



A SAMARITAN STATE REVISITED: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CANADIAN FOREIGN AID

Edited by Greg Donaghy and David Webster

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CONCLUSION

Concluding Reflections: Beyond Aid

Dominique Marshall

The symposium that gave rise to this volume was perhaps the first in Canada to focus on the evolution of Canadian official development assistance as its centre of historical inquiry. The two-day gathering, which brought together over 200 scholars, aid workers, and policy makers from Canada and abroad, uncovered a surprising variety of policy expertise, drawn from different traditions and generations.¹ The conference and this collection are welcome witness to the intellectual energy and openness of this emerging field of study in Canada, and are an encouragement to pursue, in history, what Stephen Brown demands of Canadian ODA: an “integrated approach . . . beyond aid, to encompass all dimensions of international policy.”²

One possible avenue for integration is suggested by the work of the United Kingdom’s Overseas Development Institute (ODI), whose project for a global history of humanitarianism promotes “the use of history in the practice and policy-making of humanitarian action.”³ Over the past decade, the ODI has held historical symposia across the Global South, helping to develop complementary but asymmetrical shared histories of donors and recipients. The initiative recalls the ideals of partnership and “humane internationalism” held by Canadian aid workers during the 1970s and discussed by Kevin Brushett and Asa McKercher in this volume. Many Canadian historians are going further, and starting to chart the movements of influences between Indigenous and development aid policies, as well as between recipients and distributors, in a similar intellectual endeavour.⁴

Shared intellectual endeavour marks this collection. Histories of British and American postwar development assistance have been, by force of circumstance, directly informed by critiques of colonialism and the self-interested policies of cold war superpowers. Several authors in this collection apply critical Anglo-American concepts and perspectives to tackling the history of Canadian development aid. Jill Campbell-Miller, for instance, examines India through the modernization lens developed by David Ekbladh, while Stefano Tijerina use the notion of a “promotional state” to account for the evolution of aid to Colombia.⁵ Similarly, as Greg Donaghy and David Webster note in their introduction to this volume, the historiography of Canadian development assistance, aid from an intermediary state, mirrors the history of its foreign relations; it shows the country “neither as heroic do-gooder nor as imperialist exploiter, [but rather in] a more ambiguous position that has both reflected and shaped global trends in development thought and practice.”⁶

The transnational “turn”—away from national toward global paradigms of understanding—invites further questions about the impact of aid’s history in the Global South on other histories, especially in the Northern Hemisphere.⁷ David Webster’s study of Hugh Keenleyside, for example, explores how Canadian aid workers and bureaucrats worked with ideas about the role of the state that were closely associated with Canadian domestic traditions, playing the resulting UN consensus back to Ottawa to extract more aid. Reciprocal influence is a theme pursued by Campbell-Miller as well. Indeed, Keith Spicer, the author of the original *A Samaritan State?*, noted a parallel leitmotif in recalling the impact of the Colombo Plan on his subsequent career as a Canadian public servant: “the Colombo Plan, which was a Commonwealth program . . . was my point of entry, and the discovery of French Canadians working abroad with English Canadians, impressed me very much. . . . English and French Canadians working together overseas, . . . wasn’t this a marvelous thing, why can’t we do it at home?”⁸

The history of Canadian foreign aid has recently come into its own for many reasons. Urgent among them is the age of the first generation of CIDA workers, whose papers and testimonies are in danger of disappearing. From another direction, from Canadians who are children of diasporas, comes a renewed and different curiosity about development aid. The questions that Nassisse Solomon asks about Canada’s response to the Ethiopian famine

represents one such history, as do the public histories of Canadian aid told by former Chilean refugees and their allies.⁹ The historiographical movement echoes Nik Cavell's sense that the changing nature of Canada's population would eventually call for different international relations (and different histories). This is certainly implied in Kevin Brushett's study of CIDA's Malaysian-born bureaucratic entrepreneur, Lewis Perinbam. His cosmopolitan outlook and transnational roots seemed to lead inexorably toward "aiding" the people of the region of his origins. Coming full circle, Canadian University Service Overseas successfully targets "second-generation" Canadians wishing to work where their parents were born.¹⁰ Laura MacDonald and David Black write in this collection of Canadian aid's effect in Africa and Latin America. Both regions may also be affecting Canada, as Asia already has.

Historians of development assistance emerge from several professional traditions. While most in this collection are rooted in government and the universities, others come from NGOs, churches, and human rights organizations. Retired aid workers and NGO veterans, often trained in critical and scholarly inquiry, are busy writing parts of the story. This is true, for instance, of former Oxfam Canada secretary general Lawrence Cumming, who is currently composing a complex story of reciprocal influence and dependency, and of John Foster, who is coordinating a commemorative project on the solidarity work of the Latin American Working Group (LAWG).¹¹

At times, mutual state-NGO trust and cooperation helped consolidate Canadian efforts, increasing aid's legitimacy within Canadian communities and educating them to the realities of the Global South. Much of the material for a bottom-up history of aid, which will complement Ted Cogan's top-down history of government public relations, can be gathered from such reflections. Occasions such as the conference that led to this book go a long way toward consolidating the mutual trust required to record recollections and archive personal papers.¹²

NGO archives, which document multiple interactions with Canada's official development assistance program, reveal traces of unexpected encounters. These range from inventive appeals by humanitarian workers for charitable status to tenacious attempts to secure visas for their workers to the collaborative work of Canadian politicians, artists, and philanthropists traveling abroad in awareness-raising delegations. The archives of Canadian

NGOs are rich with information on the activities of publicly funded development workers in the Global South, and writing about their activities opens wider horizons for the history of Canada's foreign relations.¹³

Former aid workers and civil servants want their stories recorded and shared. The conference on "The Samaritan State Revisited" provided the occasion of doing more history than these pages attest: I returned to Spicer's papers, interviewed him, and, with the help of research assistant Tyler Owens, organized his pictures and postcards into an online exhibit.¹⁴ Yet, too often, the resources to document our aid history are still lacking. The uncertain fate of CIDA's extensive photo library, studied in this collection by Sonya de Laat, speaks to the "devaluation of development expertise," described elsewhere in this volume by Stephen Brown.¹⁵ The politics of scholarly research, with the multiplication of programs competing for limited funding, has long created similar difficulties for "thick" research into the history of aid.

Happily, the future of aid archives has taken a turn for the better. The conference provided a platform for a group of concerned historians to engage Global Affairs Canada, convincing it to curate CIDA's historical photo collection and make it available to researchers.¹⁶ More important, after a hiatus of two decades, Library and Archives Canada has resumed its practice of collecting NGO archives.¹⁷ Moreover, LAC employees joined historians of all stripes in a pre-conference workshop on the "Archives of Foreign Aid" to disentangle the world of development aid records, from their inception to their archiving, and to make sense of the strange filing systems left by "the often informal administrative procedures" described in Donaghy's contribution.¹⁸

Those reading these pages will have seen that the borders of the history of development aid seem more fluid than ever: what is aid, and who aids whom? What of the role of private insurance companies? of security companies? of environmental agencies? What of the religious influences on official development aid during the last 30 years? Historians of all kinds are only starting to explore these topics. We hope that the wealth of material uncovered by this book will inspire the many recollections, reflections, archival rescues, and public displays required to build a dynamic and clear-sighted history of Canadians' changing sense of the wider world.

Notes

- 1 Julie Van Drie, “When Historians Meet Aid Workers and Policy Makers,” CNHH Blog post, 30 March 2017, <http://aidhistory.ca/when-historians-meet-aid-workers-and-policy-makers/>.
- 2 Brown, chapter 13 in this volume.
- 3 See <https://www.odi.org/projects/2547-global-history-modern-humanitarian-action-moving-forward-hpg>.
- 4 See Dominique Marshall with Julia Sterparn, “Oxfam Aid to Canada’s First Nations, 1962–1975: Eating Lynx, Starving for Jobs, and Flying a Talking Bird,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 22, no. 2 (2012): 298–343, <https://www.erudit.org/fr/revues/jcha/2012-v23-n2-jcha0589/1015796ar/>; see also David Meren’s unfolding project on “First Nations, Third World: A Reconnaissance of the Origins of Canadian Foreign Aid”; Jill Campbell-Miller’s post-doctoral project on “Settler Colonialism and Development: Experiences from Canada and India, 1953–58”; and the chapters by Henry Yu, Whitney Lackenbauer, and David Webster in *Dominion of Race: Rethinking Canada’s International History*, ed. Laura Madokoro, Francine McKenzie, and David Meren (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2017).
- 5 On the distinct nature of the history of aid from countries on the periphery, see Kevin O’Sullivan, “History and the Development Aid Debate in the Republic of Ireland,” *Policy and Practice* 12 (Spring 2011): 110–23, <https://www.developmenteducationreview.com/issue/issue-12/history-and-development-aid-debate-republic-ireland>; and Ann Nehlin, “Exporting Visions and Saving Children: The Swedish Save the Children Fund,” *Linköping Studies in Arts and Sciences*, no. 494, Linköping University, 2009, <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:240412/FULLTEXT02.pdf>.
- 6 Donaghy and Webster chapters, this volume.
- 7 Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier, eds., *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
- 8 Author interview with Keith Spicer, 30 November 2017. On community work methods brought to Canada from the Global South, see also Joy Parr, “Local Water Diversely Known: Walkerton, Ontario 2000 and After,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 23, no. 2 (2005): 251–71; Jessica Haynes also discovered how Canadian nurses working in family planning in India brought back to Canada’s first feminist clinics their knowledge about contraception. “The Legacy of Scientific Motherhood: Doctors and Child-Rearing Advice in the 1960s and 1970s in English Canada” (PhD diss., Carleton University, 2007).
- 9 “Carleton University Celebrates 45 Years with the Chilean Diaspora: Jose Venturelli Eade, Muralist,” 4 December 2017, CNHH, <http://aidhistory.ca/event/carleton-university-celebrates-45-years-with-the-chilean-diaspora/>. Archives and Research Collections, Carleton University (ARC) uncovered archives of a 2000 application by the development consultants Latin America Development Projects led by the curator of the

- exhibit and refugee of the first hour, Leonor Leon, to Match International, toward the building of a community centre in the small town of San José de Maipo, in Chile.
- 10 See chapter 7 in this volume.
 - 11 LAWG: Hay Camino History Project, accessed December 2017 from <https://lawghaycamino.wordpress.com/>. See also the LAWG archives, deposited at York University's CERLAC: <http://cerlac.info.yorku.ca/resources/collections/latin-american-working-group-lawg-library>.
 - 12 I would like thank the three successive heads of Oxfam Canada from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s, whom I interviewed in 2016: Meyer Brownstone, Lawrence Cumming, and John Foster. The papers, slides, and audio archives of Brownstone and Foster are now at ARC: <https://archie.library.carleton.ca/index.php/meyer-brownstone-oxfam-international-fonds>; and <https://archie.library.carleton.ca/index.php/john-foster-fonds>. Partly as a result of the symposium that gave rise to this volume, Hunter McGill and Ian Smillie have established a partnership with ARC toward a "Development Assistance and Humanitarian Archives Rescue Project." Handout in possession of the author, December 2017.
 - 13 See the archives of Match International Women's Fund, recently acquired by ARC, <https://archie.library.carleton.ca/index.php/match-international-womens-fund-fonds>; Victoria Hawkins, "Creche for the Children of Hospital Workers in Lusaka, 1980–1981," CNHH Blog post, 7 November 2016, <http://aidhistory.ca/creche-for-the-children-of-hospital-workers-in-lusaka-zambia-1980-1981/>; and the archives of Oxfam UK, acquired in 2013 by the Bodleian Library of Oxford University, <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/weston/our-work/projects/saving-oxford-medicine/cataloguing-the-oxfam-archiv>. See also the citation by the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression, who awarded Bob Thomson, a CIDA officer who leaked confidential telegrams from the Canadian embassy in Santiago on the brutalities of General Augusto Pinochet's right-wing coup in Chile, the Integrity Award in 2013: <http://www.cjfe.org/resources/features/2013-integrity-award-winner-bob-thomson>.
 - 14 Tyler Owens and Dominique Marshall, "Keith Spicer: Illustrated Maps of Humanitarian Travels in Asia, 1960," CNHH Blog post, 21 April 2017, <http://aidhistory.ca/keith-spicer-illustrated-maps-of-humanitarian-travels-in-asia-1960/>.
 - 15 Brown, chapter 13 in this volume.
 - 16 Meeting and correspondence of the author with Ralph Duchesne, 25 October 2017.
 - 17 The social justice section readily accepted the papers of the Canadian Hunger Foundation after its closing in 2015. Will Tait, "Virtual Visit to the Offices of the Canadian Hunger Foundation on the Eve of its Closing, August 2015," CNHH Blog post, 22 September 2015, <http://aidhistory.ca/virtual-visit-to-the-offices-of-the-canadian-hunger-foundation-on-the-eve-of-its-closing-august-2015/>. The papers of many closed or diminished institutions of development research await archiving, such as those of the diminished North-South Institute. Blair Crawford, "North South Institute, Ottawa-based think tank, to close," *Ottawa Citizen*, 10 September 2014, <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/north-south-institute-ottawa-based-think-tank-to-close>.

- 18 Tyler Owens, “Archives of Foreign Aid, A Workshop Summary,” CNHH Blog post, 6 February 2016, <http://aidhistory.ca/archives-and-foreign-aid-a-workshop-summary/> David Webster noted that Hugh Keenleyside recalled that the UN’s technical assistance work was measurably hampered in the 1950s by the organization’s “absurd registry and filing system.” Staff could often not find crucial documentation because dozens of files had identical titles. Correspondence with the author.

