



1993

AFS



World

Congress

Historical  
Exhibit

## INTRODUCTION

AFS is a great idea, with lots of heart, based on a fundamental faith in humanity. But where did it come from? This is the subject of the present exhibition, a collage of AFS's rich history.

Just as every AFS experience is a unique one, there are an infinite number of ways of presenting AFS's own history. We opted for a series of eight panels, each showing some milestones along the path of the endless learning experience known as AFS.

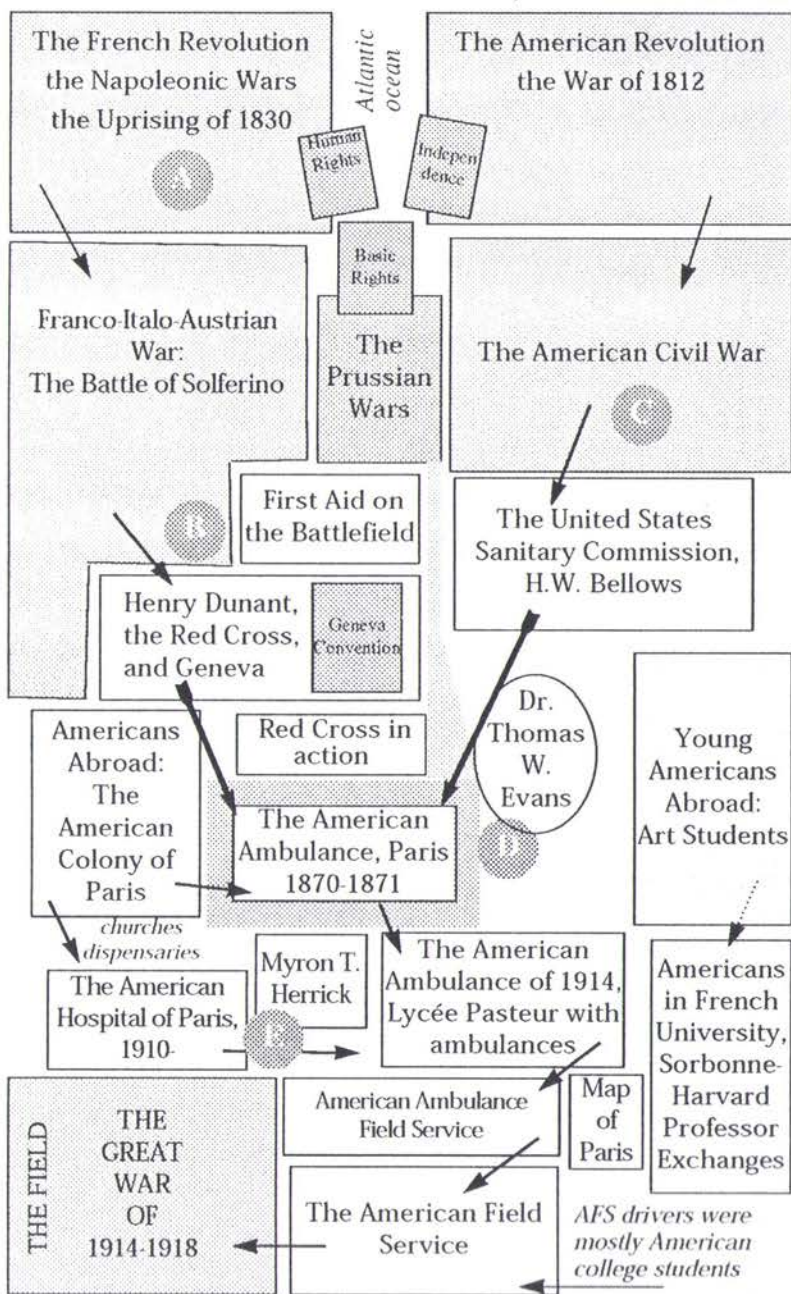
The choices might seem arbitrary, they certainly are not exhaustive, but they are a simple means to depict and explain what AFS is and why it is different from the host of its competitors.

The exhibition aims only to open the door to more exploration of the often neglected historical dimension of AFS's cultural wealth, to raise awareness of our shared history and to provide materials for building new bridges.

We invite you to discover various aspects of our common past and to consider how these relate to our current organization and activities.

*Alan Albright and Marianne Meyer*

I. ROOTS: The Violent Birth of Modern Nations; International Samaritans



**Overview:** Against a background of Franco-American relations, two main lines lead to the creation of the American Field Service: the *principles* of the Red Cross movement and the *practical experience* of the U.S. Sanitary Commission both of which converged in the American Ambulance in Paris, first in 1870 and then again in 1914. The field transportation service for these two temporary hospitals was staffed by young American volunteers—in 1914-1918, American college students. A third line—American students studying abroad in France and the first Franco-American professor exchanges—would lead to the first Franco-American university student exchanges: the AFS French Fellowships.

**A** Both the French and American Revolutions were fought by citizen soldiers, prompting the citizenry to be concerned about their fate on the battlefield. 17,000 French volunteers, including Lafayette, helped the Americans win their struggle to throw off English colonial rule.

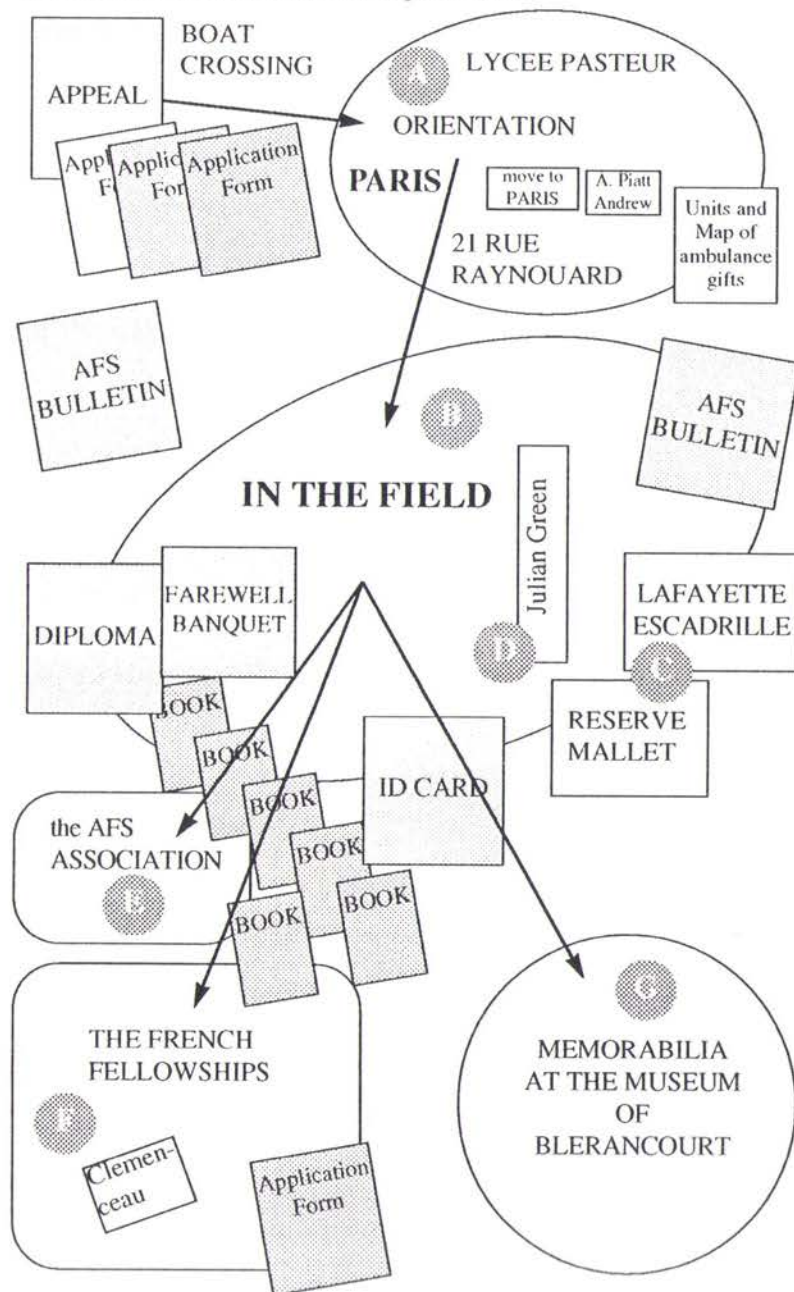
**B** Civilian medical care of the military wounded took a big step forward with Florence Nightingale and the British Sanitary Commission during the Crimean War at mid-century. This example was taken to heart by Henry Dunant, a witness to the aftermath of the Battle of Solferino. He was appalled by the carnage and his influential book, *Memory of Solferino*, and concerted efforts led first to the creation of International Societies for Assistance to the War Wounded (1863) and then to the signing of the Geneva Convention (1864).

**C** Meanwhile, during the American Civil War (1861-1865), the practice of rescuing wounded on the battlefield was being perfected by the volunteers of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, under the leadership of H.W. Bellows. Its infrastructure—vast public campaigns, "Sanitary Fairs"—prepared the American public to become involved in other worthy causes.

**D** The influential Paris American dentist, Thomas W. Evans played a key role in making the work of the Sanitary Commission known in Europe, in founding the American Ambulance of 1870 ... and in helping establish a university degree for foreign students in France.

**E** The American ambassador to France, Myron T. Herrick, was intimately involved in all Franco-American movements, from the creation of the American Ambulance in 1914 to the founding of the AFS French Fellowships in 1919.

## II. BEGINNINGS: The First AFS Experiences



**Overview:** A call to service, but also to adventure, prompted young American college students to cross the ocean in search of new frontiers. They found the horrors of war, but also the international comradeship of life at the front. For most, it was a rite of passage, a life-changing experience, not to be forgotten, but to be perpetuated in a fraternal organization, transmitted in new form through a peacetime college exchange and commemorated in books and at the museum at Blérancourt.

**A** Once they had been vouched for, been selected—the French were nervous about spies—the boys crossed the ocean in a steamer, took the train to Paris and were taken to AFS HQ. They had paid their own way, bought their own uniform, as Field Service fund raising, which was intense, was mostly devoted to buying ambulances. In 1916, HQ—under founder “Doc” Andrew—moved from the Ambulance at Neuilly to better quarters in Paris and changed its name to the American Field Service.

**B** After orientation, the boy drivers were sent to serve French units in the field—a unique, indescribable experience for each as AFS experiences always are. They were to drive through “the valley of the shadow of death”.

**C** For some, faced with the self-sacrifice of their French comrades, driving ambulances was not enough. Almost half the pilots of the new Lafayette Escadrille were recruited from the AFS by Dr. Edmund Gros, who was also AFS’s medical officer. And then, when the U.S. entered the war in 1917, many boys took the wheel of ammunition or troop trucks in AFS’s Réserve Mallet.

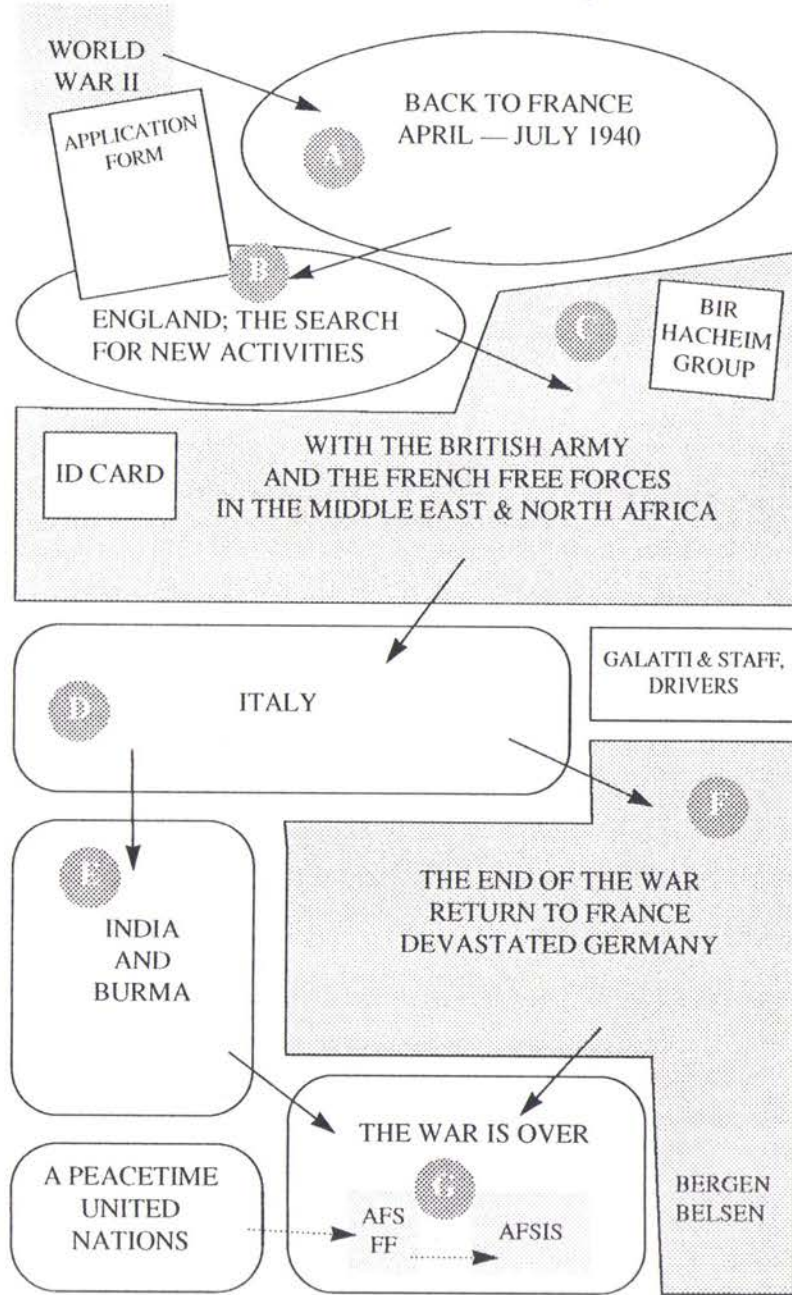
**D** Julian Green, presently of the Académie Française, is one of the last living members of the Lost Generation: artists and writers marked by the Great War. There were many driver-writers, from Louis Bromfield and Malcolm Cowley of the AFS to John Dos Passos, EE Cummings and Ernest Hemingway of other services.

**E** After the war, AFS’s *esprit de corps* continued as a kind of club or fraternal organization: the AFS Association, founded in 1920.

**F** Through Myron T. Herrick, AFS lent its funds and energies to a project in course: a university-level exchange program between France and the U.S: the French Fellowships, founded in 1919.

**G** In 1938, the American Volunteers Pavilion, featuring AFS memorabilia, was opened at the French national museum of Franco-American Cooperation at Blérancourt.

### III. INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP: The Widening of Horizons



**Overview:** Let's do it again! Enthusiastic efforts to revive the old service, with former drivers now in the role of organizers and recruiters, was put sorely to the test by the defeat of AFS's beloved France. But AFS kept active, stayed in business and eventually joined up with the British 8th Army, serving troops of many nationalities in many places. Franco-American comradeship evolved into international friendship. Behind it all was Steve Galatti, who made a number of friends in Washington and who —with ideas of his own—watched the united allies become the United Nations.

**A** The first unit of AFS drivers arrived in Paris in early April of 1940. They were in the field by the third week of May, weaving through streams of refugees to serve in the badly-hit Beauvais and Amiens areas. By the end of June, they were out of business, handing their vehicles over to the American Hospital of Paris.

**B** This left AFS with a functioning infrastructure —efficient fund raising and active regional committees— with no job to do. AFS immediately turned its support to other causes: furnishing vehicles to the American Ambulance of London, financing the Eagle Club for servicemen in England, sending cars and supplies to British Africa...

**C** Finally, after working with the Spears-Hatfield Hospital, AFS drivers and ambulances were attached to the British 9th Army in the Middle East and the British 8th Army in North Africa. Units also served with the Free French, notably at the battle of Bir Hacheim. AFS provided major support during the key battle of El Alamein and the end of the North African campaign.

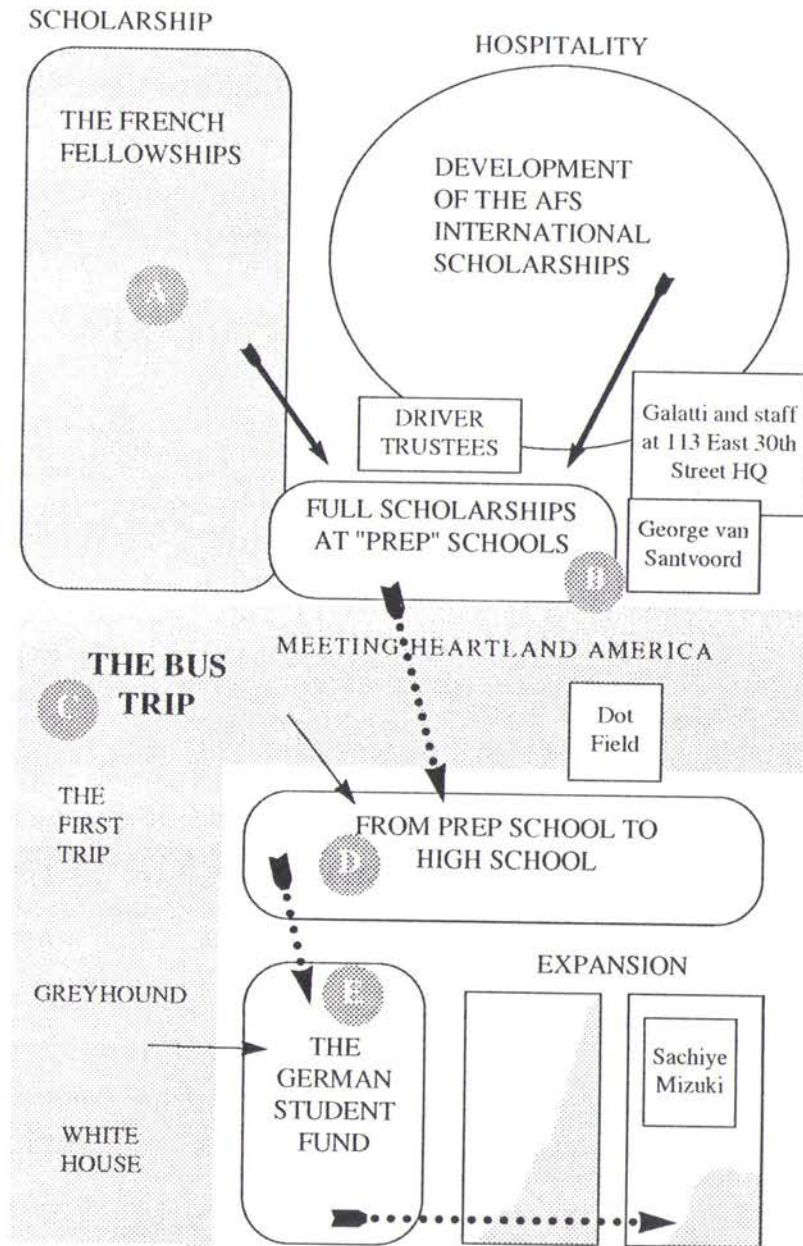
**D** In Italy, AFS drivers found they had traded desert terrain for muddy, mountain roads. Some accompanied Polish troops. Some young, enthusiastic Italian students were interested in joining up.

**E** In India and Burma, it was culture shock. The going was rough. The little jeeps were reproducing feats reminiscent of the days of WWI Fords. Neil Gilliam's heroic action won the admiration of the Gurkha unit he served.

**F** Now it was back to France, up the Rhone River, through Alsace and across into devastated Germany. An AFS unit found itself facing a newly liberated Bergen Belsen... One driver never recovered from this experience.

**G** Meanwhile, Galatti, who had made friends in high places in both Washington and abroad, was contemplating what new path the old AFS might take...

IV. VOCATION: Bringing the World Home



**Overview:** Active involvement in the French Fellowships, international scholarships for university students, hospitality to visiting foreign students: this time, AFS intended to “stay in business” after the war. But it was the offer to give full scholarships to teenagers at boarding schools that was to provide the opening it was looking for. The bus trip — another AFS “find” — showed heartland America to the kids and vice versa, leading to the extension of the private school program to public high schools. It was government funding of a program for German students that primed the pump, enabling the AFS international scholarships to take off. By 1952, it was obvious that high schools, not universities were where AFS’s future lay.

**A** The original idea of the French Fellowships was to encourage Americans to study in France. Along with its funds and its name, AFS contributed the idea of an exchange: French coming to America as well. Pierre Lepaulle was the first, in 1920, followed by Maurice Pérouse, in 1936 only. It was not until after the war, when AFS took back some of its management responsibility from the Institute of International Education, that the trend was reversed.

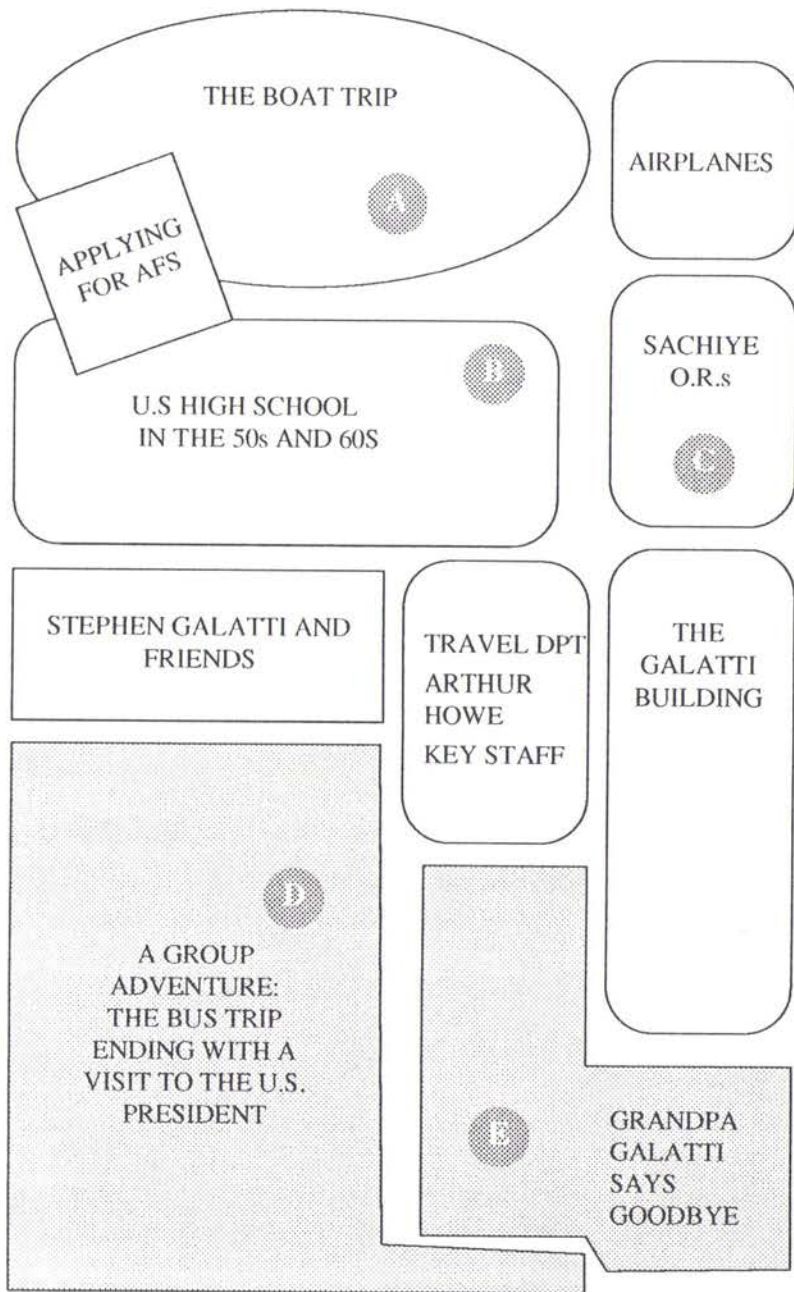
**B** An American “prep” school, with its campus and dormitories, is not unlike the private universities it prepares its students for. A majority of WWI drivers had gone to such schools: Piatt Andrew to Lawrenceville, Galatti to St. Mark’s, Howe to Hotchkiss. One, Phillips Andover, had even provided an entire unit of AFS drivers in 1917. These schools already were involved in exchanges with their counterparts in England—the “public” schools— through the English-Speaking Union. George van Santvoord, a former driver, was on the board of these exchanges, was headmaster of the Hotchkiss School, was president of the National Preparatory School Committee. It was he who opened the door...

**C** As the prep school environment was more like a university than everyday America, AFS decided to show their visiting junior diplomats the “real thing”.

**D** Now the high schools joined in, raising the money to bring “their” AFS student into their lives. Everyone got involved, chapters were formed...

**E** Galatti’s wartime connections in Washington brought him the backing of the State Department — a financial backing for the 111 German students which would enable AFS to “do a few things properly”, as Art Howe put it!

V. THE GOOD OLD DAYS: The American AFS



**Overview:** For almost twenty years, Americans brought foreign teenagers into their homes and high schools through the Field Service's International Scholarships. Beginning in 1950, a few Americans began to go abroad for the summer and then, in 1957, for the year. Henceforth, AFS meant the Winter Program in America or in other countries for Americans only, or else the Summer, Americans Abroad, Program. These programs began with a boat trip, orientations, talent shows, shipboard newspapers, dances. It was AFS's age of innocence: the 50's and 60's in prosperous America. Even the U.S. presidents got into the act. By the time he died in 1964, Stephen Galatti had led the AFS to new heights of international friendship. Now Arthur Howe, a former WWII driver, Admissions Director for Yale, who had been active behind the scenes, became president. But it was to be a time of change: decolonization abroad, a civil rights movement in the U.S.A., the end of an era.

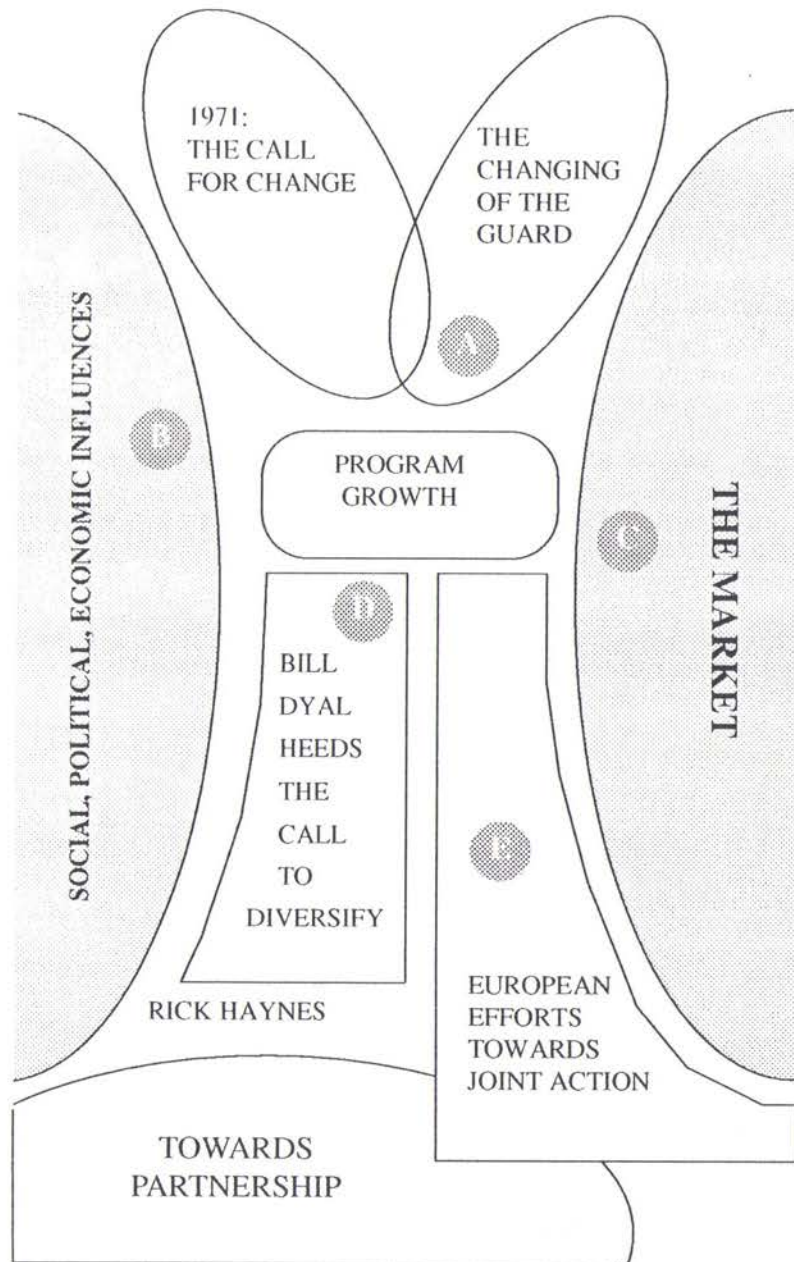
**A** Of course AFS had been using boats to cross the Atlantic (and other oceans) since 1915. Its experience with organizing group life had begun with college boys, gala dinners and performances at 21 Rue Raynouard. Then came airplanes and, by the end of the '60's, the ocean steamer was a thing of the past.

**B** The AFS student was a diplomat, but also a "rep" and was often pressed into service "talking up" his own country and the AFS. At the same time, American high school, with its wide range of extra-curricular activities, was a discovery for veterans of more intellectually-oriented secondary schools of other countries.

**C** Since the days of Rue Raynouard, Steve Galatti had worked in offices staffed by women and finally, with the student program, the women would have their say. Dot Field, who had been with him in World War II, and Sachiye Mizuki, played key roles in turning AFS into a "co-ed" organization! Meanwhile, AFS was exporting its "product" through its Overseas Representatives who, with the help of returnees, first organized a "supply house" of recruits for the scholarships before developing chapters and importing the hosting model.

**D** The extraordinary nature of the AFS experience was summed up in the Bus Trip and the meeting with the U.S. president: Eisenhower, started it; Ford was the last.

**E** The legend of Steve Galatti left a warm glow in many hearts. 49 years of service to AFS: from driver to "Santa".



**Overview:** They called it the “*Generation Gap*”, their rallying cry was “*challenge authority*”, and they aimed to change the world. By 1967, the vision of the world seen from the moon—the global village—plus the spectre of an atomic holocaust, haunted this new generation. The psychic shock hit AFS at its World Convention and Congress of 1971. The “changing of the guard”, took place shortly thereafter. Twenty years later, the consequences of the change finally crystallized in a new, truly international partnership of AFS national organizations.

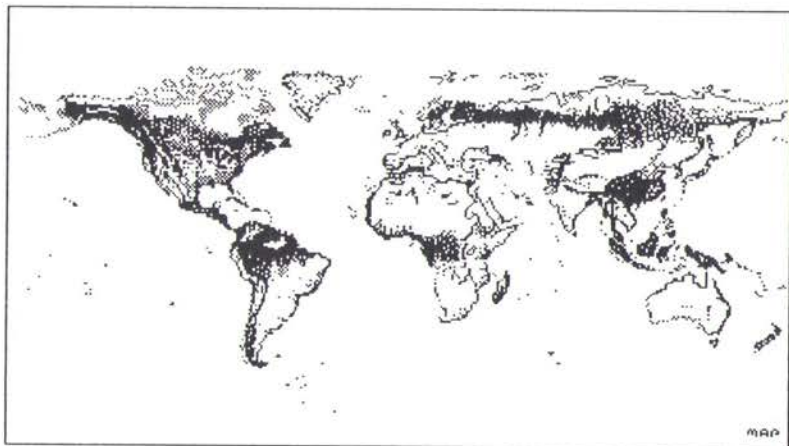
**A** The first and most important step that AFS took was the Multi-National Program. AFS was beginning to internationalize its American model. The MNP produced a rapid expansion in the late '70's. At the same time, Steve Rhinesmith, a returnee, not a former driver, was seeking other solutions to help AFS through difficult times. His exploration of merger with the U.S. Experiment in International Living was rejected. The experts then recommended a policy of diversification.

**B** These developments took place in an international context. Decolonization, against the background of an East-West standoff, had drawn America into the Vietnam War. The new generation said “no!” Internationally, the word “American” now brought mixed reviews. The oil crisis sent shock waves into a Western economic prosperity fueled by petroleum. And then the collapse of the centralized, “socialist” economies brought about a “new world order” darkened by regional conflicts, renewed xenophobia and racism.

**C** Through its success—and selection policy—AFS had unwittingly created a market for its programs. If one out of ten students were chosen, that left nine potential customers for AFS clones! Meanwhile, with increasingly accessible transportation, the tourist industry was growing and professionals were on the lookout for new products. Linguistic sojourns, featuring the AFS-pioneered “homestay”, became commonplace. A number of enterprises which were to become AFS's competitors in this field were actually founded by returnees!

**D** Under Bill Dyal, AFS diversified, but the organization had become large and unwieldy. Rick Haynes came in briefly, leaving the heritage of a new logo, but now it was time for Steve Rhinesmith to return and help AFS work out its growing pains.

**E** European efforts towards joint action produced EFIL. Meanwhile, during the presidency of Beryl Levinger, AFS moved towards the Partnership system under the guidance of Ebbe Skovdal. This program is being completed under the current president, Richard Spencer.



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