greek Government. These experts, recruited from several nations, are making a comprehensive study of food, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries problems in Greece, with practical recommendations for steps to be taken to restore food and agricultural industries in that country. The mission will complete its work by the end of July when its members will return to the United States to prepare a final report to the Greek Government.

This is an example of the advantages gained by pooling the knowledge of the most recent technological developments in the food and agricultural fields which will not only lead to a permanent betterment of the standard of living of the people in the country concerned but also through the improved economic status of that country add to the prosperity of other nations.

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The above news release about international food relief policies and comments about FAO constitute Release #32 (August 2, 1946) of Food For Freedom's weekly news service. It concludes this series unless resumed next fall.
PROPOSAL FOR A UNITED NATIONS FOOD FUND BOARD

By Food For Freedom

Presented to Acting Secretary of State, the Honorable Dean Acheson, August 1, 1946 and copy transmitted to the Honorable William L. Clayton, Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, for submission to the United States Delegation to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration Council Meeting at Geneva, Switzerland, or for whatever action is deemed appropriate.

Food For Freedom recognizes the importance of the following statement made by the Honorable William L. Clayton, Assistant Secretary of State:

"I accept it as axiomatic that the world will not permit the people of any nation to starve as long as there is food enough to go around."

Originally expressed on July 26 to the representatives of seventeen national American organizations at a conference arranged by Food For Freedom, this statement was reaffirmed in a press release of the Department of State on July 30, 1946. Although this is an expression of personal opinion and not official policy, it is a basic premise on which the future relief policies of the United States Government should be founded. It also represents an attitude which would command wide acceptance and public support in the United States. Food For Freedom and all organizations concerned that hungry people must be fed are anxious, however, that practical provisions should be made or agreements reached at Geneva to the end that what can be accepted as axiomatic may be implemented by the necessary mechanisms or arrangements so that the nations in need of further assistance will not have to rely on optimistic hopes or last-minute improvisation.

SUBSTANTIAL NEED IN 1947

The larger harvests this year in most of the European countries now assisted by UNRRA and certain other nations will be insufficient to prevent recurrence of widespread hunger before their 1947 crops are harvested unless most of these countries receive substantial food imports during the first six to nine months of that year. Record harvests in the United States make possible the shipment of a large proportion of the food essential to save the lives or health of these people provided food conservation measures are continued in the United States, provided the proposed arrangements are made for seasonal set-aside of adequate amounts of basic foods in the United States and provided funds are available to purchase this food.

International commercial relations are still very far from normal. Therefore, the financial position of most of the countries now assisted by UNRRA, recently assessed by the special committee of international experts of the UNRRA Council, is not apt to be in a much more favorable condition to pay for all of their necessary food and related relief imports during 1947. The International Bank of Reconstruction and Development, which may be expected to relieve these countries eventually from certain drains upon their slender resources, is in a preliminary state of organization and is still faced with a substantial staffing problem. It has made a call for initial capital but cannot count on receiving its full capital for some
time. This bank is not yet in operation. Considerable time must be allowed for the negotiation of international loans for specific projects.

Although Congress at the 80th Session may increase the funds available to the Export-Import Bank and although its basis of decision for loans is declared to be on economic grounds, there is grave question whether there will not be insurmountable political difficulties to long-term loans to certain of these countries.

UNITED NATIONS FOOD FUND BOARD IS PROPOSED

These nations do not desire to be dependent upon charity or on possible funds or supplies contributed on a nation-to-nation basis. To ask them to depend upon future unilateral decisions by the major nations which are sources of supply for the imported food needed to sustain the health or the lives of their people, Food For Freedom believes would be a rejection of the principle of joint decision and action by the United Nations which forms the basis for future peace.

It is assumed that most of these countries can arrange for their own procurement, transportation, and distribution of food imports provided funds are available for those essential food purchases which they cannot afford. It is also assumed that a large operating international relief agency may not be considered the appropriate solution at this time. It is assumed that the major problem is financial. Therefore, as a minimum guarantee that people of no nation should starve as long as there is food enough to go around, Food For Freedom respectfully proposes that the United States Government should take the initiative in whatever steps are appropriate to create a United Nations Food Fund Board.

It is suggested that this Board would function under the Social and Economic Council of the United Nations.

HOW BOARD WOULD ADMINISTER AID WHEN NEEDED

The present member nations of UNRRA and such other nations applying for membership and approved by the Social and Economic Council would be invited to be represented on the Board. It would be an emergency or temporary organization to function only as long as the Social and Economic Council considered necessary.

In brief and tentative outline the functions of this Board would be:

1. Authorize those nations which might apply to this Board for financial assistance, the Social and Economic Council retaining the authority to make final decisions.

2. Examine the financial and economic status of each of the authorized countries which desired to apply for assistance to purchase food imports and related relief supplies which would increase the food production in that country.

3. Estimate the total fund necessary for the purposes of this Board for the year 1947.

4. Request contributions from its member nations on a pro rata basis (possibly not more than 1/3 of 1 percent of national income).

5. Obtain agreements from claimant nations that such supplies as were purchased through this fund would be distributed without discrimination as to race, religion, or politics and arrange for whatever supervision was considered necessary to assure the fulfillment of these agreements.
6. Allocate from the fund to claimant nations in relation to their other resources solely on the basis of human needs.

7. List the type of goods or foods but not the quantity or quality which might be purchased by these funds. (The claimant nations would determine what quantities and qualities of foods or related supplies were to be purchased by whatever funds were allocated to them.)

SUCH PRACTICAL INSURANCE REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT HIGH PRINCIPLES

It would seem suitable to separate the functions of allocation of international funds from the allocation of whatever food or other supplies might be purchased by such funds. It is believed that this proposed United Nations Food Fund Board would not conflict with but rather would supplement the tasks and functions of the International Emergency Food Council which has the responsibility for international food allocations. Just as the International Emergency Food Council is closely related to the Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations Food Fund Board would be closely related to the Social and Economic Council. This Board would be expected to turn to the FAO for advice and information. The Board would provide an additional working liaison between the FAO and the Social and Economic Council. The representatives on the United Nations Food Fund Board would presumably be persons of experience primarily in finance and economics.

Food For Freedom believes that the establishment of a temporary United Nations Food Fund Board just as soon as possible would create an effective instrument by which to accomplish during 1947 the high purposes expressed in Mr. Clayton's statement, would tend to relieve the major supply nations of future and unforeseen sudden demands upon their resources, and would unquestionably contribute towards an expanding world economy and world peace.