TASTE OF ASHES:

AMERICA'S CONSCIENCE AND THE EUROPEAN FOOD CRISIS, 1939-1940

By

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A thesis to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History

University of Manitoba/University of Winnipeg

Winnipeg, Manitoba

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- Chimie pharmaceutique 0491
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- PolymÇres 0495
- Radiation 0754

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- Acoustique 0986
- Astronomie et astrophysique 0606
- Électronique et électricité 0607
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- Particules (Physique nucléaire) 0798
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Abstract

This paper is an examination of American foreign policy and of the domestic forces and political dynamics created by the Polish and European food crisis of 1939 and 1940. The United States' government chose to offer limited humanitarian aid to Nazi occupied Poland in 1940 and, to a certain degree, facilitated the operations of private American humanitarian agencies with whom they were often in fundamental disagreement. As well, the United States' Department of State and the American Red Cross negotiated with the German Foreign Ministry and forced concessions from the British Foreign Office in areas that the British considered as fundamental military strategy. However, Franklin Roosevelt did not believe he had the freedom to initiate an ambitious Polish relief operation given the constraint of America's strong isolationist sentiment. No one knew where Polish relief operations would lead or how much of a commitment they would involve.

The question broadened in the aftermath of the May 1940 Nazi invasion of Western Europe. America was told that millions of western European civilians would die unnecessarily if the United States did not break the strangulating British food blockade of occupied Europe. The inhumanity and horror of the war was no longer an abstraction; Americans too knew the "taste of ashes" as they passionately debated the issue during the fall of 1940.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....i

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....ii

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....iii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....iv

INTRODUCTION.....vi

CHAPTER I: HUNGRY POLAND.....1

CHAPTER II: BRITAIN AND POLAND.....15

CHAPTER III: IMPEDIMENTS TO POLISH RELIEF.....31

CHAPTER IV: AMERICANS AIDING POLAND.....59

CHAPTER V: THE POLITICS OF RELIEF.....75

CHAPTER VI: THE RED CROSS 'WAR DRIVE'.....95

CHAPTER VII: AMERICA RESPONDS TO THE HOOVER PLAN.....119

CONCLUSION.....144

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....147

List of Illustrations:

I. "A New Heroine", *Detroit Free Press*, February 4, 1940.....52

II: "This Much We Can Do", *New York Times*, May 25, 1940.....53

III:"Feed Jonah and you feed the whale", *Newsweek*, August 19, 1940.....54

IV: "A Time Bomb", *Newsweek*, November 25, 1940.....54

V: "An army that needed in Europe", *Christian Science Monitor*, July 13, 1940.....55

VI: "The Longest Boarding House Reach in History", *New York Herald Tribune*, July 29, 1940.....56

VII: " The Proposal To Feed Nazi-Occupied Europe", *New York Times*, December 8, 1940.....57

VII: "THE BANDITS' FEAST", *Punch*, December 25, 1940.....58

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people offered me assistance in writing this paper. My thanks go to Professor Francis Carroll who graciously agreed to be my advisor and gently guided me down the long winding path to thesis completion. I will always be grateful for his support and encouragement, and for allowing me to write the paper as I believed it should be written.

I wish to thank my committee, Professors F. Stambrook, D. Stone, and A. Sosnowski, for their close reading of this paper. I also wish to thank Professor Stone for his critical reading of an early draft of the chapter on Polish-American and Jewish-American humanitarian efforts in occupied Poland.

As well, I wish to thank Professor Lionel Steiman for steering the paper through the required administrative channels and for agreeing to undertake extra burdens when Professor Carroll began his sabbatical year.

I drank many cups of coffee, the occasional beer and spent many hours of discussion on foreign aid issues with Chris Pate and Gary Neufeld. I am sure they were wearied on more than one occasion. However, as the true friends they are, they never ran and hid, they seldom changed the subject, and they continually encouraged my work. I thank them very much.

Most importantly of all, I cannot thank the love of my life enough for all the hours she has worked on this project. I owe Martha McLeod the editorial medal of honour for her courageous deciphering of grammatical mysteries and valiant correcting of medieval spelling. Martha my dear, the misery has indeed come to an end.

INTRODUCTION

If nations had the liberty to base foreign policy decisions solely on humanitarian principles, questions of feeding and clothing distressed people would be patently simple. It would be possible for them to answer quickly and affirmatively the questions asked by the Old Testament prophet Isaiah: "These two things have befallen you - who will grieve with you? - devastation and destruction, famine and sword - who will comfort you?" However, as the prophet Jeremiah said, in the calculus of a harsh and cruel world, many are "doomed to know the taste of ashes".

Appeals for compassion in war, based on humanitarian ideals or religious principles, are as common and old as the act of war itself; Franklin Roosevelt issued such appeals. However, Roosevelt's appeals did not indicate or advocate any American government action to lessen the sufferings of civilians; this onus was to lie on the belligerent powers and on private American citizens to show compassion and support for war victims.

The American President's "urgent appeal" made September 2, 1939 to Nazi Germany went unheeded. He had asked them, along with the other belligerents, to refrain from bombing civilian areas of Poland because he saw the targeting of civilian populations as "inhumane barbarism". The President stated: "hundreds of thousands of lives of innocent human beings who have no responsibility for, and

who are not even remotely participating in, the hostilities which have broken out will lose their lives."[1]

On September 9, 1939, following the bombing of Warsaw, President Roosevelt addressed the American people in an attempt to appeal to the nation and set the tone of his administration's thoughts and actions. "Even though America is neutral in the present tragic war...," the President said, "I cannot ask that every American be neutral in thought as well. Even a neutral cannot close his mind to his conscience."[2] This was an appeal for Americans to make moral decisions which were, in the President's mind, necessary for the victory of the Allied cause over Nazi autarchy.

In the President's second appeal to the American people on October 12, 1939 he asked for support of the American Red Cross stating: "...we cannot be indifferent to the sufferings inflicted upon the peoples of the war-torn countries, particularly upon the helpless women and children. It is traditional...that the American people should wish to extend material aid to the helpless victims of war abroad."[3]

In many ways, aspects of this paper turn on these three presidential statements. America was officially

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1 Presidential telegram, Department of State Bulletin, September 9,1939, p. 181.
2 Presidential address, Department of State Bulletin, September 16,1939, p. 185.
3 Presidential appeal for support of American Red Cross, October 12,1939, Documents on American Foreign Relations, July 1939-June 1940. Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1940, pp. 588-589.

neutral but not indifferent or impartial. Polls indicated the majority of the American people believed Germany to be responsible for the war and only a few wished for a German victory. They wanted the Allies to win and they supported limited measures to aid that cause. The American people did not want to go to war, but growing numbers believed America's own safety would be endangered by a Nazi victory.[4]

As Canadian military analyst Gwynn Dyer has commented, foreign policy decisions are not always "warm and fuzzy."[5] States determine policies on perceptions of rational self-interest relating to their own freedom and ultimately survival. This, of course, is particularly evident in war-time or when allies are involved in war, a time when nations must also base their judgements on what

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[4] Polling results from George Gallup, Gallup Poll: Public opinion 1935-1971, Volume I, 1935-1948 New York: Random House, 1972:
September 8, 1939-- Which country do you consider responsible for causing the present war? Germany 82% (p. 180).
September 29, 1939--If Germany should defeat...(the Allies)...do you think Germany will start a war against the United States sooner or later? Yes, 63%, No 37 % (p. 182).
October 6, 1939-- Should we declare war and send our army and navy abroad to fight Germany? Yes 5%, No 95% (p. 184).
October 11, 1939-- Do you think Congress should change the Neutrality Laws so that England and France...can buy war supplies. Yes 60%, No 40% (p. 185).
October 23, 1939--Which side to you want to see win the war? Allies 84%, Germany 2% (p.186).
October 23, 1939-- Do you think the United States should do everything possible to help England and France win the war, except go to war ourselves? Yes 62%, No 38% (p. 186).
December 30, 1940-- Which of these two things do you consider the more important...keep[ing] out of the war...or help[ing] England win even at the risk of going to war? Keep out 40%, Help 60% (p. 253).
January 3, 1941--Do you think our country's future safety depends on England winning the war? Yes 68%, No 26% (p.257).

[5] Gwynn Dyer, "Information Radio", Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, February 10, 1994.

will aid friends as well as on the war-making ability of their friend's enemies. Unfortunately, such judgements often result in the tragic necessity of denying humanitarian aid to the distressed people of war-torn nations. Starvation often becomes an aside in the larger issue of self-interest. These, however, are onerous decisions for democratic nations whose ideals espouse the values of human compassion.

President Franklin Roosevelt's administration, interested humanitarian agencies, the Polish-American and Jewish-American communities, and the American people in general faced this dilemma during the years from 1939 to 1941. To what extent would a neutral and isolationist America be at all interested in foreign humanitarian problems? Would the people allow its government to offer the desperately needed humanitarian aid to the civilian population of Nazi occupied Poland?

America was absorbed with domestic politics during the depression years of the 1930s. However, this self concern was not created only by the nation's economic travail. America had retreated from European concerns; it had woven an isolating cocoon around itself in the aftermath of World War I. America did not want to go to war again and the isolationist impulse was the most powerful force in America.

The results of the World War had led to American disillusionment. The mass of the American people believed

they had been led into the war by British propaganda, by war-mongers in America and by unscrupulous arms dealers, who sought to profit at the expense of American lives. American isolationists believed nothing but harm could come to the United States if it became involved in European affairs. This sentiment was expressed in a series of 'Neutrality Acts' passed, in the 1930s by the Roosevelt administration, to keep America out of any future European conflicts. These acts restricted the rights of American citizens to trade with belligerents during war-time and to travel into the war zones without the express consent of the president.

When the war began the 'Neutrality Act' was amended, so that Americans could trade with the belligerents. However it was understood that the main beneficiary would be Britain. As the threat of a Nazi victory increased, many Americans came to believe America itself faced immanent peril. Many then thought Britain must be supported by any and all measures short of an actual American declaration of war. The isolationist faction, however, was still strong and many citizens, congressmen and senators continued to argue that American aid to Britain would lead the nation into war.

Because of America's strong feelings, Roosevelt did not believe he had the freedom to initiate an ambitious Polish relief operation given the constraints of isolationist sentiment. No one knew where Polish relief

operations would lead or how much of a commitment they would involve. If the war continued to expand, American policy would have to be consistent while maintaining its neutrality.

The United States government chose to offer limited humanitarian aid to Poland and, to a certain degree, facilitated the operations of private American humanitarian agencies with whom they were often in fundamental disagreement. To do this the United States' Department of State and the American Red Cross negotiated with the German Foreign Ministry and forced concessions from the British Foreign Office on what the British considered as fundamental military strategy.

The scope of the question broadened in the aftermath of the May 1940 Nazi invasion of Western Europe. America was told that millions of European civilians, not only Polish but Dutch, French, Norwegian, Belgian and Danish, would die unnecessarily if the United States did not break the strangulating British food blockade of occupied Europe. Should America feed those people? Roosevelt was adamant that no food aid should be sent to occupied Europe, and that the American Red Cross would not participate in any such operation. There would be no negotiations with Germany and the British would not be asked to make any compromises or concessions. The American people soon concurred with this decision. However, the inhumanity and horror of the war was no longer an

abstraction. Americans too knew the "taste of ashes" as they passionately debated the issue through the fall of 1940.

This paper is an examination of American foreign policy, and of the domestic forces and political dynamics created by both the Polish and the later European humanitarian crises.

Chapter 1, 'Hungry Poland', sets the stage. The brutal conditions and endemic hunger found in German-occupied Poland formed the template for what U.S. State Department officials and American humanitarians believed would be repeated in Western Europe if the war expanded. The chapter examines the survival of the people inside and outside the ghetto. Also, it looks at the small role American humanitarian agencies were physically able to play in keeping those destitute souls alive in the face of Nazi Germany's starvation policies and reticence to allow aid into the General Government in occupied Poland.

Chapter 2, 'Britain and Poland', explores the British perspective. It examines the role the British Government played in helping their prostrate Polish ally. The British believed that neutral nations, i.e., the United States, could play a role in offering succour to suffering Poland, only if guarantees could be arranged to ensure that no aid fell into German hands. The question of aid to Poland and western Europe was intimately entwined with Britain's blockade rationale. Therefore, a substantial section of

this chapter is devoted to an examination of Britain's strategic blockade policy.

Chapter 3, 'Impediments to Polish Relief', discusses why Poland did not become the humanitarian *cause celebre* during the early months of the war. Poland did not become the 'Belgium' of World War II. The chapter examines isolationism, which precluded an active governmental and American Red Cross involvement in Polish aid, as an important domestic factor in American politics. It also examines America's fear of being duped by unscrupulous foreign propaganda reports, as well as the role played by the Soviet-Finnish War in undermining Polish relief efforts.

Chapter 4, 'Americans Aiding Poland', looks at the efforts made by the Jewish-American and Polish-American communities to raise funds and to gain popular and governmental support for the Polish humanitarian cause. It also examines the factors which forced these two communities to question the extent to which they should, in fact, take part in soliciting aid for Poland.

Chapter 5, 'Politics of Relief' explores the turbulent relationship the Commission for Polish Relief and its chairman, Herbert Hoover, had with the Roosevelt administration and the American Red Cross. Also examined is the role played by the Red Cross and the U.S. Department of State in facilitating Polish Relief

operations, through their negotiations with Germany and Britain.

Chapter 6, 'The Red Cross War Drive', broadens the scope of the paper to include all of western Europe within the humanitarian crisis. The chapter looks at the new dynamics and humanitarian consciousness created by the invasion of western Europe. The American people, government and Red Cross pledge an activist role in refugee relief. It then examines the swing of the humanitarian consciousness pendulum as self-interested rationales for denying aid to European civilians became evident.

The final Chapter 'America Responds to the Hoover Plan' discusses the failed attempts of Herbert Hoover and his associates to re-focus America's attention on the side of European relief versus total support of Blockade strategy.

The study of humanitarian relief to Europe through 1939 and 1940 is significant as it increases our understanding of the American domestic climate in the early period of the European war. We see the developing conscious relationship the American administration and public had with the importance of British victory.

Prior to the catastrophic events of May and June 1940, President Roosevelt's policy was uncertain and confused concerning Polish aid and British blockade strategy. The President had attempted to play a cautious

middle ground between American humanitarianism and British concerns; the general American public expressed little opinion on the Polish question. The events of summer 1940, however, stiffened Roosevelt's resolve in favour of Britain. The public was forced to decide whether to commit themselves to feeding the refugees or to side with Britain who feared that aiding the refugees would directly aid the Nazis and thus lead to Britain's defeat or at least result in a lengthening of the war. Their ultimate decision reflected a deepening American commitment to Britain - a commitment that never existed between the American people and Poland.

While the issue of aid to Poland during 1939 and early 1940 was not reported to any great extent in the American popular press, information from unpublished and published documents relating to discussions that took place between the British, American, French and Polish diplomats is readily available. American State Department files also contain considerable correspondence from Polish-American organizations relative to their requests for increased aid to Nazi and Soviet occupied Poland. These files include correspondence from American diplomats in Europe describing conditions in Poland and reports from the Polish ambassadors and political leaders of the Polish Government-in-Exile.

The governmental side of the issue is available through corroborating evidence found in the diaries of the

major figures in the Roosevelt administration. Many officials discussed the background and beliefs which led to the creation of policy decisions on the Polish and European aid question.

The question of food for occupied western Europe was more widely discussed than the specific Polish issue during the summer and winter of 1940. America's major newspapers and mass periodicals publicized the issue. Because of its moral and Christian overtones it found its way into Catholic and Protestant publications. Foreign policy, medical, and agricultural journals discussed its implications for America and Europe. The major polling organizations sought out public opinion. Major spokespersons, on both sides of the debate, made national radio addresses and appeared in movie newsreels. It became a highly public issue - on which people had some knowledge and expressed their opinions.

Despite the question of European food aid being so widely discussed, histories of Roosevelt's foreign policy, biographies of Herbert Hoover, and studies on public opinion during these years, have, by and large, ignored the issue.[6] The question of general European relief has

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[6] The developments of Roosevelt's foreign policy from 1939 through 1940 has been widely examined by diplomatic historians. Discussions of this period may be found in: Robert Dallek, Franklin Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, New York: Oxford University Press, 1979; Kenneth S. Davis, FDR: Into the Storm, 1937-1940, New York: Random House, 1993; Robert Divine, Roosevelt and World War II, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969; T. R. Fehrenbach, F.D.R.'s Undeclared War, 1939-1941, New York: David Mckay, 1967; Warren Kimball, The Most Unsordid Act, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1969; Joseph P. Lash, Roosevelt and Churchill, 1939-1941, New York: W.W. Norton, 1976; Frederick W. Marks III, Wind Over Sand, Athens: University of Georgia Press,

been given little scholarly attention for a few very simple reasons. The issue erupted suddenly in the summer of 1940; by that winter, it had been extinguished by the weight of political and popular pressures.

1988; David Reynolds, The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance 1937-1941, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982.

I: *HUNGRY POLAND*

As the Nazi 'Blitzkrieg' overran Poland, the first photo images the American public saw in their newspapers were, as Michael Sherer wrote, "images of an awesome German military force crushing the Polish people."[1] As foreign correspondents in Germany were denied access to the Polish battle fronts, most of these photos provided by German military sources and cleared by Nazi censors were antiseptic. However, the Nazi attack was far from the surgical precision the early photos showed.

In a telegram to American Secretary of State Cordell Hull, American Ambassador Drexel Biddle described the air attack on Warsaw as "wanton barbaric aerial bombardment... [used] to terrorize the civilian population and reduce the number of child producing Poles irrespective of category."[2] In a Time interview, Julien Bryan, an American photo-journalist who was in Warsaw during the air attack, stated that German soldiers and airmen had intentionally slaughtered Poles miles from military objectives. The war in Poland "wasn't a war against soldiers. It was a war against civilians."[3] Until Bryan's graphic images were published in Life magazine, October 23, 1939, many Americans could only imagine the havoc

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[1] Michael D. Sherer, "Invasion of Poland: Photos in Four American Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 62, # 2, 1984 p. 423.
[2] Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull, Volume 1, New York: MacMillan, 1948, p.678.
[3] Time, October 16, 1939, p. 45.

wrought upon the Poland's civilian population during the savage Nazi air assault. The photo-essay brought the horror of Germany's systematic destruction of Poland to the magazine's 20,000,000 readers. "Warsaw", the commentary read, "was the full dress testament to what modern war at its dreadful best can do to a great modern city, what it might do tomorrow to Berlin or Paris."[4] Estimates calculated 95% of Warsaw's homes had been damaged and 30% to 40% had been destroyed. Sewer and electrical systems were seriously disrupted and would not be repaired until after the war.[5] Seventy thousand industrial workers, in Warsaw alone, lost their jobs as the result of the city's destructive bombardment and overall economic activity declined to 25% of the pre-war normal.[6]

By November 1939, Poland was divided into three parts: the eastern segment controlled by the Soviet Union, the western and northern segments annexed to the German Reich, and the General Government which included the area surrounding Warsaw and Cracow not technically a part of the Reich. In a dispatch sent to Washington, George Haering, the American Consul in Warsaw, concluded the

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[4] Life, October 23, 1939. p.28.

[5] Charles G. Roland, Courage Under Seige: Starvation, Disease and Death in the Warsaw Ghetto, New York: Oxford, 1992, pp. 20-21.

[6] " Methods of population control used by German authorities during the past year in the so called General-Government," American Embassy Berlin to Secretary of State, December 7, 1940, 860C.00/872., p. 9, Reel 73, RG. 59. Records of the U.S. Department of State Relating to the International Affairs of Poland, 1919-1944, University Microfims Inc. (hereafter cited as Dept. State, Poland).

Reich had little to gain from the annexation of this impoverished and resource poor area. The Germans had constituted the General Government as a buffer zone between the Soviet and German armies and as a "homeland' for Jews and Poles in line with Nazi policies of racial segregation. Also, wrote Haering, the General Government would be a "convenient reservation...for the deportation of persons from the Reich...where the *Sicherheitspolizei* (a section of the Gestapo) can watch and deal with them more stringently than would be possible if they were scattered throughout the Reich."[7]

Hans Frank, Hitler's appointee as Governor General of the area, quickly established his 'firm rule' over the 12,000,000 people of the General Government, stating November 12, 1939:

> ...the Fuehrer has made arrangements which will ensure that this hitherto misruled area will never again be a storm center for disturbing the order of the civilized world.
>
> I have now taken over the government of this territory in order to make the will of the Fuehrer the highest law in this area.[8]

From 1939 to 1941, before the decision was made to carry out the 'Final Solution', the will of the Fuehrer condemned the peoples of the General Government - Christian and Jew alike - to die a slow death by starvation. The German authorities, through the control of

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[7] "German administration of occupied Polish territory," American Consulate General to Secretary of State, December 30, 1939, # 860C.00/804, pp. 8-9, Reel 65, RG. 59 Dept. State, Poland.

[8] Ibid., p. 11.

food imports and exports, ration distribution and attempted elimination of the 'free market', kept the Polish people at, or below, bare subsistence levels. Christian Poles' rations, it is true, were higher than those of the Jews, but neither group received sufficient 'legal' rations to sustain life.[9]

The wartime diary of Polish resistance fighter Maria Brzeska gives a full and vivid impression of Polish misery under the Nazi regime in the General Government:

> The German rationing system provides bread, potatoes, jam...Fats are regarded as quite unnecessary for Poles. All through the war they have not been allowed fats once...
>
> The wartime bread in Poland is as black as earth, as sticky as clay...It consists of all kinds of substitutes: lupine seeds, chestnuts, sawdust - the percentage of flour is lowest of all. The Germans issue flour for bread rations when it is beginning to go bad in the military stores....
>
> This black and indigestible bread in nonetheless the chief item of food now in many homes. Yet there is always a shortage of it....
>
> Potatoes are issued more generously...usually only about half are fit for eating....
>
> If you have a large income you can get everything in the black market....But everyone must get hold of money for bread, flour and groats. And for these the prices are high too - about 20 zlotys for a kilo.
>
> Nonetheless the people are not starving. Those who are better off help the poorer; the village helps the city.

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[9] According to Charles Roland, "...there was not the slightest chance for Poles or Jews to survive on the official ration." p. 102. A memorandum to the U.S. Department of State from the Polish Government-in-Exile contended: "The invaders' efforts...aim at the extermination of the Polish element...[through]...food rationing on a starvation level..." Prime Minister, Republic of Poland, to Cordell Hull, July 19, 1941, # 860C.48/718, p.71, Reel 73, RG.59 Dept. State Poland.

> Of course there are days of despair in the country side before the harvest is ready, and there is hunger typhus in the towns....
>
> Apart from the shortage of food, there are many other things one has to do without....
>
> Yet the most characteristic feature of the wartime street in Poland is the street trade. The forbidden, hunted street trade, the paradise of smugglers - despair of the German police and salvation of the people....
>
> The enterprising and indestructible street traders play a useful part. They make it possible for the people to somehow survive if only by barter, and with their effective sabotage undermine the German food rationing system.[10]

The Nazi rationing system in conquered Europe differed from that of the Allies. Rationing systems generally distributed available calories in descending amounts according to caloric needs; in such a system, a soldier or a worker in heavy industry required more calories per day than a worker in a sedentary occupation and a base caloric equation can be calculated for the "normal consumer" so that proper health is maintained.[11] In Poland, however, the Nazis allocated food rations primarily by national and racial category. Although, this pattern was followed in all occupied countries, it was not followed with the severity found in the Polish situation. Food was rationed in descending amounts from the German army, German officials, Germans from the Reich, *Volksdeutsche*, to Poles working in factories, remaining

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[10] Anthony March, Darkness Over Europe: First Person Accounts of Life in Europe During the War Years 1939-1945, Chicago: Rand McNally & Co.,1969, pp.125-127, 131.

[11] League of Nations, Wartime Rationing and Consumption, Geneva: League of Nations, 1942, pp. 19-20.

Poles and finally to the Jews.[12] Consequently, wrote a Polish Government official, Poland became a "vast concentration camp in which the prisoners [got] so little food that they [were] in fact doomed to starvation."[13]

The Nazis limited amounts of legal rationed foods, which had to be paid for, to the indigenous population, and suppressed the 'free market' traffic in both rationed and non-rationed goods. This led to an exponential inflationary increase in food prices. Polish sources calculated the price of legal rations climbed between 150% and 160% and the price of free market goods surged 475% between September 1939 and January 1941.

The increase in prices was naturally hard on the ordinary Polish worker and to make the situation even more difficult to bear, the Nazi administration also imposed wage levels and wage freezes at below pre-war levels. An employed Pole's purchasing power, by January 1941, was only 20% of pre-war levels.[14] Price increases were disastrous for the hundreds of thousands of refugees who had fled from Soviet occupied Poland to the General Government and for the deportees from the Reich and annexed Polish provinces. These people had little chance of finding employment and soon found themselves facing starvation as their meager resources were expended.[15]

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[12] #860C.00/872, p. 8, Reel 73, RG. 59, Dept. State Poland.
[13] # 860C.48/718, p.78, Reel 73, RG. 59, Dept. State Poland.
[14] Ibid., p .82.
[15] Ibid., p. 82.

A chart, provided by the British Ministry of Economic Warfare to the New York Times, October 20, 1940, 'How Food Is Rationed In Europe', indicated Poland had the lowest legal rationing of any country in occupied Europe. The weekly ration per person was: Bread-62 oz., Fats-2.25 oz., sugar-5.25 oz. and meat-9 oz.[16] It also noted Germans received extra rations; *Reichsdeutsche* and *Volksdeutsche* received different ration cards from the Poles which allowed them to make purchases of non-rationed foods in German-only shops. The chart, however, was overly optimistic, as even legal rations were often not available to Poles since German requirements were filled first and the Nazis decreased the legal ration levels.

By the beginning of 1941, the best legal rations a Pole could purchase - if available - were 250 grams of bread per day and 10 kilos of potatoes weekly; no fats or sugar were rationed to Poles.[17] The official ration

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16 'How Food Is Rationed In Europe'

	Bread	Butter	Sugar	Meat
Britain	unrationed	8.0	8.0	32.0
Germany	80	9.5	8.0	17.5
France	87	3.5	4.5	12.75
Belgium	56	13.0	7.5	unrationed
Netherlands	89	9.0	9.0	17.5
Poland	62	2.25	5.25	9.0
Denmark	52	4.0	13.0	unrationed
Norway	81	10.5	7.0	unrationed

(all indicate ounces per week per person) Source: New York Times, October 20, 1940, p.22.

17 op. cit., p.77.

provided 2613 calories per day for Germans, 699 for Poles and 184 for Jews.[18]

Although the situation was grim throughout the General Government, mass starvation did not occur. People learned to cope. To obtain sufficient food they sold household goods and clothes and bartered with Polish and Jewish black market smugglers who the Nazis were never able to successfully quash. According to the Jewish historian and Warsaw ghetto dweller Emmanuel Ringelbaum, the ghetto population would have died in a very short time without the smuggler.[19]

The worst situation was in the cities, particularly in Warsaw where 10% of the Jewish population died in 1941. They suffered overcrowding in the Jewish ghettos and in the city proper because of the influx of refugees and deportees. Self-help agencies did what they could to supplement the diet of the tens of thousands of needy persons through meal programs. These programs often provided the person's only meal of the day. However, the food value of the watery soup provided by the public

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[18] Roland, p.102. An example of the differential in rationing is taken from the Litzmannstadter Zeitung for the period of one week following May 15, 1941.

Germans receive	Poles receive
250 gr. fat	none
125 gr. butter	none
500 gr. meat	250 gr.
2 soup cube	1 cube
2 eggs	1 egg
500 gr. flour	none

source: #860C.48/718, p.78, Reel 73, RG. 59, Dept. State Poland.

[19] Emmanuel Ringelbaum, Polish-German Relations During the Second World War, New York: Howard Fertig, 1976, p.75.

kitchens was only 170 to 227 calories per serving.[20] As 1940 progressed, the suppression of 'free market' purchases, diminishing funds and lack of food shipments from the American Joint Jewish Distribution Committee and the Commission for Polish Relief restricted even these minimal activities.

Given the German policy of brutality and starvation in occupied Poland, "It simply wasn't logical," reflected the Warsaw chairman of Jewish Self-Help, that foreign relief workers were allowed permits to enter the country and begin preliminary relief operations in November 1939.[21] The General Government was the only area of the former Poland where aid workers were allowed; aid to Poles in the annexed provinces was precluded. The Soviets refused all western entreaties to aid Poles in their sector, and only allowed American aid to reach Poles who had been deported to Siberia and Kazakhstan after the German invasion of the Soviet Union.

The Germans were quick, however, to assert that no hunger existed in the General Government. "There is no hunger in Poland," claimed Hans Frank, February 1940, before 150 western correspondents, "there isn't even any rationing of bread as in Germany itself."[22] The German Red Cross also claimed its efforts were effective and

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[20] Roland, p.106.
[21] Yisrael Gutman, The Jews of Warsaw, 1939-1943, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982, p.76.
[22] Chicago Tribune, February 10, 1940, p. 4.

impartial. As late as March 1940, at a press conference with the American Red Cross Chairman Norman Davis, Karl Edward, the President of the German Red Cross and Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, stated: "The German campaign in Poland was so short, and the German relief aid after the war so quick and so effective that today the people of Poland are back to normal so far as their everyday lives and immediate needs are concerned."[23] Although agreements were reached in early 1940 concerning aid administration and distribution, the relief agencies' representatives faced German obfuscation and tremendous reluctance to allow travel permits to enter the General Government.[24]

Despite their reluctance to allow food supplies into Poland, it would have been difficult for the German government to deny all access into the General Government. The German government was under diplomatic pressure from the United States to allow relief workers into the General Government. German propaganda, which claimed famine in Europe had been caused by British blockade policy, would have been undermined, and Herbert Hoover's newly created Commission for Polish Relief and his Quaker associates were respected in Germany because of the work they had done in aiding German civilians after the World War.[25]

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[23] Washington Post, March 19, 1940, p. 9.
[24] "Comments on Current Events: Conditions in Poland," Military Attache, Berlin to Department of State, April 29, 1940, #860C.00/868, Reel 73, RG. 59, Dept. State, Poland.
[25] Hall E. Wert, "Flight and Survival: American and British Aid to Polish Refugees in the Fall of 1939," Polish Review, Vol. 34, No. 3, p. 232.

The American Red Cross was not primarily a food distribution agency and restricted its activity to medical supplies. The bulk of foreign food shipments came through the efforts of the American Commission for Polish Relief (CPR) and the Jewish Joint Distribution Agency (JDC). The CPR was dedicated to impartial and non-sectarian food distribution and worked closely with JDC organizations and Polish-Jewish self-help groups in Poland. According to Yehuda Bauer, the CPR representatives in Warsaw were instrumental in having the JDC's Warsaw organization, the *Judische Soziale Selbsthilfe* (JSS) recognized by the Nazis as the Jewish representative on the independent welfare association *Naczelna Rada Opiekunca* (NRO). This association allotted relief supplies to the various organizations in Poland.[26]

The JDC allocated a substantial amount of its Polish budget to the CPR. $250,000 went to the CPR in January 1940, and smaller amounts were later allotted for CPR food purchases in the United States and Europe. JDC contributions amounted to approximately one-quarter of the $900,000 - $1,000,000 CPR spent on Polish relief.[27]

Bauer writes, "JDC figures in or out of Poland , are contradictory and unreliable"[28], but what is evident is

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[26] Yeduda Bauer, American Jewry and the Holocaust: The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1939-1945, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981, p. 85. See also: David Engel, In the Shadow of Auschwitz, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987, pp. 290-91, n. 57.

[27] Bauer gives $966,000 as the amount CPR spent in Poland, p. 99, while Polish Government sources cite $901, 722. # 860C. 48/718 p.83, Reel 73, RG 59, Dept. State Poland. It is interesting to note that the Polish document does not cite the JDC as a contributor of American relief assistance to Poland.

[28] Bauer, pp. 96-98.

that amounts were relatively small compared to the mammoth size of need. According to JDC official records, approximately $205,000 (10,238,062 zlotys) was expended by the JDC in Poland during 1940. Of this money, one-half went to the General Government for purchases of food and clothing. However, the JDC also arranged for transfers of money ($750,000 in 1940) to Poland and received unofficial 'loans' which were sent to Poland.

Neither organization was able to establish, as Herbert Hoover later wrote of the CPR, more than "a meager stream of food and medical relief...to Poland" during two years of tenacious struggle against German obstruction, British blockade policy, shortages of funds and minimal food sources available in Europe.[29] The largest allocation of supplies the CPR could purchase and ship from the United States came in June 1940, when some 1528 tons of foodstuffs, including evaporated milk, rye flour, lard, vegetable fats, sugar and hominy grits, were allowed to pass through the British blockade and reach CPR distribution centers in Warsaw, Radom and Lublin.[30] This single shipment constituted over two-thirds of the total amount CPR would eventually ship. Until the spring of 1941, CPR continued its attempt to purchase foodstuffs in

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[29] Herbert Hoover, An American Epic, Volume IV: The Guns Cease Killing and the Saving of Life From Famine Begins, 1939-1963, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1964, p. 8.
[30] Benjamin T. Anuskewicz, "Relief for Poland: How American funds and food are used to aid the needy in that unhappy country," Current History, June 1940, pp. 40-41, 59.

continental Europe.[31] Gilbert Redfern was able to purchase $100,000 of food in Lithuania for distribution in Poland in May 1941, and negotiated with the Soviet Government for additional stocks. However, by the middle of 1941, all possibilities of purchases on the continent were exhausted.[32]

Total American relief could only be extended on a minimum scale - CPR efforts amounted to only 2.5 cents per person in the General Government.[33] Herbert Hoover claimed that American relief to Poland had saved thousands of lives.[34] This claim is inconceivable, given the desperate situation in the General Government. At best, it may have given momentary respite from the pangs of hunger and provided a measure of hope in an anguished country. It can be argued that, although a failure, at least some humanitarian aid went to Poland. This was not the case in the other countries of occupied Europe where 1200-1500 calorie daily rations were the maximum a common person could hope for - if food was even available in the shops.

It is striking when reading The Diary of Anne Frank that the words of a young girl are so filled with thoughts of food. Her words speak universally for the hungry of war-torn Europe. She thought and wrote about

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[31] Gilbert Redfern to Commission for Polish Relief, Telegram. May 12,1941, 860C.48/683, Reel 72, RG. 59, Dept. State, Poland.

[32] Report of the Polish Ambassador to Hull, January 17, 1944, 860C.48/932, Reel 72, RG. 59, Dept. State Poland.

[33] 860C.48/718, p.85, Reel 73, RG. 59, Dept. State Poland.

[34] Hoover, p. 8.

the scarcity of food in war-time Amsterdam, and the miserable quality and monotony of the family diet. She tells that as she looked from her window in the 'secret annex' on to the winter streets of the Nazi-occupied city she saw misery. Cold, ill-clothed, hungry children begged for scraps of food from people who hurried past. They had no food to give and had little hope of finding extra rations to dull their own hunger. Tragedy was the inevitable outcome. Anne concluded:

> There is nothing we can do but wait as calmly as we can till the misery comes to an end. Jews and Christians wait, the whole world waits; and there are many who wait for death.[35]

[35] Anne Frank, The Diary of Anne Frank, London: Pan Books, 1954, p. 63.

II: *BRITAIN AND POLAND*

In the early months of the war, Britain recognized that the needs of Polish refugees demanded an immense relief operation. Consequently, on October 21, 1939 the British Government formed the Polish Relief Fund. The fund under the joint authority of Lord Moyne and Polish Ambassador Edward Raczynski was meant to supply clothing and medical aid to the 100,000-150,000 Polish refugees in Hungary and Rumania. King George VI and the Princess Elizabeth publically supported the cause and were its first subscribers.[36]

British plans and hopes for civilian relief to Poland itself, however, were much more circumspect. The British government felt they could not properly send aid to a nation which had been conquered by an enemy with whom they were still fighting. Public statements by the leaders of the Polish Relief Fund clearly defined the evolving British concerns: aid to Poland must come from neutrals and any succor to needy Poles would not be allowed to aid Germany.

In a radio appeal for donations to the Polish fund, Ambassador Raczynski set the agency's parameters. He stated that the funds raised would go to the refugee populations and that aid to Poland would probably be

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[36] The Times(London) October 22, 1939, p.3; hereafter cited as The Times.

"mainly directed from neutral countries."[37] In a letter to The Times, Lord Moyne assured the British people that refugee relief would not contravene blockade policy or, in any way, aid the invading powers. According to Lord Moyne, the objective of the Polish Relief Fund was to meet the clothing and medical needs of "Polish refugees and there is therefore no ground for the fear that clothing will fall into the hands of our enemies."[38] Britain feared that relief to Poland might release Germany from its humanitarian obligations to feed the Polish people thereby directly increasing the already formidable threat to Britain. The aid question was, then, inextricably linked to British strategic concerns.

The British government imposed a strategic blockade on Germany on September 4, 1939 and notified the neutral nations that the Royal Navy would prevent contraband goods from reaching the Nazi war machine. Contraband was defined as: goods shipped directly to the enemy; goods shipped to neutral ports where they, or a substitute, could, be shipped to the enemy; and goods which would, under some other manner, fall into enemy control. The British defined contraband under two categories: absolute and conditional. Absolute contraband was arms, ammunitions and explosives or "materials or ingredients used in their manufacture" or "articles necessary or convenient for the

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[37] The Times, November 20, 1939, p.8.
[38] The Times December 5, 1939, p.6.

production or use of such manufacture," fuel, all means of communication, and coinage. Conditional contraband included food, foodstuffs, feed, forage, clothing and any articles and materials used in their manufacture.[39]

The inclusion of food as contraband and liable to seizure meant, of course, that the British government be convinced that food shipments to Poland would not fall into the hands of Germany. The British, under Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax were, however, sympathetic to the needs of occupied Poland. Consequently, they left a circumscribed avenue open to the United States or any other neutral country which might wish to send aid into the General Government area.

The House of Lords debated the question of Polish relief on November 7, 1939, and granted 100,000 pounds to the Polish Relief Fund for the purchase of clothing and medical supplies within Britain. Lord Noel-Buxton contended that aid to Polish refugees was "not merely a question of humanity, but to some extent also of national honour and reputation."[40] The grant was later increased by an additional 127,000 pounds because of "the exceptional work" done by Polish Relief.[41] The first shipment of

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[39] Contraband goods, Department of State Bulletin, September 16, 1939, Volume I:12, pp.250-251.
[40] Excerpts from Hansard found in Waclow Jedrzejewicz (ed.) Poland in the British Parliament, 1939-1945, Volume 1, New York: Joseph Pilsudski Institute of America, 1946, Doc. # 73, p.367; see also: New York Times, October 19, 1940, p. L 10; November 8, 1939, p.12.
[41] The Times February 8, 1940, p.4.

clothing, some 100,000 pieces valued at 61,000 pounds, reached the Polish refugee camps in late December 1940. Lord Moyne believed that British humanitarian aid to Poland could only be provided after peace and victory had been achieved. At the present time, Britain's only option was to aid refugee Poles in Britain or in the Balkans through the Polish Relief Fund. However, Moyne also stated that the amelioration of hardship in Poland could be "dealt with best in the same way [as Belgium in the World War] through the agency of neutrals, particularly the United States."[42]

Lord Noel-Buxton stated: "One feels that the German Government ought to allow such efforts as were made by the Americans [in World War I] because of the need of human relief. Such work as could be done in Poland would have to be done...by neutral organizations."[43] The Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax did not voice opposition to any relief plan being established by interested neutrals, even though Britain could not be a direct participant. Indeed, he welcomed the relief plan contending that "we must endeavour to secure as large a measure of international co-operation as we can."[44]

The inclusion of food as an article of contraband was not initially challenged by the United States government or American relief agencies on humanitarian

[42] Ibid., p. 367.
[43] Ibid., p. 369.
[44] op.cit., p.377.

grounds. It was not challenged on the basis of neutral shipping rights, even though the 'Neutrality Act' stated the shipment of food to aid needy civilians in time of war was permissible.

The United States Government and the American Red Cross were taking a cautious attitude towards relief operations and had only just sent representatives to assess the needs of refugees in Europe. The newly formed relief agencies were only in the formative stages and had no organizational structures for shipping food or other humanitarian relief. Consequently, American aid went in the form of cash donations to established European relief agencies and did not conflict with British blockade policies.

American popular sentiment favoured an Allied victory, as opinion polls showed, and the blockade provided some instance of hope. The American public and media accepted the importance of the principle of blockade uncritically as they were told the blockade was essential for, and assured, a British victory. The British people were "enthusiastic," wrote the Washington Post, that the blockade of Germany would lead to a Nazi defeat. "Sea power is something the people [of Britain] can understand for in their schools they have learned that it is what defeated Napoleon."[45] American newsreels explained to the millions of weekly movie patrons that Britain had achieved

[45] Washington Post, April 5, 1940, pp. 1, 11.

its many victories because of its navy; that its survival depended on the strength of its navy, as nearly all of British food was imported, and the blockade had led to German starvation and defeat in the World War.[46] Time and Newsweek articles agreed with the common assumption that "Economic warfare beat Germany last time"[47], and the World War blockade had developed into a "stranglehold" leading to famine in Germany.[48]

Less popular journals also reported on the importance of Britain's blockade. Foreign Agriculture, a journal of the United States Department of Agriculture, agreed with the others' reports: "the blockade's effectiveness will likely again be a determining factor in the outcome of the present war." The journal's article determined that Germany was virtually as dependent upon food imports in 1939 (18%) as it had been before the World War (20%). The importance Germany placed on this deficiency was indicated by the intensive program for agricultural self-sufficiency it had instituted with its Four Year Plan of 1933. However, even with this program, Germany had been forced to set its standard civilian ration, as of September 23, 1939 at approximately 50% of 1938 consumption levels (Meat-54%, Butter-47%, Sugar-57%, Bread-100%).[49]

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[46] "The Battle Fleets of England," March of Time: The Battle Beyond, Part I, 1939-1940 Embassy Home Entertainment, 1987.
[47] Time, October 9, 1939, p.31.
[48] Newsweek, October 2, 1939, pp.20-22.
[49] Foreign Agriculture, Volume III: 12, November, 1939, pp. 505, 508.

Foreign Policy Reports, October 15, 1939, noted in "Europe's Economic War Potential" that the Reich was virtually self sufficient in basic staples, which provided 83% of needed calories. Food imports were, however, necessary for foods rich in vitamins. The most serious shortage was in fats. German production satisfied only 44% of domestic requirements and the Reich had insufficient reserves even after spending 384.3 million Deutchmarks during the Nazi era on fat import.[50]

The underlying principles behind the British blockade and the need for American popular support became increasingly relevant to the aid question as American relief agencies challenged Britain on the grounds of humanitarian necessity. However, the British had answered these issues in their earliest rationales for the blockade and these arguments were not originally disputed by the United States' government or public.

However, as Sir William Beveridge noted in his arguments for the blockade, if a neutral chose to dispute British policy, that nation's justifications should "turn not on the claims of humanity, but on the rights of neutrals, and the degree and form of permissible interference with their trade."[51] The challenge Britain faced from the U. S. government would evolve over the

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[50] "Europe's Economic War Potential," Foreign Policy Reports, October 15, 1939. New York: Kraus Reprint Company, 1969, p. 187.

[51] Sir William Beveridge, Blockade and the Civilian Population (Oxford Pamphlets on World Affairs) Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940, p. 6.

issue of neutral shipping rights; the Department of State claimed Britain's detention and seizure of American humanitarian supplies was unjustified.

The full-scale reasoning behind British blockade policy was argued by Sir William Beveridge in "Guns or Butter: Germany and the Blockade, A Choice of Policies", The Times, October 25, 1939, and later in his 1940 pamphlet, Blockade and the Civilian Population. According to Sir William, the strategic justification for a strict blockade of Germany was clear: "The cutting off of Germany from overseas supplies in the last War is commonly regarded as having been one of the most effective weapons in the British armory."[52]

This being clear, Sir William answered charges the Soviet Union had brought. A Soviet diplomatic note claimed that British blockade policy was a deliberate and inhumane attempt to starve the innocent German people contrary to international law. The note to the British Government, written October 25, 1939, stated:

> [The] British Government, in fact, proclaims as contraband the basic articles of mass consumption....
>
> This inevitably leads to the profound disorganization of the supply of necessities to the peaceful civilian population...and portends innumerable calamities for the mass of the people...

[52] The Times, October 25, 1939, pp. 9-10; see also: L. P. Thompson, Can Germany Stand the Strain (Oxford Pamphlets on World Affairs, No. 2) Oxford:Clarendon Press, 1939, p.3. Thompson writes: "By the end of the last war Germany had been to economic prostration...The weapon which brought Germany to these straits was the economic warfare conducted mainly by the Royal Navy. This warfare is known as a 'blockade.'

> Principles of international law prohibit bombing of peaceful populations. On the same grounds the Soviet Government deems it is not permissible to deprive the peaceful population of foodstuffs, fuel and clothing, and thus subject children, women and aged people to every hardship and starvation by proclaiming the goods of popular consumption to be contraband.[53]

According to Beveridge, these charges were spurious. He claimed that under the principles of international law, the blockading power was not required to demonstrate greater humanity than that of any belligerent, and that the right of blockade was unquestioned. He cited siege law as an example, contending "should the commander of a besieged place expel the non-combatants, in order to lessen the number of those who will consume his store of provisions, the besieging force may drive them back."[54] As the provisions of a besieged place are finite, the commander is eventually forced to choose one of three unsatisfactory options: surrender, starving the civilians to feed his army, or feeding civilians to the detriment of military effectiveness.

Siege or blockade was not seen under international law as a direct attack on civilians, as the Soviet note claimed. On this question Sir William was aided by Professor A. L. Goodhart. In his 1939 pamphlet What Acts of War Are Justified, Goodhart claimed a distinction should be drawn between direct attacks on civilians i.e., air attack, and those attacks which indirectly affected

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[53] Ibid., p.3.
[54] The Times, October 25, 1939, p. 9.

civilians. Goodhart asserted that when a bomb is dropped on civilians its purpose is to kill: "It is their death which is the direct and essential purpose...on the other hand the purpose of the food blockade is not to kill the women and children, but to deprive the enemy of essential war material."[55]

The main thrust of Sir William's argument was focused on the Soviet contention that the disruption of the civilian food supply "portends innumerable calamities on the mass of people." He argued that the German government had the power to feed its people. It was the choice of Germany's Nazi Government whether or not the German people would suffer privation, as the blockade could not, by its own admission, reduce the Third Reich to starvation levels. Germany was virtually self sufficient in essential foodstuffs. However, their conversion of this food into munitions of war deprived the Germany's citizens of a well-balanced diet.

Sir William elaborated on the close interrelationship between food and armaments. The relationship was so intimate that even though foods were classified as conditional contraband they could rightly be considered as absolute. It was impossible to distinguish between foodstuffs and armaments, given the convertibility of foods into vital commodities of war. If a nation was

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[55] A. L. Goodhart, What Acts of War Are Justifiable (Oxford Pamphlets on World Affairs, No. 38) Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939, p. 3.

willing to undertake the sometimes expensive and wasteful energies for conversion, "any food import which could be allowed by British blockade policy might be used to increase German armaments...[or] release other food which might be converted."[56]

It was well known that Germany converted fats, both animal and vegetable, into armaments. This knowledge provided a primary reason for disallowing foodstuffs through the blockade. Starches were convertible into alcohol, acetone or glycerin or could be used to feed domestic animals for fats used in the production of propellants. Although Germany suffered severe domestic deficiencies in fats - a food vital to proper human health - and had been importing fats in great quantities at great expense throughout the Nazi era, these fats had not gone to feeding her civilian population. The imports were used in armaments production. Clearly, when Germany was offered the choice of "Guns or Butter", it chose guns. The restriction of fats, a food group in which Germany was deficient, was a pressure point on which the strictures of the blockade could adversely affect the Nazi economy and provided a primary reason for foodstuffs inclusion as contraband.[57]

Beveridge also contended that "in a totalitarian war very few of the inhabitants of a belligerent country can

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[56] Ibid., p.11.
[57] Beveridge, pp 8-9.

be regarded as peaceful", as factory and agricultural workers were as vital to the war economy as soldiers. This had not been the case in pre-modern wars. Those wars were fought between armies and the general population was only marginally involved. Historic conceptions were no longer valid. In 1900, Lord Salisbury could rightfully contend that: "Foodstuffs, with a hostile destination, can be considered as contraband of war only if they are supplies for the enemy forces."[58] However, in 1939, belligerents could not distinguish as readily between military and civilian resources. Civilians were understood by governments as being directly related to that nation's war making capabilities. Therefore, all foodstuffs, whether directly or indirectly, were converted to military use.

In modern totalitarian war the "essential foodstuffs of every belligerent become a single store, owned or controlled by the central government, directed to serve the military or civilian population as best may serve the single purposes of success in war."[59] To distinguish between civilian or military supplies would be totally unsound from a strategic perspective.

The essential purpose of the sea blockade was to deprive Germany of essential war materials and drive her to exhaustion as had been done in World War I. Germany

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[58] Ibid., p.13.
[59] Ibid., p.14.

would be forced by the effects of the blockade to utilize its soldiers and factory workers to increase agricultural production and to find "alternative methods" for the production of necessary materials; alternative methods which were wasteful and expensive compared to the "easier" method of importing those goods. "Easier," according to Beveridge, "means releasing power for her main task of defeating her enemies."[60]

Even though Germany was, for all purposes, self sufficient in domestic food production, it did not have sufficient supplies to feed both its armaments needs and its civilian population. "If the civilian population of Germany...goes short of essential food in this war," wrote Sir William "that will be a decision of the Nazi party, because the Government diverted so much of their total resources to making and using munitions as to starve their own women and children."[61] This was the decision the German government had made between 1914 and 1918 and the British expected the Nazi government would repeat this fatal error. However, it would be their decision, not a necessary consequence of the British blockade.

Ronald Cross, Britain's Minister of Economic Warfare, reiterated Sir William's perspective on the blockade's purpose and its eventual effect in an interview published in the New York Times, November 12, 1939. Cross stated

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[60] Ibid., p.26.
[61] Ibid., p.27.

the aim of the blockade was to cripple German industry. German and Russian charges that the blockade would cause starvation were unfounded: "Provided [Germany] uses food for food purposes it is impossible for Britain to starve out Germany". It would lead, however, to Germany's industry being "starved out."[62] The essence of the food blockade was to force the Nazi enemy into making a decision - feed the people or feed the guns. Either decision would be crippling to Germany's war effort in the long term. Not forcing Germany into a decision would be disastrous for Britain.

By the end of 1939, the question of direct aid to Poland was in a state of limbo. The British government, although willing to aid refugees in the Balkans, had handed the responsibility for humanitarian relief in conquered Poland to interested neutrals. However, as British blockade policy showed, they were vitally concerned that no food should go to Germany to directly or indirectly aid Nazi war-making capabilities.

To this point in the war, no American humanitarian relief had gone directly to Poland. Consequently, Britain had not been forced to address the question of whether any eventual aid would, in fact, release Polish food supplies for Germany's benefit. Until the end of January 1940, the Nazi conquerors had not allowed relief workers or

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[62] New York Times. November 12, 1939, p.12.

independent agencies into occupied Poland to distribute aid.[63]

The testing time of Britain's resolve came in the aftermath of the Vatican's broadcasts of January 1940, which detailed the scope of German religious persecution, atrocity, defilement and a deliberate policy of starvation in Poland. The Economist asserted: "there was nothing in the future of that state save the slow agony of famine and disease."[64] The Polish Government-in-Exile, as well, began issuing regular reports on the situation in Poland, which The Times reported as "making a great impression owing to the accumulation of details from many sources."[65]

The German Government faced diplomatic pressure from the United States and opened talks with representatives of the American Red Cross to allow neutral supervision of aid distribution. According to The Times, "a vigorous counter-propaganda campaign has already been started and is attempting to overtrump the facts which have been made known to the world about German atrocities."[66] German propaganda broadcasts correctly stated that the British were detaining American food supplies destined for Poland.

The British refused to allow American relief shipments through the blockade until they had guarantees that the food would reach the starving population of

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[63] The Times, January 25, 1940, p.6.
[64] The Economist, January 27, 1940, p.137.
[65] The Times, January 30, 1940, p.6.
[66] The Times, February 12, 1940, p.6.

Poland. According to Lord Drogheda, Chairman of the Contraband Control Committee, the British Government considered the German government's assurances to the American Red Cross as "absolutely of no value whatsoever."[67] Until assurances came from the American Government that all relief supplies would be delivered and distributed by the American Red Cross, or another suitable neutral agency, no food shipments would be allowed through the blockade.

[67] The Times, February 15, 1940, p.5.

III: *IMPEDIMENTS TO POLISH RELIEF*

The image of Hitler as devil or demon was familiar to the readers of Time magazine. Hitler had been named 'Man of the Year' in 1938 but the Fuehrer was not portrayed in martial splendor as the leader of the Third Reich: he was drawn as the "Organist of Hate" playing his unholy hymn in a ruined Gothic cathedral. Nazi generals looked on in admiration as an enslaved German clergyman offered a blessing to the organist as victims dangled on meat hooks suspended on a medieval torture wheel. Historic Poland had been a civilized nation, a homeland for renowned scientists and artists. In its twenty years of independence, Poland had been moving towards democracy: it had a record of social progress. Now the republic was dead and its people listened to the mad organist's cacophony of hate.[68] In the first month of the war, American press coverage of Poland's struggle emphasized its bravery in the face of overwhelming odds, the courage of its soldiers, the steadfastness of its political leaders and the terror of the Nazi *blitzkrieg*.[69] Poland's resistance to Nazism had been, said Time, a "war to stop the Devil A[dolf] Hitler from putting an arrowy tail on every good Catholic in Poland."[70]

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[68] Time, January 4, 1939, cover.
[69] Time, October 16, 1939, p.45.
[70] Time, September 11, 1939, p.3.

Poland's cause, however, did not become the 'cause celebre' of the war's early months. Unfortunately, fine words of sympathy were not transformed into action. The factors against Polish relief were mounting: Poland's struggle had ended quickly and decisively, Germany was reluctant to allow aid workers into Poland, American newspaper corespondents were not allowed into occupied Poland, and the American public - which viewed foreign reports with a more than healthy skepticism - was dubious of claims from obviously self-interested groups. Congressional action was slow to materialize and American public opinion constrained what actions the Roosevelt administration might have wished to undertake.

Moreover, popular sentiment did not demand that the American Red Cross initiate a large scale aid program in Poland as new heroes - the Finns - had grabbed the attention and support of the American public. The Finnish army's heroic stand against the Soviet Union during the "Winter War" of 1939-1940, and the unity and determination of the Finnish people, provided drama, heroism and hope that a small European nation could prevail against the tyranny of Bolshevism. Life's February 19, 1940 issue commented that "U. S. anger against the Soviet rises not alone in the fact that Russian armies invaded Finland, it rises in America's all-embracing sympathy for the underdog, for almost any David against any Goliath. Poland's end came too quickly before

American sympathies could be stirred. But Finland has held out."[71] The factors working against relief to Poland were the obverse in Finland and the American people rushed to aid that nation.

The news of Poland was superseded by front page reports of the Finnish-Soviet war from December 1939 through March 1940. Also, Polish relief campaigns were taking a distant second place in the face of the developing, dynamic, focused Finnish relief blitz. Certainly, a factor in the phenomenal outpouring of American sentiment was the freedom American newspapers had to cover that war directly without the impediments of invasive censorship or propaganda. Foreign news created doubt, fear and anxiety in the public mind; independent American news was believed.

The March of Time newsreel "Republic of Finland, 1919-1940" praised the hard-working, thrifty, intelligent Finns and their government, that protected basic freedoms and paid their war debts. Nothing had stirred sympathies of U. S. citizens more than Finland's fight to maintain independence. The actions of the American public in quickly providing humanitarian aid and support for Congressional non-military loans to Finland exhibited "overwhelming sympathy of American people for a

[71] Life. February 19, 1940. p.28.

little country which has already become the Belgium of the Second World War."[72]

Needed humanitarian aid could reach Finland quickly on American ships. The President had not declared Finland a 'belligerent' under the regulations of the 'Neutrality Act' or included the northern sea-lanes in the prohibited 'combat zones'. Consequently, there were no legal impediments to America's shipping goods to Finland. The American Red Cross and Herbert Hoover's newly organized 'Campaign for Finnish Relief Inc.' pressed the American public for its charitable dollars, as each organization marshaled its particular strengths. The Red Cross shipped medical supplies, ambulances, mobile hospitals and clothing. The Hoover organization raised and sent money.

The Hoover campaign, operating out of New York, was running a high profile, focused, national campaign which eventually received millions of dollars for Finland. The New York Times published an almost daily running total of donations. At the end of March 1940, it reported that, since its creation on December 8, 1939, the Hoover fund had received $3,000,000, an average of $27,000 per day, and that much of the funds had already been distributed to reliable relief agencies operating on Finland's behalf.[73]

The campaign reached out to the humanitarian consciences of ordinary American people. Over 1,100,000

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[72] " Republic of Finland, 1939-1940," The March of Time: The Battle Beyond, Part 2, Embassy Home Entertainment, 1987.
[73] New York Times, March 29, 1940, p.7.

individuals made their concerns known with anonymous fifty cents or one dollar contributions to the collection boxes at local theater and with donations to the town newspaper for forwarding to the Finnish Committee. The Finnish relief campaign, however, also catered to, and received contributions from, America's wealthiest corporations whose chief executive officers sat as high ranking officers on committee boards. The society pages dutifully reported on America's richest citizens who donated their money, time and efforts to Finnish relief. Movie and radio celebrities stood arm in arm with Hoover at fund raisers; Broadway directors and actors donated receipts and salaries to the cause.[74] The success of this campaign could not be matched by any other campaign established to aid specific countries. Only the Red Cross May 1940 'War Drive' demanded a greater outpouring of support from a broad spectrum of the general public.

An assertion that the American public suffered from long term memory loss, or mere fickleness, would be overly simplistic, but there were contemporary reports giving the idea some weight. A February 4, 1940 editorial cartoon, originally published in the Louisville Courier-Journal and reprinted in the Detroit Free Press, captures the elements of the American public's memory and sentimentalism. The cartoon shows an individual, labeled 'Public Sympathy', staring lovingly at a movie poster of

[74] New York Times, January 21, 1940, p.27.

'Finland in Heroic Defense' now playing at the 'War Theater'. In the background, torn posters of earlier features, entitled 'Poland' and 'Czechoslovakia', lay forgotten in the back-alley as new heroes capture public attention.[75] Finnish relief could become a reality; it was not impeded by the many problems facing Polish relief.

Life's September 25, 1939 issue had cautioned readers to remember the lessons of the World War. Britain had lied to America. British propaganda had seduced a gullible America into believing stories of German atrocities in Belgium. These lies, in part, had led America to war and disillusionment.[76] A Gallup Poll, taken on October 20, asked the question: "Why do you think we entered the last war?". Only 26% of those polled believed America had a "just cause", while 34% stated America was the "victim of propaganda" and selfish interests.[77]

In 1939, the American people needed little cautioning; their skepticism was evident. A Gallup Poll of early September 1939 showed America's distrust of foreign news reports. When asked the question: "Do you have confidence in the news from Germany?", just 1% said they had complete confidence, 33% had some confidence and

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[75] Detroit Free Press, February 4, 1940, p. 8; see illustration I.
[76] Life, September 25, 1939. p.72; see also: Walter Laqueur, The Terrible Secret, Boston: Little Brown, 1980. pp. 7-8. Laqueur 's work illustrates that the world's disbelief that the Holocaust was in fact occurring was caused, in part, by the horrid propaganda claims made against the Germans by the British during World War I.
[77] Gallup, Ibid., p. 192.

66% had no confidence. When asked the same question in regards to England and France, only 8% stated they had full confidence, 62% had some confidence and 30% stated they had no confidence.[78]

The Gallup findings were substantiated by a Roper Poll conducted for Time's sister magazine Fortune taken in December 1939. To the question: "Do you believe all, most, some, little or none of the war news items from these cities?"

Those polled answered:

	Washington	London	Paris	Berlin	Moscow
all	13.6	1.4	1.3	0.4	0.4
most	35.3	10.0	8.8	2.0	1.7
some	32.7	48.5	47.2	29.6	25.9
little	10.3	29.9	27.6	41.1	33.3
none	1.9	5.5	5.8	18.0	20.9

[79]

Although both the Gallup and Roper findings show the American people almost universally distrusted some or all of the news emanating from Berlin or Moscow, they also indicate distrust of news emanating from Allied capitals and Washington. Few Americans trusted 'all' or 'most' of the news from any European capital. On a percentage basis the totals of the middle categories, 'some belief' and 'little belief' are not overwhelmingly different for the Allied or Axis camps: Washington - 43%, London - 78.4%, Paris - 74.8% (The Polish Government-in Exile- reported from Angers, a suburb of Paris), Berlin - 70.7%, Moscow - 59.2%.

[78]Gallup, Ibid., p. 182.
[79] Time. December 4, 1939. p.19.

Time's analysis of the Roper survey concluded that the American people were leery of news from any government source. The American people felt that they had been betrayed by former Allies and by their well-meaning government who had led them into war for the wrong reasons. They did not want this to happen again:

> Burned by the fire of War I, the U. S. shuns the blaze of War II. Believing themselves to be have been well singed by the Allied and German propaganda of War I, the U.S. people are on the whole reluctant to believe even what their world's most honest press can learn about War II.[80]

Neutral observers and American reporters, along with reporters from other nations, had been ordered out of Nazi occupied Poland in October 1940. The American Ambassador, Anthony Biddle, and most of the diplomatic community, had fled to France to be with the Polish Government-in-Exile, leaving only a small American consular staff to deal with the few remaining American nationals. American consulate staff was ordered out of Poland in February 1940. Without a free neutral press or a full diplomatic contingent in Poland, only refugees and the Polish Government-in-Exile could tell stories of Poland's deprivations under the Nazi terror.

The tales of starvation and atrocity coming from Polish groups were countered by the German propaganda ministry.[81] A statement made by Polish Premier Wladyslaw

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[80] op. cit.

[81] Deborah E. Lipstadt, Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1945, New York: Macmillan Inc.,pp. 136-137.

Sikorski, reported in the New York Times, contains elements reminiscent of British World War propaganda claiming German atrocity, which were subsequently shown to be false. Sikorski stated: "Poland under German rule has become a land of martyrs. Nazi barbarity adds a new and terrible page to the history of German atrocities and aggressions throughout the ages."[82] Statements from the German Foreign Office were also quoted in the New York Times. The German reports stated that although "the impoverished population forms ragged lines before shops to get food... [and] many inhabitants are homeless....[they are] being fed by German and Polish relief agencies"; there was, according to Berlin reports, no need for aid from outside relief agencies. The German report also claimed that "Warsaw is coming back to life and taking on the appearance of a normal city....Today Poland's society is dancing once more with undeniable grace and chic on a parquet floor."[83]

The German claim that food was going to the needy was substantiated by American consular reports and eyewitness observations by an American Quaker official.[84] According to historian Yehuda Bauer and contemporary

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[82] New York Times. November 30, 1939. p.8.
[83] New York Times. January 14, 1940. p.34.
[84] Both the American consulate and the Quaker, William McDonald, qualified their statements, but, in fact, they were true claims by the Germans. The American official also stated that the Germans attempted to extort reimbursement from the Warsaw municipal aid agency. McDonald stated that Jews were denied any of the food the Germans brought into Poland. "German Administration of Occupied Polish Territory," Division of European Affairs, February 19, 1940, # 860C.00/804, Reel 65, RG. 59 Dept. State Poland; see also Roland, p. 101.

witnesses, there were restaurants in Warsaw where patrons could purchase (for huge sums of money) any foods they wished. Although these places were frequented by smugglers and criminals, who were the "new aristocracy of the society", they provided needed German propaganda.[85]

It was not until the publication of Cardinal Primate of Poland Auguste Hlond's report of late January 1940, also broadcast over Vatican radio, that Poland's agony was accepted without reservation in the American press. According to the New York Times, which printed the full texts of the Cardinal's reports, the indictment of Germany's suppression of the Catholic Church, the persecution and murder of priests, and the brutal oppression of the Polish people had added the "necessary measure of truth" to the reports coming from Polish sources. Prior to the Cardinal's reports, the opinion had been that the stories from obviously interested Polish sources were tinged with more elements of self-interest than objective fact.[86]

Major periodicals now ran articles decrying atrocities. Newsweek's "Pillage in Poland," described Soviet actions as "infamy of every description, [yet] heart rending as news from that quarter has been ...even more persistent is the assault...in that part of Poland that has fallen to German administration."[87] Nation's

[85] Bauer, p. 74.
[86] New York Times, January 29, 1940, p. 1.
[87] Newsweek, February 5, 1940.

article "Mass Murder in Poland" spoke of Germany's policy of "deliberate depopulation" of occupied Poland and Gestapo instructions to begin "mass sterilization" of Poles. Furthermore, German actions against the Jews were a "calculated plan to remove them from the occupied area by creating conditions intolerable or impossible for human life."[88]

However, American press coverage of Polish misery was purely descriptive; there was no concerted editorial call in the major papers or mass periodicals for increased American humanitarian intervention or for America to put diplomatic pressure on Germany. Interest in the Polish issue died out quickly. The Washington Post ran a front page story the day the Cardinal's report was released, but no follow-up articles appeared in the Post's pages. In Detroit, news interest in Polish issues was maintained for a few days longer, as the release of the report coincided with the visit of the Polish Government-in-Exile's Minister of Information, and war hero, Joseph Haller. The New York Times began to run Polish issues again in the back pages.

The publicity surrounding the release of the Polish reports moved some Congressmen to action, but little was resolved on the numerous Polish relief bills put before the Foreign Relations Committees. Congressman Hamilton Fish of New York appealed to the Congress. "America", he

[88] Nation, January 27, 1940.

said, "if it has any humanity at all, cannot refuse to turn over its surplus wheat and cotton over to feed and clothe the Poles." Congressman John Tenerowicz asserted: "The private contributions of Polish-Americans will not suffice in the face of this historic and colossal emergency". Congressional action was of utmost importance if millions were not to perish in occupied Poland.[89]

In an impassioned speech to the Congress, January 24, 1940, New York Congressman Sol Dickstein pleaded with his fellow representatives not to forget Poland, and not to be overwhelmed by their sympathies toward Finland to the detriment of the Polish people, who "have been raped by both the Nazis and the Communists. We have heard many talks on the floor and in the other body about Finland," said Dickstein. "What about Poland, my friends? Poland, with 40 million or more people, is being annihilated, in the most cruel way possible."[90] In an interview Hoover was asked why there was so little support for Polish relief, when Finland was so popular? "The Polish Committee has not been able to arrange for a satisfactory distribution of relief in German occupied Poland. We will make the same effort there as soon as arrangements can be made...We can't get to them."[91]

The advocates of Polish relief recognized the severe limiting factors which must be overcome before an aid bill

[89] Congressional Record, Volume 86, Pt. 13, (Appendix), p. 218 (hereafter cited as CR).
[90] C.R. 76th Congress, 3rd Session, 1940, Volume 86, Pt. I, pp. 621-627.
[91] Detroit Free Press, February 5, 1940. p.2.

would be passed and a program implemented. All agreed that no American relief ought to go to Poland without complete control by Americans. Germany had not yet allowed full American supervision of relief distribution. Until this time, Congressman Tenerowicz said that the Red Cross was handling their job in Poland by "remote control" in collaboration with the Germans. Reports that Germany was seizing food that was being sent to Poland spurred on Britain's refusal to allow further supplies through the blockade. All of these factors together amounted to a near insurmountable barrier to a large scale relief operation.[92]

If a large scale relief operation for Poland could have been put into effect in 1939 it would have had to come from the American Red Cross (ARC). The outbreak of the European war saw the ARC occupying an enviable position within the United States' humanitarian community. New 'temporary' humanitarian agencies were forced to overcome the American public's reluctance to support unproved agencies while also coping with the problems of organizational structure, distribution systems, and fund raising.

The American people trusted their Red Cross, which had been established by congressional charter in 1900 (revised 1905), as America's permanent national relief agency. As the Christian Science Monitor wrote, "[The

[92] C.R. Volume 86, Pt. 1. pp. 1092-1095, 1111-1112.

ARC] tops all agencies in public confidence because of its long, impartial and courageous record of national and international service."[93] Millions of dollars were contributed annually to its membership drives and in 1939 more than a million Americans contributed their time and energy as Red Cross volunteers. The millions of dollars received allowed the ARC to operate, according to its vice-president James T. Nicholson, "a vast and diversified social service program" supported by a national executive, as well as established regional and local offices staffed by specialists in the medical and social service fields.[94] The capital and infrastructure were in place for the ARC to deliver money or material goods at short notice to victims of disaster.[95]

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[93] Christian Science Monitor, October 13, 1939, p. 1.

[94] James T. Nicholson, "The Social Service Program of the American Red Cross, " Social Service in Wartime, Helen Wright (ed.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944, p. 69.

[95] Red Cross Service Record: Accomplishments of Seven Years, July 1, 1939-June 30, 1946 indicates the scope of the ARC's capabilities. In the fiscal year, 1939-1940, the organization had 3,482 paid personnel at the national and local levels buttressed by an army of 1,200,000 volunteers. The local organization of the ARC is based upon the chapter -- organized on a county basis. At its peak during 1945, the ARC had 3,754 chapters, one in almost every county in the United States and employed 39,032 paid personnel and 7,500,000 volunteers working in various capacities for the organization.

The 1939 balance sheet of the American Red Cross showed figures as impressive as its volunteer roles. As of July 1, 1939, the ARC had an operating balance of $14,048,139.01. From 1 July 1939 to 31 December 1941 an additional $9,605,009.80 was raised through annual roll call campaigns (donations were received from 7,047,251 persons in December, 1939); other contributions for foreign war relief added $2,801,627.97; the May 1940 'War Drive' campaign, itself, raised $21, 912,909.82. These contributions enabled the American Red Cross to spend $14,306,124.23 in overseas war relief from September 1939 to December 1941. These figures do not, however, include the value added to volunteer produced goods. Red Cross figures calculate value added at a radio of $4.00 per $1.00 spent, therefore the $37, 867,500 spent in overseas relief in World War II translates into $152,071,918 worth of civilian relief supplies. Red Cross Service Record: Accomplishments of seven Years, July 1, 1939--June 30, 1946, Washington, D. C.: The American National Red Cross, 1946, pp.61-67, 104-105.

Private donations from ordinary Americans made the ARC wealthy; its international relief network, its associations with foreign governments, and its ties to the diplomatic community and its links to the United States' Government made it influential and powerful. During the war years, ARC Chairman Norman Davis, a former American diplomat and life long Democrat, maintained a close relationship with Franklin Roosevelt, and met weekly with the President on relief matters. Davis was also a friend of Secretary of State Cordell Hull and a golfing partner of Britain's Ambassador Lord Lothian and of Assistant Secretary of State for Relief and Emergency Matters Breckenridge Long.

Presidential support for relief operations to war-torn Europe was extended only to the ARC. President Roosevelt's October 12, 1939 call for American support for humanitarian relief, written by Cordell Hull and Norman Davis, was issued in the name of the ARC.[96] Also, during his May 26, 1940 "Fire-side Chat" Roosevelt asked America to turn to its Red Cross to aid European refugees.[97] The administration supported the ARC in its negotiations with Great Britain and Germany when the time came to facilitate aid shipments to Poland, and lobbied in the Congress for

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[96] Department of State Bulletin. October 21, 1939. 1:17, p.404.
[97] Russell Buhite (ed.) F. D. R.'s Fireside Chats. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992, p. 153.

special ARC provisions in the 'Neutrality Act' which allowed ARC ships to enter prohibited belligerent ports.[98]

Although the ARC was entirely funded by private contributions, it was also, as a former Red Cross vice-president of the ARC expressed, a "quasi-governmental agency" established by the Congress.[99] The ARC chairman was a presidential appointee and the President of the United States was, 'ex officio', President of the American Red Cross. Foster Dulles, a historian of the ARC, contends that the organization was an adjunct of the State Department - a "quasi-official arm of government" - whose policies exhibited the humanitarian arm of Roosevelt's foreign policy.[100] The inter-relationship of the Red Cross and the American government did not, however, give it a free hand in conducting its relief operations. In fact, it placed the ARC in an exceedingly tenuous position as its responsibilities and obligations were seen as

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[98] The applicable sections of the 'Neutrality Act of 1939' [Public Resolution--No. 54--76th Congress) [H. J. Res. 306] are:
Sec.2. (a) Commerce With states Engaged in Armed Conflict. Wherever the President shall have issued a proclamation under the authority of section 1 (a) [Proclamation of a State of War Between Foreign States] it shall thereafter be unlawful for any American vessel to carry any passengers or articles or materials to any state named in such proclamation.
Sec. 3.(a) Combat Areas Whenever the President shall have issued a proclamation under the authority of section 1(a), and he shall thereafter find that the protection of citizens of the United states so requires, he shall by proclamation, define combat areas, and thereafter it shall be unlawful, except under such rules and regulations as may be prescribed, for any citizen of the United States or any American vessel to proceed into or through any such combat area....
Sec.4. American Red Cross The provisions of section 2 (a) shall not prohibit the transportation by vessels under charter or other direction and control by vessels under charter or other control of the American Red Cross, proceeding under safe conduct granted by states named in any proclamation issued under the authority of section 1 (a), of officers and American Red Cross personnel, and medical supplies, food, and clothing, for the relief of human suffering.
[99] Nicholson, Ibid., p.69.
[100] Foster R. Dulles, The American Red Cross: A History, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950. see Chapter 20, " In the Shadow of War", pp. 339-57.

manifestly greater than any other relief organization. Its actions would reflect upon the administration as the ARC's policies were perceived by the Congress and the American people to be closely linked to the foreign policy of FDR's administration.

Because of this inter-relationship, the Roosevelt administration's cautious attitude in foreign affairs was mirrored in Red Cross actions. Neither the administration nor the ARC knew how popular a massive Polish aid program would be in an isolationist America. The ARC did not want to risk its position by initiating an operation which ran ahead of public opinion and perception. The ARC executive considered the special relationship of trust the ARC shared with the American people vitally important. The early months of the war were viewed as a perilous time for the organization. Rash actions at the outset of war might have destroyed the ability to conduct operations in Europe if the war continued and expanded. If credibility was lost in international affairs, the ARC's ability to conduct the domestic programs their congressional charter required could also be jeopardized.

The American people feared the 'thin wedge' that could, perhaps, lead them into an unwanted war and they distrusted European reports of German atrocity. Consequently, the ARC believed its public face must be nothing less than complete neutrality to ensure the bond

between the American public and the ARC would not be broken.

Davis made this point in a statement to the Central Committee of the Red Cross prior to the start of the war. The American Red Cross, he said, "should be cautious, to see that its course of action could not be interpreted as indicating a belief that the United States ought to be, or eventually would become, involved in such a war."[101] In a public statement made December 12, 1939, Davis cautiously limited the scope of ARC activities. He stated that although the Red Cross had international obligations, it would focus on the "continuing and primary responsibilities for the conduct of Red Cross work in the United States."[102]

Although Davis's cautious statement appeared to place limits upon ARC actions, he neither precluded increased ARC action nor indicated that the ARC was willing to turn

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[101] Ibid.

[102] New York Times, December 12, 1939, p.17. The necessity for the absolute appearance of neutrality became particularly evident, and indicative that humanitarian relief programs were examined in the same light as any governmental program appearing to exhibit an "unneutral " attitude on the part of the United States' government, occurred when Senator Bennett Clark of Missouri, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, stood in the Senate, May 9, 1940, and accused the ARC of becoming a "recruiting agency for an undeclared war". He believed, he said, that ARC's hiring of extra medical-technical staff (2) were for war preparation. He quoted statements of Red Cross officials, reported in the New York Post, that the ARC was prepared for "M" day and could raise $100,000,000 though a "high pressure" campaign. "There can only be one purpose to be accomplished [with these releases]," he thundered, "and that is to inflame the mind of the American people as to the inevitability of our engaging in war and the creation of the impression that war is imminent or shortly to be imminent in this country." The executive committee of the ARC had authorized a 'War Drive' May 8, as the invasion of northern Europe showed the ARC would require a massive injection of funds to undertake relief operations. The Senator's blast fell on deaf ears, however, as the invasion of western Europe led to the popular out-cry for the ARC to lend its help to European refugees . Congressional Record, 76th Congress, 3rd Session, 1940, Volume 16, Pt. 6, p. 5821.

the responsibility for aid operations over to any other agency. If the war expanded, civilian needs would increase beyond the normal scope of ARC activity. In this event, the ARC could coordinate, as it had done in the past, the activities of other relief agencies to prevent duplication of services.[103]

As the senior agency, the ARC would remain the pre-eminent humanitarian organization, and be in a position to control and limit the direction of aid in accordance with its administration policy. Also, in the ARC's opinion, the temporary emergency organizations established at the beginning of the war did not have the capacity for organizing an effective overseas operation.

The ARC answered a German Red Cross request for aid to Poland with a $25,000 grant for medical supplies. However, questions were soon raised by American officials as to its proper distribution. The German military authorities refused to allow neutral aid workers into occupied Poland. They claimed that civil unrest made it too dangerous for the representatives of neutral aid agencies to enter Poland.[104] Until agreements could be reached, the ARC restricted activities to aiding the thousands of Polish refugees in the surrounding neutral countries.

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[103] New York Times, December 14, 1940, p. 17.
[104] Chicago Tribune, November 28, 1939, p. 4.

To meet the immediate needs of Polish refugees who had fled to neutral Rumania and Hungary, the ARC answered the call of the Polish, Hungarian and Rumanian Red Cross Societies for relief aid, dispatched American representatives to Europe to survey the situation, and allocated $1,000,000 for refugee relief.[105] Although the ARC announced these advances and contributed $100,000 directly to Red Cross societies in Europe, the organization soon came under criticism from relief agencies already operating in Rumania and Hungary.

Paul Super, Director of Y. M. C. A. relief operations and an agent for the Commission for Polish Relief (CPR), was angered by ARC policy which prevented the direct release of all emergency funds. ARC policy required that the bulk American relief supplies be purchased in the United States and distributed under ARC control and supervision. Consequently, the first ARC relief supplies of clothing, bedding and drugs valued at $200,000 did not reach the refugee camps until late December 1939.[106]

This restrictive policy limited agencies such as Super's, which had experienced personnel in Europe, and established refugee aid centers, from meeting immediate needs for food and clothing. The newly established CPR did not operate under these same policy guidelines and was willing to send funds directly to responsible agents

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[105] New York Times, October 14, 1939, p.14.
[106] "The Red Cross and the War," Current History, December, 1939, pp.58-9.

operating refugee facilities. Consequently, from the first days of relief operations, friction developed between the established ARC and the upstart CPR, whose leaders challenged Amcross's authority and relief methods.[107]

German obfuscation stymied any American relief activities in the General Government until the end of November 1939, when German authorities and the ARC came to an agreement on relief methods. Under the terms of the agreement the German Red Cross would be the official agency to administer and control relief. This was consistent with the terms of the International Red Cross treaty. However, a German "pledge of impartiality" was also obtained. American relief workers were denied access to all areas of Nazi occupied Poland except Cracow. They were allowed to travel with the relief shipment, but could only remain in Poland until Polish agencies had initially distributed the supplies under joint American-German supervision. This agreement ensured that "the heartbreakingly urgent needs" of the Polish people for medicine, clothes and hospital supplies could be met without delay. With the receipt of this partial pledge, Davis authorized a $250,000 shipment of American clothing and medical supplies to Poland via Gibraltar and the neutral port of Genoa.[108]

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[107] Chicago Tribune, October 20, 1939, p.12.
[108] New York Times, November 28, 1939, p.4; Chicago Tribune November 28, 1939, p.2.



Louisville Courier-Journ

A New Heroine

ILLUSTRATION I

ILLUSTRATION II



Herblock in The Wilmington

"This much we can do."



ILLUSTRATION III

London Daily Sketc

'Feed Jonah and you feed the whale'

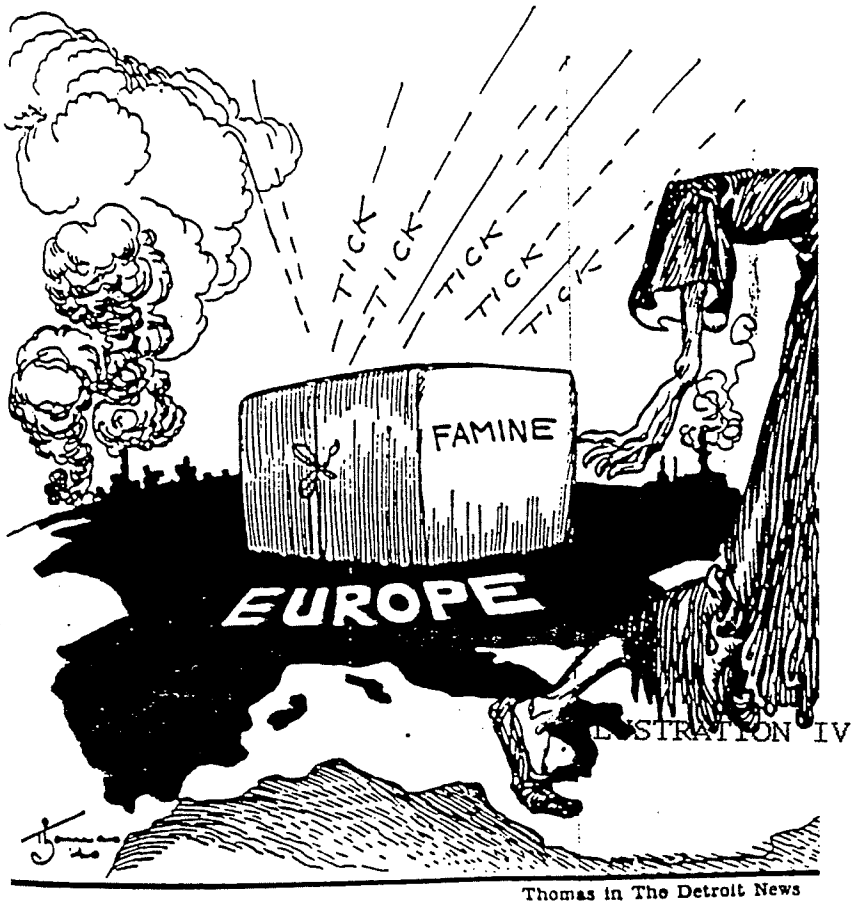
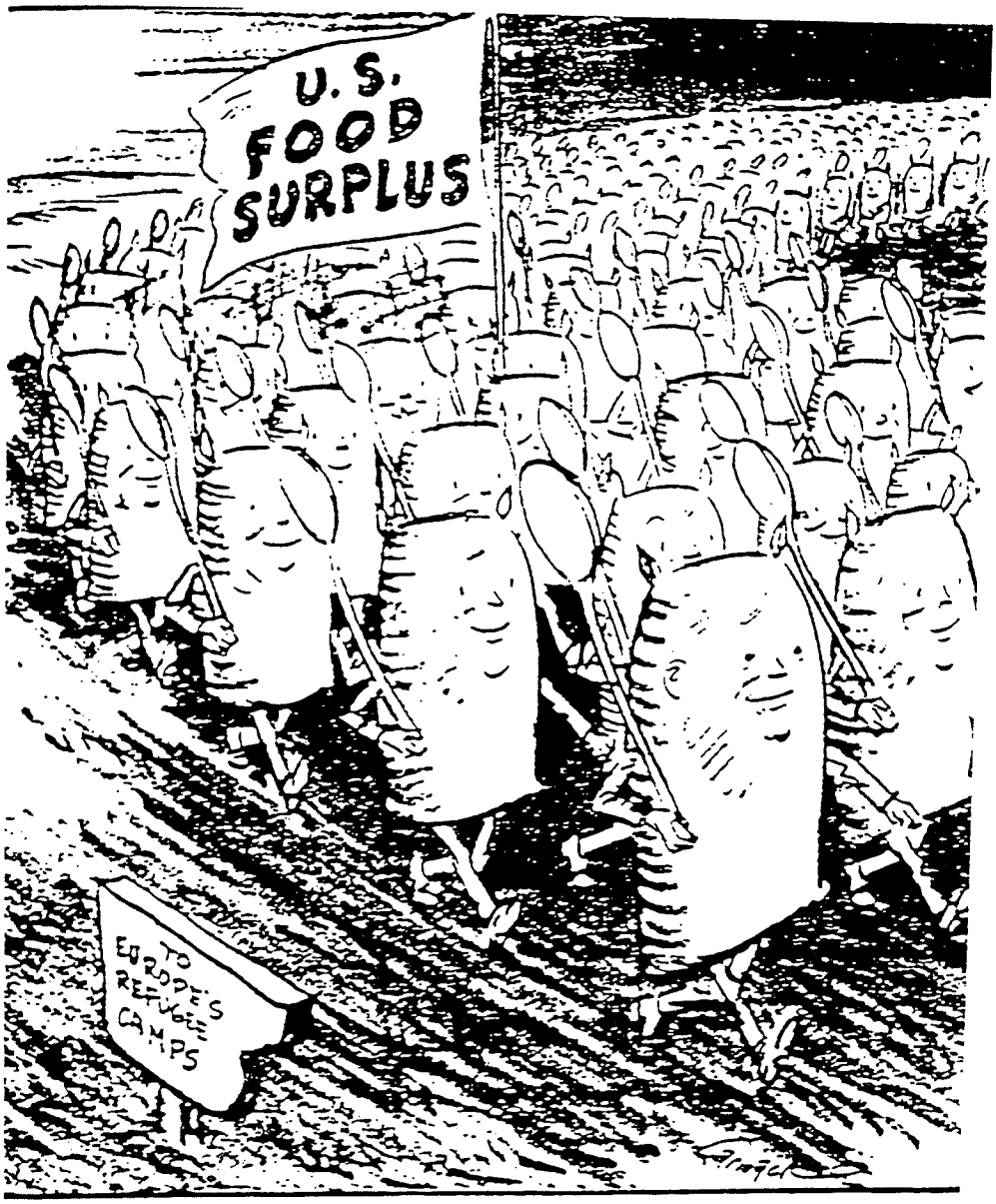


ILLUSTRATION IV

Thomas in The Detroit News

A Time Bomb



Cartoon in The Christian Science Mon

"An army that's needed in Europe."

ILLUSTRATION V



ILLUSTRATION VI

"THE PROPOSAL TO FEED NAZI-OCCUPIED EUROPE"



Herblock in The Lynchburg New

ILLUSTRATION VII



THE BANDITS' FEAST

"I've said it once, and I'll say it again, the British are starving Europe."

IV: *AMERICANS AIDING POLAND*

There was neither a great, national, humanitarian outcry to raise money for Polish aid, nor was the United States government willing to initiate a massive relief effort without popular pressure. The onus, then, was placed upon the Polish-American and Jewish-American communities - the only groups which retained emotional, cultural and religious ties to Poland.

The Polish-American community had a visceral reaction to the news of the German invasion. Polish-American historian Joseph Wytrawl wrote:

> It was well-nigh impossible to describe the pain which Polish-Americans endured. Pain is the word. It was literally physical with many. They huddled around radios, unable to restrain sudden sharp agonized cries of hurt, outrage, hate."[109]

However, beyond the outpouring of justifiable emotion, ambiguities existed among both the Jewish and Polish-American communities. How much loyalty did they owe to Poland? They were, after all, Americans and owed their adopted country allegiance. How would a nativist and isolationist America react to distinct minority groups fostering a foreign cause which might lead the United States into war?

American Poles and Jews struggled for acceptance in their new country and had achieved a tenuous security, but were still subjects of ethnic derision and bigotry. Time

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[109] Joseph Wytrawl, Behold! The Polish Americans, Detroit: Endurance Press, 1973, p. 353.

magazine's October 1939 characterization of Polish-Americans was a mixture of a people participating in the "American Dream" and an ethnic slight. The Polish-Americans, stated the article, were politically insignificant and a largely unknown quantity to the general population. They had "poured their sweat" into building American industry and had now begun to send "their brawny children to college, where their names have recently emerged as problems to football cheering sections."[110] Although Polish Americans had begun to climb the ladder of social mobility in the industrial cities of the North-East, they still ranked among the lowest ethnic groups in social status. The perception of the Pole as strong, slow-witted "Hunky" still endured.[111]

The Jewish-Americans faced a more ominous hurdle; American anti-Semitism was no stranger to the Jewish community. The Jew, according to the resurgent Ku Klux Klan, was the alien enemy within America, and Detroit's Father Caughlin preached anti-Semitism weekly on national radio. Anti-Semitism was not only a populist issue, but was respectable in all classes. Henry Ford, although repentant in the 1930s, had promulgated the myth of the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" in the 1920s, and

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[110] Time, October 16, 1939, p.25.
[111] Eugene Obidinski, "Polish American Social Standing: Status and Stereotypes," Polish Review, Volume 21, #3, 1976.

"America First" and Charles Lindbergh had labeled the Jews as warmongers in 1940.[112]

National public opinion polls of the 1930s were not positive to the Jews. A 1938 poll asked if Jewish businessmen were more dishonest than others? 44% of respondents said 'yes'. In 1939, 32% of Americans polled stated Jewish "power in the business world" should be restricted. In the same poll, 10% expressed the opinion that Jews should be "deported". In a 1938 poll asking: "Do you disapprove of Germany's treatment of the Jews?", 94% said 'yes', while 58% believed that the persecution of Jews in Europe was at least partially their own fault.[113]

The climate of distrust and dislike forced the Jewish community's leadership into taking a cautious attitude to humanitarian relief in Poland. They feared that pressing the case for Polish Jews might be seen as 'war-mongering' in isolationist America. Almost all of the Jewish leaders agreed that the plight of European Jewry must not be made to be seen as a "special case".[114]

Morris Waldman, Secretary of the Jewish Joint Distribution Agency (JDC), believed:

> We should exercise the greatest caution in avoiding giving the impression we Jews have special interests in the present situation....Jews in Europe are

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[112] On American anti-semitism see:Bezadel Sherman, The Jew Within American Society. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1965, p. 202; Rufus Learski, The Jews in America. Cleveland: World Publishing, 1954, p. 298.

[113]Rita Simon, Public Opinion in America, 1936-1970. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1974, Jewish business ethics, p. 87; attitude on Jews p.84; Jewish persecution in Europe p.94.

[114] Arthur Hertzberg, The Jews in America, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989, pp. 294-5.

not the only victims of the present turmoil.[115]

Some Jewish leaders felt the question could be side-stepped if actual relief operations were handed over to the American Red Cross or to the Quakers (Commission for Polish Relief).[116]

Jewish agencies did begin relief drives. However, these agencies did not differentiate between Polish Christian and Polish Jew in relief funding. Their funds were also donated to specifically Christian organizations. The United Jewish Appeal for Refugees and Overseas Needs donated $250,000 to Catholic and Protestant relief.[117] The JDC, which raised $1,500,000 between September 1939 and August 1940, provided the Commission for Polish Relief and its Quaker associates with a large percentage of their operating funds.[118]

The Polish-American community, leadership and agencies were the most vocal in their entreaties for aid to the ancestral homeland. Although fund-raising campaigns were largely community based, the Polish-American leadership attempted to exploit larger American sympathies by using the non-Polish based Commission for Polish Relief as its publicist, congressional lobbyist, clearinghouse and distribution agency.

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[115] Yehuda Bauer, American Jewry and the Holocaust: The American Joint Distribution Committee, 1939-1945. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981, p. 36.
[116] Bauer, pp. 39-40.
[117] New York Times, January 2, 1940, p. 14.
[118] "Contributions For Relief in Belligerent Countries," Department of State Bulletin, August 13, 1940, p. 180.

The Polish-America community's sympathetic ties to Poland were still evident in 1939. However, the ties of birth, culture and language were diminishing in the American-born generation which now accounted for a larger percentage of the Polish-American population. A survey taken in the late 1920s of native born Polish-Americans indicated that the connection to the Polish past had been largely severed; this generation identified itself as American. When asked how they viewed themselves, 74.% said 'American' or 'Polish-American'. Few named themselves as Poles or Poles in America.[119]

When Poland gained independence following World War I, non-citizen Poles in America were faced with a difficult decision. They either had to return 'home' or make a new life for themselves and their children in America. Making the decision to remain in America meant undertaking a new identity as American citizens rather than as expatriate Poles. They were no longer Poles in America but naturalized American citizens. The immigrant parents were content if their American-born children retained their surnames, remained in the fold of the Catholic Church and possessed some knowledge of the Polish language and culture. However, in all other respects, writes Joseph Wytrawl, "they were willing that their children become Americans."[120]

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[119] Frank Mocha, Poles In America Stevens Point (Wisconsin): Worzalla Publications, 1978, p. 305.
[120] Joseph Wytrawl, p. 273.

These new American citizens and the leaders of Polish-American fraternal organizations began naturalization work as the means to counter American 'nativism'. Stereotypical views of Eastern Europeans and suspicion of Slavs already in the United States had led to the passing of immigration quotas during the 1920s. Such immigration restrictions fostered the acculturation process; there was no longer a fresh flow of Polish immigrants to maintain or revive the waning "Polishness" of the new American Poles.

Moreover, in the 1930s the Polish-American leadership reversed its long standing policy of close cooperation and deference to Poland. They set their agenda according to the political perceptions and needs of Polish-Americans. Francis X. Swietlik, Dean of Marquette University and President of the Polish National Alliance during World War II, made this clear to a world-wide Polish convention. Swietlik stated: "Polonia in America is neither a Polish colony nor a national minority but a component of the great American nation."[121] The interests of Polish-Americans, and of the general American population, were mutually linked in the present cultural realities. Poland, then, would always be second in their hearts. When asked "Should Poles in America Go Fight for Poland?" (Chicago Tribune , October 3, 1939), a young

[121] Quoted in John A. Bukowczyk, And My Children Do Not Know Me, Bloomington: University of Illinois, 1987, p.70.

Polish-American replied: "I am a citizen here and I owe only America my loyalty."[122]

There was no general outcry within the Polish-American community for U. S. military aid to Poland. An October 6, 1939 Gallup survey asked the question: "Should we declare war and send our army and navy abroad to fight Germany?" The national response was an overwhelming 95% 'No'. When the response was broken-down by nationality - that is "persons whose fathers were born in another country" - the Polish-American response was 89% 'No'.[123]

As well, young Polish-Americans did not answer Polish Premier Sikorski's October 2, 1939 call for a Polish-American army to fight for Poland. "There are 5,000,000 Polish citizens in Canada and the U. S", claimed Sikorski. "These Poles are our last card and we are going to play it."[124] Other than creating a small diplomatic flap between the Polish Government-in-Exile and the U. S. State Department, little came out of this plea.* Few young Polish-Americans joined the Polish Brigade, which was formed in Canada during 1940. Those few recruits would try to resign so that they could answer the call to arms

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[122] Chicago Tribune. October 3, 1939. p.5.
[123] Gallup, p. 184.
[124] Chicago Tribune. October 2, 1939. p.6
* The diplomatic correspondence relating to the Sikorski plea is to be found in Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, 1939, Volume I; herafter cited as F.R.U.S. The Polish Ambassador, Count Jerzy Potocki, advised the State Department that he had informed his Government that " no attempt should be made to recruit Poles in the United States ." Secretary of State Hull advised Ambassador Biddle to "point out" to the Polish Government the provisions of "the President's Proclamation of neutrality relating to the enlisting of soldiers...in the United States into the service of a belligerent." , pp.697-698.

and fight for freedom along side thousands of other Polish-Americans who enlisted when the United States entered the war in 1941.[125]

Polish-America's leaders quickly asserted their belief that humanitarian aid should go to occupied Poland. The Secretary of the Council of Polish Organizations stated: "America's 5,000,000 Poles want to help Poland and we can best serve them by relieving their suffering."[126] The initial meetings of Polish-American leaders in Detroit stressed the need for the community's adherence to American neutrality laws. As a reporter for the Detroit Free Press wrote: "They [Polish-America's leaders] urged that moral support be given Poland and insisted that nothing be done to alienate the now-apparent friendly feelings of America." The Most Reverend Bishop Woznicki put the Catholic church's position at the meeting; "We Poles in the United States...will do everything possible to preserve neutrality...but so far as our neutrality permits we will try to help Poland."[127] As an initial gesture to this sentiment, the Polish National Alliance contributed $150,000 to the American Red Cross when it agreed to collect funds for the Polish Red Cross.[128]

Polish-American organizations banded together, holding mass rallies and memorial services for Poland

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[125] Bukowczyk, p.5.
[126] Chicago Tribune. September 5, 1939. p. 2.
[127] Detroit Free Press. September 2, 1939. p. 5.
[128] New York Times. October 14, 1939. p. 5.

throughout the nation during the October "Pulaski Week" celebrations, in what would be the highlight of the national consciousness raising effort to stir American sympathy and support. The largest of the rallies was held October 11, 1939, at New York City's Madison Square Garden. Representatives of Polish-America's national societies listened as former President Hoover, a world respected humanitarian, delivered his address 'The Spirit of Poland'. Hoover directed his message to all of America; Poland was worthy of America's sympathy, remembrance and humanitarian support.

Hoover spoke glowingly of Polish history, and its repeated rise from its oppressors - Czarist Russia, Imperial Germany, and Austria-Hungary. He predicted that Poland would rise again from the oppression of Nazi enslavement. He spoke of independent Poland's achievements: the creation of a parliamentary government, the growth of industry and the creation of universal educational opportunities:

> ....[In] these twenty years the Polish nation under freedom had outdistanced in progress all of the one hundred and fifty years of her previous oppression. That in itself is proof of the undying character and spirit of the Polish nation.
>
> And today Poland is plunged into the depths by the clash of the same forces. But Poland will not die.
>
> Our task is to do what we can to alleviate the lot of the suffering and the homeless. For that a temporary organization has been created to do what it [Commission for Polish Relief] can. With them are the leading Americans of

> Polish descent. That body merits your generous support.[129]

The Polish-American community fell upon its resources to undertake aid to the ancestral homeland. It undertook this endeavour with passion and high hopes, but without great result. Taking full advantage of provisions in the "Neutrality Act", which allowed for the collection of humanitarian relief for belligerent countries, they began to raise funds for Poland.[130]

The concern of the Polish-American community was confirmed by this exponential growth of locally-based organizations in the cities and towns of the North-East and Mid-Western United States. By September 16, 1939, not including the few agencies which listed Poland in addition to other belligerent nations as recipients, the Department of State reported that sixteen agencies had registered to collect funds exclusively for Polish relief. Fifty

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[129] George Lenski (ed.), Herbert Hoover and Poland, A Documentary History of a Friendship. Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 1977. Document #30, pp. 101-103.

[130] Section 8(b) of the 'Neutrality Act' (1939) stated :

> Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the solicitation or collection of funds and contributions to be used for medical aid and assistance, or for food and clothing to relieve human suffering, when such contributions are made on behalf of, and for the use by, any person or organization which is not acting for, or on behalf of, any such government...

Under the regulations of the "Act" any solicitor for funds was required to fill out a simple one page form listing the name of the organization, address, address of any chapters, names of principal officers, the means of solicitation, country designated for receipt of funds and the manner in which funds were to be distributed i.e.: the Commission for Polish Relief, The American Friends Service Committee, the Y. M. C. A. etc. as the agent for the organization. The organization would then be registered with the Department of State and required to submit a monthly accounting of funds received and disbursed to the recipient nation.

agencies had been created by September 23; eighty-one by September 30, and over one hundred by December 30.[131]

There was little relationship, however, between the numbers of organizations and the amount of contributions received. Of the 81 organizations collecting for Poland at the end of October 1939, fifty-seven showed cumulative receipts of under $1000; the largest cumulative amount was only $27,000 which was collected by the Polish Relief Fund of Detroit. Total receipts for all organizations was $159,370.10. The December 23, 1939, State Department Bulletin listed 80 organizations with receipts under $1000 and total receipts of $615,507.16. Of this, $315,186.36 had been distributed to relief agencies.[132]

The relief funds were raised in the same manner as funds for any charitable cause: rummage sales, benefit concerts endorsed and attended by celebrities, and fund raising through lotteries and games of chance. Commission agents were prohibited by State Department regulations imposed in late 1939. Fraternal organizations also imposed membership levies in an effort to boost contributions from their members.[133]

Some caution is necessary when dealing with the actual amounts of funds contributed by the Polish

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[131] "Contributions for Relief in Belligerent Countries", Department of State Bulletin. September 16, 1939. 1:12, p.248; Department of State Bulletin, September 23, 1939. 1:13, p. 281; Department of State Bulletin. December 23, 1939, 1:26, pp. 714-718.

[132] "Contributions for Relief in Belligerent Countries", Department of State Bulletin. November 25, 1939, 1:22, pp.585-588.

[133] Donald Pienkos, P.N.A.: A Centenial History of the Polish National Alliance of the United States of America. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984, p. 152.

community for relief efforts. Donations made directly to the American Red Cross by individuals and organizations are omitted from State Department figures. The Red Cross was not required to report in the same manner as the temporary relief organizations. It submitted a yearly audit to the War Department under the provisions of its congressional charter, and its financial statement does not categorize donations made for specific countries.

There was no single organization mandated to collect funds for Polish relief. The newly formed Commission for Polish Relief, which was not specifically part of the Polish-American community, approximated a national body. However, it essentially operated as Polish-America's lobbyist at the State Department, clearing-house for the disbursement of relief funds, and distribution agency. The Polish National Alliance (PNA), Polish American Council (PAC), the Paderewski Fund and the Bishops' Fund for Polish Relief all collected funds from their various constituencies. These were the largest and most viable of the hundreds of Polish relief agencies established. Collectively, they received and distributed approximately $1,000,000 from September 1939 to mid-1941. These numbers were far lower than the initial $10,000,000 goal set by the Council of Polish Organizations or the $1,000,000 goal established by the Paderewski Fund, which collected only $188,000 from December 1939 to January 1941.

Polish-America's efforts found little success in America at large.[134] Cardinal Hlond's report and attendant publicity did not translate into markedly increased donations, as the receipts of the largest agencies showed. The PAC reported cumulative donations of $142,928.00 to January 1940; by the end of March 1940, this total had increased only $74,175.00. Donations to the PNA were even more depressing. Receipts for the PNA showed an increase of only $26,000 ($221,545.00 to $247,764.00). During this same period the Commission for Finnish Relief was reporting donations of $25,000 per day when the American Red Cross announced its "War Drive" on May 10, 1940, their average receipts were $500,000 per day.

The Polish-American community was stymied in its attempts to raise large amounts of money from the general population of the United States, and the British blockade coupled with negligible food stocks in Europe prevented large scale aid from reaching Poland. However, their activity did not cease. The Polish-American committees had pledged never to cease attempting to aid those in the stricken homeland.[135] Polonia's Congressmen and Senators were assailed with petitions for aid and with letters which asked how it was possible to send even small amounts of food and clothing to Warsaw, Cracow or a specific ancestral village. Was it possible to send food parcels

[134] Current History, December 1939, p 59.
[135] "Polish-American Council to Secretary of State Hull", March 22, 1940. Reel #65, 860.C00/824, Reel 65, RG. 59 Dept. State Poland.

to Poland? Were the private food distribution companies, which would send parcels of food to Poland for a large fee, reputable businesses? Did these parcels actually reach the Polish or were they stolen by the Germans? How could money be sent to relatives in Poland? How was it possible to aid Polish refugees in Turkey, Africa and Japan? To their credit, the Senators and Congressmen dutifully passed petitions, tearful letters and questions to the State Department where, at times, answers could be found to the questions. Parcels could not be sent to Poland via mail as the United States Postal Service had ceased parcel post service in November 1939. However, the State Department had received reports that the private parcel services were, up to that time, reliable. It was still possible to transmit funds to Poland through American Express. Funds could reach refugees via Red Cross, Red Crescent Societies or other suitable agencies. In some cases, funds were sent directly to Polish Ambassadors in Turkey and Tokyo, to take advantage of diplomatic rates, and then forwarded to the designated agency.[136]

Polonia did not forget or ignore the treatment Poles were suffering at the hands of the Soviets. Its humanitarian organizations and friends attempted to

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136 "Suspension of Parcel Post" Department of State Bulletin, November 18, 1939. 1:21, p.575; citizen inquiries on postal service, February 8, 1941, #860.C48/556, Reel 72, RG. 59, Dept. State, Poland; money orders, April 4, 1941, #860.C48/599 Reel 72 RG 59, Dept. State Poland; private food distribution agencies July 19, 1941, #860C.48/718, Reel 72 RG. 59, Dept of State, Poland.

solicit American Government action on behalf of Polish exiles in Soviet Siberia. "[The Polish people]," petitioned Pluttony Polskiego Samarytanina of Chicago to Cordell Hull, "are driven from their homes, robbed of their most minute possessions, fathers sundered from their families, children from mothers, suffering agony and death...they are deported to the sterile barren wastes in the depths of Siberia, where they face torture, pestilence and death."[137] They urged that the United States Government take up the cause of the exiled Poles with the Soviet Government by sending an "official or private" mission to Moscow. State could only reply that the Soviet Union refused to grant permission for any foreign relief agencies in their territory. In a 'Memo of Conversation' of April 19, 1941, Under Secretary Sumner Welles related that he had inquired of Soviet Ambassador Oumansky to allow American Red Cross representatives to enter the Soviet Union via Vladivostok to Eastern Poland. The Soviet Ambassador's reply was that there "was no need of relief and the Soviet union was capable of feeding its citizens."[138]

As there was little hope of the Soviets agreeing to allow neutral agencies into the conquered territory, the possibility of a food parcel program was examined by the

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[137] Plutony Polskiego Samarytanina to Secretary of State Hull, February 26, 1941, #860C.48/581, Reel 72, RG. 59, Dept. State Poland.

[138] Memorandum of Conversation (Welles) April 19, 1941, # 860C. 48/678, Reel 72, RG. 59, Dept. State Poland.

State Department, the Polish Embassy and Polish American groups. It was felt, however, that such a scheme was "inoperative on account of high duties" the Soviets would assess. The Red Cross and the Polish societies viewed these duties as essentially a form of extortion, as seventy-five cents of every dollar collected would go "into the coffers of the Soviet Union". Accordingly, the United Polish Relief Societies "have taken the position that they will not allow one cent of funds collected by them to be sent to the Soviet Union since they do not believe that contributions...should be used for the benefit of that country.[139] Following the reopening of Soviet-Polish diplomatic relations, July 30, 1941, the Soviets allowed negotiations for humanitarian relief for the Polish exiles to begin. By October, Assistant Secretary of State Long could inform Francis Swietlik, President of the Polish American Council, that the American Red Cross had 800 tons of medical supplies in England ready for shipment to Russia, and that the Red Cross had instructed its representatives in Moscow to ensure that special consideration was given to relieving distress among the Poles in the Soviet Union.[140]

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[139] Dept. State Poland. Ambassador Sikorski to Long, April 14, 1941, Reel #73, 860C.48/701, Reel 73, RG. 59 Dept. State Poland; see also 860C. 48/704.

[140] Breckenridge Long to F. X. Swietlik, October 18, 1941, #860C.48/715, Reel 73, RG 59, Dept. State Poland.

V: *THE POLITICS OF RELIEF*

The Commission for Polish Relief's (CPR) singular agenda was to aid the Polish people. Its executive believed the limited efforts of the American Red Cross and the administration were insufficient to meet Poland's unfolding tragedy. In their eyes, growing humanitarian needs necessitated a massive relief operation. This, coupled with poor private support and limited donations led the CPR to demand direct U. S. government involvement and congressional appropriations for food purchases.

This demand, however, ran counter to the President's and State Department's views, which were concerned with long term policy considerations. Even though "nothing in history exceeds the sadistic cruelty that Germany is responsible for in Poland", said the President in Cabinet, it could not guide U. S. policy.[141] Franklin Roosevelt, Cordell Hull and Breckenridge Long believed that if the United States Government became directly involved in Polish relief operations, and if the war expanded, it would be necessary to initiate relief programs in other countries to be "consistent as well as neutral". Any expansion of Polish aid operations demanded careful study. The United States Government was not prepared to commit itself to a program which, said Roosevelt, "the American

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[141] Harold C. Ickes, The Secret Diaries of Harold C. Ickes, Volume III: The Lowering Clouds, 1939-1941, New York: Simon and Schuster, pp.115-116.

people would want to consider very carefully as to its magnitude in case we would have to continue...and extend it."[142]

Direct government intervention in relief matters was a controversial issue among the American people in early 1940. Roosevelt had reasonable grounds for caution. The President knew the American public almost universally supported Finland in its war with the Soviet Union (88% according to the Gallup Poll). The people generously supported the ARC and the Hoover committee. However, only a small majority (58%) favored a Senate bill to authorize a non-military loan (only 38% of those polled supported any loan that could be used to purchase military supplies).[143] The American Youth Congress, which was meeting in Washington, feared government loans to Finland would lead the United States.[144] In the Senate, Pat McCarran voiced the same concern: the Finnish money bill was the "opening wedge for promiscuous foreign wars".[145]

Controversy between CPR and the administration ran deeper than a differing relief agenda: the political motivations of CPR's inner circle were suspect. CPR's executive, although experienced in war-relief operations and diplomacy were drawn from Herbert Hoover's World War Committee for Belgian Relief and the American Relief

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[142] Breckenridge Long, The War Diaries of Breckenridge Long, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967, March 4, 1940, pp. 60-2.
[143] New York Tmes, February 7, 1940, p. 3.
[144] New York Times, January 16, 1940, p. 1.
[145] New York Times, February, 14, 1940, p.1.

Commission.[146] Franklin Roosevelt believed Hoover, CPR's Honorary Chairman and the man he had defeated in the 1932 presidential election, was using European relief to re-enervate his political career. Hoover's political career and road to victory in the 1928 presidential race rested on the national and international prominence achieved through his single-minded orchestration of World War I relief.

Hoover maintained a low profile in the early stages of Polish relief and made few speeches, but FDR's administration considered Hoover its driving force. Hoover acted *sub rosa*, wrote Assistant Secretary Long. Long detested Hoover and had written in his diary that Hoover's 1928 presidential victory had "disgusted" him. ARC Chairman Norman Davis, also a life-time Democrat, believed Hoover was attempting to use Polish relief as a "springboard" to get himself "in the spotlight again" and to get re-elected President in 1940. The failure of Polish relief to launch Hoover's political reincarnation was, according to Long, the motivation for orchestrating the highly popular Finnish relief operation during the 1939-1940 Finnish-Soviet War.[147]

Roosevelt had attempted to entice Hoover into the administration in September 1939. He offered an executive position within the ARC because, wrote Harold Ickes, the

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[146] Hoover, pp. 4-5.
[147] Long, December 7, 1939, p. 40.

President believed Hoover knew "more about civilian relief than any other individual in the world".[148] Hoover refused the President's invitation to come to Washington to discuss his conceptions of European relief operations. Hoover would only agree to meet with Davis in Hoover's New York office and rebuffed the President's overture of an administrative position. Hoover's "arrogance" was "hard to understand", wrote Long. He placed too many conditions on his acceptance.[149]

Hoover believed the ARC should assume the leadership and responsibility for general relief operations in Poland. A separate European division of the ARC ought to be created. Utilizing the agencies vast resources, food could reach the destitute people quickly, efficiently and in sufficient quantity. Davis, however, would not accept any ARC obligation beyond "emergency relief" and informed Hoover that the ARC would not undertake mass feeding "which requires such substantial outlays of money as to necessitate Governmental financing".[150] The unwillingness to expand ARC operations in Europe led to the creation of the CPR, which took on the role as the agency responsible for extended relief.

Hoover believed that there should be only one organization to oversee general relief operations, as had

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[148] Ickes, pp. 9-10.
[149] Long, September 18, 1939, p.16.
[150] Quoted in Richard Smith, An Uncommon Man: The Triumph of Herbert Hoover, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984, pp. 273-275.

been the case in World War with the Commission for Belgian Relief. In November 1939, CPR requested the ARC to issue a statement limiting the field of the Red Cross to medical activity and recognizing the CPR as the sole, responsible agency for food distribution. However, Long and Davis continually opposed any limitation of ARC prerogatives.[151]

The demand carried over into the Finnish relief operation. Hoover and his associates contended the "burden of caring for the feeding and shelter of this homeless [Finnish] people must be undertaken by the Finnish Relief Fund with the funds which are received from the American people".[152] Hoover had not publically advocated government appropriations. He believed private initiate and personal responsibility should come before state involvement; this was consistent with his Quaker background and political philosophy.

However, in a speech for Finnish relief, December 21, 1940, Hoover expanded his program to include direct government funding for both Finland and Poland. Individual initiative could not meet the present magnitude of need, and need would increase. He stated:

> As to food, I believe that our Government should furnish from our surplus the bulk of food to such countries as Poland and Finland without requiring monetary obligations. Both little countries are dependent upon imports for part of their food supply....They are now blockaded...When their last year's

[151] Long, November 9, 1939, p. 38.
[152] New York Times, December 17, 1939, p. 33.

> harvest is exhausted they will be faced with famine....
>
> It is possible, if the war spreads there may be other little countries where this situation of Poland and Finland may be repeated.[153]

Hoover's policy ran directly counter to the ARC's controlled, and the administration's contained, relief operations.

The two organizations' antipathy prevented a unified effort as national organizations vied for public support and for the limited funds available for relief measures for Poland and Polish refugees.[154] The ARC was particularly rancorous over this issue. Davis, said Long, became increasingly "fed up" with the CPR, whose fund drives had not raised large amounts of donations. They were "trying to gobble up funds which different organizations had collected for the Red Cross."[155] The ARC had received a $150,000 donation from the Polish American Council for use in conjunction with the Polish Red Cross, but it had also allocated $1,000,000 from its general fund for the relief of Polish refugees. Davis believed the funds collected by the CPR should be relegated to his organization to repay any moneys the Red Cross spent on Polish relief.

This ill-will was not lost on the President or the national press. Roosevelt, said Ickes, was "displeased"

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[153] New York Times, December 21, 1939, p. 1.
[154] Hal Elliott Wert, "Flight and Survival: American and British Aid to Polish Refugees in the Fall of 1939," Polish Review, December 1989, Vol. 34, No.3, pp.232-33.
[155] ibid., p.34; Chicago Tribune, October 20, 1939, p.4; New York Times, December 7, 1939, p.17.

with Davis. He had let Hoover "get away with all the good publicity" for Finnish relief, even though the ARC had been supplying the bulk of civilian aid to Finland. Davis, the President suggested, should find a "good publicity man" to counter-act the Hoover operation. "He [the President] did not like it".[156] Soon, columns appeared suggesting Hoover's motivations were less than honourable. However, they were countered by sympathetic journalists angered at "attempts to belittle [Hoover's] relief activities".[157] Newsweek's, December 25, 1939 article "Hammering Hoover" stated the Red Cross was now "knee-deep" in politics in its attempts to counter Hoover's relief campaign which "had grabbed the Finnish-aid ball and galloped for a Republican touchdown". A "smear" campaign had been organized and "certainly members of the administration and self styled friends of the Red Cross had continued their share to the bad blood".[158] The President clearly believed, said Time, December 18, 1939, that Hoover "muddied the orderly channels of the Red Cross". Hoover counter-charged that it was a pity that "people will start out to poison the wells of human charity", and prevent the efficient and necessary delivery of aid to distressed people.[159]

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[156] Ickes, December 24, 1939, pp. 95-96.
[157] Smith, p.278.
[158] Newsweek, December 25, 1939, pp. 12-13.
[159] Time, December 18, 1939, p.15.

The publication of the Vatican reports and increasing information from other reliable sources put Poland's plight on the front pages of America's newspapers: "It seems clear by now", editorialized the New York Times, "that Germany is trying to exterminate a whole people".[160] News of Poland led to congressional appeals for increased government aid, and Germany's recognition of the CPR activities in occupied Poland forced the administration to reconsider their level of humanitarian actions. There was now a legitimate organization contending for leadership and publically demanding increased support to Poland.

The President's relative satisfaction with the scale of ARC operations in countries bordering Poland was clearly indicated by the administration's course of action, or non-action, on Congressional Polish relief bills. In a private discussion with Sol Bloom, Chairman of the Congressional Foreign Relations Committee, Roosevelt indicated the administration would not foster or oppose the bills before Bloom's committee. However, he hoped the appropriation bills would die before reaching the floor of the Congress. Numerous bills had been put before the Foreign Relations Committee requesting two measures: a governmental appropriation of $10-20,000,000 for Polish relief, to be allocated for purchases of government surplus food stocks, and the creation of a

[160] New York Times, January 24, 1940, p. 20.

single agency with an overall responsibility for relief operations.

The committee asked Hoover to present his views on the expansion of the Polish aid program and he proposed an initial federally funded program of some $10-15,000,000.[161] Hoover stated that any legislation should provide that an organization could be established by the President to undertake financing, supervision of food distribution facilities, and operations. It would also co-ordinate all other necessary activities between governments. These types of activities were within the capabilities of the Commission for Polish Relief, whose members had been involved in relief for Poland in 1919 and 1920. However, any organization set up to undertake these tasks would be acceptable to Hoover's organization.[162]

This type of "commission" was advocated, as well, by other major Polish-American relief organizations. The Polish-American Council saw the need for a coordinated effort by the American Red Cross and the Commission for Polish relief so that "the force of expression and influence of this country will be able to bring about a stop to the conditions which have never before existed in the world".[163] The Paderewski Fund believed the Red Cross should emphasize medical care, while the "greater burden

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[161] Hoover's presentation to the Foreign Relations Committee, February 28, 1940, Lenski, p. 105.
[162] Hoover statement to House Foreign Affairs Committee, February 29, 1940, Lenski pp. 107-8.
[163] C.R. Volume 86, Pt. 13, (Appendix) p 1098.

of general relief" should be undertaken by their organization or one of a similar nature.[164]

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee also discussed the feasibility of governmental support. Although members favoured authorizing an aid package, several questioned whether Germany's guarantees that food-stuffs would be equitably distributed, and that none would be seized, were credible. Committee Chairman Key Pittman also raised the issue of over-all government policy. Any appropriation would set a precedent and, if granted, future victims could demand commensurate action.[165] An eventual Polish relief appropriation bill for $15,000,000 passed through committee in early May 1940, but never went to the House. It was superseded by Roosevelt's June 12 request, following the invasion of western Europe, for a general European relief appropriation of $50,000,000.

The administration's attempts to quiet and control the aid issue were complicated, however, by Britain's contraband regulations. The British Government, although reluctant, had allowed initial Red Cross shipments to pass through contraband control checkpoints in January 1940, on the basis of the ARC-German agreement of November 1939. These supplies reached Cracow in mid-February. The ARC was then informed that the assurances offered by the German Government did not meet the requirements of British

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[164] New York Times, April 27, 1940, p.14.
[165] New York Times, March 14, 1940, p. 12.

Contraband Control, which now blocked the release of further Red Cross aid detained at Gibraltar.

"[The British] inform us," wrote Davis to Harold Nicholson, ARC representative in Berlin, "they will not pass further supplies without assurance that our representative will receive them at Cracow and see that they are turned over to Polish agencies for distribution".[166] A spokesman for the Commission for Polish Relief reiterated the aid dilemma in an interview with the American press: "Until the principle of American supervision is accepted by the German Government, the British and Allied Governments have informed us they will not permit one pound of supplies to go through the blockade."[167]

The State Department did not challenge the British detention of these supplies for humanitarian reasons. Britain's legal theorists had already given short shrift to any contention that the blockade could be challenged on humanitarian grounds under existent principles of international law. Therefore, the State Department grounded their arguments on neutral shipping rights. This was the more politically expedient course, given the American public's temper.

Britain and America had not settled procedural questions on America's neutral shipping rights. Britain's

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[166] Nicholson from American Red Cross, January 27, 1940, FRUS,1940: 2, p.749.
[167] New York Times, February 13, 1940, p.12.

interference in American shipping to neutral ports and the seizure of American mail destined for Germany was leading to anti-British feelings in the United States. The State Department protested British actions as violations of the American 'Neutrality Act'. United States ships were, in American opinion, being unnecessarily stopped and forced into prohibited belligerent ports, where they were liable to attack from German marauders. The State Department argued that ships sailing from neutral port to neutral port were "entitled to the presumption of innocent character."[168]

Secretary of State Cordell Hull instructed his diplomats in Britain to inform the foreign office about the ARC--German negotiations concerning American control of humanitarian relief shipments to Poland. Furthermore, American diplomatic representatives in Germany were also making direct representations to the German Foreign Office on this same question.

The United States Government regretted the British Government's pursuit of its present course and, according to Cordell Hull, Britain must "relent in the execution of its policy which intercepts, delays and may prevent the supplies of American relief organizations from reaching the stricken areas of Europe". The American Government felt the right of its citizens to send humanitarian supplies to victims of war "should not be interfered with

[168] Washington Post, January 10, 1940, p.5; January 30, 1940, p.9.

by the British Government or such interference predicated by that government on policy which the German Government may adopt."[169] The rights of American humanitarian agencies, authorized by the United States Government to collect funds for Polish relief, must be recognized by Britain, and their shipments allowed free passage through the blockade.

In the light of Britain's attitude, Davis pressed his Berlin representative to redouble his efforts with the German Foreign Ministry. He stated the situation was tense in the United States: the publication of the Vatican reports, which had made front page news across the nation, was leading to public discussion. If the ARC was to continue relief operations in Poland, "We must either be able to give positive assurance to the public that the arrangement is working satisfactorily, explaining in detail how it functions, and secure definite assurances of necessary facilities to oversee completion program, or give public notice of withdrawal and reasons." Quick action was required as Hoover was about to "issue [a] blast" if Germany continued to forestall his agency's operations.[170]

The United States used the "carrot and stick" approach to the Polish relief question in its discussions with the Germany foreign ministry. It first held out the

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[169] Hull to Johnson, February 15, 1940, FRUS, 1940: 2. p. 753.
[170] Davis to Nicholson, February 1, 1940, FRUS, 1940:2 pp.751-2.

stick of American public and government opprobrium if the issue could not be resolved. Secretary of State Hull instructed Alexander Kirk to renew negotiations with the German Foreign Office and take a pragmatic approach. Kirk should inform the Germans that unless they met Red Cross concerns, the Vatican's allegations "will find substantiation in the thought of the people of this country." If definite arrangements could not be made with the ARC and "possibly other organizations", the Germans could expect that "private agencies in the United States will make some explanation to the American people which may not react favorably upon German-American relations."[171]

The carrot offered better diplomatic relations if an understanding could be reached. The United States was at a diplomatic disadvantage in Berlin as their Ambassador had been recalled the following the 1938 Nazi pogroms against the Jews. The Charge had only limited contact with high German officials. The New York Times reported that the renewal of full diplomatic relations was possible, but only if Germany provided Under-Secretary Welles with guarantees of proper relief distribution.[172]

Senator Arthur Vandenburg, a leading isolationist and contender for the Republican presidential nomination, had also asked Roosevelt to have Welles intercede with the German Government. According to Vandenburg, Welles should

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[171] Ibid.

[172] New York Times, February 22, 1940, p.1.

"urge the German Government to cooperate as intimately as possible with Polish-American relief plans" and "allow U.S. representatives to supervise relief operations in Poland in keeping with American wishes."[173]

The feared and threatened Hoover 'blast' came on February 19, 1940, and threatened to derail the ARC's negotiations. He revealed the CPR had been conducting private negotiations of its own with the German government and demanded full freedom of operation throughout occupied Poland. However, they had not received a satisfactory reply. The German government insisted that all relief must be administered by the German Red Cross, which the ARC was bound to accept under International Red Cross treaty obligations. "If the German Red Cross was good enough for the American Red Cross to work with", said Hoover "it should be good enough for us."[174]

Hoover asserted that neither the French or British governments accepted the German Red Cross as a *bona fide* independent agency, and that the Polish Red Cross believed the German organization to be under Nazi control. Polish-American organizations also claimed the German Red Cross, in "its capacity as an arm of the German Nazi Government, is seeking to secure by purchase, gift or otherwise...materials [to be] diverted into death dealing devices. These the German Red Cross represents as needed

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[173] Detroit Free Press, February 16, 1940, p.14; New York Times, February 18, 1940, p.40.
[174] New York Times, February 19, 1940, p.7.

for humanitarian Red Cross purposes."[175] The American government should make this clear and refuse to entertain negotiations with this duplicitous agency.

Negotiations to satisfy ARC concerns and British demands continued into mid-February. The area of dispute lay in the request for permanent Red Cross-Quaker headquarters in major Polish cities and limiting the German Red Cross to administrative details. A compromise position was reached on February 24. Offices of the relief agencies could be established in Berlin and a single neutral representative would be allowed to travel into Poland with the relief shipment. That individual would remain to "supervise the allocation and distribution. Upon the conclusion of that distribution, or series of distributions, the representative would withdraw." The agencies, however, were required to "regulate their distribution in agreement with the German Red Cross."[176]

The Polish Government-in-Exile's representative for Polish relief in Washington contended that the negotiated agreement was only satisfactory to the ARC, as "few persons are required to supervise the distribution of medical supplies and clothing." The acceptance of the German terms had "weakened the negotiating position of the

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[175] Polish American Council of Illinois to Hull, March 22, 1940, #860C.00/824, Reel 65, RG. 59 Dept. State Poland.

[176] Hull to Johnson, February 22, 1940, FRUS, 1940: 2, p.755.

Commission for Polish Relief."[177] The CPR, whose negotiators had requested a permanent staff in major Polish cities, questioned whether an effective and impartial relief operation could be established under these severe restraints. Moreover, CPR's President, Chauncey McCormick, wondered whether the British would "be induced to lift its blockade to an extent that would permit shipment of relief supplies in adequate quantity" because the system of distribution was not under total American control.[178]

The British would have preferred that the United States Government take greater control of relief matters as, said Britain's Ambassador Lord Lothian, it "did not know what societies might be organized and what might happen to the supplies that were permitted to reach Poland." Assistant Secretary Long informed Lord Lothian that although the American Government had some control over their operations, the government was not actually sending relief. Long tried to calm the Ambassador by saying that the American agencies had no intention of supplying Germany's military needs. The American people, do feel "that there should be proper supervision of distribution of the supplies....It followed that this was a question between the American donors and the societies which represented them and the German Government in order

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[177] Memorandum of Conversation (Dunn and Rajchman) February 29, 1940, FRUS, 1940: 2, p.757.
[178] ChicagoTribune, February 25, 1940, p.6.

that the American people be satisfied."[179] The British were less than enthusiastic with the German-ARC compromise, claiming the agreement did not meet British demands. However, the American government's limited assurance satisfied them sufficiently to allow passage of relief supplies through contraband control.[180]

Between the months of March and June, the relief committees faced near insurmountable difficulties getting food and medical supplies into occupied Poland. They were stymied by German bureaucratic obstruction, which denied the required permits to enter and distribute relief and pressed the American relief agencies to surrender the supplies to them for distribution.[181] The Germans also claimed, again, that civil unrest in Poland made it too dangerous for the relief workers to enter Poland.[182]

Small quantities did reach the peoples of Poland, and distribution was regulated by combined committees of American, Polish and Jewish representatives, which had been recognized by German authorities.[183] However, in a telegram sent to Herbert Hoover on May 10th, CPR's Hugh Gibson informed Hoover that British resistance to "general relief for Poland" was stiffening. The British were now

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[179] Memorandum of Conversation (Long and Lord Lothian) March 6, 1940, FRUS, 1940: 2, pp. 758-60.
[180] Kennedy to Hull, March 16, 1940, FRUS, 1940: 2 pp.760-761.
[181] American Military Attache in Berlin, April 29, 1940, "Conditions in Poland", #860.00/868, Reel 74, RG.59, Dept. State Poland.
[182] New York Times, April 21, 1940, p.27.
[183] David Engel, In the Shadow of Auschwitz, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987, p.291.

unwilling to create precedents, which "might be invoked for feeding of other countries overrun by Germany." In general, wrote Gibson, British attitudes toward the suffering populations were "characterized by toughness unknown in the last war."[184]

The value of supplies the ARC shipped to Poland and the surrounding neutral countries was only $797,951.[185] This trickle of ARC relief ended with Italy's entry into the war on June 10th. Roosevelt invoked the 'Neutrality Act', closing Italian ports to American shipping. Consequently, said Davis, "It will no longer...[be] feasible for the American Red Cross to ship to Poland relief supplies".[186]

The door to extended Polish relief was not irrevocably shut. Re-opening the aid door required two American governmental actions. First, the 'Neutrality Act' required amendments to the regulations which forbade Red Cross ships from entering belligerent ports. And second, in response to Britain's May 26, 1940 strangulating blockade on continental Europe, which closed all European ports to humanitarian shipments, the American government needed to reach a compromise with Britain if aid was to resume.

The Polish case, however, now became subsumed within the larger context of general humanitarian relief to all

[184] Biddle to Hull, May 10, 1940, #840.48/3553:Telegram. F.R.U.S. 1940: 2 pp. 761-2.
[185] New York Times, June 16, p.28.
[186] New York Times, June 13, 1940, p. 18.

of Nazi-conquered suffering Europe. Until the invasion of western Europe, Poland had been unique; now it was only one of many occupied countries. American humanitarian rhetoric, under the leadership of Herbert Hoover, no longer spoke of aid to Poland specifically, but of aid to the 'Five Small Democracies' - Poland, Holland, Belgium, Norway, and Denmark.

VI: *THE RED CROSS 'WAR DRIVE'*

The Nazi invasion of northern and western Europe stabbed at the heart of the American people's consciousness. The needs of European civilians became dreadfully obvious. Millions of refugees were forced to flee their homes and ravaged countries; they trudged destitute into a perilous future. According to American newspaper correspondents, the refugee army was a "vast homeless mass of millions...so entangled and entangling that it can scarcely advance....Babies in arms, men and women 80 and 90 years old...mentally deficient people.... As they move they eat up their own supplies and devour the supplies of those into whose country they move. Where it will end no one can tell."[187] The ARC announced a 'War Relief Drive', May 10, 1940, as Nazi armies invaded western Europe, initially hoping to raise $10,000,000; this total was soon raised to $20,000,000. "No one could foresee," said Davis, "that in two short weeks the greatest tragedy in all history would be unfolded."[188]

American ambassadors in Europe sent desperate telegrams amplifying the horrific plight of civilian populations. The letters of the Ambassador to France, Roosevelt's good friend William "Bill" Bullitt, verged on hysteria. Bullitt estimated millions of French deaths

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[187] New York Times, May 21, 1940, p.11.
[188] New York Times, May 29, 1940, p.12.

without immediate American help: "Six million persons in south western France will die unless American aid for them is organized immediately with the utmost efficiency, officials of the Red Cross are incompetent to organize relief on the scale demanded; $100,000,000 needed to meet needs." Bullitt wrote. Roosevelt responded with promises to his friend that he would do everything possible to aid the refugees in France.[189]

President Roosevelt's moving May 26 'Fireside Chat' told the American people:

> Tonight over the once peaceful roads of Belgium and France millions are now moving, running from their homes to escape bombs and shells and machine gunning, without shelter, and almost without food. I speak to you because each of you that is listening to me tonight has a way of helping them. The American Red Cross, that represents each one of us, is rushing food and clothing and medical supplies to these destitute civilian millions. Please-I beg you--please give according to your means to your nearest Red Cross chapter, give as generously as you can. I ask this in the name of our common humanity.[190]

Newspapers, which had never editorialized for increased Polish aid, now campaigned for the ARC and urged its unqualified support to avoid the tragedy of Poland would not be repeated in the west.[191] The newspaper's editorial cartoonists did their part to support the drive.

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[189] Orville Bullitt (ed.) For the President Personal and Secret, Correspondance Between Franklin D. Roosevelt and William C. Bullitt. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972, pp. 462-5.
[190] Russell Buhite (ed.) F. D. R.'s Fireside Chats, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992, p.153.
[191] Washington Post, May 12, 1940, p.8.

Readers saw 'Uncle Sam' digging into his pockets and donating his change to Red Cross volunteers. Rays of sunshine fell on burning cities as Red Cross planes flew across the Atlantic carrying American relief. The caption over one Red Cross cartoon read: "Relief for the starving, this much we can do". The picture showed war victims trudging across a barren field, as the grim reaper reaches its claw hand toward a falling individual. A strong Red Cross hand seizes and holds back the bony arm of death.[192]

The American public was told the winter of 1940 would be a winter of famine in Europe. If American citizens did not contribute their dollars to purchase food for millions of needy refugees, and if this food did not immediately reach Europe, there was only one possible end. America's most respected humanitarian, Herbert Hoover, predicted "the greatest famine in history."[193] Returning from a tour of European refugee camps, Morris Trouper, the Joint Distribution Commission's European Chairman, stated to the New York Times: "Starvation has already cast its gloomy shadow across the continent.... [Quick] action is necessary if the little life left in these children is not to be snuffed out."[194] The leading Protestant periodical Christian Century voiced the moral imperative facing the Christian United States: "Words are too feeble to make

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[192] Washintgon Post, May 30, 1940, p.10; May 27, 1940, p.10; New York Times, May 25, 1940, p.22; see illustration II.
[193] Time, June 17, 1940, p.34.
[194] New York Times, July 11, 1940, p.13.

clear the harrowing nature of the need or the moral responsibility to respond which rests upon us who live in this comparative security."[195]

To aid Americans' in their choice of worthy charitable organizations, Life magazine's June 24, 1940, issue provided readers with a quick "Guide to Allied War Aid." The guide listed selected agencies where "citizens may wisely invest time and money". These included, among others, the American Red Cross, Commission for Polish Relief, Queen Juliana Fund for the Netherlands, Bundles for Britain and the Society of Friends (Quakers). With the "exception of Communists, pro-Germans, and a few ideological pacifists," stated the article, "America had begun to realize...that they had better act before the ultimate disaster came to pass."[196]

The people of the United States responded generously to European need. In May and June of 1940, American philanthropy filled Red Cross coffers. The strongly isolationist American Legion urged its members to support the ARC appeal, even though it had previously "steered clear" of other agencies fund raising efforts and was now "very glad" to aid the war relief appeal.[197] Distinguished Americans, movie stars and radio celebrities donated their time and urged the ordinary citizens to support their Red Cross. The giant donations of America's richest citizens

[195] Christian Century, June 12, 1940, p. 34.
[196] Life, June 24, 1940, pp. 76-79.
[197] New York Times, May 17, 1940, p.17.

and corporations. General Motors' $50,000. International Harvesters' $50,000 and Anhauser Busch's $10,000, were duly noted in the papers, as were the donations made by ordinary citizens, such as a blind woman's $20 and a child's 20 cents.[198] The broad nature of the appeal and its success were registered in the newspaper columns. The Red Cross appealed to the conscience of America. The bulk of the donations came from ordinary individuals; over 7,000,000 Americans contributed in excess of $21,000,000 to the 'War Drive'.

While the American public was generously contributing to the ARC, the administration asserted its power to aid and extend Red Cross activities. The Department of Agriculture announced a program through which the ARC was now able to purchase surplus food stocks from the government and be charged only one-half the current market value. "We are making it possible," said Agriculture Secretary Wallace, "for the Red Cross to accomplish greater ends with its available funds." The Secretary contended that the administration's agricultural programs had put the United States in a position to be of "utmost service to a suffering world if this threat [of famine] becomes an actuality."[199]

The editorial cartoonist of the Christian Science Monitor captured the sense of need, and the sense of

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[198] Washington Post, May 18, 1940, p. 7; New York Times, May 27, 1940, p.11.
[199] New York Times, June 2, 1940, p.19.

optimism that something could, and should, be done for the starving millions now that American food was going to Europe. The cartoon's caption read "An army that's needed in Europe" and showed thousands upon thousands of smiling food bags carrying spoons and a banner reading U. S. FOOD SURPLUS marching off to feed Europe's refugees.[200]

The reports issuing from France on the refugee situation, the desperate straits of the nation and America's longtime friendship with France caused Roosevelt to reverse the policy he had maintained toward Poland. On June 12, 1940, he asked for a special congressional appropriation of $50,000,000 for European war relief, which was approved by the Senate and signed into law in July 1940. In his request to the Senate, the President said:

> Many millions of dollars have been given to the American Red Cross for relief purposes in Europe, but I feel that the Government itself should greatly add to the assistance that is now being given....
> [T]he greater part of the amount appropriated will be spent in the United States for the purchase and export of food materials--nearly all of which represents surplus in this country....I call attention to the fact that such an appropriation in no way lightens the burden which the American Red Cross has already assumes. It is necessary that the Red Cross continue its service for wounded and sick soldiers and civilians. An appropriation by the Congress will supplement the work of the Red Cross to meet the many additional crying needs of

[200] Christian Science Monitor, July 13, 1940, p. 7; see illustration V.

the civilian populations who have been driven from their homes.[201]

The ARC chartered the government-owned 9000 ton "McKeesport" to carry $1,000,000 in American donated relief supplies to Bordeaux and hoped to charter other vessels for the same purpose. Previously, the ARC had shipped its relief supplies to Europe only as partial cargo when space could be found in the holds of other nations' vessels. Now, the ARC considered it expedient to charter a ship as they were sending an entire load of supplies to one port for a specific relief operation. However, America's bountiful charity and the President's appropriation were in danger of floundering on the shoals of the "Neutrality Act's wording. The "McKeesport" had sailed without legal authority and it appeared the ARC's attempts to aid European refugees would end before they had begun. The 'mercy ship' had been ordered to proceed to the neutral port of Bilboa, Spain, but Long and Davis doubted the supplies could be carried through Spain to the refugee centers in France.[202]

In writing the 1939 'Neutrality Act' the Congress, at the request of the Red Cross, had given the President a limited discretionary power to permit ARC ships to enter prohibited combat zones and dock at belligerent ports. However, Section 4 provided ships under the charter or

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[201] Roosevelt Presidential Press Conferences, Number 651 (June 11, 1940) Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Volumes 15-16, 1940. New York: Da Capo Press, 1972, Volume 15:554-555. See also "War Relief". Current History, July 1940, p.15.

[202] C.R. Volume 86, Pt. 8, June 18, 1940, p. 8481.

control of the ARC could enter those waters on condition the ARC received "safe conduct granted by states named in any proclamation issued under the authority of section 1(a)." According to this wording, the ARC was legally disqualified from transporting relief supplies to Europe. The reason was simple, said Senator Key Pittman in the Senate, June 18, 1940. The ARC could not locate the legal governments of Belgium, Holland and France. The ARC had no way or obtaining "safe conduct" from belligerents named in the President's proclamation whose "business address at the present time are not known."[203] The ARC and State Department lobbied the Congress for the exchange of restrictive wording that demanded guarantees of safe conduct by all states for a clause requiring simple permission from the state blockading any other nations' ports.

The Senate debated the proposed amendment June 18 through June 20. Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Key Pittman, reiterated Davis' statement to the committee. ARC ships would not put themselves at risk by attempting to run any nation's blockade. Pittman further stated that personally he did not believe the President would grant a permit to a Red Cross vessel to go into a combat area where there was any danger of it being attacked. However, Pittman acknowledged ARC vessels would be liable to search and

[203] Ibid.

seizure of supplies if any nation deemed it to be contraband. The ARC would lose these contraband items to the forces of the blockading nation. Moreover, if the ship was sunk while carrying contraband goods, the United States could have no legal complaint under international law. These issues aside, he did not see any great danger to the ARC. He believed that nations, whether Allies or Axis, would neither stop and seize Red Cross supplies, nor deliberately sink an unescorted ship flying the Red Cross banner.[204]

The debate in the Senate over the proposed amendment was spirited. Senators Bone, Gillette, Vandenberg, and McCarran, did not share Pittman's certainty of Red Cross immunity. They suggested any change to the act increased dangers to ARC shipping and increased the probability the United States might become involved in the war. If an ARC ship was stopped or sunk, the public's anger would make America's entry into the war inevitable. The preservation of peace for America was more important than feeding the hungry of Europe, contended Senator Bone of Washington: "I should want to see no mishap in this venture become the basis for a declaration of war". Senator Gillette predicted: "No incident would so inflame the minds of the American people as the holding up and searching of a Red

[204] Ibid., p. 8482. Although Red Cross ships had not been sunk in the World War, the Commission for Belgian Relief ship "Harpalyce", which had a German safe conduct pass, was sunk by a German submarine in the English Channel, April 1915, and other CBR ships also had been attacked. See: George H. Nash, The Life of Herbert Hoover: The Humanitarian, 1914-1917, New York: W. W. Norton, 1988, p.115.

Cross ship." The sinking of a Red Cross ship would be the "spark" that led America into the war, said Senator McCarran: "Just let one ship be sunk with the American flag on the masthead and the Red Cross on their side and every red blooded American would rush into this holocaust of hell."[205] Given the real danger to the United States, Senator Vandenberg asserted that Great Britain and France should carry ARC supplies on their own vessels. This had been done before the "McKeesport" was chartered. Why rewrite legislation, put American lives in jeopardy, and increase the risk of war when the situation was in hand?[206]

The text of the amendment passed by the Senate, June 20, and the Congress, June 21, provided that only ARC ships could enter belligerent ports that were not under attack. ARC ships would travel unescorted by warships and contain only Red Cross supplies; and "where permission has not been granted by the blockading power, no American Red Cross vessel shall enter a port where a blockade...is being attempted."[207] ARC ships, under this revised act, were prohibited from entering British ports because of danger from German attack.

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[205] CR, p. 8488.

[206] CR, p.8481.

[207] The text of the ammendment reads: Section 4: The provisions of section 2 (a) shall not prohibit the transportation by vessels unarmed and not under convey, under charter or under direction and control of the American Red Cross of officers and American Red Cross personnel, and medical supplies, food, clothing, for the relief of human suffering. Provided, That where permission has not been given by the blockading power no American Red Cross vessel shall enter a port where a blockade by aircraft, surface vessel, or submarine, or into any port of any country where such blockade of that whole country is being so attempted; Provided further: That such American Red Cross vessel shall be on a mission of mercy only and carrying only Red Cross materials and personnel. CR, p. 8702.

Britain could circumvent these restrictions by using its merchant fleet. Arrangements were made for ARC shipments to be carried on British ships free of charge. Virtually all British merchant ships began to carry American Red Cross supplies, which were to be turned over to the British Red Cross. ARC figures, to the end of July 1940, show that an average of 850,000 pounds of food and medical supplies were being shipped to Britain per day. A total of 145 different ships, of which 104 were British, were used to transport $8,000,000 of ARC supplies.[208]

Other than Britain, the Red Cross had no place on which to spend the millions of dollars the American people had donated for refugee relief. The congressional debate had centred on the fear that the Axis powers would sink or detain ARC ships. However, as Great Britain had declared its intention to blockade all of continental Europe, including Vichy and neutral Spain, the relief agencies dilemma had not been altered. Britain, as the "blockading power", would have to grant permission for any American relief ship to enter European ports. Britain allowed the "McKeesport" to dock at Marseilles in July 1940, but viewed this as a special case. Prime Minister Winston Churchill had informed France's Prime Minister Paul Reynaud of Britain's policy of blockading France. On June 13, 1940, Churchill told Reynaud:

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[208] New York Times. July 26, 1940, p.8; August 1, 1940, p.19; August 4, 1940, p.12.

> The blockade would become increasingly effective. Famine and desperate suffering would ensue. These were very terrible, but inescapable prospects. France...could not hope to be spared.[209]

The strongest defender of the continental blockade policy was Dr. Hugh Dalton, who had become Minister of Economic Warfare when Churchill formed his Cabinet. In his memoirs, Dalton later wrote, "I was against all moderation...a whole hearted war-wager...dedicated to one idea - to win the war - and I would use all the power which I commanded to that end."[210] No half-hearted efforts, no "appeasement mentality" would be allowed to infect his Ministry. Dalton's biographer, Pen Pimlott, writes Dalton had "little affection" for the diplomatic and aristocratic world view of the Foreign Office, who had earlier modified British policy on food shipments to Poland. Lord Drogheda and the other "Palsied Pansies of the Foreign Office" cared more for diplomatic nicety than war winning strategy.[211]

Dalton cast his greatest scorn toward Lord Lothian, who he described as "weak and wobbly" and "whose strongest suit was high minded ballyhoo". Until his death, December 12, 1940, Lord Lothian continually pressed the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Economic Warfare for a relaxation of the food blockade to assuage American humanitarian sentiment. However, said Dalton, all requests

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[209] Quoted in Martin Gilbert, Winston S. Churchill, Volume VI: The Finest Hour, 1939-1941, London: Heinemann, 1983, p. 532.
[210] Hugh Dalton, The Fateful Years: Memoirs 1931-1945, London: Frederick Mueller, 1957, p. 326.
[211] Ben Pimlott, Hugh Dalton, London: Johnathon Cape, 1985, pp. 285-287.

must be refused: "Once we began to discuss allowing food through on any conditions, we were on the slippery slope and we might be forced to modify our conditions."[212]

In a secret session of Parliament held on July 9th, Dalton warned the House that Britain would probably face pressure from American humanitarians and German propaganda to lower the blockade, but to do so would increase British casualties and lengthen the war. British policy, he said, should affirm "food shall go in when the Nazi go out. Let food and the Armies of Liberation go in together."[213]

Dalton's position affirmed the argument of Sir William Beveridge, the Chairman of the Imperial Sub-Committee on Rationing. Food shipments to the occupied nations would allow the invaders greater access to food stocks, already looted to bare subsistence levels, for the feeding of the Nazi war machine, which did not have enough food to carry on a long war. Dalton asserted that, "with German brutality, [Nazi Germany] intended to let the rest of Europe go short before she went short herself". Britain could not compromise its policy and increase the possibility of losing the war.[214]

Europe was traditionally dependent upon the import of food for its survival; Germany was, at the time, "potentially" in a worse situation than before its

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[212] Pimlott, p. 294; see also: David Reynolds, Lord Lothian and Anglo-American Relations, 1939-1940, Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1983, pp. 325, 346.
[213] Dalton, p. 346.
[214] The Times, July 8, 1940, p.2. See editorial cartoons: Illustrations III and VIII.

conquests, stated The Economist. British victory was possible if Germany was denied access to foreign food and if Britain could withstand the promised invasion.[215] A political cartoon from the London Daily Herald reasserted the point. The cartoon shows Hitler sharpening a sword labeled "The Invasion of Britain". Behind him is an hourglass indicating that "Food Supplies" will run out as certainly as will the sand. The obvious inference is that, providing there is no food stuffs sent to occupied Europe, Britain will be able to "starve out" the enemy and thus be victorious over the Nazi tyrant.[216]

Furthermore, the British saw a hungry Europe as advantageous to their war effort. Hunger might lead the European people to passive or active resistance. If Europe was reduced to a starvation level, "Hitler might find his position as master more precarious, and invasion of England consequently more risky," wrote New Statesman and Nation.[217] Heightening the threat of revolution was to Britain's benefit.

In the House of Commons, Arthur Greenwood, Minister without Portfolio, claimed: "Hitler ruled over millions of sullen people who would not give the willing service rendered by the free people of this country: he might rob, but he could not add starvation to slavery without the

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[215] The Economist. July 6, 1940, pp.5-6.
[216] New York Times. July 19, 1940, Section E, p. 7. Cartoon not included as it was unsuitable for copying.
[217] New Statesman and Nation. August 3, 1940, p.112.

risk of revolution."[218] Ironically, then, this factor lessened the threat of actual European famine, if the Germans understood their own rational self-interests.

On July 17, 1940, Britain's Ambassador Lord Lothian presented an *Aide-Memoire* to Secretary Hull clarifying the British position on food to Europe. No food would go to Europe. Germany has it in its power to see that the inhabitants of the occupied territories are adequately fed: unoccupied France would be treated "for all contraband control purposes in the same way as occupied France." Britain believed this decision would help win the war and hoped "the United States Government [would] be able to see the question in this light - not as a measure which will inflict avoidable hardship on the helpless, but as one which will shorten the struggle and hasten the day when Germany's victims can regain their liberty and the world enjoy a prospect of lasting peace."[219]

Britain's news sources claimed that American humanitarian statements of coming famine were greatly exaggerated. The July 27, 1940, New Statesman and Nation editorial "Will Hunger Win the War" asserted that "to expect general famine would be absurd even if we calculate on the basis of those published figures which are most unfavorable to the Nazis."[220] Besides believing exaggerated claims, the humanitarians were victims of a

[218] The Times, August 5, 1940, p.4.
[219] The British Embassy to the Department of State, July 17, 1940, FRUS, 1940: 2.
[220] New Stateman and Nation, July 27, 1940, pp.80-81.

Nazi propaganda campaign. "The Nazi propaganda line is this," wrote British columnist J. B. Priestly.

> Germany has just enough food for herself, and so can defy the British blockade, but all these poor countries under her control are already suffering - and will soon suffer much worse - all because of the wicked British. One month previous these stricken countries had lots of food, but where is it now? Stolen by the Nazis. Now, having grabbed everything they could lay their hands on, they are pretending to feel sorry for their wretched victims and whining about the blockade.[221]

Duff Cooper, Minister of Information, spoke in the same vein. In a radio address, Cooper stated any famine exists "owing to the principle laid down by Marshal Goring that it is better to spend money on guns than butter. It is that policy which has produced hunger in Germany, and will soon produce starvation in Europe. We shall be blamed for it....But it is the Nazi policy that is responsible. Destruction and devastation march in the vanguard of Nazism and famine rides behind."[222]

From a constructive standpoint, however, it was not enough to merely blame the Nazis for the suffering of the European people. Although Britain felt justified in imposing the food blockade and attempted to justify itself to the conquered nations and the United States, the blockade was a static policy. It required a dynamic element to counter German propaganda and the demands of

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[221] J. B. Priestley, Britain Speaks. New York; Harper Brothers, 1942, pp.122-124.
[222] The Times, August 5, 1940, p.2.

American humanitarians, and to instill hope in the European people.

In an August 5 letter to The Times, William Benson, a Conservative party advisor, wrote that the government should make a clear policy statement that Britain would feed Europe if the Nazi invaders "evacuated" the conquered territories. This would show the conquered countries that any resulting famine was the fault of the invaders rather than Britain.[223] Colonel Richard Meinertzhagan, a life-long friend of Churchill's, submitted a plan to The Times which he felt would be an effective counter to German propaganda claims, an outlet for humanitarian sentiment and an offer of a necessary measure of hope to the conquered nations of Europe. Meinertzhagan's idea was the creation of a food-stock "earmarked" specifically and irrevocably for a liberated Europe. Other than the mentioned benefits, the practical side of the plan was: Britain would eventually have to feed devastated Europe when the war was won; the creation of a food stock would relieve the growing food surplus in the United States; the links between Britain and the United States would be strengthened if they worked together.[224]

The British, however, were still uncertain how Roosevelt would react to their blockade policy. They would have been more comfortable if they had known that

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[223] Ibid., p. 5.
[224] The Times, August 10, 1940, p.10.

Roosevelt's private thoughts were similar to their own. Neither the President nor any administration spokesman had made a public declaration concerning American intentions, nor had the President privately informed Churchill of his concerns.

Any statements the President made on this issue were characteristically oblique. During a July 1940, press conference, Roosevelt contended that neither he nor the Red Cross had definite evidence that famine would face Europe or knew the extent of Nazi looting. "It is all a guess," said the President. "I would say that I would be awfully guarded in giving any definite picture because we have not got the detailed facts." Challenging the President, a reporter stated: "[Mr. Hoover] painted a very black picture of it and said it was based on pretty detailed conferences with spokesmen of various governments. He forecast the worst famine in all of history if this war went into the fall." Roosevelt reiterated that neither he nor the ARC had any such information, but "he would give the world to have the information on which Mr. Hoover based his prediction". Roosevelt proposed that if Mr. Hoover had such information he was obligated to share it with the Red Cross. Roosevelt doubted that any specific ambassadors "would have any detailed information whatsoever because, probably, in that case we would have it."[225]

[225] Complete Presidential Press Conferences, July 23, 1940, No. 662, Volume 16:57.

In private, Roosevelt's opinions were much more definite. He was certain the Germans would seize any and all available foodstuffs from the occupied countries. The Germans would create famine and be responsible for any starvation which occurred. Harold Ickes' diaries indicate Roosevelt's position on humanitarian aid to occupied Europe solidified by the end of June 1940 and would remain unchanged. In a late June cabinet meeting, Roosevelt outlined the European food situation as he understood it. "Actual starvation will confront millions of people in Europe" for "undoubtedly, the Germans will help themselves first and leave the natives to fare as best they can." Furthermore, he asserted, the Germans were totally untrustworthy and would seize relief supplies or take equivalent amounts from occupied countries. Consequently, "the Red Cross will not go into the countries occupied by Germany."[226] By December, the President's opinion was the same: the anti-blockade forces only "pretend that supplies can be restricted to those who need them", and he would not compromise on this issue: "Harsh and cruel...is the policy...[but]...to do otherwise would be to strengthen [Germany's] assault upon civilization."[227]

Although the President and the State Department believed food shipments to occupied Europe would aid the Nazi cause, they held out hope some relief could be

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[226] Ickes, pp.223-5, 296.
[227] Ibid., p.385.

extended to Vichy. According to Long, the administration's position proposed a compromise between British policy, which denied all food relief, and Hoover's "insistent" demands that all people be fed.[228] Consequently, in early December 1940, the President approved Clarence Pickett's proposal for a combined ARC-Quaker relief shipment of milk and vitamin concentrates to Vichy. If British permission was received, funds would be provided from the Congressional relief allocation.[229]

The British Ministry of Economic Warfare was willing to allow medical supplies to pass through their blockade, but the American diplomats in Britain notified the Secretary of State that, "milk for the children of unoccupied France is definitely under the ban." In the American official's opinion, Churchill and Lord Halifax, the British Foreign Secretary, were fully aware of Dalton's "aggressive spirit" which was also supported by parliamentary and public opinion. Moreover, the children of Holland and Belgium suffered from the effects of the blockade and their Governments were still faithful allies to the British. In all good conscience, the British did not feel they could aid the children of France when the children of British allies faced even harsher cruelties under German domination.[230]

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[228] Long, December 11, 1940, pp. 160-1; see also: Ickes, December 1, 1940, p. 386.
[229] Pickett, p.177; on the role of the Quakers in unoccupied France see: "The Lord's Battalions," Fortune, December 1940, pp.69-72, 79.
[230] Charge in the United Kingdom to the Secretary of State, December 21, 1940, FRUS, 1940, Volume II, # 840.48/4540 :Telegram, pp.553-4.

Anglo-American discussions were stymied until Roosevelt voiced his personal opinions, in a December 31, 1940, secret communication to Churchill. He believed that for "humanitarian and political reasons limited quantities of milk and vitamin concentrates for children should be sent to unoccupied France." Moreover, he was convinced the supplies, under direct ARC control and distribution, would not benefit the Germans but "help to win over the French people."[231] Of course, wrote Roosevelt, the United States' humanitarian assistance would be conditional on Vichy's friendly relations to the western powers.

Churchill agreed to allow one ARC shipment through the blockade provided the ARC distributed the relief goods (medical supplies, vitamin concentrates, children's clothing), and provided the Vichy Government allowed the French press to publish accounts of the relief operations and British assistance. If these conditions were not met, further American shipments would be stopped. Churchill also requested that British actions should "be presented in as favorable light as possible" in any statements to the press and indicative of Anglo-American cooperation.[232]

The relief ship, which the Americans had hoped would reach France by Christmas 1940, sailed January 25, 1941. It contained 6000 tons of cargo, one-half for Spain and one-half for France. A second ship sailed March 17,

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[231] Warren Kimball (ed.), Churchill and Roosevelt. The Complete Correspondence Volume I: Alliance Emerging. Princeton: Princeton University Press, R-19X, pp. 117-118.
[232] Kimball,C-51x,p.125.

1941.[233] The British, for their part, were satisfied with the arrangement and began to see these small and controlled American relief shipments as politically advantageous. Churchill went so far as to suggest to Roosevelt, March 12, 1941, that perhaps the United States might send a monthly shipment of wheat to Vichy, provided, of course, a "working agreement" could be reached with that government to limit collaboration with the Germans.[234] However, American shipments were suspended following a "strongly collaborationist" May 15, 1941, broadcast by Marshal Petain.[235]

Roosevelt's concerns over European famine were modified as reports from Department of Agriculture economists indicated the threat was not as dire as earlier feared. He could write, with some comfort, to Harry Hopkins, in March 1941, that "the conquered nations are all actually capable of feeding their own people despite the British blockade, if Germany does not take their food away."[236] The Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations of the Department of Agriculture issued a report in July 1940 stating that the overall food situation in Europe was not critical. If food distribution was properly organized, and "...if 1940 crops and stocks already on hand were to

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233 Pickett, p.179.
234 Kimball, C-67x, pp. 145-6.
235 Sir Llewellyn Woodward, British Foreign Policy in the Second World War. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1962
236 Franklin Roosevelt to Harry Hopkins, March 1, 1941. FDR: His Personal Letters 1928-1945, Volume II (Eliot Roosevelt Ed.) New York:Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950, p. 287..

be proportionately distributed there would be no abnormal shortage of food and certainly no widespread starvation."[237] Any shortage of grains was offset by better than average corn, potato and vegetable crops in Europe. Also, once through the first winter of occupation, the Nazis would be better able to organize food supplies so the long term threat of famine in Europe was minimal.

The Department of Agriculture's report was augmented by a study prepared and published by the International Institute of Agriculture (Rome). This report also denied Europe faced catastrophic starvation in the coming winter. It contended that the people of Europe would suffer through a hard winter and feel the "pinch of famine in isolated localities" but certainly there was no threat of "genuine famine".[238]

Britain resolved to maintain its blockade and Roosevelt privately supported the British policy to the fullest. However, the question had not been truly put before the court of American public opinion. The concerted attack on British policy and drive to influence American opinion came from John Cudahy, the American Ambassador to Belgium, and Herbert Hoover. Cudahy, in a well publicized August 8, 1940, interview, contended that not only had the German army had behaved humanely in Belgium, they were actually willing to facilitate

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[237] New York Times July 30, 1940, p.31.
[238] Christian Science Monitor, August 1, 1940, p.5.

humanitarian food shipments. Belgium, said Cudahy, faced starvation in only a few months if American supplies did not reach it immediately. Cudahy's press statement was the fanfare, and the final act opened with Herbert Hoover's August 11th announcement of the creation of the European Food Distribution Commission. Hoover claimed he could feed Europe without benefiting the Nazi cause.

VII: *AMERICA'S RESPONSE TO THE HOOVER PLAN*

In his August 8, 1940 diary entry, Breckenridge Long wrote that the John Cudahy, Ambassador to Belgium, had given a "questionable press interview". Cudahy advocated the "feeding the starving Belgians and the starving people of Europe....[The] reverberations of his indiscretion will be rumbling around for some time."[239] The Ambassador's humanitarian feelings and impetuous nature were well known in Washington. Because Cudahy wished to become chairman of a Belgium relief organization headed by the Vatican *Nuncio* and the Italian Ambassador, had offered his resignation following the fall of Belgium. Cordell Hull refused to accept Cudahy's resignation and ordered him to remain at his post.[240]

At the "questionable interview" Cudahy had asserted that famine was indeed coming to Europe. He stated: "the Belgian situation is very serious, "present supplies, with severe rationing...will last until September 1, or at the best early October. If you gentlemen think the continent is a howling Hell now, what do you think it will be like this winter?"[241] Roosevelt immediately recalled his talkative Ambassador to Washington for a clarification of these remarks. "I know I am going home to be crucified, but the truth must be told", stated the unrepentant

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239 Long, p.122.
240 Ambassador in Italy to Hull, May 27, 1940, FRUS, 1940: 1 pp.206-7.
241 New York Times, August 9, 1940, p. 1.

ambassador to the British press.[242] If Cudahy's assertion was correct, it was not the truth the administration wanted to publicize.

According to Ickes, Cudahy had broken an elementary rule of diplomacy; he had created an embarrassing situation for the United States. Cudahy's statement provided a vehicle for German propaganda. It seemed to show the inhumanity of the western democracies. But, in Ickes view, it would be "stupid and suicidal" for the United States to feed the people of Europe.[243] This was also the view held by Cordell Hull, Sumner Welles, Harry Hopkins, and, most importantly, Franklin Roosevelt. They understood that military considerations had to take precedence over humanitarian concern.

Cudahy's assertions were denied by the Red Cross, who continued to maintain that they had no information that Belgium faced starvation. Under-Secretary of State Welles confirmed the Red Cross position, while further disassociating the Ambassador's views from the State Department. He commented: "the Ambassador's interview was given without prior authorization from, or without prior notification to, the State Department....[The] interview was in violation of standing instructions of the Department of State, and certain of the views expressed by the Ambassador are not to be construed as representing the

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[242] New York Herald Tribune, August 8, 1940, p.1.
[243] Ickes, August 10, 1940, pp.296-7.

views of this government."[244] The administration silenced Cudahy and hoped to quell any diplomatic furor or public outcry, but the situation was further exacerbated by Herbert Hoover's announcement of his plan to feed hungry Europe.

Hoover, as chairman of the new 'European Food Distribution Commission', made his announcement from Republican presidential candidate Wendell Willkie's West Yellowstone, Wyoming headquarters. Hoover claimed the Red Cross and Roosevelt were lying to the American people. He attacked presidential and ARC statements which claimed that there was no information on the coming European famine. Hoover believed twenty-seven million persons in Holland, Denmark, Norway and Poland faced imminent starvation. He said: "It is impossible to understand what the administration in Washington means by the statements that they do not have any facts....The obvious truth is that there will be wholesale starvation, disease and death in these countries unless something is done about it."[245] Although Willkie had not yet announced his position on European relief, it must have appeared to Roosevelt that Republican strategists considered the President politically vulnerable on the relief question.

Front page headlines in British, Canadian and American newspapers on August 12, 1940, declared Hoover's

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[244] New York Herald Tribune, August 10, 1940, pp.1, 8.
[245] New York Times, August 12, 1940, p.

intention to feed war victims. The papers reported the former President was negotiating with the German Government to allow food, under American supervision, to be distributed in the occupied countries. Also, Hoover's representatives were about to approach the British government to lower its blockade.

Hoover claimed his plan offered a system of guarantees which answered the British fear that supplying food to Europe would aid the Nazi war effort. Moreover, it claimed to solve American concerns that the benefits of any relief supplies would only go to the needy. Satisfying this American concern was a necessity for the plan's popular acceptance. Through the early summer of 1940, American newspapers included many articles on Nazi food looting in the occupied countries which had led to suffering in their civilian populations.[246]

A masterful cartoon in the New York Herald Tribune, July 29, 1940, 'The Longest Boarding House Reach in History', was indicative of the current attitude. In the cartoon, supplicant Europeans hold up empty plates toward an obese Goering, who is gorging himself at a full table. A fanatical Hitler, too occupied to eat, stabs at French cattle, hogs, and sacks of grain with his fork and reaches with his other hand to seize sheaves of Polish wheat.[247]

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[246] New York Herald Tribune, July 11, 1940, p. 1; July 7, 1940, p. 1; New York Times, August 4, 1940, p. 13; October 13, 1940, Section E, p. 3. See illustration IV.
[247] New York Herald Tribune, July 29, 1940, p. 6; see illustration VI.

Hoover did not blame the British for European starvation; the British were only asked to allow relief ships to pass their blockades. The primary responsibility for a successful implementation of the plan was placed on Germany who was expected to take none of the "domestic produce" from the occupied nations and to replace the "equivalent of any food already taken". Germany, according to Hoover, must permit food imports from Russia and guarantee safe passage of relief ships. Furthermore, the "control of distribution" by the neutral organizations must be assured.

They added element in Hoover's European relief plan, which differed from the Polish plan he had presented to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in February 1940, was the operation's financing. The new plan was not charity; the "fugitive Governments" of the occupied countries would pay the operational costs, which Hoover estimated at $20,000 to $40,000 per month, and supply the funds for food purchases in the United States.[248]

The Christian Science Monitor wrote that the release of the Hoover Plan united the entire British press. They unanimously declared the plan could not be implemented without aiding Germany.[249] "It was almost inevitable," editorialized The Economist, "that the United States, whose record in Europe has always tended to combine great-

[248] Hoover, pp.18-19.
[249] Christian Science Monitor, August 13, 1940, p. 5.

hearted humanitarianism with a misapprehension of the issues at stake, should be the first to bring the matter up."[250] Britain's primary concern, they asserted, was to defeat Germany. However, the press did not deny that there were hungry persons in Europe; hunger was symptomatic of Nazism.

The food distribution plan was, said The Times, a "prominent topic at Westminster." Members of Parliament opposed it and supported a motion to "resist any effort or request" which might be made to permit food supplies to Europe to pass the blockade.[251] In a August 20, 1940, speech in Parliament, which Sir Alexander Cadogan of the Foreign Office called "very good and very successful"[252], Winston Churchill expressed the official policy of his Government. The Prime Minister placed the responsibility for any famine squarely on Nazi shoulders, but attempted to soften the blow of a food blockade, and provide hope and support to the conquered nations with the introduction of the "food stock" plan. This food was to be "held in trust for the Free Europe of tomorrow."[253]

In a October 3, 1940, speech carried by American radio, Hugh Dalton put his Ministry's case to the American people: "I have given much thought to the question, and I

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[250] The Economist, August 17, 1940, pp.206-7.
[251] The Times, August 15, 1940, p.4.
[252] David Dilks (ed). The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, 1938-1945. New York: Putnam, 1972, p. 322.
[253] Winston Churchill, The War Speeches of the Right Honourable Winston S. Churchill, Volume 1. London: Cassell, 1951, August 20, 1940.

have had the benefit of much expert advice, but I have yet to discover any satisfactory and watertight system of guarantees against food imports into any part of enslaved Europe finding their way directly or indirectly into the bellies of the Nazis." As well, Dalton questioned the motives of people who considered plans that could aid Germany:

> Some queer folks seem to be mixed up in agitating for the relaxation of the blockade....Night after night German airmen scatter bombs [over England]....They return after killing and maiming out women and children to enjoy excellent breakfasts in the German airforce messes just across the Channel....They feed on food stolen from the French, the Belgians and the Dutch. Why should we [who are] fighting for our lives and still exercising command of the sea routes be expected to supply better meals for these Nazi fly-by nights?[254]

Dalton would not compromise his now standard position on the food question.

The attempts made by Cudahy and Hoover to excite United States popular sentiment and pressure the administration to force a lowering of the food blockade were, ironically, a boon to the British position. Britain had feared that the United States would urge a lifting of the blockade to alleviate the European food shortage. However, now that the issue had come to a head, it became clear, said The Times, that Roosevelt and Hull were "not willing to exert pressure. Neither put full faith in

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[254] The Times, October 3, 1940, p. 9.

German assurances that supplies would not be pillaged."[255] The State Department's response to the Hoover Plan was absolute dismissal. Welles stated the department had "no comment" to make and would have none to make in the future.[256]

The administration's June decision that aid would not go to the occupied countries held firm. The "All possible aid to the Allies" policy meant American acquiescence to British blockade policy; no food to Europe was, in effect, aid to the allies. Cordell Hull wrote in his memoirs that his own "humanitarian feelings were stirred by the plight of the occupied countries". However, it was obvious to him and to Roosevelt that sending food to Europe would increase the economic strength of Hitler. "In the long run the occupied countries would benefit more from a policy that made Hitler's defeat more certain in a shorter time than one that gave them a temporary relief." The Hoover Plan could not be supported as it was "in conflict with our ideas and those of Britain's on winning the war."[257] Britain was fighting for her life, Hull wrote. She had her "back to the Atlantic wall" and needed all the help the United States could give her to defeat Germany. Because of this the administration could not, and would not, do anything which would conceivably hurt her

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[255] The Times, August 8, 1940, p. 3.
[256] New York Times, August 13, 1940, p. 1.
[257] Hull, p. 804.

ally, even if that imposed added hardships to European civilians.

Americans tuned to CBS radio listened to Edward R. Murrow's 'This is London'. Murrow proclaimed that if Great Britain, fighting alone against Europe's Nazi conquerors, was to win the war, the blockade of continental Europe "must be as effective as possible."[258] The New York Times wondered whether the United States Government could "deem it expedient to avert famine from a Europe [which] Germany must first conquer, [with the knowledge that Germany would] then mobilize against the United States?"[259] Time, in its usual fashion, put the issue succinctly in a July 1, 1940 article:

> The only way the U. S. can be sure of not having to fight Adolf Hitler is to have Britain beat him first. And the only way Britain can beat Hitler--now that her Allies on land are all defeated--is to starve him out. If winter comes and Britain is still fighting, not only Germans but Poles, Norwegians, Danes, Dutch, Belgians and French will starve. Then the U. S. will have to face its toughest relief problem--to help Hitler by feeding Hitler ruled Europe, or to let Europe starve.[260]

The present chances for a British victory appeared extremely tentative to America in general. As Sumner Welles later wrote in A Time for Decision, the collapse of France brought home to America "the full realization of

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[258] Edward R. Murrow, This Is London. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1941, July 21, 1940 broadcast.
[259] New York Times, July 7, 1940, section E, p. 5.
[260] Time, July 1, 1940, p.17.

the danger confronting the United States itself."[261] Early in the war, 82% of Americans polled were optimistic that the Allies would prevail in the conflict. However, as the Allied war effort during the winter of 1939-1940 proved ineffectual, these numbers began to fall: only 8% considered the Allies to be "ahead" on May 19, 1940. America's optimism waned further as the unstoppable Nazi *blitzkrieg* forced its way across western Europe. The American people believed Britain's victory was vitally important to the United States of America. When asked the question: "If Great Britain is defeated would Germany start a war with the United States," 65% of the respondents answered 'yes' to a June 2 poll, and by July 7, only 32% of respondents believed Britain would win the war.[262] A Nazi victory over Britain, then, indicated a clear and certain danger to the United States. Britain was America's last line of defense. If Britain was defeated, Hitler would cast his eyes further westward.

Mid-August press assessments were that "Franklin Roosevelt almost certainly did not intend to ask the British to let the U. S. feed Hitler's victims unless

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[261] Sumner Welles, A Time For Decision, New York: Harper, 1944, pp. 148-149.

[262] Gallup Polls:

September 18, 1939: Which side will win the war?-- Allies 82%, Germany 7%, Qualified 11%, p. 181.
May 19, 1940: Which side is ahead?--Allies 8%, Germany 67%, Qualified 25% p. 224.
June2, 1940: If Britain is defeated will Germany statrt a war with the U. S.?-- Yes 65%, p. 226.
July 7, 1940: Which side will win the war?-- Allies 32%, Germany 35%, Qualified 33%, p. 231
September 11, 1940: Which side will win the war?-- Allies 43%, Germany 17%, Qualified 40%, p. 226
January 3, 1941: Do you think our country's future depends on England winning the war?--Yes 68%, No 26%, Qualified 6%, p.257

public opinion forced such a step.[263] However, the concerted public pressure which Hoover and his supporters attempted to engender was not forthcoming from the media or from the general public.

The sight of Britain fighting alone was a critical moment in the lives of American citizens. When Western Europe fell to the Nazi armies many of the complexities and ambiguities of the war dissolved in what might be termed a great simplifying event.[264] It became apparent to Roosevelt and to Americans that there could no longer be any question of an American role in humanitarian endeavours while Europe was occupied.

Polish aid had not been a priority and Franklin Roosevelt followed a cautious and ill-defined policy which, if anything, sent out mixed messages to all concerned. Although the president asked Americans to offer aid to the innocent victims of war, the administration did not foster any congressional actions for fear of controversy. The American Red Cross announced a $1,000,0000 emergency war relief fund, but acted *pro forma* as its chairman endeavoured to avoid the spotlight and debate. The organization, however, was not willing to assign any responsibility to other groups which were concerned with aiding the Poles and found itself in conflict with these organizations over relief operations.

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[263] Time, August 26, 1940, p. 18.

[264] For a discussion of the concept of a "great simplifying event" see: Charles A. Maier, "Democracy and Its Discontents," Foreign Affairs, July/August 1994, Vol. 73, #4.

Although the administration clearly did not favour a large Polish operation, it was also not willing to allow the British or the Germans to quash perceived American interests. Consequently, the State Department challenged Britain on the question of America's neutral rights. The State Department demanded and forced a British accommodation on the issue, even though Britain claimed its strategic concerns were jeopardized. As well, American diplomats entered into negotiations with the German Foreign Office so the Red Cross and the distrusted Commission for Polish Relief could begin humanitarian operations in the previously restricted General Government area.

The invasion of Western Europe led to the long delayed Red Cross 'War Drive'. America believed that it had a responsibility to feed the war's victims as best it could and this was vigorously promoted by the administration publically and in the Congress. However, by June 1940, American interests could no longer be defined outside of British strategic considerations. As the year continued, this fact became increasingly apparent to the general populace. This led to an abrupt turn around on the aid question and to a re-evaluation of where America's true interests lay.

Although America was troubled by the dilemma of a starving Europe, wrote the New York Times, democracy and freedom might never return to the conquered nations unless

Britain was triumphant. The defeat of Germany depended on the "success of the blockade."[265] The Christian Science Monitor pointed to the fact that America was now spending billions of dollars on armaments to prevent Nazi expansion into the Western Hemisphere and that the British Navy was America's first line of defense. It was not reasonable to facilitate a weakening of the blockade.[266]

Even the New York Herald Tribune, which was normally friendly to Hoover, considered it "folly" for the United States, which was attempting to aid Britain in every way possible, to "agitate" for a lowering of the weapon Britain considered its greatest asset in the war against Hitler. "Food is war," added the editorial, "if that rule imposes suffering, it will not be this country's fault; it will be the fault of those who loosed war upon the world."[267]

Internationally syndicated columnist Walter Lippman offered what he called a "cool appraisal of this great problem" in his 'Today and Tomorrow' column. The appraisal was calculated to deter any but the most ardent friends of Hoover. The stipulations of the Hoover Plan required neutral - meaning American - control of food distribution. This necessitated a monstrous administration system to control food supplies and allocation. As virtually the whole of Europe was under Nazi control, the

[265] New York Times, August 13, 1940, Section C, p.18.
[266] Christian Science Monitor, August 12, 1940, p.12.
[267] New York Herald Tribune, August 12, 1940, p. 18.

European Food Distribution Commission now had the responsibility of organizing the feeding of tens of millions of persons across the geographical boundaries of the continent, not merely within nations. The agency must ensure Germany did not seize the domestic food production of any country, returned any foods seized, and allowed the conquered countries to freely trade with areas that produced surplus food.

In truth, what Hoover was proposing, wrote Lippman, was "an administrative blockade - a blockade not only on the frontiers between Germany and the invaded nations but also inside all these nations - as between the occupying armies, the Nazi officials, the Gestapo on the one hand, the local inhabitants on the other." The idea that Germany would deny itself the rights to the food of occupied Europe, which it had conquered for economic gain was, to say the least, highly improbable.[268]

Editorials in The New Republic and Nation contended that certain pragmatic considerations of British and American self-interest could be attained through a lowering of the blockade. According to both magazines, neither Britain nor the United States could risk the loss of long-term friendships with the conquered nations. As well, a total blockade added substance to German propaganda claims of British and American inhumanity.

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[268] New York Herald Tribune, August 15, 1940, p. 19.

Serious diplomacy should be able to work out a relief program, said The New Republic, to counter Nazi propaganda; if proper controls were placed on food shipments, Germany would not receive direct benefits.[269] However, The New Republic noted the serious nature of the problem and the need for caution. America could pressure the British to lower the blockade to feed a hungry Europe, but at the same time it must realize that "Britain's defense is our defense, that if she fails we are in immediate and tremendous peril." Moreover, New Republic wondered if it would be "mere sentimentalism", a denial of the value of lost Allied lives, for America to supply food particularly since agricultural experts had concluded that food was plentiful enough to feed Europe, if Hitler would distribute it equitably.[270]

The Nation hoped that, if Hoover's general relief program could not be put into operation, a minimal operation to feed children, elderly, the mentally ill, and the sick could be implemented. Germany, said Nation could not be trusted to look after these persons. However, the magazine was uncertain whether the Germans would allow neutral groups to know the actual situation in the occupied countries and to "permit the democracies to gain the prestige that would accrue from feeding children."[271]

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[269] The New Republic, October 21, 1940, pp. 542-3.
[270] The New Republic. August 19, 1940, pp. 230-1.
[271] Nation, December 14, 1940, pp. 592-3.

The September 1940 Gallup survey indicated public opinion supported the continental blockade and the administration's position. When asked: "If there is starvation in France, Belgium and Holland this winter should the U. S. try to send food to those countries in our ships?", only 38% of the respondents answered 'yes'. Of this 38%, 78% answered "no" to the supplementary question: "Would you support the Hoover Plan if some of this food went to the Germans?" The poll showed that there was no regional differences in public opinion. American farmers, who were suffering from decreased markets, did not favour relief to Europe. Party affiliation was not a factor in peoples' opinion; virtually the same number of Democrats (60%) and Republicans (64%) said 'no' to supporting the plan. The Gallup organization concluded: "If this issue had to be decided by the voters of the United States at the present time, despite strong natural sympathies for the innocent victims of the European War, the American public's first reactions are that feeding nations now under Adolf Hitler's control would only be a direct method of feeding Hitler's Germany."[272] The outcome of the Gallup survey was, of course, comforting to the administration and to the British. The pressure of popular sentiment would not demand a confrontation between the two governments over fundamental policy. The "diplomatic furor" feared by

[272] Gallup, p. 239; see also: New York Times, September 1, 1940, p. 19.

Breckenridge Long in the State Department did not materialize, nor was public sentiment marshaled against the blockade.

In the face of this opposition, the anti-blockade forces marshaled what arguments they could to change public opinion. However, they did not have a broad based constituency on which to draw support. The Christian community and leadership, from which they had hoped support would come, was fractured. The leading Catholic journal Commonweal recognized that Christians would disagree on this issue. The problem, as Commonweal saw it, was "not as simple as putting 'Corinthians I' against *Mein Kampf*."[273]

The journal devoted space in almost every issue published in the winter of 1940-1941 to the examination of this question. Commonweal's contributing editors were split intellectually. They debated Britain's fight for life versus what some claimed to be an inhumane policy. Those favoring a lowering of the blockade were sympathetic to the British military and strategic needs. However, they considered the benefits Germany would receive, if it was relieved of its responsibility to feed Europe, as an "unfortunate consequence as there are some means which cannot be justified regardless of the ends."[274] Also, the moral implications of the policy were contrary to the high

[273] Commonweal, December 27, 1940, p. 245.
[274] Commonweal, August 16, 1940, p. 357.

ideals the United States espoused. The United States was following a policy which aided in "bringing about the liquidation of a nation by forcefully refusing succor to reach it because its very existence serves in an indirect way to further the interests of the enemy."[275]

Those who agreed with blockade policy asked: "Is it necessary to remind Catholics in America that there are moral and spiritual ends to be served, higher and more imperious than physical needs?"[276] The vital question to be considered was: ought we feed people today, so they could be killed tomorrow or enslaved forever? Jan Mazarek, Foreign Minister of the Czech-Slovakian Provisional Government-in-Exile, and a supporter of the food blockade policy, stated that "it is better to get along without material necessities than to have our souls destroyed."[277]

During the debate over the "pros and cons" of relief, the pacifist Christian Century stood at the forefront. It advocated support for the Hoover Plan, which, as it said,

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[275] Commonweal, January 3, 1941, p. 282.

[276] Commonweal, October 22, 1940, p. 22.

[277] The text of Masark's speech,quoted in the New York Times, December 11, 1940, p.11, reads:

The Czecho-Slovak nation is determined to withstand without complaint the combined effect of German oppression and the British blockade, which result in serious food shortage in our country. From our point of view it is better to get along without material necessities, such as food and clothing , than that our souls be destroyed. I am convinced that other peoples whose territory is occupied by the Germans feel as we do.

Can one believe that the Nazi would not rob the conquered peoples of any food sent to them, as they have already robbed Czecko-Slovakia, Poland, Norway, France and others of every thing they wished?.

...A complete blockade is essential to victory; half measures are not enough.

We on the front line of battle can see the splendid sacrifices the British people are making. Arguments for softening the blows of one of the arms of defense, the blockade, are so unthinkable to us, even though they may occur to some persons thousands of miles away, say in California.

There will come a day when America can help feed the hungry and restore weary bodies, but that day has not yet come.

was the only plan. The opponents of relief had devised no alternatives, other than accepting the military necessity of innocent deaths. Moral equivocation, intellectual rationalization and debate over military strategy were anathema. Their concern centered on black and white Christian imperatives:

> [The] naked in Holland say 'Clothe us", the hungry in Belgium say, 'Feed us', the sick in Norway say, 'Visit us', the desperate in Poland say, 'Come to us'. To let the poor people suffer and to die would be to deny the wisdom of God in favor of a human wisdom which, over and over again, has proven to be a ruinous folly.[278]

The magazine's editorials: "Europe's Specter of Starvation", "The Incomparable Atrocity", "For Every Reason Feed Europe", and "Feed Belgium's Children" expressed abhorrence at the American Government's support of British blockade policy. Britain's policy passed a death sentence on Europe's civilian population and Washington concurred, the journal concluded, in the "heartless consignment of innocent people to a slow starvation". The duty, then, of every American who "put Christian compassion above navalist Machiavellianism", was to protest and demand that their government change its policy towards feeding Europe.[279]

Although pragmatic considerations were of limited importance to the main argument of Christian Century, it

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[278] Christian Century, November 27, 1940, p. 1478.
[279] Christian Century, February 26, 1941, p. 109.

did assert that the plan had practical utilitarian value. It did not call for charity; it was not German-inspired and it imposed strict conditions. Moreover, certain self-interests of the belligerents were addressed: Germany could not risk a European pandemic on the scale of 1919 and the Britain needed to maintain the long-term friendship with her European allies.

The argument that Germany could not be trusted to live up to agreements was false, the Christian Century said, in the light of the experiences of relief workers in occupied Europe. These experiences ought to carry more weight than the opinions of 'experts' who spoke without real knowledge. Christian Century put its faith and trust in the Commission for Polish Relief (CPR) and the Society of Friends. "It ought to get through to those people who oppose relief", wrote Gilbert Redfern, the CPR's representative in Europe, "that relief is going on in German-occupied Poland without interference."[280] Clarence Pickett, Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee and the man responsible for the largest relief operation in Europe, said the Germans could be trusted. Pickett was quoted at length in a November issue:

> [Although] the American temper at the present time would probably not believe that such promises by the German government would be lived up to. However, the evidence Polish Relief Commission...[and]...of the American Red Cross in Poland, leads one to believe

[280] Christian Century January 22, 1941, p.109.

> that the pledges made by the German government can be relied upon. Mr. Hoover maintains that this was scrupulously true in the operations of the American Relief Commission during and following the World War, and it is true of the operations of the American Friends the present time.[281]

The leading Protestant theologians and educators, who opposed the Hoover Plan were considered by Christian Century to be deficient in Christian charity. In their agreement of blockade policy, Christian Century said, those Christians were perpetuating an evil as pernicious as Hitler's totalitarianism. As Clarence Pickett wrote: "I spoke to a meeting of about 150 ministers in New York...[and]...I believe I was the only speaker who upheld feeding".[282] Church leaders sided overwhelmingly with the blockade.

A statement, contending that "any efforts by private American citizens to bring pressure to bear upon other governments or to arouse American sentiment for that purpose would be improper and unfair as well as directly contrary to America's essential interests, and should be firmly resisted by every clear-sighted leader of public opinion"[283], and signed by Union Theological Seminary's President Henry Sloan Coffin, Harvard President James B. Conant, Princeton President Harold Dobbs and twelve others, was vilified. Dr. Henry Van Dusen, of the Union Theological Seminary and a leading opponent of the Hoover

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[281] Christian Century, November 12, 1940, pp. 1406-7.
[282] Clarence Pickett, For More Than Bread Alone, Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1953, p. 176.
[283] New York Yimes, October 6, 1940, p.1.

Plan, commented in a letter to the New York Times that the American people "slowly but surely" have recognized that "their own security is intimately involved in the success of Great Britain's heroic defense." Pragmatic considerations have been taken into account, according to Van Dusen, and the American people are unwilling to take action which would compromise that defense.[284]

Hoover and his supporters continued to press their case into the fall of 1940, but neither Americans nor Christian leaders were stirred to action. In the face of continued British refusals, a modified plan was suggested in December 1940. It, too, was rebuffed by the British and American governments as unworkable. In a December 21, 1940, speech Hoover put the best possible face on this refusal saying "Governments may deprecate, some cartoonists may sneer, some columnists may argue. But a great body of Americans will continue to search for a method....And there need be no feeding of Germans in that action."[285] However, his plan had lost much of the little popular support it had left.

A second national poll conducted in November 1940, and published in Fortune magazine, showed that the Hoover efforts had not won over the support of the American public. The question, put in a blunter form than that of

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[284] New York Times, December 2, 1940, p. 16.

[285] Speech of Herbert Hoover, "Problems That Confront Us," delivered December 21, 1940, see; Vital Speeches of the Day, Volume 7, 1940-1941, p. 183.

the Gallup Poll, asked: "One of Great Britain's weapons against Germany is a blockade to keep food and supplies out of Germany and the countries she has occupied. If this results in a serious famine in these countries she has occupied, do you think we should or should not try to send food to them through the blockade?" The response was: 'Should send food' - 19.1%; 'Should Not send food' - 67%; 'Don't Know' - 13.9%. From this data, the pollster concluded: "the public ...is consistent with its advocacy of helping England, at the price, it would seem, of abandoning the American custom of feeding the afflicted abroad....[The] pleas of Herbert Hoover and Ambassador Cudahy...have not won over any large part of our normally humanitarian public."[286]

Anne Morrow Lindbergh wrote: "The feeding of Europe cause was like swimming against the stream." Her Christmas radio speech, "Should We Feed Hitler's Europe" was overlooked by the press and the public.

> There was no criticism because it was completely overlooked! 'Smothered', said C[harles A. Lindbergh]. I had the dream feeling that I was giving it in a vacuum and no one heard me, a feeling accentuated by the lack of attention it got.[287]

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[286] Fortune, December 1940, Special Insert.

[287] Anne Morrow Lindbergh, War Within and Without: Diaries and Letters of Anne Morrow Lindbergh, 1939-1944. New York: Harcourt-Brace Jovanovich, 1980, p. 161; see also Charles A. Lindbergh, Wartime Diaries of Charles A. Lindbergh, New York: Harcourt-Brace Jovanovich, 1970, January 1, 1941 "The audience showed no reaction whatsoever. The only time they cheered was when Roosevelt said the Axis would not win the war. The only time they booed was when a picture of Mussolini was thrown on the screen."

The American government and people had made the final decision by the end of 1940 that food should not go to the countries of occupied Europe. The food situation in Europe was "grim", commented Time magazine in its December 16, 1940, issue. "Of Europe's 525,000,000 people, some millions, probably never to be counted, will starve".[288] The decision was not reached without public debate and considerable pain. Life commented that it was its "duty" to show the pictures of European starvation in World War I in its article "Hunger, Americans Face a Terrible Decision". The American people must realize the responsibility they faced. If they decided against pressing their government to force a lowering of the food blockade, some claimed the suffering of the innocent would be on America's conscience.[289]

However, Herbert Block's [Herblock] editorial cartoons, which had supported the Red Cross 'War Drive' in May 1940, expressed the prevalent American perspective. A December 8, 1940, cartoon "The Proposal to Feed Nazi-Occupied Europe" portrayed Hoover, emblematic of all those who favoured feeding Europe, as the owner of the 'The Good Intentions Paving Company'. He is surrounded by the fires of International Hell, but, unconcerned, he paves the way for Nazi jackboots to *goose-step* to America.[290]

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[288] Time, December 16, 1940, p. 35-6.
[289] Life, December 23, 1940, pp. 51-3.
[290] New York Times, December 8, 1940; see illustration VII.

Franklin Roosevelt's 'Fire Side Chat' of December 29, 1940, captured the mood of the American people. The people believed, like the President, that Britain was the first and last line of American defense. The President said that it was "no exaggeration to say that all of us, in all the Americas, would be living at the point of a gun - a gun loaded with explosive bullets, economic as well as military."[291]

There came a point in time when, as Norman Davis said, America's humanitarian concerns would have to take second place to military necessity.[292] Suffering Europe would know the taste of ashes until the defeat of Hitler's Germany. That defeat became more certain as American concerns became synonymous with those of Great Britain. The development of the Anglo-American Alliance was fostered when America resolved the question of humanitarian aid to occupied Europe.

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[291] Russell Buhite (ed.). F. D. R.'s Fireside Chats. Norman:University of Oklahoma Press, 1992, December 29, 1940. p. 185.
[292] Newsweek. November 25, 1940, p. 33.

Conclusion

The prophet Isaiah asked: Who was there to take the bowl of wrath from the hands of those suffering from famine and sword? In isolationist America there were very few who were knowledgeable or interested in taking up the humanitarian cause of Poland's Christians and Jews. Ignoble anti-Semitism precluded an active Jewish-American effort: Jews feared for their own well-being in the United States. Polish-American loyalties were to America and their ancestral homeland took a distant place in their hearts.

The powerful American Red Cross walked as warily as Franklin Roosevelt in the minefields of isolationist sentiment. The political necessities of 1939 and 1940 demanded caution; they did not know how the war in Europe would develop and where their own national responsibility would lie. Consequently, they would not bend to the pressures put on them by the Commission for Polish Relief. In February 1940, however, the Red Cross and American Department of State were forced to take action due to the revelations of German atrocity in Poland. These actions were, however, limited in scope by the Red Cross-German agreements which curtailed the ability of other agencies working for Polish relief.

Active involvement in humanitarian efforts before the invasion of western Europe was deemed inexpedient. As the sight of millions of fleeing refugees battered their

consciences. America responded emotionally and generously donated millions of dollars towards refugee relief. They soon came to believe, however, that feeding European civilians was not the responsibility of Americans and, more importantly, that humanitarian aid was not in their best interests as it could lead them directly into war. No matter how needy Europe appeared to be, America could not allow itself to become involved in any humanitarian efforts.

Red Cross supplies could only go to Britain, carried on British ships, to feed and clothe the British people. These people, according to a State Department official, "were living like rats in holes" under the daily bombardment of the German *Luftwaffe*.[291] Britain provided the hope that freedom could prevail over tyranny. America adopted Britain as they had adopted Finland in its struggle. Although not directly involved, America provided its support through humanitarian supplies. The exhortations of the isolationists John Cudahy, Herbert Hoover, Anne Morrow Lindbergh and Christian Century fell on deaf ears as Americans thought that the sound of Nazi jackboots would be heard goose-stepping on U. S. soil following the fall of Britain.

Claims of pure self-interest carry little weight in philosophical circles. However, it is evident that the American leadership and citizens questioned the somewhat

[291] Christian Science Monitor, December 12, 1940, p. 12.

nonsensical idea of feeding people today so that their food or life could be stolen from them tomorrow. Freedom must come before all else. The moral ambiguity of this decision weighed heavily on the shoulders of Franklin Roosevelt. He realized that the food blockade was a harsh and cruel policy and that famine would stalk the once prosperous and free lands of Europe. However, the greater moral imperative was to destroy the Nazi regime.

The end of the misery was more assured by the close co-operation established between the United States and Great Britain. This co-operation was tightened as the self-interests of the two surviving democracies were further cemented. The American people now recognized that their interests and those of Britain were virtually synonymous. America could not countenance actions which could, in any way, harm Britain's chance of victory; in Britain's success lay America's security.

The "bowl of wrath" would be taken from the hands of suffering Europe and the "taste of ashes" would be washed from their mouths, but it would be five more years before that occurred. It was five more years before American food arrived to feed Europeans suffering from cold and starvation in the "Hunger Winter" of 1944-1945. To paraphrase the sorrow-filled words of Anne Frank: there was nothing Europeans could do but wait as calmly as they could till the misery came to an end. Jews and Christians waited, although many waited for death.

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