THE KINDNESS OF UNCLE SAM?
“THE KINDNESS OF UNCLE SAM”?: AMERICAN AID TO FRANCE AND THE POLITICS OF POSTWAR RELIEF, 1944-1948

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A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy

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Lay Abstract

This dissertation contributes to literature on postwar philanthropy and Franco-American relations. It examines American Aid to France (AAF), one of hundreds of U.S. private voluntary relief organizations founded during the Second World War to help devastated civilians. Operating from 1944 to 1956, AAF’s efforts to provide emergency supplies, rehabilitative services, and assist in the reconstruction of Liberated France was a significant private affirmation of the Franco-American alliance during a period of increasingly tense international relations. Private voluntary relief organizations have been overlooked in scholarship in favour of larger agencies such as the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), which has resulted in a considerable emphasis on transnationalism in the literature on postwar relief. Examining Franco-American relations through the prism of AAF’s relief reveals that a dynamic alternative network of private assistance, which operated firmly outside of the transnational relief movement, contributed in meaningful ways to France’s recovery.
Abstract

This dissertation contributes to literature on postwar philanthropy and the Franco-American relationship. It examines the private voluntary relief organization, American Aid to France (AAF), which provided emergency supplies, rehabilitative services, and assisted in the reconstruction of France following the Second World War. Unlike other devastated European countries, Charles de Gaulle did not invite the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) to host a program, which limited France’s participation in the transnational relief movement of the immediate postwar period and allowed AAF to become the principal foreign private voluntary aid agency operating in Liberated France. From 1944 to 1956, AAF asserted that its assistance reflected the strength of the Franco-American alliance, and kinship felt between two countries with a shared history of liberal revolution and republicanism. AAF’s statements expressing “goodwill” and “historical friendship” towards France rapidly began to assume a more political tone as Cold War tensions intensified. From 1947 onward, AAF became increasingly outspoken in its support for capitalism, democracy, and international cooperation. These statements were crafted for, and appealed to, U.S. authorities who believed France was the key to containing communism in Europe. In reality, AAF’s main concern was redressing the destruction of Normandy caused by Allied bombing campaigns, and the organization showed no hesitation to work with mayors from across the political spectrum in devastated French communities to achieve this goal. AAF’s private voluntary status shielded the organization from French criticisms of Americanization chiefly aimed at the Marshall Plan. This dissertation demonstrates that AAF was part of an independent, robust private voluntary relief sphere that contributed to
Europe’s recovery, and helped citizens in the United States and France come to terms with the transition from war to peace.
Acknowledgements

Successfully researching and writing a dissertation would have been an implausible feat without the assistance, guidance, and friendship of a number of people. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Martin Horn, for encouraging my studies as early as my undergraduate degree. Throughout the Ph.D., he proved to be a model supervisor: reliable, realistic, and perspicacious. Dr. Horn, and my committee members, Dr. Pamela Swett and Dr. Stephen Streeter, guided my endeavors at McMaster and on countless archival research trips. They provided insightful suggestions and revisions to this manuscript. Debbie Lobban and Wendy Benedetti are experts at welcoming and assisting new cohorts of graduate students; they made attending and working at McMaster an enjoyable experience.

Researching my dissertation took me to archival repositories in the United States and France. In every research library, the archival staffs were an indispensable resource. I would specifically like to thank the Archives and Manuscript Division at the New York Public Library, Jennifer Comins at Columbia University, Thierry Vincent at the Archives municipales de la ville du Havre, and Véronique Goulle at the Archives municipales de Coutances. I would also like to thank Klaus and Carmen Mueller for giving me a comfortable home base in Germany where I could coordinate and conduct my European research.

I have been fortunate in my personal life to have a supportive family. My parents, Heather and Ed, have encouraged and assisted me no matter what I decided to pursue in
life. Due to their belief in the power of education, I grew up to be curious about the world around me and people that came before me. My late močiutė, Bena Gataveckas, brought the immediate postwar period to life when she recounted her courageous experience fleeing Lithuania following the Second World War. My brother, Noah, his partner, Amanda, and their children, Malcolm and Hannah, are a constant source of inspiration and happiness.

I met my husband Tim Mueller at McMaster. Going through the Ph.D. with someone who not only understands the study of history but also the demands of the program has only made me a stronger historian. His love and support outside of academia consistently reminds me that there is more to life than what is printed in books.
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List of Abbreviations

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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACDF</td>
<td>American Committee for Devastated France</td>
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<td>ACVAFS</td>
<td>American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Services</td>
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<td>AFF</td>
<td>American Friends of France</td>
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<tr>
<td>AJJDC</td>
<td>American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Archives</td>
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<tr>
<td>AN</td>
<td>Archives nationales (National Archives)</td>
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<td>ANRC</td>
<td>American National Red Cross (U.S. National Archives distinction)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARA</td>
<td>American Relief Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARC</td>
<td>American Red Cross</td>
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<td>ARF</td>
<td>American Relief for France</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARE</td>
<td>Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASC</td>
<td>Comité américain de Secours civil (American Committee for Civilian Relief)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCFRS</td>
<td>The Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFLN</td>
<td>Comité français de libération nationale (French Committee of National Liberation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGT</td>
<td>Confédération générale du travail (General Confederation of Labour)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRB</td>
<td>Commission for Relief in Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRF</td>
<td>Croix-rouge française (French Red Cross)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUL</td>
<td>Columbia University Libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECA</td>
<td>Economic Cooperation Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>FDR</td>
<td>Franklin Delano Roosevelt</td>
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FFRC  Fighting French Relief Committee
HIA  Hoover Institution Archives
ICRC  International Committee of the Red Cross
IRO  International Refugee Organization
LC  Library of Congress
MLM  Morgan Library and Museum
MRP  Mouvement républicain populaire  
(Popular Republican Movement)
NACP  National Archives at College Park
NGO  Non-governmental organization
NYT  New York Times
OWI  Office of War Information
PCF  Parti communiste français  
(French Communist Party)
POW  Prisoner of war
PSF  President’s Secretary File
RAC  Rockefeller Archive Center
RPF  Rassemblement du peuple français  
(Rally of the French People)
SFIO  Section française de l’internationale ouvrière 
(French Section of the Workers’ International – The French Socialist Party)
SHAEF  Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
UDSR  Union démocratique et socialiste de la Résistance  
(Democratic and Socialist Union of the Resistance)
UN  United Nations
UNA    United Nations Archives

UNRRA  United Nationals Relief and Rehabilitation Administration

USC    Unitarian Service Committee

VHPC   Veterans History Project Collection

YUL    Yale University Library

YMCA   Young Men’s Christian Association
Declaration of Academic Achievement

Brittany Gataveckas is the sole author of this dissertation.
Introduction

In September 1945, Paul Valentin, a young boy from Orléans, wrote a thank you note to the directors of the New York-based relief organization, American Aid to France (AAF). Valentin praised AAF for providing his summer camp with crucial foodstuffs, and declared on behalf of his twenty-eight fellow campers that “none of us ever doubted the kindness of Uncle Sam.”¹ Like Valentin, millions of Europeans depended on foreign aid to survive the devastation of the Second World War, and only the United States appeared to possess the economic wherewithal to help these war-torn countries recover. In many cases, European civilians were assisted by private American voluntary relief organizations that had sprung up during the war years. The “kindness of Uncle Sam” saved the lives of millions, but in reality, the motivations behind private voluntary relief efforts were more complicated than satisfying humanitarian impulses.² Many relief organizations claimed to be demonstrations of international friendship and goodwill, but their programs were inherently political insofar as they reflected U.S. foreign policy concerns.

This dissertation examines the most important U.S. private voluntary relief organization offering assistance to France in the wake of the Second World War. AAF was founded in June 1944, when the President’s War Relief Control Board, the administrative body that regulated American war-era aid agencies, merged the two largest

¹ Letter, Paul Valentin to the American Committee Aiding the Children of France. Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 5A, Archives of the Morgan Library and Museum (MLM), New York.
² Michael Barnett points out that while it is difficult to distinguish the concept of humanitarianism from that of charity, compassion, or philanthropy, there are three chief components of modern day humanitarianism: it is associated with compassion across boundaries; it is characterized by a transcendental significance (can be religious or secular); and, it is connected to governance and a desire to engineer progress. This dissertation uses the term “humanitarianism” when discussing relief organizations’ efforts and programs, and the term “philanthropy” when referring to the industry of relief, more generally. Michael Barnett, Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 19-21.
pre-existing private voluntary relief organizations committed to providing material and monetary relief for French civilians, refugees, and prisoners of war (POWs).\(^3\) From 1944 to 1956, AAF was the most prominent U.S.-based relief organization dedicated to assisting the French. American volunteers made, collected, and shipped millions of pounds of material goods, foodstuffs, medicines, and clothing to France. AAF also worked with French welfare organizations and ministries to offer a wide range of services for devastated civilians, including dentistry and medical consultations, childcare and feeding programs, leisure activities, educational instruction and exchange, and most notably, the reconstruction of a hospital at Saint-Lô. The breadth of work executed by AAF was exceptional in that the organization successfully transitioned from providing emergency relief supplies, to rehabilitative services and reconstruction; however, AAF remains a footnote in history.

AAF operated during a period of unprecedented humanitarian intervention, which brought about a flourishing of the philanthropic industry. From 1939 to 1945, individuals, communities, and interest groups across the United States founded over five hundred private voluntary relief organizations and donated approximately one billion dollars to assist European civilians who had been caught in the war’s crossfire.\(^4\) In addition to these private voluntary relief agencies, thousands of Americans volunteered or worked for

\(^3\) AAF was originally founded as “American Relief for France” (ARF) but the organization’s board of directors changed its name to “American Aid to France” in 1946. In order to avoid confusion, the organization will be referred to consistently as “AAF” throughout this dissertation; however, “ARF” might appear in the archival title of documents listed in the footnotes. Chapter two provides an organizational history of AAF, and therefore, will discuss the name change in detail.

\(^4\) By mid-1941, 545 relief agencies were registered with the State Department. This number would drop below 150 in 1943, as the Roosevelt administration opted for greater oversight of foreign relief, and would continue to decrease after the war with fewer than 100 relief agencies in being by 1945. Rachel McCleary, *Global Compassion: Private Voluntary Organizations and U.S. Foreign Policy since 1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 38-49; Joseph E. Davies, Charles P. Taft, and Charles Warren, “Voluntary War Relief During World War II: A Report to the President by the President’s War Relief Control Board,” (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, March 1946), pg.1.
alternative philanthropic organizations, most notably the American Red Cross (ARC), or the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). This outpouring of humanitarianism was a direct response to the considerable costs and consequences that total war had inflicted on civilian populations in Europe and Asia. Their hardship did not go unnoticed by the millions of U.S. citizens who had familial connections to countries directly involved in the war. Many of these U.S. immigrant and interest groups felt compelled to volunteer their services or contribute money and material goods once they began to hear the news of bombed-out cities, sick and starving populations, and societal unrest in European countries.

In the case of France, civilians had experienced years of occupation, resulting in an array of social, economic, and political problems upon Liberation in 1944. The historian Keith Lowe argues that for many Europeans, the liberation period generated more destruction, causalities, and disorder than the years of war and occupation. While France faced significant hardships brought about by the German occupation, its Liberation was particularly difficult. France’s army admitted defeat in June 1940, and French politicians, lead by Marshal Philippe Pétain and later, Pierre Laval, pursued a policy of collaboration and accommodation with the German occupation authorities from the government’s new headquarters in Vichy. Exiled in London, General Charles de Gaulle claimed to be the voice of the French resistance, but his popular support was ambiguous and his political acumen had yet to be proven, especially in the eyes of wary

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British and American authorities. After years of collaboration, the Liberation of France resulted in the de-legitimization of the Vichy regime, creating a political vacuum, and any attempts to form a new government generated tension among France, Britain, and the United States.

After D-Day, de Gaulle arrived in France with the intention of leading a Provisional Government, but Allied authorities refused to formally recognize his leadership until October 1944. Political recognition by the Allies was an important step in legitimizing de Gaulle’s government because the French needed a leader to enforce order after the war’s turmoil. Many regions, especially Northern France, suffered heavy damage to housing stock and to infrastructure such as bridges, railways, and roads. Millions of French men, women, and children had been transformed into refugees by the German invasion and eventual retreat, as well as the Allied bombing campaigns that pre-dated the D-Day invasion in June 1944. The Vichy government proved willing to enforce German policies during the war, which resulted in thousands of additional dislocated French civilians, specifically forced labourers, deportees to concentration camps, and political refugees. Although Vichy authorities worked to secure the return of French POWs, their efforts were largely ineffective, and many of France’s captured soldiers were unable to return home until after Germany’s total defeat. In French cities and villages, especially in Southern France, various resistance networks and collaborationist groups clashed violently. Some men and women took justice into their

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6 It is difficult to calculate the exact number of French civilians made refugees during the various phases of the war, especially the 1944 German retreat and Allied bombing campaigns. However, Hannah Diamond has determined that during the German invasion of France in May and June 1940, approximately eight million French, Belgian, Dutch, and Luxembourgers became refugees. While three million of these refugees returned to their homes after France’s defeat, millions remained or became newly dislocated during the war. Hanna Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler: France 1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 150.
own hands, doling out punishments for alleged collaborators in what became known as the épuration sauvage (the wild purges). The épuration légale (the legal purges) followed, but generally failed to prosecute individuals in meaningful ways. France’s economy and industrial production, which had been forced to assist Germany’s war effort, proved slow to recover, and inflation was rampant in the immediate postwar years. AAF was forced to confront all these different facets of France’s disorder when they began to provide emergency relief supplies to French civilians in the late autumn of 1944.

Given the destruction of the war, only a politically stable, and economically vigorous nation, such as the United States, was able to support a substantial private voluntary relief initiative. Although war was an ever-present reality on the home front, the United States was one of the few belligerent countries that did not witness sustained aerial or combat warfare within its borders. Nor was America occupied by Axis forces

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7 The “wild purges” consisted of unsanctioned violence, humiliation, and retribution taken against so-called collaborators by local communities or resistance members. Often the victims of the “wild purges” were women who were suspected of being intimate with German soldiers, or those who profited from the occupation, such as black marketeers. By contrast, the “legal purges” were official domestic trials held against those who had collaborated with Vichy or German occupation authorities. The purges have been studied by a handful of scholars including: Philippe Bourdrel, L’épuration sauvages: 1944-1945, vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie Académique Perrin, 1988); Hanna Diamond, Women and the Second World War in France, 1939-1948: Choices and Constraints (New York: Pearson Education Ltd., 1999); Megan Koreman, The Expectation of Justice: France 1944-1946 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); Peter Novick, The Resistance Versus Vichy: The Purge of Collaborators in Liberated France (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968); Robert Paxton, Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972); Fabrice Virgili, La France ‘Virile’: Des femmes tondues à la Libération (Paris: Payot, 2000).

and plundered for resources, as were most countries in Europe, even those that tried to remain neutral. For the United States, war mobilization had translated into economic might. The steady leadership of President Franklin D. Roosevelt combined with the combat success of Allied troops to ensure that America would reign supreme among the postwar global leaders.

At the Tehran Conference in 1943, Roosevelt advocated for the establishment of the United Nations (UN) and the partnership of “four policemen” – the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, and China – to safeguard peace and promote international cooperation in the postwar era. After Roosevelt’s death in April 1945, President Harry S. Truman led the United States through the transition period that bridged together the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War. In the months following the Paris Peace Conference of 1946, the Truman administration became gradually less concerned with prosecuting Axis aggressors, and instead, focused more attention on confronting the emerging Soviet threat. This transition from hot to cold war constituted the essential backdrop to the massive humanitarian movement of the immediate postwar years. Although private voluntary relief organizations were largely secular and claimed to be apolitical, these agencies found it nearly impossible to tread the precarious terrain of the immediate postwar years without eventually floundering in the waters of Cold War politics.

This dissertation attempts to illuminate the political nature of private voluntary assistance following the Second World War, specifically focusing on American relief efforts to France. As such, there are two principal interrelated strands of historiography

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that inform it: the history of philanthropy; and the history of postwar Franco-American relations. Scholars have long observed the interconnectedness between foreign aid and foreign policy. Although the history of philanthropy is in the early stages of development, most scholars recognize that foreign aid is, by nature, inherently political. Prior to the Enlightenment, the act of donating money, goods, or volunteering to assist the less fortunate was generally understood almost exclusively as charitable behaviour motivated by piety. According to one study, the Enlightenment enabled France to become the first country in modern history to distinguish between religious charity and “bienfaisance,” defined as altruism devoid of religious connotations. Belief in individual rights, equality, and tolerance eventually came to serve as the intellectual foundation of philanthropic societies, most notably, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), formed in Geneva in 1863. The historian Julia Irwin has described the projects of the ARC, established in 1881, as markers of a specific “American responsibility.” Under Washington’s guidance, the ARC fostered U.S. internationalism and “recast” existing understandings of manifest destiny. Irwin notes that many Americans believed they had a duty to exercise patriotism abroad by demonstrating the purported moral superiority of American exceptionalism, which included the principles of generosity, benevolence, and material wealth. Largely due to the ARC’s ascendency, by the time the First World War

10 Lawrence Friedman notes that the history of philanthropy was virtually non-existent prior to the 1980s and has since been dominated by contemporary studies commissioned by institutions or foundations, or a focus on domestic social policies, not historical analyses of humanitarianism. Lawrence J. Friedman, “Philanthropy in America: Historicism and Its Discontents,” in Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History, eds. Lawrence J. Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1-2.


broke out, Washington had become acutely aware of the benefits of collaborating with relief agencies to accomplish common goals and garner goodwill abroad.\textsuperscript{13}

Humanitarian assistance rapidly assumed a new sense of urgency and meaning in response to the calamitous conflicts of the twentieth century. According to the historian Michael Barnett, the scale of human suffering visible during the First World War fundamentally altered relationships between the state, civilians, and relief agencies. No longer were the “forces of compassion” that motivated individual U.S. citizens to become involved in relief enough to meet the needs of large populations of suffering civilians; instead, organized private relief agencies coordinated with the government to assist millions of devastated civilians.\textsuperscript{14} The scholar Bruno Cabanes has depicted the Great War as a turning point in the politicization of relief because the conflict “made the protection of all the war’s victims, civilians and soldiers alike, an absolute necessity.”\textsuperscript{15} When the United States entered the Second World War at the end of 1941, mounting popular support for civilians’ rights during wartime had already resulted in the formation of hundreds of U.S. private voluntary relief organizations.

Despite the substantial number of private voluntary relief organizations in operation during the Second World War, scholars have focused almost exclusively on the work of the transnational agency, UNRRA, created in 1943 to provide emergency relief supplies and essential services to displaced persons. This scholarly attention is both necessary and understandable considering that at its peak in 1946, UNRRA employed approximately 25,000 personnel, and assisted 16 war-devastated countries. UNRRA

\textsuperscript{14} Barnett, 101.
handed out just under four billion dollars worth of relief supplies and services, the majority of funding coming from the United States, Britain, and Canada.\textsuperscript{16} Many studies have attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of UNRRA, a difficult task considering that UNRRA’s goals were somewhat broadly defined and its application inconsistent. UNRRA’s official mandate was to provide relief in the form of shelter, food, material goods, medicine, essential services, and other basic necessities to the victims of the Second World War.\textsuperscript{17} At the same time, UNRRA became closely involved in the repatriation, both forced and voluntary, of millions of displaced persons. Some historians, including Ben Shephard and Keith Lowe, emphasize the internal disagreements that hindered the efficacy of UNRRA’s relief efforts. UNRRA’s transnational composition generated disputes between British and American leaders who did not always see eye to eye regarding the utility of relief and UNRRA’s role in the repatriation process.\textsuperscript{18} Other historians, including William Hitchcock and Jessica Reinisch, argue that based on its mandate, UNRRA was, in fact, a success. These scholars acknowledge UNRRA’s shortcomings, including tense relations between UNRRA and Allied armies, limits to UNRRA’s operational capabilities, and personality disputes between administrators, but suggest that without the organization, relief would have been paltry and uncoordinated. In their view, UNRRA was an essential “experiment” guiding the transition from war to

\textsuperscript{17} “United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration: Administrative History - Agreement, Articles 1 and 2,” AG-018, Fonds United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), \textit{United Nations Archives} (UNA), New York.
peace and more importantly, generating the physical and moral recovery of civilians who had nowhere else to turn.\(^\text{19}\)

Much of the literature on UNRRA focuses on the development of human rights. For scholars such as Daniel Cohen, UNRRA’s work assisting displaced persons “played a landmark role” in the birth of the UN and the subsequent passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 1948.\(^\text{20}\) Several scholars, including Jeremy Varon and Stephen Porter, recognize that UNRRA helped to institutionalize the rights of civilians to adequate food, shelter, medicine, education, and safety.\(^\text{21}\) The historian Atina Grossmann has reasoned that procuring foodstuff and vital resources from UNRRA allowed devastated civilians to reaffirm their dignity and right to life; a particularly empowering act for survivors of the Holocaust.\(^\text{22}\) These scholars commend UNRRA for encouraging the development of an international civil society that protected human rights.

Other scholars have observed that UNRRA did not wholeheartedly embrace the principles of the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The scholar Laure Humbert, for instance, argues that UNRRA largely viewed displaced persons as “objects


of sentiment and charity rather than individuals in possession of universal entitlements.”

The historian Tara Zahra came to a similar conclusion, demonstrating that women and children received UNRRA aid not because it was considered their right, but because their gender or age made them objects of sympathy. Re-establishing women and children’s traditional roles in familial relations was considered by UNRRA to be an essential means of normalizing social structures among the disorder of displaced person camps, but Zahra argues that UNRRA’s narrow casting of women as feminine, maternal figures, clashed with postwar realities and the concept of human rights that the UN was developing at the time.

As this scholarship demonstrates, it is important to recognize that UNRRA and other relief agencies were products of the emerging institutionalized “human rights revolution” that began in the mid-to-late 1940s. At times, AAF repeated phrases common to the language of human rights; most notably, declaring the innocence of devastated French civilians, especially children. However, the language and worldview employed by AAF was notable not because it emphasized war victims’ rights, but instead, because the organization insisted that becoming involved in relief was the responsibility of all peace-loving Americans.

Aside from its sheer size, one of the principal reasons for scholarly fascination with UNRRA lies in the organization’s transnational composition. In general, scholars that employ a transnational lens tend to be revisionist, moving away from traditional historical approaches that place at the centre the nation-state, and neatly delineated

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markers of gender, class, and race found within.\textsuperscript{25} The postwar period, in particular, was marked by fluidity of borders and massive human upheaval, making it a prime candidate for transnational analysis, and UNRRA one of the leading topics of investigation.\textsuperscript{26} While recognizing the importance of transnationalism to the study of postwar philanthropy, this dissertation seeks to fill a gap in the literature by exploring the history of one private voluntary agency, AAF, which operated on the fringes of UNRRA’s transnational relief movement. An examination of private voluntary relief draws attention to the under-appreciated reality that UNRRA did not operate a uniform, comprehensive relief mission across Europe. France, along with Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Norway did not receive significant UNRRA funds.\textsuperscript{27} In these countries as well as those that received


\textsuperscript{26} That is not to say that UNRRA’s transnational composition and outlook render traditional categories of analysis irrelevant. Scholars have argued that UNRRA’s displaced person camps actually reinforced traditional notions of national identity and ethnicity. This occurred partially because Allied military command, hoping to repatriate displaced persons as fast as possible, encouraged UNRRA to group refugees by their national identity (the major exception being Jewish displaced persons), but also because displaced person camps became safe places for the Nazis’ victims to express sentiments of renewed ethnic, cultural, and civic nationalism. For more, see: Lynne Taylor, In the Children’s Best Interests: Unaccompanied Children in American-Occupied Germany, 1945-1952 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017); Jessica Reinisch, “‘We Shall Rebuild Anew a Powerful Nation’: UNRRA, Internationalism and National Reconstruction in Poland,” 451-476; Sharif Gemie, Fiona Reid, and Laure Humbert, Outcast Europe: Refugees and Relief Workers in an Era of Total War, 1936-48 (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012); Laura Hilton, “Cultural Nationalism in Exile: The Case of Polish and Latvian Displaced Persons,” The Historian 71, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 280-317; Jan-Hinnerk Antons, “Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany: Parallel Societies in a Hostile Environment,” Journal of Contemporary History 49, no. 1 (January 2014): 92-114; Anna Holian, “Anticommunism in the Streets: Refugee Politics in Cold War Germany,” Journal of Contemporary History 45, no. 1 (January 2010): 134-161.

\textsuperscript{27} While UNRRA eventually offered assistance to most European countries, there was some confusion as to whether or not countries formerly occupied by Axis forces would qualify for UNRRA assistance. UNRRA administrators initially reasoned that Germany and “ex-enemy territories” would not qualify for aid, but revised the organization’s stance in 1944 to allow for the assistance of displaced persons and the victims of Axis aggression in these countries, providing military and state authorities permitted UNRRA’s presence. Some heads of state rejected UNRRA’s assistance but typically, this decision was made for political reasons, not because the country’s government was financially capable of providing for devastated civilians. Chapter three deals with France’s reasons for refusing UNRRA assistance in more detail. Ellen S. Woodward, “UNRRA – A Democratic Plan for International Relief,” Social Security Bulletin 7, no. 11 (November 1944): 10-11; Barry Riley, The Political History of American Food Aid: An Uneasy Benevolence (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 104.
UNRRA aid, significant alternative networks of private voluntary relief existed. In France’s case, to qualify for AAF’s relief, potential recipients were required to prove that they were devastated French men, women, or children, who resided within French borders. By categorizing and accepting recipients based on their national identity, AAF reaffirmed the boundaries of France’s nation-state, most notably including Alsace and Lorraine, and helped to strengthen French identity during a period of significant human dislocation and uneasy nationalism.

AAF’s private voluntary relief initiatives provide a unique vantage point to explore interactions between Americans and the French. A handful of studies have illuminated the complex relationships that developed between French civilians and American soldiers following France’s Liberation. However, the relationship between a U.S. relief organization and devastated French civilians was different than that of U.S. army personnel and French civilians, namely because the French believed AAF’s relief was a generous, apolitical offering from sympathetic U.S. citizens. Analyzing these postwar years through the eyes of a relief organization informs our understanding of Franco-American relations not only on the level of high politics or military engagement, but also as it was experienced by individual American and French men, women, and children.

For many French civilians, especially in Northern France, AAF was a significant point of contact with American citizens, ideas, culture, and products. Historians, including Alexander Stephan and Mel van Elteren, have described more broadly the transfer of American global influence, practices, products, and culture, as

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“Americanization.” Scholars have examined Americanization and U.S. intervention in Europe after the Second World War from many different perspectives. A common approach has been to characterize relations between the United States and European countries after 1945 through the lens of cooperation or conflict. Geir Lundestad makes use of this framework to suggest that while Western Europe was “no tabula rasa on which the United States was free to make whatever imprint it wanted,” the United States was in a unique position to influence the trajectory of European countries after 1945. Lundestad argues that the period from 1945 to 1950 was defined by international cooperation largely due to the unwavering economic and industrial power of the United States. He contends that this hegemonic status allowed the United States to pursue an “Empire by Invitation,” especially in countries like France, which required substantial postwar reconstruction.

Lundestad’s thesis has been challenged or complicated by a number of scholars who study Franco-American relations. A general theme has developed that stresses the agency of the French in both accepting and resisting Americanization. Richard Kuisel explains that the French viewed American society as “both a model and a menace.” The French appreciated U.S. economic assistance, technology, and cultural products like films

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31 Lundestad, 27.
and music, but at the same time, they feared that an oversaturation of all things American would dilute their “Frenchness.” As such, the French resisted and rejected certain elements of Americanization, leading the historian Brian McKenzie to reason that Americanization was not a “bulldozer” in France, but more like a “scattergun.” Kuisel points to French reluctance to adopt the U.S.’s fast food culture, and corporate managerial practices as evidence that Americanization was contested in small but meaningful ways. Irwin Wall also rejects the theory of unilateral U.S. hegemonic control over postwar France by mentioning alternative influencing factors on France’s postwar order, including the Soviet Union, Britain, and smaller European states. For Wall, American influence in France was “both pervasive and ineffective at once.”

A significant portion of the scholarship on Americanization in France discusses the Marshall Plan, the economic assistance package offered by the Truman administration to European countries following the Second World War. The Marshall Plan is widely credited with stimulating Europe’s postwar economy and modernizing recipient countries’ industry, technology, and agricultural sectors. Given the enormous cost of war, William Hitchcock has described the following decade in Europe as one of “miraculous” recovery. In the case of France, Hitchcock highlights the “paradox” of the Fourth Republic’s recovery: “a weak, divided regime managed to chart a successful national strategy of recovery and pursue it with effectiveness, so much so that when the European

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34 Kuisel, 233-4.
economies really began to take off in the late 1950s, France’s was one of the most dynamic.” So impressive was France’s postwar recovery that the economist Jean Fourastié dubbed the period from 1945 to 1975 as *les trente glorieuses*.

Several factors contributed to France’s “glorious” economic recovery during the thirty years following Liberation. As Hitchcock has argued, any discussion of France’s recovery must recognize the substantial role played by French diplomats, politicians, technocrats, and planners. At the same time, American influence should not be overlooked, especially in the immediate postwar period. The historian Michael Hogan has shown that the Marshall Plan significantly contributed to France’s revival and more generally, the subsequent prosperity of Western Europe. From 1948 to 1951, Marshall Plan aid amounted to $12.5 billion; France received $2.9 billion, a substantial share of the total funds allocated for Western Europe.

Beyond the impetus to provide financial assistance to European countries, there were significant political, cultural, and social elements to the Marshall Plan. As the historian David Ellwood has explained, after the Second World War, European societies

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41 McKenzie, 19-21.

began to define progress in economic terms instead of political ones; financial prosperity and economic growth became powerful demonstrations of U.S. might in the face of the Soviet threat.\footnote{David W. Ellwood, \textit{Rebuilding Europe: Western Europe, America and Postwar Reconstruction} (Essex, England: Longman Group UK Limited, 1992), 1-3.} The historian Victoria de Grazia argues that as European citizens began to seek a better standard of living, U.S. policymakers hoped that the Marshall Plan would “bind western Europe to [the U.S.’s] own concept of consumer democracy.”\footnote{Victoria de Grazia, \textit{Irresistible Empire: America’s Advance through 20th-Century Europe} (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 4-6.} The Marshall Plan also served as the Truman administration’s primary method of intervening in Europe’s affairs and securing Western Europe against communist forces during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Notably, Marshall Plan aid was given only to recipient countries that embraced American-style capitalism, a condition that effectively shut out Eastern European countries lying behind the Iron Curtain.\footnote{Chiarella Esposito, \textit{America’s Feeble Weapon: Funding the Marshall Plan in France and Italy, 1948-1950} (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994), 1-3.} The Marshall Plan may have contributed to Europe’s economic recovery, but many citizens from recipient countries resented the Americanization that went hand-in-hand with U.S. economic assistance.

This dissertation complements studies on the Marshall Plan by illustrating that a significant private voluntary relief movement also contributed to European recovery after the Second World War. Private voluntary relief agencies like AAF formed part and parcel of the same impetus to U.S. postwar economic intervention in Western Europe, but their non-governmental organization (NGO) status gave them greater operational flexibility and autonomy. In many ways, relief organizations like AAF became agents of Americanization, both deliberately and unintentionally, as they sought to participate in Europe’s postwar recovery process. As one of the longest-standing private voluntary
relief organizations operating in Europe after the Second World War, AAF gradually came to export to France an American ideology that emphasized democracy, liberalism, international cooperation, republicanism, and capitalism. AAF claimed that its material assistance helped to stabilize France against any future communist insurrection, but without the baggage that accompanied official U.S. government sponsorship. Since AAF was privately operated, the organization could choose which tenets of the Truman administration’s ideological platform to support. Not surprisingly, many of the organization’s administrators embraced elements of Washington’s political rhetoric, specifically Roosevelt’s commitment to international cooperation, the anti-communism of the Truman Doctrine, and the Marshall Plan’s calls for productive capitalist reconstruction. Adopting these beliefs helped shield AAF from possible criticism in the United States, especially at a time when many Americans began to question the value of private foreign aid programs.\footnote{George Sirgiovanni explains that suspicion of foreigners played into questions regarding the utility of foreign relief. Much of American’s postwar suspicion towards foreigners had to do with the increasing anti-communism that coincided with the nascent Cold War. However, this “undercurrent of suspicion” influenced how Americans interacted with all foreigners within their own communities, and understood U.S. involvement in foreign countries. George Sirgiovanni, \textit{An Undercurrent of Suspicion: Anti-Communism in America during World War II} (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1990).}

At the same time, examining AAF’s operations in France reveals that most of the U.S. government’s Cold War rhetoric actually had little bearing on the organization’s day-to-day ventures. AAF’s verbal commitment to the principles of democracy, liberalism, and capitalism proved malleable depending on the political, economic, and social realities that existed in France following the war. More specifically, the Truman administration’s mandate of fostering democracy abroad did not prevent AAF from forging working alliances and cooperating with local socialist and communist authorities.
who had been voted in during France’s postwar elections. The strong performance of leftist parties in France troubled U.S. authorities who believed communism was inherently hostile to democracy, while skepticism in Washington abounded about socialist intentions. Once the Soviet Union rejected the terms of the Marshall Plan in June 1947, French communists launched a campaign against the Plan’s “imperial” overtures and Americanization. The historian Philippe Roger points out that many French men and women, regardless of their political affiliation, resented the Marshall Plan, because it exposed France’s dependence on the United States and threatened “economic colonization.” Although AAF tried to qualify for Marshall Plan funding, it did not receive financial assistance from the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), thus sparing the organization from French criticism lobbed against the Marshall Plan, and helping to ease French anxiety over receiving aid from an American source.

This study of AAF adds another dimension to existing scholarship on Franco-American postwar relations by acknowledging that negotiating private relief was an important step in stabilizing relations between France and the United States following the Second World War. Many scholars have explored the animosity that plagued Roosevelt and Truman’s relationships with de Gaulle, and to a lesser degree, other Provisional Government and Fourth Republic authorities. This scholarship does not usually breach the non-governmental realm, even though relations between heads of state were of “

paramount importance in the operations of an agency like AAF. Instead, scholars focus on personal disputes between Roosevelt or Truman and de Gaulle regarding American recognition of France’s Provisional Government, or the use of French forces in the Liberation of Europe. In addition to disagreements over military engagement and political representation, postwar relief was of the utmost political importance for the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, as well as the French Provisional Government. Roosevelt believed relief could be used as a means of stabilizing France and demonstrating U.S. goodwill following the Liberation, and as a way to compensate for the devastating Allied bombing campaigns in Northern France. Truman understood that sustained relief and rehabilitative services would generate positive press coverage of American relief efforts, especially in countries like France that hosted large numbers of U.S. soldiers. For de Gaulle, foreign relief served a simpler purpose. U.S. assistance was necessary to ensure that French civilians were fed, clothed, medicated, and sheltered, and later, to rebuild devastated communities. The Marshall Plan may have eventually addressed many of these concerns for both the United States and France, but prior to 1948, AAF led the cause.

This investigation is based on research in national, municipal, and private archives in the United States and France. Collections at the National Archives and Records Administration at College Park (NACP), and the Archives nationales at Saint-Denis provided insight to the views of the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, as well as de Gaulle and the Provisional Government. The documents from these national archives offered crucial historical context and evidence from various embassy authorities, ministries, and government boards. Most important, however, were the organizational
records of AAF, located at the New York Public Library. Also consulted were the records of individual relief administrators and aid organizations associated with AAF, which are housed in the United Nations Archives, the Rockefeller Archive Center, the Library of Congress (Veterans History Project Collection), the Hoover Institution Archives, the Morgan Library and Museum, and the libraries of Harvard University, Yale University, the University of South Florida, and Columbia University.

In terms of source material, the French archives pose a number of access and research limitations for the historian. In particular, certain collections related to the Second World War and Liberation period at the Archives nationales, the archives départementales, and the archives municipales remain restricted.\textsuperscript{50} This dissertation references unrestricted collections that contained material on postwar relief from local archives in Dunkerque, Le Havre, Coutances, Saint-Lô, and the Manche department. Further collections related to war damages and communities’ devastation exist, but it becomes nearly impossible to trace exactly how these claims were resolved, and whether or not foreign aid agencies played a role.\textsuperscript{51} There is, however, ample material on postwar relief to France in private, corporate, and government archives in the United States. Many of these collections contain documents written by French civilians and authorities, allowing their voices to resonate. The U.S. Embassy in Paris and local consuls across France received letters from French civilians who requested U.S. relief, received supplies,

\textsuperscript{50} Article L.213-2 of France’s Code du patrimoine decrees that archival records become available one hundred years after the period in question, or twenty-five years following the death of the primary person involved in the archival collection. In some cases, especially personal papers, additional restrictions are present.

or participated in relief agencies’ rehabilitative programs. The American Ambassador to France, Jefferson Caffery, forwarded many of these letters and reports to the United States, where they can now be found in the papers of the President’s War Relief Control Board, the General and Classified Records of the U.S. Embassy in Paris, and other private collections related to war relief and France’s Liberation.

The dissertation is divided into four thematic chapters. Chapter one sets the stage for discussion of relief following the Second World War, by examining U.S. efforts to aid French civilians during and following the First World War. Relief drew the attention of President Woodrow Wilson’s administration due to its potential for fostering positive foreign relations and stabilizing countries following the Great War’s upheaval. This chapter reviews three main relief agencies that operated in France between 1914 and 1924: Herbert Hoover and the Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB), Anne Morgan and the American Committee for Devastated France (ACDF), and the ARC. Close examination of these organizations reveals several trends that would come to shape relief work in the aftermath of the World Wars. An important development was that relief agencies became progressively more secular, apolitical, and transnational during the early twentieth century in response to the catastrophic devastation of the First World War. Aid organizations were increasingly run by businessmen, not religious leaders or volunteers, who adopted corporate structures to govern the labour force of administrators, young college-aged men, and female volunteers. Despite their accomplishments aiding French civilians, the expert relief administrators of the First World War – Hoover, Morgan, and to a lesser degree, the ARC – did not enjoy the same autonomy in their efforts to aid devastated civilians after 1945. While the aforementioned trends continued to define
relief beyond 1945, the massive human dislocation required the creation of a new, powerful transnational agency in UNRRA. At the same time, volunteers across America formed hundreds of private voluntary relief organizations to address the specific needs of devastated European civilians.

The second chapter describes the organizational history of AAF. It begins by reviewing the origins of the organization prior to 1944, and goes on to describe the agency’s operations until the onset of the Marshall Plan in 1948. In some ways, AAF was typical of many private voluntary relief agencies with respect to its secular outlook, corporate structure, and employment of expert relief administrators. In terms of AAF’s budget, population served, and the type of relief provided, the organization compares most readily to select private voluntary relief organizations, specifically, American Relief for Italy, the Greek War Relief Association, or American Relief for Poland. The countries hosting these agencies, however, had the advantage of also receiving UNRRA aid, whereas France did not. AAF contributed more relief supplies (both in terms of U.S dollar amount and total pounds of materials shipped) to a greater number of civilians and provided these services for a longer period of time than similar relief agencies in countries that did not receive UNRRA aid, such as the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, and Norway. The differences that marked U.S. private voluntary relief organizations indicates that additional scholarship on these agencies need to be conducted to supplement the dominant narrative of UNRRA, especially in geographical regions where UNRRA was absent, or its execution uneven.

Chapter three examines the political alignment of AAF in light of the nascent Cold War. It seeks to explain why the U.S. government encouraged a program of private
voluntary relief in France. In order to compensate for the physical devastation that was caused by the Allied bombing and Normandy invasion, both the Roosevelt and Truman administrations championed relief as a means to salvage America’s reputation in France. Moreover, guaranteeing France’s stability and orientation as a democratic, capitalist state was of principal importance to U.S. officials. Relief served as a soft power instrument, that is, a means of attracting support or garnering influence without resorting to aggressive tactics like military force, to help cement a friendly alliance with France, which, in turn, could prevent France from falling to the communists. This chapter also demonstrates that AAF became an essential, albeit unofficial component of U.S. foreign policy towards France. After the 1946 termination of the President’s War Relief Control Board which partially freed aid organizations from official U.S. government oversight, AAF adopted the political rhetoric of the Truman Doctrine. In order to appeal to U.S. authorities and donors, AAF framed its efforts to aid French civilians as a way to demonstrate American values including generosity and friendliness, as well as promote democracy, capitalism, and international cooperation to a fragile ally. Reflecting back on its operations in the early 1950s, AAF declared that it had done more than any other American organization to reinforce Franco-American friendship and stabilize relations on the ground between the two countries.

Chapter four describes the responses of French women, men, and children to AAF’s relief efforts. It is important to examine U.S. relief from the perspective of the

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52 Joseph S. Nye Jr. argues that a government’s domestic or foreign policy has the ability to “squander” or “undercut” its hegemonic authority abroad. In these instances, soft power can be used to restore a country’s international image and reinforce hegemonic control. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2004), 14; Inderjeet Parmar and Michael Cox, eds., *Soft Power and US Foreign Policy: Theoretical, Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 1-2.
French, because, as the historian Mary Louise Roberts points out, most accounts of the Liberation of France ignore the French and instead, focus on “the day-to-day fighting of the Allied forces, particularly the American GIs.” This chapter demonstrates that many French recipients of relief responded with gratitude to AAF. Unlike the more tempered French response to the Marshall Plan, AAF’s assistance was well received, suggesting that the organization’s private voluntary status shielded it from the more general French criticisms aimed at U.S. intervention and Americanization. In fact, French civilians went out of their way to request relief from U.S. authorities and AAF, indicating that many devastated communities and local authorities understood the important role that the United States would play in Europe’s recovery after the war. French civilians revealed their agency by pursuing U.S. relief services as due reward for withstanding Allied bombing campaigns, participating in the French resistance, and aiding U.S. soldiers during the Normandy invasion. As this chapter will show, AAF forged working relationships with French mayors from across the political spectrum, demonstrating that in practice, the organization embraced a mandate to assist civilians regardless of their political leanings, despite its public pronouncements supporting the emerging Cold War rhetoric.

The documentary producer and historian, Ben Shephard once complained that it is difficult to write about the history of relief organizations because of the “goodie-goodie” problem. The subject of altruism or humanitarian relief poses a unique problem to the historian because contemporary culture has deemed that “goodness is dull, and organized

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54 The term “goodie-goodie” comes from Gitta Sereny who theorized that, at the time, UNRRA had not been discussed by scholars as much as one would expect partially because of the “well-known resistance in all medias to so-called ‘goodie-goodie’ stories.” Gitta Sereny, *The German Trauma: Experiences and Reflections, 1938-2001* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 25.
goodness is dullest of all.”\textsuperscript{55} Despite this cynicism, Shephard believed that documenting the forces of “goodness” was needed to counter the countless monographs and biographies that examine evil or hatred; two topics especially pervasive in the literature on the Second World War. Concurrently, this dissertation suggests that altruism is rarely unspoiled. Even the noblest of pursuits, such as providing relief to devastated civilians, can often be marred by controversy. Foreign relief is prone to become a tool used by wealthy individuals to enrich themselves, or by governments to pursue a particular political agenda. The founders of AAF hoped that their organization would “do a job of national significance to both the American and the French people.”\textsuperscript{56} They were anxious to rise to the occasion of this consequential moment in Franco-American history and to demonstrate to the world the enduring ties that bound the United States to France. And yet, they too became entangled in the politics of the Cold War.

\textsuperscript{55} Shephard, 8.
\textsuperscript{56} “Meeting of the Board of Directors, 20 September 1944,” AAF Records, Box 1, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library (NYPL).
Chapter One: American Assistance, France, and the First World War

On 5 October 1942, one week before Roosevelt took to the airways for a “fireside chat” with those on the home front, he called on the American people to mobilize “the forces of human kindness and decency.”\(^1\) With this declaration, the Roosevelt administration inaugurated the first official War Chest campaign to take place since the United States’ entry into the Second World War. During these month-long annual drives, the War Chest collected public donations, and then distributed the funds among various private voluntary relief agencies across the country. Recipient relief agencies would use the funds raised to provide material goods and foodstuffs for suffering civilians in war-torn Europe.\(^2\) Roosevelt urged the American public to remember that their donations would “provide not alone strength for our nation at war, but proof, in a world of violence and greed, that the American people keep faith with democracy, that we hold inviolate our belief in the infinite worth of the individual human being.”\(^3\)

Roosevelt’s call to humanitarian giving in time of war was not without precedent. President Woodrow Wilson had issued a similar decree on behalf of the ARC on 4 May 1918. Wilson had implored the American people to “give generously to the continuation of the important work of relieving distress, restoring the waste of war, and assisting in maintaining the morale of our own troops and the troops and peoples of our Allies.”\(^4\)

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2. The war chest fundraising drives, overseen by the President’s War Relief Control Board and the National War Fund, occurred during the fall until 1945 (with funds to be paid out for the fiscal year beginning in 1946). Once funds had been allocated, recipient relief agencies worked alongside the home governments of European countries, both belligerent and neutral, and local relief agencies to deliver aid.
3. “Address of the President re: Community Mobilization for Human Needs, 1942”; FDR Library.
Both the First and Second World Wars produced immense humanitarian crises in Europe. In the wake of each war, European nations, many with collapsed or delegitimized governments, struggled to provide basic necessities or stabilize living conditions among their civilian populations. As the lines between civilian and soldier or home front and frontlines blurred, relief became an ever-pressing necessity. In 1918 and 1945, the United States was the only nation willing and capable of providing significant relief to Europe. Both the Wilson and Roosevelt administrations provided monetary and material aid to European civilians, and sanctioned the work of private voluntary relief agencies to fortify the U.S.’s international presence after the wars.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the historical context of American private voluntary relief leading up to the Second World War. To do so, this chapter will compare and contrast the efforts of three individuals and organizations that operated in France following the First World War: Herbert Hoover and the CRB, Anne Morgan and the ACDF, and the ARC.\(^5\) In order to demonstrate the changing nature of war relief, this chapter surveys the same actors and organizations as they attempted to provide relief during and following the Second World War.

In discussing the history of war relief, the historian Jessica Reinisch has deemed comparison of temporal periods and relief methods to be a “useful prism through which the continuities and disjunctures in twentieth-century European history can be illuminated.”\(^6\) In the case of American efforts to aid France after the Armistice of 1918 and Liberation in 1944, numerous continuities are evident. Relief work became

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\(^5\) It should be noted that a number of other smaller agencies dedicated to French civilian relief sprang up as a reaction to the First World War, such as the French Heroes Lafayette Memorial Fund, Inc., the French Tuberculc Children’s Fund, the Fatherless of France, and Free Milk for France.

\(^6\) Reinisch, “Introduction: Relief in the Aftermath of War,” 392.
increasingly secular in response to the World Wars. The growing non-denominational character of aid agencies was often due to their reliance on expert relief administrators, consultants, and trained field workers, instead of religious volunteers. It should be noted that religious institutions remained involved in civilian relief efforts, especially on the home front, but were often sidelined by more capable secular agencies abroad. Expert administrators progressively modeled relief agencies after businesses, emphasizing professional administration and efficiency. Relief work also witnessed increased state involvement in the coordination and regulation of aid agencies. Washington, acutely aware of the benefits of civilian relief to maintaining or improving foreign relations, endorsed postwar relief as a means of achieving global stability when war ended in 1918 and 1945. Lastly, aid networks and agencies became gradually more transnational following the First World War. This transnationalism was part of a broader movement for collective cooperation after the First and Second World Wars, beginning with the creation of the League of Nations and culminating in the formation of the UN and its various branches.

These trends reflected the broader evolution of American aid to Europe that took place in the first half of the twentieth century. France, specifically regions north and west of Paris, provides an opportune case study to analyze the development of wartime and postwar relief politics because it received millions of dollars worth of American aid during and following both the First and Second World Wars. While this suggests continuity in American relief efforts after the wars, foreign assistance following the Second World War was far greater in scale and duration than that of the First World War, partially because U.S. authorities and relief administrators learned from the massive
civilian suffering that had accompanied and followed the Great War. More countries and regions donated and received aid after 1945 than in 1918, largely due to the formation of UNRRA and the hundreds of private voluntary relief agencies that were formed in the United States between 1939 and 1945. Due to the proliferation of relief agencies, the scope of private voluntary relief was far greater under Roosevelt and Truman than Wilson. In 1945, relief administrators also emphasized rehabilitation, not just immediate or emergency relief, meaning the temporal duration of aid projects was prolonged. The First World War may have become the template for administering relief work in the twentieth century, but the Second World War’s unforeseen devastation, specifically the Holocaust and the unparalleled number of civilian deaths across Europe and Asia, revolutionized the nature of postwar foreign aid.

In both the First and Second World Wars, foreign policy motivated American efforts to provide aid to France. Relief work often reflected the nuances of American relations with Western European countries, including intervention during wartime and “independent internationalism” or “neutrality” during periods of peace. Individual relief workers were often moved by humanitarian impulses to become involved in aid organizations, but for government administrators, relief was primarily political in inspiration. The historian Brian Smith has argued that during periods of American

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7 UNRRA’s principal donors were the United States, Britain, and Canada, but 48 other nations including France, the Netherlands, Norway, Australia, South Africa, Brazil, and New Zealand donated funds as well. UNRRA’s primary recipients were Albania, Austria, Byelorussian SSR, China, Czechoslovakia, Dodecanese Islands, Ethiopia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Korea, Philippines, Poland, San Marino, Ukrainian SSR, and Yugoslavia. Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom: A New History of the Liberation of Europe*, 220; McCleary, 18.

8 Scholars have used the terms “independent internationalism” and “neutrality” as alternatives to describe what has originally been called American “isolationism” during the interwar period. For more, see Stephen M. Streeter, “Independent Internationalism,” in *U.S. Foreign Policy: A Diplomatic History*, Robert J. McMahon and Thomas W. Zeiler, eds. (California: Sage, 2013); Brooke L. Blower, “From Isolation to Neutrality: A New Framework for Understanding American Political Culture 1919-41,” *Diplomatic History*, 38, no. 2 (April 2014): 345-376.
neutrality, relief agencies acted as “surrogates for U.S. government interests.” From 1914 to 1917 and 1939 to 1941, relief work permitted the United States to retain a presence in European affairs regardless of its non-belligerent or neutral status. During the years of active military engagement from 1917 to 1918 and 1942 to 1945, Presidents Wilson and Roosevelt promoted their own versions of national relief plans to ensure aid was provided to allied countries.

Following the First World War, Wilson encouraged the work of relief organizations in Europe but not necessarily for projects directly related to postwar rehabilitation or reconstruction. Instead, the Wilson administration was primarily concerned with assuaging famine and preventing the spreading of epidemics. Roosevelt, on the other hand, encouraged prolonged relief efforts that were directly related to civilian rehabilitation and postwar reconstruction. These undertakings were eventually engrained in U.S. foreign policy with the Marshall Plan under President Truman. Wilson and Roosevelt both believed that relief was an effective tool to forge improved relations between states. However, owing to the emerging Cold War, Roosevelt and Truman placed more emphasis than Wilson on the potential of civilian relief to foster democracy, liberalism, and capitalism in Western Europe. Wilson believed that foreign assistance could strengthen these values, but his administration did not focus emergency relief efforts on devastated Western European countries; instead, the Wilson administration looked to Central and Eastern Europe in response to the collapse of the Russian, Habsburg, and German Empires.

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9 Smith, 43.
The Wilson Administration and the Political Potential of Foreign Relief

The United States had yet to enter the First World War when President Wilson presented a plan in 1916 and early 1917, intended to secure peace and stability across Europe following the war’s conclusion. At the centre of Wilson’s thought was the notion of contriving American hegemony in Europe. The British historian Adam Tooze has argued that Wilson hoped to establish the United States as “the truly undisputed arbiter of world affairs.”10 Tooze suggests that the U.S.’s economic dynamism and Wilson’s belief in American moral superiority pushed the President towards increased international intervention. Wilson’s foreign policy platform, what would come to be known as Wilsonianism, was further refined once the United States entered the War in April 1917. Wilsonian ideology advocated advancing global democracy and the self-determination of nations, promoted liberalism and capitalism abroad, and called for international cooperation to safeguard collective security.11 Most notably, during the immediate postwar period, Wilson intended to usher in a new diplomatic order governed by the creation of an international body for peace and cooperation, the League of Nations. Historian Frank Ninkovich points out that most of Wilson’s ideas were not new, but gained traction due to the President’s ability to synthesize and succinctly articulate their utility.12 A chief manifestation of Wilsonianism was the President’s Fourteen-Point address, which guided Wilson in 1918 as he headed to Paris in December to arrange a

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peace treaty amongst the belligerents.\textsuperscript{13} Within Wilson’s grand vision for reordering international relations, extending relief to war-torn countries was a minor component. As such, in 1919, Wilson urged the U.S. Congress to create a national aid organization, the American Relief Administration (ARA), to be headed by Herbert Hoover. The U.S. government, along with private donations, funded the ARA with hundreds of millions of dollars, aimed at easing the transition from war to peace in thirty-two countries including Russia, Poland, and Germany.\textsuperscript{14}

Historian Kendrick Clements demonstrates that Hoover used the ARA as a soft power instrument to achieve American political aims without resorting to military force.\textsuperscript{15} The principles of Wilsonian foreign policy, including encouraging liberalism, democracy, and collective security were embedded in the ARA’s operations. By 1919, Hoover was a veteran of relief efforts due to the success of his private relief agency, the CRB. As the primary ambassador of Wilsonianism in the realm of postwar relief, Hoover’s goal was to usher in “international economic cooperation” based on an open-door policy of intervention in Europe.\textsuperscript{16} Fearing that the United States would be pushed out of shaping the emerging European postwar order, Hoover insisted that the Americans control any inter-allied food relief efforts. If the United States did not remain involved in European affairs, Hoover reasoned that France and Britain might ban American imports and investments, destroying any chances for improved international cooperation and


\textsuperscript{16} Clements, 3.
economic recovery among allies.\textsuperscript{17} As it stands, scholars insist that Hoover’s fears were misguided. Marc Trachtenberg and others who study the First World War and France’s economic recovery maintain that France was desperate for American economic investment after 1918.\textsuperscript{18} Either Hoover failed to understand that the United States held the upper-hand in these postwar negotiations, or he believed that in order to gain support for his initiatives, American intervention had to be framed in dire terms.

Hoover’s concern was matched by Wilson who recognized that “something more” was needed for France and Belgium. In December 1918, Wilson addressed Congress and declared “May I not say a special word about the needs of Belgium and Northern France? No sums of money paid by way of indemnity will serve of themselves to save them from hopeless disadvantage for years to come. Something more must be done than merely find the money.”\textsuperscript{19} However, little else was done for either state after 1919 despite Wilson and Hoover’s calls for increased international assistance. The Western Front had been the battleground for much of the First World War, but there was a curious lack of sustained American relief efforts, both private and governmental, for Northern France and Belgium after the peace agreements. The deficiency was, in part, due to a desire on behalf of French and Belgian authorities to resume control of their territories after the war and prove to their citizens the effectiveness of their governments. More significant, however, was the fact that liberal democracy, although battered and bruised, had survived the war in France and Belgium.\textsuperscript{20} France remained a traditional ally of the United States and

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 2-5.  
\textsuperscript{20} Ludivine Broch and Alison Carrol demonstrate that while democracy and republicanism survived the First World War in France, these concepts were “threatened to breaking point” during the tumultuous
proved willing to cooperate with other countries on an international stage via the League of Nations. It was unclear to the Wilson administration if the newly formed nation states in Central and Eastern Europe would do the same. In the words of Lloyd Ambrosius, if Wilson wanted to inspire “democratic revolution in the Old World,” it was apparent that Western Europe would not be the chief battleground. \(^{21}\) Instead, the Wilson administration looked towards securing democracy in Central and Eastern Europe.

For an administration bent on encouraging democracy and stability, the political risks of non-intervention in Central and Eastern Europe were far greater than in France. The Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and German Empires had collapsed. Hoover feared “further political revolutions” in the newly-formed states in Central and Eastern European since the “social pendulum has not reached the point of stability in some spots.”\(^{22}\) American authorities, driven by the voice of Hoover, believed that aid could be a powerful demonstration to unstable regions of the benefits of democracy and international cooperation. Promoting Wilsonianism in these regions was especially vital considering the proximity to Russia’s Bolshevik Revolution. With Wilson’s backing and Hoover’s managerial skills, the ARA became a medium for demonstrating Wilsonian ideals in unstable regions, specifically Eastern Europe.

The historian Matthew Lloyd Adams has observed that between 1918 and 1919, the ARA provided Polish civilians with “crucial relief” that was fundamental to


\(^{22}\) Letter to the President on American Membership on Commissions Set Up by the Treaty, 11 April 1919, Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB) Records, 1914-1930, Box 7, *Hoover Institution Archives (HIA)*.
stabilizing independent Poland.\textsuperscript{23} The ARA conducted similar efforts, albeit on a smaller scale, in Romania, Serbia, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Germany. Despite its geographic reach, the ARA has been remembered primarily for its work abating famine in Russia. During the upheaval of the Bolshevik Revolution, the United States had severed diplomatic ties with Lenin’s regime, meaning the ARA had to function without official government backing. Although relief administrators were wary about collaborating with the Russians, U.S. authorities believed Bolshevik influence could be eroded through the delivery of American food.\textsuperscript{24} At the very least, food relief could be used to acquire positive international publicity and improve America’s image amongst Russian civilians. Between 1921 and 1923, the ARA fed over ten million Russians, achieving widespread acclaim within Russia and the United States, although Bolshevik leadership remained resistant to U.S. food relief. While the ARA may have provided life-saving relief to millions, the organization’s efforts did not significantly alter Russo-American relations. At most, scholars believe the ARA achieved minor political benefits for Washington through its humanitarianism.\textsuperscript{25}

As the head of the ARA, Hoover was credited by the \textit{New York Times} as having “fed more people and saved more lives than any other man in history.”\textsuperscript{26} American relief that occurred during and following the First World War succeeded in providing vital

\textsuperscript{25} Smith, 33-34. There is evidence that Russian leaders castigated the ARA after 1924, charging the organization with interfering with internal Russian affairs, and those who received ARA foodstuffs as traitors and spies. Weissman, 182-188.
assistance to Europeans. However, it is clear that providing emergency relief to Europe did not generate recovery nor secure peace. The historian Bruno Cabanes argues that contemporary American officials and volunteers considered post-1918 relief projects to be forceful declarations of anti-war sentiment. Americans contributed to and participated in foreign relief efforts in the hope that administering immediate assistance to devastated areas would prevent a future war.27 Although relief was certainly not the only soft power method employed to prevent future conflict during the interwar period, relief as an assurance of peace failed after 1918.28 The historian Jessica Reinisch has shown that the failure of relief after the First World War was part of a broader “failure of analysis” in which “inadequate reconstruction programmes, insufficient international agreement and an unstable international architecture” brought about “disastrous consequences.”29 In other words, the way that Wilson’s administration went about delivering relief, that is, by providing rudimentary necessities for a short period, proved an ineffective method of reinforcing the diplomatic peace affirmed at Paris. American efforts to support European countries may have temporarily fed and clothed millions, but there was a distinct lack of rehabilitative care, or a commitment to long-term reconstruction projects. The fact that American relief policy addressed only the immediate needs of devastated Europe hindered diplomatic aspirations for peace as European nations were hard-pressed to meet the persistent demands from civilians and veterans directly affected by the war.

27 Cabanes, 10.
American Foreign Relief and the First World War

While the United States was in a position to deliver an extensive relief program to Western Europe after the First World War, American relief projects to France and Belgium were relatively short-lived and lacked popular and governmental support for a lengthier commitment, regardless of the advocacy of Hoover and Wilson. Despite his public pronouncements in favour of relief to France and Belgium, Wilson had expended much of his political capital attempting to convince the U.S. Senate to ratify the Paris Peace Agreements. Wilson’s postwar relief program, therefore, concentrated on Central and Eastern Europe, where, according to U.S. authorities, the political risks of non-intervention were too pressing to ignore. The task of easing civilian suffering in Belgium and France was left to private relief organizations during and following the Great War. The CRB, the ACDF, and the ARC all provided relief to France during the German occupation and in the immediate postwar period but were ultimately hampered by the Wilson administration’s Central and Eastern European agenda. Their experiences demonstrate the challenges faced by relief organizations operating in devastated territories in Western Europe after the First World War.

Herbert Hoover and the Commission for Relief in Belgium

Before he was leader of the ARA, Herbert Hoover was a successful American engineer and businessman looking to establish a career in public service. Hoover’s biographer, George Nash, traces the future President’s commitment to providing civilian relief to Europe after 1914, dubbing him “the great humanitarian.” When the First World War broke out, Hoover joined the American Red Cross and later served as its president. In 1918, he was appointed as the first director of the American Relief Administration (ARA), tasked with providing relief to war-torn Europe. Hoover’s dedication to humanitarian efforts was evident in his tireless work and his ability to garner international support for the relief efforts.

World War broke out, Hoover headed a team of Anglo-American businessmen from London with the purpose of assisting American and British civilians stranded in Europe. By October 1914, Hoover’s attention fixed on the troubles of European civilians caught in war zones, living under German occupation, or facing hardship due to blockade restrictions. Meanwhile, the American and British press had become preoccupied with the plight of Belgium and the German atrocities committed against Belgian civilians. In response, Hoover formed the CRB, which would go on to provide food and material goods to approximately nine to ten million civilians in Belgium and Northern France over the course of the war.

Hoover’s work with the CRB in Northern France primarily focused on sustaining civilians living in German occupied areas from 1915 to 1918. Following the Armistice, the CRB continued to provide limited postwar emergency relief until the French government was able to take over in June 1919. W.B. Poland, the Director of the CRB in Paris, explained to his counterpart in Belgium in January 1919, “The French Government originally intended to take over the ravitaillement of the liberated regions themselves, but when they went over the country they found that the only working organizations were our committees of ravitaillement. They therefore asked us to continue, until conditions should again approach normal, to feed the people.” The postwar services provided by the CRB in Northern France included feeding programs and overnight camps for children,

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31 Nash, 1.
32 The most commonly cited figures are seven to eight million civilians in Belgium, and two million civilians in Northern France. Although the Germans occupied areas outside of Northern France, there is no evidence that the CRB provided significant aid to those regions. George I. Gay, ed. and H.H. Fisher. Public Relations of the Commission for Relief in Belgium: Documents – Chapter VI: Northern France (California: Stanford University Press, 1929).
educational support for nursing mothers, decontamination and hygienic treatments, medical diagnostics and procedures, and financial support for needy families. While the CRB’s postwar operations were short-lived, the food and material goods requisitioned for Northern France from 1915 to 1919 allowed the French government to focus primarily on the war effort, before turning their attention to implementing a program of recovery.

CRB leadership managed the relief agency as if it were a corporate business, despite the fact that the organization’s executives did not receive a salary. Hoover became known for running an efficient and organized operation, leading Kendrick Clements to revise his nickname from the “great humanitarian” to the “great manager.”

The organization’s employees and volunteers disavowed politics and religion, and were ordered by Hoover to maintain a strictly professional appearance. In her first meeting with CRB volunteers in Paris, the writer and French Red Cross (CRF) volunteer, Madeleine Saint-René Taillandier, recalled that “it was clear that they had brought to the work which they had accepted all that was in them of strength, intelligence, exactness, and discipline.” While Hoover stacked the administrative structure of the CRB with successful businessmen, the majority of the volunteers that Taillandier and other French men and women would have encountered were highly educated, affluent American men of college age. Hoover did not recruit from the traditional pool of volunteer relief workers – wealthy, married women – due to the risks associated with front-line relief

35 Clements, 24.
38 Nash, 67.
work in a war zone, but he expected women on the home front to support his initiatives. The historian Susan Zeiger notes that Hoover often blamed American women for food shortages instead of looking towards farmers and suppliers.\(^{39}\) After the United States entered the war in 1917, the pool of eligible college-aged men dwindled but there was no accompanying upswing of women serving in the CRB. Some women were members of other relief agencies that operated overseas, most notably the ACDF, but in general, women contributed to civilian relief efforts on the home front, not the front lines.

A subtle gender shift occurred as relief work developed in response to the First World War. With Hoover’s backing, the CRB became a place for Rhodes scholars and Ivy League educated men to break into a career in public service, or to gain valuable experience abroad before assuming full-time employment after their degrees were conferred.\(^{40}\) Under Hoover’s guidance, relief work became a vehicle for professionalization. Men, many of whom were trained as lawyers, bankers, or industrialists, became expert relief administrators, thus taking the place of faith-based or upper-class volunteers. The most evident reason for this development was because relief work during the First World War required intimate contact with civilians, and increasingly depended on geographical proximity to the conflict’s front lines. Despite the fact that Anglo-American women had previously served as nurses or medical support staff in conflicts, fieldwork with foreign civilians was seen as dangerous and unfeminine.

One of the reasons why Hoover was able to attract young, educated, male volunteers to the CRB was because he treated the relief agency as a semi-governmental organization. Contemporary accounts of the CRB described its wartime record as “an


\(^{40}\) Nash, 67, 80.
achievement in business statesmanship.”

Others were more direct: a British Foreign Office official once called the CRB “a piratical state organization for benevolence.” The Commission flew its own flag on ships and buildings, while Hoover, a man with no diplomatic expertise before 1917, negotiated agreements and travelled abroad to discuss affairs with government authorities. In the case of France, in August 1918, the New York Times reported that Hoover met with Marshal Joseph Joffre and promised that American foodstuffs would continue to flow into Northern France. These meetings were highly publicized in an effort to draw attention to Hoover’s food conservation initiatives in America.

Hoover and the CRB were not without critics. The CRB provided assistance chiefly to Allied populations but it also negotiated with the Austro-Hungarians and Germans to remove financial levies or ensure the distribution of foodstuffs to suffering civilians, much to the chagrin of some. In 1915, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge accused Hoover of holding unauthorized discussions with foreign governments, issuing ultimatums on behalf of the United States, and using the CRB as an instrument for British interests. Certainly, the CRB’s ties to the American government were ambiguous during the period of U.S. neutrality. Prior to 1917, Hoover did not hold an official U.S. government position and although Wilson publicly endorsed the CRB, the organization

41 “The Commission for Relief in Belgium: A Record of the Founding and Establishment of the Commission and of its Operations from October 1914 to July 1915,” CRB Records, 1914-1930, Box 302, HIA.
43 Nash, 94.
received no funding from the State Department until the United States entered the war. For most of the CRB’s wartime existence, the organization received the majority of its monthly income from the governments of France and Britain. Despite the accusations of Lodge and others, Hoover continued to operate the CRB as he saw fit. While some facets of the CRB’s existence may have been “piratical,” in reality, the CRB operated more along the lines of the transnational relief organizations that would appear after the Second World War.

Once the United States formally entered the First World War, Wilson appointed Hoover to the post of President of the United States Food Administration. Hoover used his newfound status to advance the work of the CRB during the remainder of the war, and in the interwar years, to enhance his political power. When the war ended, Hoover found himself at the Paris Peace Conference as leader of the Food Administration. President Wilson struggled to negotiate a lasting diplomatic peace while Hoover attempted to reconstruct the collapsed international economic system by deliberating the terms of assistance. According to Clements, Hoover was “the most important American at Paris and a major figure at the peace conference.” Upon his return to America in 1919, the U.S. Congress created the ARA, where Hoover continued his conservation and relief efforts. The ARA had an office in Paris and utilized the shipping ports of Southern France, yet France did not receive significant aid from the ARA because relief efforts had shifted from Western Europe to Eastern and Central Europe. Instead, France’s recovery

\[46\] After 1917, the United States was the largest financier of the CRB. George I. Gay and H.H. Fisher eds., *Public Relations of the Commission for Relief in Belgium: Documents.*
\[47\] Nash, 305.
\[48\] Clements, 10.
\[49\] Ibid., 3.
and reconstruction was left in the hands of French authorities, eager to prove they could provide for citizens after years of warfare.

_Anne Morgan and the American Committee for Devastated France_

Daughter of the wealthy American financier John Pierpont Morgan, Anne Morgan gained a name for herself working to aid French civilians during the First World War. Before 1914, Morgan was involved in numerous organizations and clubs that focused on achieving better living and working conditions for women, especially from the lower classes, in New York. When war broke out in 1914, Morgan happened to be in France at _Villa Trianon_. The luxurious property in Versailles was owned by Elsie de Wolfe, but upon her father’s death in 1913, Morgan used part of her $3 million inheritance to purchase a share of the estate. Morgan remained in France during the war and founded a convalescent hospital for injured soldiers where she ran daily operations. In 1917, Morgan joined the Civilian Division of the American Fund for French Wounded and set up headquarters at the _Château de Blérancourt_ in the Aisne department upon an invitation from General Pétain. In March 1918, after a German offensive forced civilians and relief workers to flee the area, Morgan decided to reorganize the American Fund for French Wounded’s Civilian Division, creating the ACDF, which would become Morgan’s primary vehicle for providing postwar aid to the French. From 1918 to 1924, Morgan supervised a team of approximately 350 American women who were stationed across Picardy to deliver clothing, medicines, foodstuffs, tools, and agricultural resources.

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to French civilians.\textsuperscript{52} In total, 13,000 American donors and 625 volunteers (largely comprised of American, English, and French women) aided more than 60,000 residents, and also contributed to the restoration of 127 villages in the Aisne department.\textsuperscript{53}

American women had a long history of involvement in wartime relief work, as cooks, laundresses, and nurses. During the War for Independence as well as the Civil War, women served as volunteers at local relief societies and medical stations. They also served as contract nurses during the Spanish-American War. However, these roles were generally undertaken to aid the combatants, not civilians caught in war zones. The unprecedented civilian casualties of the First World War resulted in greater efforts to redress civilian suffering. In many ways, Morgan’s organization continued the rich history of women’s participation in relief work but shifted the focus away from American soldiers, towards serving foreign civilians, exclusively. The ACDF’s president was Myron T. Herrick, a former governor of Ohio and U.S. Ambassador to France, but the face of the organization was Morgan and her business partner, Anne Murray Dike, a Scottish-American doctor. Morgan and Dike made a conscious decision to employ wealthy, unmarried, divorced, or widowed women like themselves. On a personal level, Morgan preferred working with women but more importantly, she considered it an asset that female field workers were “less political” than their male counterparts.\textsuperscript{54} While the

\textsuperscript{52} “Anne Morgan’s War: Rebuilding Devastated France 1917-1924,” Exhibition Brochure, 3 September-21 November 2010, Anne Tracy Morgan Papers, MLM.
\textsuperscript{53} McGuire, 101, 105.
\textsuperscript{54} The notion that women were “less political” than men was shared by many at the time, despite the growing U.S. suffragette movement. American women did not achieve the vote until 1920, and therefore, could not participate politically in the same ways as men. Women also could not be conscripted for military service. These structural gender limitations contributed to popular understandings of women as “less political” than men. The other consideration came from the longstanding tradition of women as caregivers and humanitarians, not politically motivated field workers.
ACDF still emphasized professional conduct, these women stood in contrast to the CRB’s male-dominated overseas personnel.

Alongside traditional roles as nurses and child-caretakers, Morgan also employed women outside of caregiving professions. Marian Bartol, a volunteer from Philadelphia, held the title of store-keeper at an ACDF centre outside of Paris. She sold foodstuffs and household goods at discounted prices to locals and upon verification of their financial status, distributed supplies to French women and men who were unable to pay. \(^{55}\) Bartol described the responsibilities of ACDF women at length, ranging from directors of local distribution centres, to mechanics, drivers, storeroom superintendents, nurses, child-care managers, resettlement officers, agricultural workers, and housekeepers. She reflected in 1921, “I have just returned from a trip which would have made Father say even more strongly, ‘a woman’s place is in the home.’” Bartol’s father had passed away months prior to her enlistment with the ACDF. She continued, “For that matter he probably would not have let me come over with the committee, although I am most carefully chaperoned and looked out for in every way.” \(^{56}\) Even though Bartol recognized that the ACDF adhered to traditional customs of public chaperoning for wealthy, unwed women, she noted that simply being overseas and working on the front lines of an organization associated with war would have concerned her late father. The ACDF’s female staff were unlike service nurses who were often employed abroad by the ICRC. These upper-class women were living with and working alongside destitute French civilians, which oftentimes pushed the boundaries of so-called respectable female behaviour.

\(^{56}\) Bartol, 65.
Volunteering abroad afforded ACDF women increased independence and unique experiences unavailable on the home front.

The women of the ACDF provided postwar relief to civilians in the Aisne department, but due to these geographic limits, their work falls short of comparable projects taken on by relief organizations after the Second World War. As Mary Blume, a journalist for the *International Herald Tribune*, put it, the ACDF was not “involved in anything as fancy as urban planning.” However, the organization “sailed in and gave seven years of total devotion to a relatively small area, setting up dispensaries, schools, machine shops to repair tools, sawmills, dairies, agricultural cooperatives, getting incubators for poultry farmers and seeds for kitchen gardens.”

While the ACDF would remain active in France until 1924, the organization faced mounting obstacles securing private funding. The ACDF’s struggle to secure financial backing was typical of the difficulties facing relief organizations operating in France after the war, including Hoover’s CRB. Morgan, writing to her mother in March 1919, lamented, “Of course we are very sad over the failure of our [fundraising] Drive in America, and above all for what our office tells us is the reason, in the widespread lack of sympathy which has grown up between France and America.”

Months before the Versailles Treaty was signed, there was little popular and governmental support in the United States for Morgan’s efforts. Rumors in America about the “prosperity of France” and the “ungrateful” French continued to wreak havoc on independent relief organizations’ fundraising efforts into the

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57 Mary Blume, “Healing the Wounds of a Shattered World,” *International Herald Tribune* (11-12 November 2000), The Anne Tracy Morgan Papers, MLM.

58 Letter, Anne Morgan to Frances Tracy Morgan, 10 March 1919, The Anne Tracy Morgan Papers, MLM.
summer of 1919. At the same time, U.S. Congress had appropriated $100 million for
the ARA to conduct postwar relief work in Central and Eastern Europe, turning the
spotlight away from Northern France and Belgium. Simply put, a private voluntary
relief organization could not compete with the governmental funding of the ARA.

Strained by the Paris Peace Agreements, debates over inter-Allied debts, and the
U.S. failure to join the League of Nations, the Franco-American relationship turned sour. The historian Philippe Roger has observed that “relations had plummeted to a rarely attained degree of coldness.” In the United States, President-elect Warren G. Harding’s campaign promised a “return to normalcy” and emphasized the popular will to “make sure our own house is in perfect order.” In France, anti-Americanism became a popular response to the bitterness caused by the Versailles Treaty, which many thought inadequately protected France from future German aggression. Some French, including Georges Clemenceau and André Tardieu, as well as influential writers such as Marcel Proust and Charles Maurras, openly denounced Wilsonianism and Americanization. As Franco-American political relations foundered, Morgan continued to appeal to the American people on behalf of French civilians. She claimed that “throughout France the warmest feelings existed for the United States” when faced with comments from Americans about France’s anti-American attitude. Despite her best efforts, by 1924 Morgan terminated the ACDF’s operations in France. Few people took notice in the

59 Helen Choate Prince, “Declares France Still Needs our Aid,” NYT, 31 August 1919, pg. 17. As chapter four will demonstrate, after 1944, political animosity between France and America continued to influence international relief efforts and diplomatic relations.
60 Background on the ARA, Register of the American Relief Administration (ARA) Records, HIA.
61 Roger, 259.
63 Roger, 259-270.
64 “Miss Anne Morgan Pleads for France,” NYT, 18 January 1922, pg. 14.
United States when, at the *Château de Blérancourt*, Marshal Pétain awarded Morgan and Dike with the Legion of Honour during a well-attended ceremony celebrating the work of the ACDF.\textsuperscript{65} Morgan returned to New York after the war years as a Francophile and an experienced philanthropist. Providing civilian relief after the First World War had proved to Morgan that a small but dedicated group of women could implement an effective private relief program. Twenty years later, her commitment to France would mean the resurrection of Morgan’s relief efforts as Europe was once again plunged into war.

*The American Red Cross*

As a branch of the ICRC, the ARC provided significant relief during civil and international conflicts, and natural or man-made disasters during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. What had begun as a commitment to aiding soldiers and those wounded on the battlefield evolved to include more far-reaching measures including relief for POWs and civilians. The historian Julia Irwin has demonstrated that from the ICRC’s founding, its ethos was secular, and its work was defined in nondenominational “material and modernist terms.”\textsuperscript{66} Despite the efforts of organizations such as the American Huguenot Committee and the United Committee on Christian Service for Relief in France and Belgium, most religious institutions and charity organizations were not equipped to operate in France and Belgium’s unstable, active battle zones that persisted throughout the First World War; nor were they able to meet effectively the multifaceted demands of millions of suffering soldiers, POWs, and civilians. In the place of religious relief organizations, the ARC rose to prominence, benefitting from its

\begin{footnotes}
\item[65] “American Honored for Work in France” *NYT*, 21 July 1924, pg. 11.
\item[66] Irwin, 8.
\end{footnotes}
transnational connection to the ICRC, which allowed the ARC to work closely with the Allied military apparatus to provide medical and health services to soldiers, POWs, and civilians.

By the time the United States entered the First World War, the ARC had been working steadily in Europe for almost three years. During the tenure of Mabel Boardman, Chairwoman of the ARC from 1905 to 1915, the ARC strategically aligned itself with the State Department in order to become the face of American international aid and disaster relief.67 This relationship continued through the years of U.S. neutrality, as the ARC maintained a close working relationship with the Wilson administration. From 1914 to 1917, the ARC shipped almost $15 million worth of goods to Europe, mainly to Britain and France, but it also provided limited relief to German and Austro-Hungarian civilians and soldiers.68 The ARC’s reputation as the Wilson administration’s preferred relief agency led to a membership boom, as almost one-third of the American population joined the Red Cross by the end of the war.69 The historian Marian Moser Jones calculated that during the Great War, approximately eight million upper and middle-class American women, in addition to millions of children from the Junior Red Cross, engaged in volunteer work at their local ARC branches.70 For men, women, and children on the home front, membership in a local branch of the Red Cross became a form of patriotism and a method of participation in the conflict. Most of these supporters contributed to the ARC through membership fees, donations during annual drives, and by participating in

68 Smith, 32.
69 Irwin notes that the war years produced “explosive” growth in membership. By 1919, twenty-two million adults and eleven million children were members of their local Red Cross society. Irwin, 67.
70 Jones, 157.
volunteer services like administrative work, knitting or sewing, and supervising fundraisers.

Overseeing the ARC volunteer base was a group of professional businessmen aligned with the Wilson administration. In 1917, Wilson appointed Henry P. Davison, a partner in J.P. Morgan & Co., as Chairman of the ARC. The scholar Scott M. Cutlip notes that at first, Wilson was reluctant to recruit Davison or anyone with Wall Street ties to the post. Working in Davison’s corner to sway the President was Cleveland H. Dodge, a philanthropist, investor, and old friend of Wilson’s from Princeton. Perhaps more significant than Dodge’s urgings was the fact that in order to justify the ARC’s status as the government’s official wartime charity, Wilson needed to fill leadership roles with influential citizens. With Davison’s appointment, the tradition of a woman heading the ARC ceased. Since the ARC came under the supervision of the State Department, Wilson recruited a “War Council” comprised of powerful businessmen who operated the ARC as “a corporation-like enterprise,” intending to transform the agency into “a wartime government auxiliary.” Davison wrote that he approached the problem of relief by attempting to develop a “clear business proposition,” demonstrating that Davison, like Hoover, believed that the efficiency of a relief organization depended on crafting an appropriate business model and filling the ranks with professional, capable men and women.

The organizational structure of the ARC lent itself well to relief efforts during the First World War. Unlike the other American relief organizations of the time, the ARC

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72 Jones, 157.
had a direct line into France via the CRF, and benefited from close cooperation with the ICRC in Geneva. The international structure that bridged together the various Red Cross branches across Western Europe and North America allowed for financial and strategic collaboration in organizing, shipping, and distributing supplies to France. Compared to the CRB and the ACDF, the ARC had more resources and connections to call upon. The ARC’s success in feeding and aiding Europe during and following the First World War signified to many relief administrators that the future of foreign aid could be found in transnational coordination.74

After the belligerents signed the Armistice in 1918, the ARC worked alongside the CRB and the ACDF to provide postwar relief to France. The ACDF was preoccupied with the Aisne region, and the CRB was handling the distribution of food and supplies in Northern France. In order to avoid the duplication of relief, the ARC decided to focus attention on providing medical relief and healthcare services, but its presence in France was not sustained.75 In March 1919, the New York Times reported that the ARC had begun to wrap up relief operations in France to “free its resources for the larger task” of recovery in other European countries.76 Like the CRB and the ACDF, the ARC faced the challenge of declining public support for private voluntary relief to foreign countries after the war, as many Americans began to question the alleged benefits of such aid.77 ARC administrators recognized that the American people were reluctant to back prolonged projects of relief and reconstruction in Western Europe. At the same time, the U.S. government’s focus had shifted to Central and Eastern Europe, prompting the ARC to

74 Cabanes, 5.
75 Irwin, 143.
76 “Warns of Reports Harmful to France,” NYT, 24 March 1919, pg. 5.
77 Irwin, 143.
follow suit to address insufficient food supply and disease control in these areas. In the 1920s, the ARC worked alongside Hoover and the ARA to combat outbreaks of famine in Russia. More significantly, the ARC was the most active American relief organization working to assist those infected with the Spanish Influenza.\(^78\) Unlike aid organizations created in response to the First World War, the ARC was not terminated in the interwar period because it adapted its relief efforts to serve all different types of disasters and emergency situations, and it was far too popular an organization to cease operations.

*The Roosevelt Administration, American Foreign Relief, and the Second World War*

When war broke out in Europe in 1939, Herbert Hoover, Anne Morgan, and the ARC were once again on the front lines to provide relief to French civilians. In many cases the leaders who were active in aiding France during and after the First World War attempted to recreate their efforts in 1939. Morgan and Hoover had practical experience aiding French civilians during the First World War, and their knowledge was drawn upon in various ways to combat the increasingly desperate situation in France. The ARC also had experience in France, and it was the most popular and widely known relief organization in the United States. However, the challenges facing relief administrators during and following the Second World War were fundamentally different from those of 1918. The First World War had transformed relief work as the amateur gave way to the expert, and the Roosevelt administration sought greater oversight of private voluntary relief agencies. Aid organizations were forced to operate within the overarching

\(^78\) Marian Moser Jones, “The American Red Cross and Local Responses to the 1918 Influenza Pandemic: A Four-City Case Study,” *Public Health Reports* 125, no. 3 (2010): 92.
framework of Roosevelt’s foreign assistance program, which was aimed at generating international goodwill and spreading the American dream to suffering civilians abroad.  

The Roosevelt administration reasoned that if the United States supported programs that provided basic necessities including food, shelter, and medical services to devastated civilians, countries such as France would be more willing to cooperate with Washington’s foreign policy agenda in Europe. As such, during the war, Roosevelt used civilian relief to generate positive diplomatic relations and publicity for the United States. For example, the historian Joan Beaumont suggests that Roosevelt fought to make civilian relief an exception to the British blockade of Nazi occupied countries during the war. Roosevelt believed economic and material aid could be used to garner Allied support in countries such as France and Greece, where limited U.S. relief was eventually shipped. The President insisted that relief and rehabilitation would shorten the war and strengthen America’s claims during the peace process. 

Roosevelt’s conviction in the benefits of foreign aid was part of his broader ideological outlook. In his “Four Freedoms” speech to Congress in January 1941, Roosevelt outlined the “freedom from want” as the right “which will secure to every nation a healthy peace time life for its inhabitants – everywhere in the world.” The historian Victoria de Grazia explains that Roosevelt believed that it was the responsibility of...
of the United States to improve quality of life across the world in the postwar period; “freedom from want” became the principal means of measuring the international “standard of living” for the Truman administration.\(^{82}\) Anticipating early on that after the war, Europe would need resources and assistance if it were to provide for devastated civilians and improve living standards, Roosevelt created various commissions and boards to execute his plans.

Promises of postwar civilian relief materialized with the creation of two specific boards: The President’s War Relief Control Board, and the War Refugee Board. In July 1942, Executive Order 9205 established the President’s War Relief Control Board, which was designed to oversee the abundance of U.S. relief agencies being created by Americans in response to the war’s massive humanitarian crises. The creation of the President’s War Relief Control Board generated an official governmental channel for Americans who wished to become involved in postwar projects of relief across Europe and Asia. The President’s War Relief Control Board, combined with its fundraising partner, the National War Fund, directed nearly every aspect of private voluntary relief organizations from 1942 until its termination in 1946.\(^{83}\)

In January 1944, the Roosevelt administration issued Executive Order 9417, creating the War Refugee Board. Anticipating the considerable human dislocation that would be caused by the Allied push towards Germany and hoping to rescue “civilian victims of enemy savagery,” the War Refugee Board worked with U.S. relief agencies to provide assistance to refugees in Nazi-occupied Europe, and attempted to evacuate

\(^{82}\) De Grazia, 340-341.
\(^{83}\) Chapter two discusses the President’s War Relief Control Board and National War Fund in more detail.
Jewish men, women, and children during the final two years of the war.\textsuperscript{84} Among other initiatives, the President’s War Relief Control Board and the War Refugee Board sought to assist Europe’s most desperate, downtrodden civilians.

Roosevelt’s commitment to providing relief during and after the Second World War derived in part from hindsight. Roosevelt had witnessed the failure of Wilsonianism to bring about lasting peace in Europe. In his last State of the Union address in January 1945, Roosevelt declared, “in our disillusionment after the last war, we gave up the hope of achieving a better peace because we had not the courage to fulfill our responsibilities in an admittedly imperfect world.” Roosevelt went on to reaffirm the U.S.’s commitment to the Atlantic Charter, which contained Wilsonian principles of self-determination, global cooperation, and the lifting of trade restrictions.\textsuperscript{85} Scholars have argued that Wilsonian ideals including democracy, liberalism, and collective security broke down during the interwar period. Perhaps the most pronounced shortcoming was America’s lack of commitment to international cooperation and an unwillingness to act as global arbitrator. The historian Frank Ninkovich has shown that during the interwar years, America’s “moral commitment to leadership” in Europe fell far short of Wilsonian objectives.\textsuperscript{86} During the Great Depression, U.S. domestic worries overwhelmed international concerns. Roosevelt hoped to avoid the same postwar fate when he drafted directives for achieving peace. In March 1945, Roosevelt addressed Congress following the Yalta Conference and stated that “responsibility for political conditions thousands of

\textsuperscript{84} “Executive Order Establishing a War Refugee Board, 22 January 1944,” Franklin D. Roosevelt, The War Refugee Board Volume 1; Folder 1; \textit{FDR Library}.


\textsuperscript{86} Ninkovich, 95.
miles away can no longer be avoided by this great nation.” He continued, “the United States now exerts a tremendous influence in the cause of peace throughout all the world…We will continue to exert that influence, only if we are willing to continue to share in the responsibility for keeping peace.”

In the eyes of the Roosevelt administration, postwar foreign aid remained a credible instrument capable of preventing further conflict and diffusing tense foreign relations, despite its mixed record after the First World War.

From 1943 to 1945, however, many of Roosevelt’s Republican opponents spoke out against the idea of postwar aid. Specifically, they opposed any U.S. financial commitment to UNRRA and other foreign aid “schemes.” As the historian Barry Riley put it, “certainly “relief” was something that most legislators could agree with, albeit reluctantly. “Rehabilitation” (not to mention any hint of “reconstruction”) presented them with issues of much larger magnitude.” Some Republicans in the House, including Clare Hoffman, Hamilton Fish III, and Jessie Sumner, as well as Senator Arthur Vandenberg, believed that U.S. investment in relief and rehabilitation in Europe could cripple the American economy, increase national debt, and divert resources from deserving American civilians.

In defense of his proposals, Roosevelt cited the benefits that foreign relief would bring to the United States including widening the commercial market for American goods, strengthening democratic alliances abroad, and preventing the likelihood of a

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87 “Address to Congress on Yalta, 1 March 1945,” The Miller Center, The University of Virginia.
89 Riley, 93-94.
future war.91 As Assistant Secretary of State, Dean Acheson was able to negotiate an agreement with Republican legislators that limited UNRRA’s efforts to emergency relief – the United States could withdraw if UNRRA’s leadership decided to take part in rehabilitation or reconstruction – and in March 1944, Congress approved U.S. funding of UNRRA. Throughout 1945, however, Republicans opposed to UNRRA were able to delay hundreds of millions of dollars in appropriations, essentially rendering UNRRA bankrupt at times. Debates over UNRRA continued until December 1945, when General Dwight D. Eisenhower appeared before Congress and argued that UNRRA’s work was integral to postwar stability and America’s national security.92 Eisenhower convinced Congress to approve UNRRA’s outstanding funds, keeping the organization solvent until it wrapped up operations in 1947.

At the same time that Congress was debating the effectiveness of UNRRA, hundreds of private voluntary aid organizations were attempting to execute relief programs across Europe. While some new relief agencies flourished under the attention and regulation of the United States government, many of the old actors from the First World War, including Herbert Hoover, Anne Morgan, and the ARC, struggled to repeat their leading roles.

Herbert Hoover and the Second World War: Adept Administrator

Hoover, now a former U.S. President, responded immediately to calls for relief as the Second World War broke out in 1939. He lobbied the Roosevelt administration to send aid as Germany overran Poland and then, in 1940, Denmark, Norway, the

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92 Riley, 101-104.
Netherlands, Belgium and France. Hoover’s tense relationship with Roosevelt resulted in additional challenges as he tried to implement what proved to be an unpopular plan for relief: Hoover intended to circumvent the blockade of Nazi occupied countries, which was deemed unacceptable by British and American authorities. Unwilling to work with the Roosevelt administration and incapable of breaching the British blockade without governmental support, Hoover accepted offers to head the Commission for Polish Relief and the Committee for Food for the Small Democracies. Eventually, the United States negotiated a minor relief shipment to France, but Hoover’s advocacy had little to do with the decision. Marshal Pétain, head of Vichy France, appealed for civilian relief to Roosevelt, who agreed in the hope that aid might improve American-Vichy relations and intensify French animosity towards the Germans. Prime Minister Winston Churchill may have reluctantly agreed to let the United States send limited relief supplies to Vichy France in 1940, but Whitehall ensured that the effort was short-lived.

Undaunted, Hoover tried to drum up support for shipping relief supplies to occupied Europe by warning the American public that if material goods and foodstuffs were not forthcoming, famine and disease would kill millions of civilians. Hoover argued that the survivors, physically destitute from years of deprivation, would be

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“incapacitated,” leaving them “impotent and defenseless of whatever doctrine attacks.”

After the war, U.S. relief agencies and authorities used a similar notion to justify relief to France, suggesting that U.S. assistance was necessary to prevent communism from infecting the French. For the duration of the war, however, most government officials and private groups rejected Hoover’s reasoning. For example, the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies produced numerous press releases supporting the British blockade. The Committee speculated that any food sent to occupied countries would be “turned into munitions,” in Hitler’s laboratories. Besides, the Committee reasoned naïvely, “Hitler would not dare to starve the subjected peoples because workmen in the conquered countries are producing for the Nazi war machine.”

Emerging evidence of German atrocities and the Holocaust eventually softened the American public’s resistance to providing civilian relief to Nazi occupied countries. The Allied invasion of Normandy in June 1944, however, temporarily suspended further consideration of providing relief to France until the country was liberated.

After Roosevelt’s death in April 1945, President Truman came to rely on Hoover to oversee the relief effort in liberated countries. As head of the Famine Emergency Committee, Hoover travelled to Europe and Asia to survey agricultural conditions in twenty-two devastated countries. Hoover reported back that famine was imminent if

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95 “Famine in Western Europe, 1940,” CRB Records, 1940-1945, Box 17, HIA.
96 These claims were obviously false, but the fact that the Committee broadcast them to the U.S. public to counter Hoover’s initiatives remains significant. Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, “Shall We Feed Europe?” 1940, CRB Records, 1940-1945, Box 17, HIA.
97 James H. George Jr. describes the developments in American public and congressional opinion as it related to breaching the British blockade. Initially, the public and the Roosevelt administration were against breaching the British blockade. By 1943 and 1944, Hoover’s continual appeals found resonance as Senators Robert A. Taft, Guy Gillette, and Congressman John Lesinski made cases for breaking the British blockade to send relief. The director of UNRRA, Herbert Lehman, also advocated the Roosevelt administration to send relief supplies. Despite this popular support in the United States, the British proved unwilling to compromise. George, 403-406.
Europe did not receive over eight million tons of foodstuffs. He recommended that Americans reduce their food consumption and donate wheat, rice, fats, and baby food to relief organizations, and he secured an agreement with Argentina to provide two million tons of foodstuffs for devastated civilians. The former President was a valuable resource to the Truman administration when it came to assessing the practical considerations for providing large-scale relief, most notably determining the type and amount of aid needed.

Regrettably for Hoover, his proposed strategy to feed Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa was overshadowed by the emergence of the powerful transnational aid organization, UNRRA. During the First World War, Hoover had enjoyed virtually unlimited freedom when negotiating relief. As the “great manager,” Hoover specialized in securing foreign governments’ permission and organizing the technical coordination of relief distribution. But when he attempted to perform the same managerial role for private voluntary relief organizations during the Second World War, Hoover was stymied by the President’s War Relief Control Board, which insisted on regulation, accountability, and standardization. The scale of destruction following the Second World War demanded a more coherent response than what had occurred after the First World War. While private voluntary relief organizations remained effective at collecting and distributing aid, transnational bodies proved adept at coordinating relief and rehabilitation efforts in the major war zones, including Germany, Poland, Italy, and China.

100 Clements, 24.
The American Red Cross and the Second World War: Transnational Competition

The ARC had become one of the leading transnational agencies committed to aiding civilians by the time of the Second World War. This rise to prominence was enhanced by President Roosevelt’s decision to exclude the ARC from the Neutrality Act of November 1939, which otherwise forbid Americans from raising funds for belligerent countries. Private voluntary relief agencies such as the ARC were exempt, providing that they registered with the State Department and submitted frequent, detailed reports in order to ensure that the enemy did not confiscate American resources.101 From this privileged position, the ARC initially managed to ship goods across the Atlantic Ocean through its independent distribution agency, Secours Américain aux Victimes de la Guerre, and the CRF helped to distribute the materials across France.102 The ARC ran into trouble after the Fall of France in 1940, as British authorities refused to permit civilian relief cargo to breach the blockade of Nazi occupied countries. Only after Roosevelt directly appealed to Churchill did the Royal Navy permit ARC supplies to reach civilians in Vichy France.103 American goods ranged from pharmaceuticals such as insulin and opium powder, to medical products like syringes and cellulose wadding, and commodities including caffeine, milk products, and woolen garments.104 The U.S. government contributed $385.8 million to the ARC’s efforts to aid civilians abroad, however, the funds could not be used in Nazi occupied territories.105 This regulation allowed American goods and funds to be shipped to Vichy France since the Germans did

103 “Red Cross Obtains Ship to Aid France,” NYT, 4 November 1941, pg. 47.
104 “Agreement between the A.R.C. and the S.A.V.G.” (3 June 1940), Collection ANRC, NACP.
105 Smith, 39.
not technically occupy the zone until November 1942, and later, North Africa, but never occupied France.

Despite achieving modest success in the shipping of relief supplies during the Second World War, the ARC’s aspiration to lead American relief efforts as it had during the First World War never materialized, as the agency was forced to compete with a wide range of new private voluntary and transnational relief organizations. In July 1942, Roosevelt commissioned the President’s War Relief Control Board to regulate and unify smaller private voluntary relief organizations, and grant them a voice within the State Department. Thus, the Board effectively siphoned public funds that might otherwise have gone to the ARC. The National War Fund, for example, held its fundraising drive in November, which tended to preempt the ARC’s fundraising efforts, which normally took place in March. Many of the smaller relief organizations represented by the National War Fund’s campaign were committed to providing aid to a specific European country or religious denomination, which mobilized immigrant communities across the United States. The narrow focus of these private voluntary relief organizations appealed to many Americans who harbour a personal attachment to Europe or wanted to become involved in more direct relief efforts to a specific country.

In order to remain relevant and productive, most of the ARC’s efforts to provide civilian assistance to France occurred in collaboration with other relief agencies. U.S private voluntary relief organizations, most notably AAF and the American Friends Service Committee, worked alongside the ARC, at times, to provide civilian relief to France. The ARC’s relationship with these private voluntary aid agencies was often stronger than its relationship with UNRRA. While UNRRA did not operate a

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106 McCleary, 50.
comprehensive mission to France, de Gaulle eventually consented to allow emergency relief when UNRRA offered limited supplies, specifically food, soap, and clothing, to France during the difficult winter of 1945. Since the ARC and UNRRA both operated transnationally, they often stepped on one another’s toes or ended up competing for resources. With a larger budget and the government support of its forty-four founding members, UNRRA tended to get the better of ARC. For example, in a memo from the Displaced Persons, Refugees and Welfare Section of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) in June 1945, UNRRA officials in France demanded that “Red Cross Markings” on commodity packages be removed and repacked so that UNRRA could redistribute the bundles. Name recognition was important for relief agencies since positive publicity resulted in greater support and more substantial donations. It was not only funding and goods that were being divided between the various transnational relief organizations. UNRRA was also recruiting American personnel at an extraordinary rate. A report on the UNRRA intakes arriving at its training facility in Granville, France in September 1945, listed 68% as American workers. The second largest body of workers was British at a distant 22%.

In order to avoid competing with UNRRA, the ARC worked closely within the network of the Red Cross, specifically allying with the CRF. The CRF sometimes allocated roles at its relief camps and depots to American field workers from the ARC serving in France, but most of these Americans did not remain in France proper for very long. By May 1945, the CRF had deployed teams of American and French workers to

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108 “Memorandum from George J. Clarke for Lt. Colonel Witte re: Red Cross – UNRRA Packages, 27 June 1945,” RG 331; Entry 121, Box 59, NACP.
Saarbrücken in the French occupation zone in Germany. Unlike the private voluntary relief agencies that provided assistance to a singular country, the ARC had the power to allocate its resources wherever its administrators saw fit. The ARC initially aided France during the liberation period, but once Germany surrendered, the organization shifted its focus to needier regions in order to assist the millions of refugees who had survived Nazi concentration or labour camps, or remained dislocated in Central Europe after the war.

While the ARC provided valuable aid to France during the Second World War, the competition for resources among transnational relief agencies and the geographical expanse of destruction meant that the ARC was unable to dominate American relief efforts in France as it had during and following the First World War.

Anne Morgan and the Second World War: Relief Regulations

Anne Morgan returned to France from the United States when war broke out in 1939. She inhabited the Château de Blérancourt, restored in the interwar period and refurbished as a National Museum of Franco-American Cooperation, as she had during the First World War. Aid efforts were swiftly reestablished as Morgan formed the Comité américain de Secours civil (CASC), a French-based relief organization intended to assist French civilians and POWs. However, Morgan was forced to flee France for the United States after the Germans invaded in 1940 and proved unwilling to negotiate with any aid organization other than the Red Cross. Back in New York, Morgan headed the relief

110 “Memorandum from French Red Cross Headquarters to SHAEF Mission (France) re: French Red Cross Teams for 15th Army,” 29 May 1945,” RG 331; Entry 121, Box 59, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces: SHAEF Mission (France), G-5 Div. Executive Sec. Decimal File Aug 1944-Aug 1945, NACP.

111 It is unclear exactly why the Germans would only work with the Red Cross, but Jean-Claude Favez implies it might have been because of the Red Cross’ commitment to aiding POWs and army units, as opposed to civilians (the Geneva Convention would be amended in 1949 to include civilians). Lilla Pennant
organization, American Friends of France (AFF), which was quickly transformed into the American fundraising branch of the CASC. From 1940 to 1944, Morgan attempted to raise money and ship goods to Vichy France, but the American organization, AFF, faced new challenges imposed by the Roosevelt administration in the days before France’s Liberation.

In the spring of 1944, Roosevelt sought to overhaul the way that private voluntary relief organizations were regulated across the United States. The President’s War Relief Control Board and the National War Fund decreed that only a single American relief organization could provide aid for each devastated European or Asian country. While Morgan agreed that one agency should take the lead in order to prevent duplication or mismanagement, she was upset to learn that her organization, AFF, was not selected to head relief efforts in France. Instead, the various existing French relief organizations would be merged to form a new organization: AAF. These rules meant that any existing relief organization that did not agree to join AAF had to disband. Morgan thus transitioned to AAF where she rapidly became an important figure, but she often clashed with other members over the ways that the organization collected, coordinated, and distributed aid to France. Additionally, the Roosevelt administration’s intense regulation of relief agencies bothered Morgan, who was used to the relatively unrestricted fundraising and distribution allowed during the First World War. Similar to the challenges faced by Hoover in lobbying the U.S. government to circumvent the British

suggests that the Red Cross responded more favourably to German orders than other relief agencies, which may have gained them favour. Lilla Pennant, Anne Morgan, Eva Dahlgren, Rose Doland: And the Aid They Brought to French Refugees 1939-1949 (New York: Oliphant Press, 1990), 9-10, in the Anne Tracy Morgan Papers, MLM; Jean-Claude Favez, trans. John and Beryl Fletcher, The Red Cross and the Holocaust (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

112 McCleary, 47-48.

113 See chapter two for more detailed information on the organizational history of AAF.
blockade, Morgan felt her potential as an experienced relief administrator was being squandered by unnecessary administrative regulations.

Morgan, somewhat unhappily, continued to work for AAF until 1946. When Truman terminated the President’s War Relief Control Board by executive order in May 1946, the measures that had forcibly brought together various aid organizations across the United States no longer existed. Morgan took the first opportunity to withdraw her organization, AFF, from AAF. With newfound freedom, Morgan travelled to France in July 1946 to oversee the work of AFF and the CASC but she was forced to return to New York shortly after due to health concerns. Although Morgan remained the honorary president of CASC, she “slipped into the background of the relief efforts for the still-devastated areas of France.” In some ways, the CASC provided the long-term rehabilitation and recovery to Aisne that Morgan tried to implement via the ACDF after the First World War. However, due to Morgan’s health issues, the CASC became the concern of Morgan’s younger partners, Eva Dahlgren and Rose Dolan, who remained in France throughout the war and postwar years. The CASC would remain active in France until 1951, and one year later, Morgan passed away.

Conclusion

Between 1914 and 1945, foreign relief work developed into a full-fledged industry. In some way, the trends developed by Herbert Hoover and the CRB, Anne Morgan and the ACDF, and the ARC in France from 1914 to 1924 remained instrumental to the efforts of subsequent aid agencies. Relief work gradually became a respected professional endeavor, creating a growing field of expert administrators. Relief

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114 Pennant, 28, in the Anne Tracy Morgan Papers, MLM.
organizations were progressive in their recruitment of businessmen, educated volunteers, and female field workers. The majority of organizations remained secular, disavowing political affiliation in the name of humanitarian concerns.

Despite the evident continuity in the field of foreign relief between the wars, the scale of destruction, specifically the engineered killing of the Holocaust and the degree of suffering inflicted on civilian populations, meant that during and following the Second World War, relief administrators, led by Allied governments, had to respond to extraordinary challenges. On top of the unparalleled wartime destruction, the liberation period was characterized by what the historian Keith Lowe has described as a “descent into anarchy,” defined by continued violence, vigilante killings, and mass population dislocation. In France’s case, relief administrators needed to address the devastation brought about by the German occupation, Vichy’s collaboration, the Allied invasion, and the Liberation’s ensuing disorder.

Partially due to the extent of civilian devastation following the Second World War, relief organizations working in Western Europe enjoyed the backing, both financial and procedural, of the Roosevelt and Truman administrations. During the First World War, for the most part, private voluntary relief organizations were private undertakings without well-defined connections to the U.S. government. This independence allowed for adaptable management and flexible intervention, but left these organizations vulnerable to the political whims of the State Department, which became fixated on Central and Eastern Europe at the expense of Western Europe. In a reversal of fortune, by 1945, private voluntary relief organizations enjoyed the increased attention paid by

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115 Keith Lowe, xvii.
governmental authorities in the form of federal regulation and transnational coordination. Roosevelt had paved the way for the establishment of a new vanguard of highly regulated private voluntary aid organizations. One of the agencies topping this list was AAF.
Chapter Two: A Case Study of American Aid to France

On the eve of France’s Liberation in 1944, Roosevelt ordered the creation of a single private voluntary aid agency to handle all forthcoming U.S. relief efforts in France. As the sole U.S. agency permitted by the President’s War Relief Control Board to assist French civilians, AAF provided emergency relief supplies and rehabilitative services to French men, women, and children from 1944 to 1956. AAF’s board of directors founded the organization with the hope that it would be able to “offer proof of enduring and understanding friendship for France,” and eventually, “assist in the reestablishment of normal French life and French influence in the world.”¹

The following chapter examines the organizational history of AAF, beginning in 1944 and concluding in 1948. AAF’s formative years, 1944 to 1946, include the organization’s founding and its subsequent emergency relief efforts following France’s Liberation. The ensuing years, 1946 to 1948, marked AAF’s more mature efforts to provide rehabilitative services to French civilians during the early days of France’s Fourth Republic, and the nascent Cold War. AAF continued to function until 1956, but by 1949, the organization was a shell of its former self, having substantially rolled back relief, or transferred responsibilities to the French.²

Examining the organizational history of a private voluntary agency like AAF deepens our understanding of the history of philanthropy. Scholars including Jessica Reinisch and Gerard Daniel Cohen have emphasized that after 1945, postwar aid was a

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² The years between 1949 and 1956 will be touched on in this dissertation’s conclusion.
transnational operation primarily directed by UNRRA. As the largest and most prominent relief agency, UNRRA has been a popular subject for historians studying Europe’s liberation and recovery. These works observe UNRRA’s internationalism, as well as the challenges that went along with assisting millions of devastated civilians across Europe. UNRRA may have dominated the postwar relief landscape, especially in Central European countries, however, there were also hundreds of private voluntary organizations that delivered aid from individual citizens in the United States to a single European country. The histories of these private voluntary agencies have been largely overlooked in scholarship.

By focusing on AAF, this chapter attempts to illuminate the work of private voluntary relief organizations, and demonstrate the complex nature of providing foreign relief to a specific European country after the Second World War. Many U.S. private voluntary relief agencies shared similar characteristics. The majority of these aid organizations were secular, ethnically-oriented, run by professional relief administrators, and forced to meet the operational regulations imposed by the President’s War Relief Control Board. Immediately following the war, private voluntary relief agencies operating across Europe delivered comparable types of material assistance. The basic goods listed on AAF’s shipment records were consistent with those of other relief agencies: foodstuffs and vitamins, pharmaceuticals, medical supplies, infant formula, clothing, textiles, and shoes.

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At the same time, this chapter reveals that individual private voluntary relief agencies possessed distinct characteristics that influenced the ways that they collected private donations, conceptualized relief programs, and distributed aid. Notably, the executive bodies of U.S. relief agencies had differing understandings of what, exactly, relief entailed. The rudimentary concept of providing emergency material supplies to civilians was uniform among U.S. private voluntary relief organizations. However, as time went on, each agency had to decide on the spectrum of services offered, keeping in mind their limited budgets, and the operational challenges that went along with providing foreign relief after years of warfare, disorder, and uncertainty. Specifically, relief agencies debated whether or not they would include rehabilitative assistance, such as medical and dental consultations or access to training and educational programs, as well as reconstruction, as part of their programs. Beyond the conceptual and technical dimensions that influenced a relief agency’s work, the executive boards of these aid organizations quickly learned that the wartime experience and postwar needs of a specific devastated country was equally important to their organization’s ability to deliver assistance. This chapter uses AAF’s efforts to assist France as a case study to demonstrate the particular nature of U.S. relief work in France, and establish more broadly that each private voluntary relief organization that operated after the Second World War has a unique history.

The history of AAF is made significant, in part, because France did not receive UNRRA aid, and therefore, relied on private voluntary relief agencies for assistance. France was not the only country where UNRRA was absent. Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Norway did not invite UNRRA to host a comprehensive relief mission,
either. Private relief agencies operating in these countries, including the Belgian War Relief Society, American Relief for Holland, and American Relief for Norway, received far less funding and had distinctly shorter lifespans than AAF. Other U.S. agencies that were similar to AAF, such as American Relief for Poland, American Relief for Italy, and the Greek War Relief Association, operated in countries that also hosted UNRRA, fundamentally influencing their ability to provide civilian relief.  

Private voluntary relief agencies were required to obtain UNRRA’s consent and abide by its regulations when implementing a relief program in a country where UNRRA was also operational. The cross-agency coordination needed to meet these rules may have increased bureaucratic red tape, but private voluntary relief organizations benefitted from collaborating with UNRRA, especially when it came to securing transatlantic shipping contracts, attracting relief workers, and implementing programs that required cooperation with local authorities.  

Since no private voluntary relief agency had funding support comparable to UNRRA’s budget, organizations operating in countries without UNRRA, such as AAF, found it challenging, at times, to deliver a robust relief program.  

While it could be difficult to work in a country where UNRRA was absent, AAF benefited from its status as the sole American private voluntary relief organization operating in France when it came to deciding what type of relief services the organization would offer French civilians. Unlike AAF, UNRRA’s mandate did not allow for assistance beyond the realm of delivering emergency material relief and meeting basic needs for shelter, safety, and healthcare. Partially due to these operational limits, UNRRA

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5 According to Hitchcock, Poland received $477 million in UNRRA assistance; Italy received $418 million; and Greece received $347 million. Hitchcock, _The Bitter Road to Freedom: A New History of the Liberation of Europe_, 220.

restricted its assistance to refugees or displaced persons, and subsequently, became involved in the repatriation process. Many French citizens who had become displaced as POWs or forced labourers were voluntarily and relatively swiftly repatriated at the end of the war. By contrast, thousands remained in displaced person camps in Germany well into the 1950s, especially those from countries that fell under the Iron Curtain. Aid organizations operating in areas of massive population dislocation such as American Relief for Poland, the United Yugoslav Relief Fund, and American Relief for Czechoslovakia had to work alongside UNRRA, but they also had to work outside of their recipient country’s national boundaries to provide assistance to displaced citizens. Since France did not face the same prolonged problems related to population dislocation evident in Central or Eastern Europe, AAF remained strictly within France’s national boundaries after the war, allowing the organization to concentrate relief efforts and enjoy the publicity that went along with being the most prominent U.S. relief agency operating in France.

The history of AAF adds another dimension to our understanding of foreign relief and postwar recovery after the Second World War. U.S. private voluntary relief organizations were diverse and constantly reacting to unpredictable circumstances, both within the United States and in the recipient countries they served. As such, no two postwar relief organizations followed the same path. In France’s case, the differences that set AAF apart from other organizations resulted in a longstanding, increasingly politicized private relief program. The smaller, private relief initiatives of organizations like AAF are integral to our understanding of Europe’s recovery and the United States’ hegemonic rise after the Second World War.

7 UNRRA turned over operations to the International Refugee Organization (IRO) in 1946.
Situating American Aid to France among U.S. Private Voluntary Relief Agencies

AAF represented one of over five hundred U.S. private voluntary relief agencies created by Americans during the Second World War. By 1945, the most prominent U.S. private voluntary agencies designed to serve one specific European country included: AAF; American Relief for Czechoslovakia; American Relief for Holland; American Relief for Italy; American Relief for Norway; American Relief for Poland; the Belgian War Relief Society; the British War Relief Society; the Greek War Relief Association; and the United Yugoslav Relief Fund. Despite the sheer number of private voluntary agencies created from 1939 to 1945, few scholars have explored the histories of these relief organizations in their own right. When scholars discuss private voluntary relief agencies in studies of postwar philanthropy, they commonly approach the examination of organizations like AAF by conducting wide-ranging surveys, employing the temporal period surrounding the Second World War as one chapter or section amid a broader discussion of U.S. foreign assistance, humanitarianism, or philanthropy. As such, historians often discuss Second World War era private voluntary relief organizations as a collective unit, inadvertently fostering the impression that relief agencies were quite similar.

Private voluntary relief agencies did, in fact, share certain characteristics. For example, most relief organization founded during the Second World War, like AAF, were encouraged by the Roosevelt administration to include the word “American” in their

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8 McCleary, 40.
names. In terms of their identification, the majority of private voluntary aid agencies that operated during and following the war were void of religion, appealing for foreign relief on behalf of Americans’ generosity and principles of humanitarianism. According to Rachel McCleary, about 70% of all U.S. private voluntary relief agencies operating in 1945 were secular. Of these secular agencies, 40% were oriented towards assisting a specific devastated country, such as AAF.

One reason private voluntary relief organizations shared similar characteristics was due to the Roosevelt administration’s oversight. All private voluntary relief agencies were forced to register with the President’s War Relief Control Board, a body designed to regulate and coordinate U.S. agencies working to provide foreign war relief.12 Every private voluntary relief organization in the United States had to obtain a license of operation from the President’s War Relief Control Board and agree to prescribe to the rules of the Board, which sought to increase cooperation and coordination amongst aid agencies, eliminate duplicate relief efforts, oversee the distribution of donated funds, approve budgets and programs, and decrease overhead costs.13

Despite these organizational similarities, private voluntary relief agencies differed in terms of their funding. Beginning in 1942, all private voluntary relief agencies received funding from the National War Fund, an organization that centralized local fundraising

10 Smith, 40.
11 McCleary, 53, 61.
12 The Roosevelt administration’s regulation of relief agencies started with the Neutrality Act of 1939, which mandated that all private voluntary relief organizations register and submit activity reports to the State Department. Roosevelt then created the Committee on War Relief Agencies in March 1941, but the Committee was ineffective. The private voluntary relief sphere deteriorated after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor spurred the creation of an array of relief agencies, many duplicating the efforts of already-existing agencies. In response to the Committee’s ineffective management and the U.S. entry into the war, Roosevelt established the President’s War Relief Control Board in July 1942 and granted the new agency considerably more authority than its predecessor.
13 The only agencies exempt from registering with the President’s War Relief Control Board were the ARC and religious relief agencies. These organizations held their own fundraising drives and could accept private donations. Bremner, 159-160.
efforts across the United States by coordinating public donation campaigns for aid agencies, until it was terminated in 1946.\textsuperscript{14} The National War Fund collected public donations during annual campaigns that occurred in the autumn months, and doled out the money to registered relief organizations based on budgets and plans submitted by each agency.\textsuperscript{15} In theory, the operating funds of AAF should have been most akin to other aid agencies working in countries where UNRRA was absent, such as American Relief for Holland, the Belgian War Relief Society, or American Relief for Norway. Yet, AAF’s budget far exceeded these agencies’ funds. AAF’s budget was second only to the Greek War Relief Association, which received a few hundred thousand more dollars each year, in addition to significant UNRRA assistance.\textsuperscript{16} Although the margins were closer, AAF generally received more funding than organizations operating in UNRRA-sponsored countries, such as American Relief for Italy and American Relief for Poland (see Table A). It appears that the presence of UNRRA in a specific country had little influence on the National War Fund’s allocations, despite the fact that UNRRA’s substantial budget would have offset some of the costs of private voluntary aid organizations’ relief efforts, particularly assistance for displaced persons and refugees.

Instead, it appears that France’s sizable National War Fund allocation was related to its geographic size and population. Following the Second World War, France was one of the largest European countries, both in terms of geography and demographics, receiving assistance from a private voluntary relief organization. France’s postwar

\textsuperscript{14} The National War Fund held three annual fundraising drives in 1943, 1944, and 1945. The final year, 1945, was designed to fund relief organizations for the 1946 fiscal year.

\textsuperscript{15} The fiscal year began in October. Agencies that were members of the National War Fund could not conduct independent fundraising efforts. This rule meant that sometimes relief agencies had to turn down direct donations. Gifts-in-kind, however, could be accepted with no financial penalty.

\textsuperscript{16} U.S. assistance to Greece was partially driven by the ensuing Greek Civil War, which played into U.S. fears of communist uprisings in Europe. For more the role of geopolitics in U.S. relief, see chapter three.
population, which stood at approximately forty million in 1946, was far greater than many European countries, including Belgium, Greece, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, the Netherlands, and Norway. Only Italy, of recipient nations, had a comparable population.\(^{17}\)

**Table A: National War Fund Budgets, 1944-1946\(^{18}\)**

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<tr>
<td>American Relief for Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>$711,463</td>
<td>$1,095,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Aid to France</td>
<td>$3,282,096</td>
<td>$3,550,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Relief for Holland</td>
<td>$2,006,277</td>
<td>$2,700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Relief for Italy</td>
<td>$2,700,000</td>
<td>$3,325,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Relief for Norway</td>
<td>$1,075,000</td>
<td>$1,125,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgian War Relief Society</td>
<td>$1,160,000</td>
<td>$1,426,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek War Relief Association</td>
<td>$3,338,071</td>
<td>$3,700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Relief for Poland</td>
<td>$2,427,006</td>
<td>$2,370,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Yugoslav Relief Fund</td>
<td>$697,106</td>
<td>$900,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

American Aid to France may have received a greater share of the National War Fund’s allocations compared to other countries not receiving UNRRA’s assistance, but France’s substantially large population limited the organization’s ability to deliver aid across the country. When the National War Fund displayed its financial allocations based on U.S. cents per capita, France ranked seventh amongst European countries, with 9.34 cents per capita. Greece topped the list with 52.04 cents per capita, followed by Luxembourg, Norway, the Netherlands, Lithuania, and Belgium, which easily outranked

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\(^{17}\) France’s postwar population was recorded to be 40,503,000 in 1946; Belgium’s was 8,339,000 in 1945; Greece’s was 7,632,801 in 1951; Poland’s was 23,930,000 in 1946; Czechoslovakia’s was 12,162,000 in 1946; Yugoslavia’s was 15,772,000 in 1948; the Netherlands’ was 9,625,000 in 1947; and Norway’s was just over 3,000,000 in 1945. Franz Rothenbacher, *The Societies of Europe: The European Population, 1850-1945* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 118, 232, 490; B. R. Mitchell, *European Historical Statistics, 1750-1970* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1975), 19-27.

\(^{18}\) These numbers make up part of a comprehensive table on the National War Fund’s budget. “National War Fund Comparative Schedule of Budgets, 1944-1946,” Elliott Hugh Lee: VHPC, LC.
France at 17 cents per capita. These figures demonstrate that AAF actually obtained less funding than other war-torn nations relative to its population, especially when compared to smaller countries that also did not receive UNRRA aid. Relief agencies providing aid to countries like Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the Baltic states were able to spread their resources across devastated regions throughout the entire country, but this would have been impossible for AAF unless they received more funding, or worked alongside UNRRA. As such, AAF decided to limit the geographic range of its assistance primarily to the bombed areas of Northern France in order to use their funding most effectively.

Figures related to overseas relief shipments also demonstrate how AAF compared to other relief agencies. Between 1945 and 1946, AAF shipped 10,150,719 pounds of relief materials to France, assisting approximately three million French men, women, and children. In comparison, the Belgian War Relief Society’s records listed 3,250,000 pounds of supplies shipped, aiding over half a million Belgians during the organization’s entire existence, from 1944 to 1946. American Relief for Holland’s busiest year was 1945, and shipments amounted to 7,981,656 pounds. In terms of the monetary value of goods shipped, AAF also outpaced other relief organizations in countries where UNRRA was absent. AAF estimated that the value of its shipments during an eighteen-month period from 1944 to 1946 was roughly $3 million worth. In comparison, American Relief

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19 “National War Fund, Inc. 1945-46 Approved Consolidated Budgets,” Elliott Hugh Lee: Veterans History Project Collection (VHPC), American Folklife Center, LC.
21 “Belgian Honor Given to Hoffman,” NYT, 19 April 1946, pg. 3.
for Norway shipped approximately $1.3 million worth of goods from 1945 to 1946.\textsuperscript{23} AAF’s figures regarding the pounds of goods shipped, the number of civilians receiving aid, and the monetary value of relief material, suggest that the agency was operating at a superior capacity to similar relief organizations in other non-UNRRA countries like Netherlands, Belgium, and Norway.

Conversely, AAF’s activity paled in comparison to agencies operating in countries where UNRRA was also providing relief, such as American Relief for Poland and American Relief for Italy. For instance, American Relief for Poland shipped approximately $7.5 million worth of supplies to Polish civilians in 1946, alone.\textsuperscript{24} Likewise, from 1944 until the spring of 1946, American Relief for Italy reported having sent roughly $40 million worth of material goods to over four million Italians.\textsuperscript{25} The superior performance of these organizations compared to AAF, specifically, their ability to ship more tons of material goods and assist a greater number of civilians, suggests that operating in a country that was also receiving UNRRA assistance enhanced a relief organization’s ability. While AAF’s large budget may have allowed it to outpace relief to smaller countries that did not receive UNRRA support, France’s larger population necessitated a relief policy that limited the geographical range of assistance, unlike relief to Belgium, or the Netherlands. At the same time, AAF fell behind agencies with smaller budgets and comparable populations in countries that received UNRRA assistance, such as Italy.

\textsuperscript{23} A.N. Rygg, American Relief for Norway: A Survey of American Relief Work for Norway During and After the Second World War (Chicago: Arnesen Press, Inc., 1947), 139-140.
\textsuperscript{24} “American Relief in Poland,” \textit{NYT}, 22 February 1947, pg. C12.
\textsuperscript{25} American Relief for Italy’s budget from the National War Fund was around the same as AAF. Therefore, the majority of American Relief for Italy’s material goods must have been gifts-in-kind which could be accepted without financial penalty, not purchased from their National War Fund budget. “Italian Relief Group Assisted 4,250,000,” \textit{NYT}, 11 April 1946, pg. 10.
The differences and similarities among private voluntary relief agencies demonstrates that, aside from providing civilians with similar goods, AAF did not share much in common with other relief agencies that operated in countries where UNRRA was absent. AAF actually had more in common with organizations operating in larger, UNRRA-sponsored countries, especially American Relief for Italy or American Relief for Poland. However, AAF was disadvantaged when compared to an agency like American Relief for Italy simply because UNRRA did not provide relief to France. In countries accepting UNRRA aid, private voluntary relief organizations were able to save more funds and resources because UNRRA assumed a large share of the responsibilities for emergency relief and displaced persons. Due to UNRRA’s presence, relief became a transnational initiative in these countries, drawing ample funding and volunteers. In France, however, private voluntary relief organizations like AAF remained independent from the larger transnational relief movement. AAF contributed to France’s recovery immediately following the war, and laid the groundwork until a substantial U.S. assistance plan could be developed.

*French Relief Agencies and the Founding of American Aid to France*

U.S. private voluntary relief organizations had been working to provide relief for French civilians throughout the Second World War. AAF, formed in 1944, owed much of its legacy to two principal agencies that were established shortly after the Fall of France: the Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies (CCFRS) and the Fighting French Relief Committee (FFRC). In the years leading up to 1944, the CCFRS and the FFRC had absorbed or partnered with smaller U.S.-based French relief agencies to harmonize their
efforts (see Table B). During the war years, these agencies offered a range of relief programs for France’s military personnel and civilians. They distributed, largely via the Red Cross network, comfort and food packages and sewed garments for hospitalized French POWs, and later on, the Free French Forces.\footnote{Volunteers at warehouses made goods and assembled packages, producing approximately 12,000 per month. The ARC then rented cargo space on neutral vessels and shipped the packages to representatives of the ICRC at ports in Portugal, France, or Italy, where they were then transported to headquarters in Geneva. Based on needs, the ICRC would work with its national and local branches to distribute the goods to POW camps or military bases. \textit{Yale University Library (YUL), Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Elizabeth Hudson Collection of E. G. Somerville & Personal Papers, Box 11.}}\footnote{“American Red Cross Memorandum, 5 January 1944,” Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 3, \textit{MLM}.} They opened “canteens” that served food, offered barber services, and provided entertainment for military personnel and French civilians, mainly refugees and the families of French service personnel stranded in America and England. The FFRC sponsored organizations that worked in North Africa, donating clothing, medicine, foodstuffs, childcare products, and automobile equipment.\footnote{“American Red Cross Memorandum, 5 January 1944,” Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 3, \textit{MLM}.}

From 1941 to 1944, these private voluntary relief agencies focused their efforts on military personnel and civilians in North Africa, because they were unable to declare with certainty that relief supplies or funds would reach French citizens under the German occupation, especially after Germany occupied the entirety of France in November 1942. Shortly after the Fall of France, Anne Morgan’s relief organization, AFF, a leading member of the CCFRS, reported that they had received a “deluge” of letters and telegrams from Americans who had donated to the relief agency, but were now requesting that their donations be redirected to alternative private voluntary relief organizations. Donors wanted to receive an “absolute guarantee that no German would touch any money or supplies sent by this organization,” which AFF’s board of directors
admitted was virtually impossible. Morgan spoke with the *New York Times* in August 1940, imploring readers to realize that “the French are still French and have not changed their skins since the German occupation,” but many donors in the United States remained suspicious. In the eyes of relief organizations, French civilians were innocent victims of Nazi aggression, however, these agencies could not guarantee that the occupation authorities would pass along material aid to the intended French recipients. Armed forces and civilians in North Africa, however, could be reached with greater success due to existing agreements between governmental bodies and national branches of the ICRC. More importantly, from the spring of 1943, the Allies controlled North Africa, further allowing for increased shipments.

The complicated relationship between the United States and France prior to Liberation meant that relief agencies took a risk deciding where to align their political support. Taking cues from the Roosevelt administration did not help to clarify the political situation for relief agencies. The United States maintained diplomatic relations with France until Vichy cut off contact in November 1942, following the Allied invasion of North Africa. The historian G.E. Maguire has depicted American recognition of Vichy as pragmatic, not necessarily an affirmation of U.S. support or a reaction to negative views of de Gaulle. Nevertheless, the American ambassador to Vichy, Admiral William Leahy, often expressed hostility towards de Gaulle and the Free French. These sentiments resonated with Roosevelt, partially because Leahy was a trusted confidant, but also owing

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28 “Special Meeting of Board of Directors, American Friends of France, Inc., 10 July 1940,” Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 31, *MLM.*

29 “French Need Cited by Anne Morgan,” *NYT,* 20 August 1940, pg. 5.

to Roosevelt’s tense interactions with the General. Put simply, Roosevelt despised de Gaulle and refused to trust him in any matter of importance.

Table B: Agencies Merged to Create American Aid to France, 1944

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relief Agency</th>
<th>Member Agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Coordinating Council of French</td>
<td>-American Association for Assistance to French Artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief Societies</td>
<td>-American Auxiliary Committee of l’Union des Femmes de France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-American French War Relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-American Friends of France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Les Amitiés Féminines de la France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Le Colis de Trianon-Versailles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Comité des Dames Patronnesses of the Federation of French Veterans of the Great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Committee of French American Wives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Committee of Mercy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Franco-American Committee for War Victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Funds for France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Les Filles de France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Urgent Relief for France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-A.E.F. Veterans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Le Secours Francais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-United Committee for French Relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Young Friends of French Prisoners and Babies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-French War Relief of Los Angeles and San Francisco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fighting French Relief Committee</td>
<td>-American-French War Relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Free French Relief Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Franco-British Relief</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These conflicting views towards Vichy and the Free French put relief agencies in an awkward position. When asked if they were “a Free French or Vichy organization,” the CCFRS skirted the question by answering that it was an “American organization.”

While this categorization may have technically been true, both the CCFRS and the FFRC

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31 Based on a combination of various archival sources, the agencies listed in this table are the discernible supporting or allied relief organizations mentioned in the official communications of the CCFRS and the FFRC. In reality, this list might omit some of the tiny, local agencies that sprung up in cities or towns across the United States, and any mergers that might have occurred before these organizations became a part of the larger bodies coordinating French relief.

maintained an affiliation with de Gaulle’s Free French. The FFRC’s relationship with the Free French was stated clearly in its operational mandate: “striving to help those Frenchmen engaged in active resistance under General de Gaulle.”33 The CCFRS’ connection to the Free French was less overt. They intentionally described their relief efforts as purely humanitarian, often emphasizing their work for vulnerable groups, such as POWs and French children. At the same time, the CCFRS proudly repeated an endorsement received from de Gaulle in 1942. The General stressed his “personal interest” in the relief agency’s work and declared “I shall in no sense fail to encourage the unselfish sympathy shown by the American nation for the French people.”34

The CCFRS and the FFRC’s endorsement of de Gaulle did not necessarily mean that individual members eschewed Marshal Pétain or other Vichy authorities. In the eyes of some American relief administrators, the Marshal was strong-armed into conceding to the Germans. These sentiments were especially true for the “old guard” of relief administrators active in France during the Great War, most notably Anne Morgan. In fact, Morgan’s ties to Vichy and Pétain concerned some members of the philanthropic community. In 1946, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund reported that Morgan was “definitely associated with the Vichy element in France.”35 The American Committee to Free Pétain even wrote to Morgan to ask for an interview based on “the assumption” that Morgan was concerned about Marshal Pétain’s arrest and “place in history.”36

33 Ibid.
34 Ibid. For more on de Gaulle and U.S. relief to France, see chapter four.
35 Morgan’s relationship with Pétain dated back to the First World War, when Pétain donated Château de Blérancourt to Morgan for the use of her relief agency. Pétain awarded Morgan the Legion of Honour in 1924 in appreciation of her war relief work. “Memorandum, From Doris Goss to Mr. Arthur W. Packard, 1 May 1946,” Rockefeller Archives Center (RAC), Record Group 2 – Officer of the Messrs. Rockefeller, Series: Q – World Affairs, Box 43.
36 Letter, American Committee to Free Pétain to Anne Morgan, 7 October 1945, Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 15, MLM.
personal papers do not include a reply, it is likely that she harboured sympathy towards Pétain during his tribulations following the collapse of Vichy. While relief agencies were careful not to villainize Pétain, their loyalty ultimately lay with de Gaulle’s movement and the resistance. The FFRC confirmed the complex sentiments of most relief administrators with their assertion that “the capitulation of the French improvised leaders was an act of despair,” and “the majority of people in France, realizing that their present government is a mere puppet in Nazi hands, pray and hope for a British victory.”

By 1944 both the CCFRS and the FFRC had built up impressive relief programs. However, on 21 April 1944, six weeks before the Normandy invasions, the President’s War Relief Control Board ordered the creation of AAF – essentially pitched to members of the relief sector as a merger of the CCFRS and the FFRC – to establish a “united front” among French-oriented U.S. relief agencies. In reality, the President’s War Relief Control Board was forcibly terminating the CCFRS and the FFRC, and replacing these agencies with AAF. According to the Acting Director of the President’s War Relief Control Board, Charles P. Taft, AAF would ensure that “the good will of our people on behalf of France may be adequately expressed at the appropriate time.”

The President’s War Relief Control Board understood that a new relief agency was needed because granting power to either the CCFRS or the FFRC could potentially alienate a vital body of French relief administrators and volunteers, thus impairing the effectiveness of future relief. The Board hoped that the creation of a new agency would give all relief administrators an equal chance to participate in assisting France, moving forward. Additionally, granting sole

37 “France Forever Pamphlet,” Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 7A, MLM.
38 Taft was the son of President William H. Taft. During the Second World War, Taft served as the State Department’s Director of Wartime Economic Affairs. He later served as an advisor at the San Francisco Conference that established the UN. “Correspondence with Charles P. Taft and Mr. Sheets, April 1944,” Elliott Hugh Lee: VHPC, LC.
power to one of the two largest relief agencies would be a tacit endorsement of that
group’s political leanings. Although both agencies supported the French resistance and de
Gaulle on the eve of Liberation, it was unclear to the Roosevelt administration exactly
what role de Gaulle or other resistance figures would play in France’s postwar order. In
keeping with this posture, the President’s War Relief Control Board insisted that French
relief should be cleansed of potentially troublesome political baggage.

The Creation and Composition of American Aid to France

The President’s War Relief Control Board expected that the suspension of the
CCFRS and FFRC would discourage former members’ from maintaining any political
favouritism towards de Gaulle, and effectively give AAF a tabula rasa moving forward.
The President’s War Relief Control Board assigned Harold F. Sheets and Elliott H. Lee to
the task of launching AAF, but the transition would prove to be anything but smooth.
Sheets and Lee had previous experience working for the CCFRS and the FFRC, as well
as the Red Cross network; however, they were also considered qualified due to their
corporate connections. Sheets was a director of Socony-Vacuum and had worked for
Vacuum Oil in Paris, where he lived intermittently between 1907 and 1924. Lee’s
connection to France dated back to the First World War, where he served as a First
Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Ambulance Corps and was awarded three Croix-de-
Guerre. After Lee returned to the United States, he went on to become a Vice President

39 Robertson, 6-7.
40 The Rockefeller Foundation, which had ties to Socony-Vacuum, was widely recognized for launching a
successful program to curb tuberculosis and improve public healthcare in France during and following the
First World War. John Farley, To Cast Out Disease: A History of the International Health Division of the
Mobil Oil Dies,” NYT, 30 May 1969, pg. 27.
41 At 6 feet 4 inches, Lee’s height excluded him from serving as an officer in the U.S. Army, so he joined
of the Guaranty Trust Company of New York, and headed the company’s offices in France.\(^{42}\)

Sheets and Lee quickly found that merging the CCFRS and the FFRC led to a clash of personalities.\(^{43}\) The FFRC accepted the terms of the union immediately, while members of the CCFRS resented the disbanding of their organizations, and disagreed with elements of AAF’s new charter, putting the merger in jeopardy. Anne Morgan, in particular, feared that she would be sidelined on “a little pink cloud” as the new bureaucrats took over.\(^{44}\) In a show of force, the President’s War Relief Control Board responded to the stalled negotiations by issuing an ultimatum. The merger was to be accepted without further controversy or else the CCFRS would be barred from participation in the new group. “This brought action,” claimed Lee, and AAF was incorporated on 5 July 1944.\(^{45}\)

The first executive body of AAF contained members from most of the major pre-existing relief organizations. The breakdown was as follows: six nominees from the CCFRS, six nominees from the FFRC, five nominees from “international philanthropies” (ex: American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, War Relief Services, National Catholic Welfare Conference, American Friends Service Committee, International Committee of the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA)), and an assortment of


\(^{43}\) “Notes from E. H. Lee,” Elliott Hugh Lee: VHPC, LC.

\(^{44}\) Morgan was acutely aware of sexism in the philanthropic industry, so her use of the words “little pink” when describing her loss of power should be analyzed through the lens of gender discourse. “Objections to Mr. Seatree’s letter of July 26\(^{th}\) and the accompanying slate, 2 August 1944,” Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 5, MLM.

\(^{45}\) Ibid.
nominees from independent agencies (ex: the Société Israélite Française de Secours Mutuel de New York, Federation of French Veterans, Committee of French Speaking Societies, Committee of French-American Wives, Franco-American Committee for War Victims). The internal structure of the new organization consisted of an executive committee and board of directors, as well as various work divisions and committees (see exhibit A).

Supporting the executive body was an array of homegrown branches in local communities and cities across the United States. At the height of operations in 1946, 380 local units existed in forty-eight states, and approximately 15,000 volunteers, most of whom were women, were affiliated with the organization as members or volunteers.

The board of directors considered the women who volunteered for AAF to be the “backbone” of the organization, handling much of the production or accumulation of goods, as well as local fundraising drives. According to AAF executives, attracting competent volunteers was of the utmost importance because the funds the organization received from the President’s War Relief Control Board represented a “drop in the bucket” compared to the needs of the French.

The prevalence of female volunteers was a common feature of private voluntary relief agencies. American Relief for Holland, for example, reported a similar reliance upon “highly-productive” female volunteers. The American women who ran private

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46 “By-Laws of American Relief for France Incorporated, 1944,” AAF Records, Box 1, NYPL.
47 AAF’s local units existed across the country in both large America cities and small rural locales (Alaska and Hawaii were not official states as of 1946). Oftentimes, the small communities that established AAF branches would report to a larger unit located in the capital or major city of the same state. “The Story of American Relief for France, 1945-1946,” Elliott Hugh Lee: VHPC, LC.
48 “American Relief for France, Incorporated: Introduction, 12 July 1944,” Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 5, MLM.
voluntary relief organizations’ everyday operations were an indispensable source of unpaid labour. The historian Christopher Capozzola has noted that home front volunteerism was increasingly the “privilege” of wealthy women during the First World War because few working-class families were able to survive without a dual income.\(^\text{50}\)

One the eve of the Second World War, the historian Claudia Goldin has pointed out that changes to the U.S. economy and financial stress brought about by the Great Depression meant that more women, especially older, married, white women, were employed.\(^\text{51}\) The number of men conscripted after 1941, compounded by the massive swelling of war industries meant that more women were working in paid labour out of necessity during the Second World War when compared to the First World War. As such, the women who volunteered for AAF tended to two types: young, single women from wealthy families; or, mature, married or widowed women past child-rearing age. While visiting New York in August 1945, de Gaulle specifically recognized the women who volunteered for AAF. In a handwritten letter published by the *New York Times*, de Gaulle wrote “what has been done – and what continues to be done – by the admirable women constituting today the ‘American Relief for France’ is beyond appraisal forever.” He continued, “I want it to be known, in France and elsewhere, not because our benefactors wish it so (they ask nothing, but to do still more) but because from deep within our hearts must well the gratitude that we owe them.”\(^\text{52}\)


\(^{52}\) “General de Gaulle Expresses His Thanks,” *NYT*, 28 August 1945, pg. 11.
Exhibit A: American Aid to France’s Corporate Structure

American Aid to France, est. 1944

Executive Committee
- President
- Chairman
- Executive Vice-President
- Vice-Presidents x4
- Treasurer
- Secretary

Board of Directors
- Members

Committees
- Membership
- Nominating
- Plan and Scope
- Fundraising
- Budget
- Overseas Operations
- Overseas Personnel Advisory Cmte.
- Paris Advisory Cmte.
- Cmte. to Consider Relations with Other Agencies
- Cmte. to Report to the President’s War Relief Control Board

Operational Divisions
- Overseas Relief Activities and Services
- Supplies for Relief Projects
- Domestic Relief Activities and Services
- Public Relations and Publicity
- Recruitment or Volunteers
- National Campaign Office
- Workrooms
- Local Units
The Division of Overseas Relief Activities and Services was opened in Paris early in 1945 to support the various U.S.-based divisions and branches of AAF. George W. Bakeman, on leave as the Assistant to the President at the Medical College of Virginia, served as the first director in Paris. Described as a man of “unusual intelligence and ability,” Bakeman was recommended for the position by Paul B. Anderson, an AAF director. His recommendation was bolstered by the fact that in the 1920s, Bakeman worked for the Rockefeller Foundation in Paris where he allocated scholarships and oversaw the research of grant recipients and representatives from the Foundation’s various commissions and boards. Owing to these past connections, Bakeman was able to set up headquarters in Paris at the Rockefeller offices at 20 Rue de la Baume in the 8th arrondissement.

AAF’s domestic headquarters was located in Midtown Manhattan on Madison Avenue, and as such, the upper echelons of New York’s high society were well represented within the organization’s various divisions. A handful had been born in France and immigrated to the United States, where they became pillars of the New York Francophone community. For example, André Meyer, a longstanding vice-president, came to New York from Paris as an evacuee after the German invasion of France. Having been a partner at the private banking firm, Lazard Frères et Cie. in Paris since 1926, Lazard’s private investment firm in New York City welcomed Meyer, who was

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53 The Medical College of Virginia was founded in 1854, and joined forces with the Richmond Professional Institute in 1968 to form the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) School of Medicine.
54 Anderson met Bakeman in Russia following the First World War. Anderson was working for the Red Cross at the time, while Bakeman was recruited by Arthur Bullard to be a member of the Committee on Public Information (Compub). George F. Kennan, The Decision to Intervene (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1958): 193.
eventually made senior partner in 1943. Likewise, Parisian-born J. Andre Fouilhoux was a well-known architect when he was named president of AAF in 1945. His designs for the New York World Fair and the Rockefeller Center earned him widespread praise.

Even though the majority of AAF’s members were not born in France, they nonetheless had strong connections to the American Francophone community. Forsyth Wickes, one of AAF’s vice-president, spent much of his adolescence in Paris, and, like other members of AAF, served in the U.S. military in France during the Great War. Wickes became a senior partner at the law firm Wickes, Riddell, Bloomer, Jacobi, and McGuire in New York City, and he served as a board member of the French Institute, and the French Lycée. Wickes accumulated an exceptional collection of French art and porcelains, and often delivered lectures on the topic at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and various Carnegie Corporation locations in Europe and America.

AAF’s communications specialist, Florence Gilliam, considered herself an honourary Parisian. Gilliam moved to Paris in 1921 as a journalist with her then-husband, editor Arthur Moss. Gilliam and Moss were part of the literary and artistic community that thrived in Paris during the 1920s. Despite divorcing in 1931, Gilliam remained in the city with a group of expatriate women until 1941, when she returned to New York City.

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57 Fouilhoux’s tenure as President was short-lived, for when visiting the site of a new construction project in Brooklyn, he reportedly fell to his death on 20 June 1945. Fouilhoux was scheduled to be in Manhattan attending a board of directors’ meeting for AAF when he died. The following month, the board of directors paid their respects to Fouilhoux by remembering, among other personal traits, his “fine sense of duty which led him to accept the heavy task of heading this organization at a difficult moment.” “Minutes of the Thirteenth Meeting of the Board of Directors, 18 July 1945,” AAF Records, Box 1, NYPL.

58 “Forsyth Wickes, Art Collector, 88,” NYT, 21 December 1964, Pg. 29.

In 1945, while heading AAF’s public relations department, Gilliam published a book entitled, *France: A Tribute by an American Woman*. Gilliam’s book was based on the premise that there was “plenary concern” in the United States towards France and all things French. As Gilliam put it, “it is as if France were the timeless repository of human emotion. And this must be because, as far as we of the West are concerned, what happens in France is the very picture of *la condition humaine*.”

While Gilliam may have overstated Americans’ everyday preoccupation with France, scholars have noted that during the early-to-mid twentieth century, many Americans were exposed to French culture through war, travel, education, and globalization, which resulted in a friendly familiarity between the two countries. After the First World War, many Americans could look to family members and friends for information or stories about France. The historian Mary Louise Roberts has observed that millions of American men and women were influenced by their fathers’ wartime stories. To a generation of Americans, “France was a land of wine, women, and song.” Most of these memories centred on the city of Paris, leading the journalist, Charles Glass, to comment that many Americans felt “a particularly American love” for the French capital. Aside from the generation of U.S. soldiers who fondly remembered their time in France, during the *fin de siècle* and interwar period, privileged Americans escaped to

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63 Glass, 2.
Paris to enjoy the city’s liberal social order.\textsuperscript{64} The historian Brooke Blower estimated that the number of Americans living in Paris peaked in the late 1920s, when approximately 40,000 called the City of Lights home. This affluent community was supplemented with a steady stream of wealthy American tourists that sought out France for vacation and exploration.\textsuperscript{65}

Although the majority of Americans were unable to travel abroad in the interwar period, many were still exposed to France through the press, radio, and literature. Paris was commonly portrayed in popular media as a cultural icon due to its architecture, art, theatre, music, fashion, and gastronomy. While Blower acknowledges the popular tendency to romanticize Paris by those who were unable to visit personally, she argues that Americans who ventured overseas saw Paris as “a concrete terrain on which to grapple with increasingly pressing questions about Americans’ relationships to a wider world of political and cultural affairs.” For Blower, Americans’ attachment to Paris, either real or imagined, could not be reduced to its status as an escapist land of “small delights,” but instead, was rooted in confronting the city’s complex global identity.\textsuperscript{66}

Interwar Paris was a city where Americans – those who traveled abroad as well as those who encountered France in the news or popular media – could interact with some of the day’s most pressing socio-political issues including immigration and empire, the

\textsuperscript{64} France was not void of xenophobia, racism, sexism, conservatism, or bigotry, but for some Americans, the everyday reality of discrimination was not as prominent in France as it was in the United States. Popular examples of American artists living or working in France during the interwar period include Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, Sylvia Beach, Josephine Baker, and Sinclair Lewis. Culturally, many Americans are still fascinated by Paris to this day, as evidence by recent film productions such as Baz Luhrmann’s \textit{Moulin Rouge} (2001), Martin Scorsese’s \textit{Hugo} (2011), and Woody Allen’s \textit{Midnight in Paris} (2011), as well as popular literary publications including Paula McLain’s \textit{The Paris Wife} (2011), Edward Rutherfurd’s \textit{Paris} (2013) and, Anthony Doerr’s \textit{All the Light We Cannot See} (2014), to name a few.


\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 2-4.
depression, labour strikes, radical left and right wing politics, and ethnic nationalism. These issues were on display at the same time in the United States but appeared to many Americans as more consequential or noteworthy when witnessed in an old-world bastion of civilization.

In addition to seeing France as a land of leisure or a stage for confronting the changing world order, some Americans conceived of their relationship with France through shared political beliefs. According to Edward Knox, many Americans imagined an historic attachment to France through their “sister revolutions.”67 The French refrain of liberté, égalité, fraternité was received well among Americans who valued patriotism and freedom as hallmarks of a successful republic. In fact, AAF used the popular belief in France and America’s shared political foundation as a promotional tool. AAF claimed its “great goal” was to “strengthen the bond of friendship between the two great Republics,” and “win honorable satisfaction for the people of America that in the days of their great need we did not forget our long-time friends in that great country across the seas we love so well.”68 To accomplish this end, AAF used real and imaginary shared historic, political, and cultural associations to cement ties.

AAF relied on France’s rich cultural heritage as a means for fundraising. Events commonly revolved around art, music, and fashion. Other relief agencies used similar tactics, but their social functions were never as frequent or as lavish as those of AAF. In 1945, the organization ran a concert series at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City that featured performances of famous French compositions. Fashion shows featuring

68 “Report of Henry Bruère, President, American Relief for France, 29 March 1945,” Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 5, MLM,
renowned designers such as Hermès and Nina Ricci were sponsored. An exhibit called the Theatre of Fashion was held in New York City during the spring of 1946, which featured miniature versions of costumes from leading French fashion houses, including Christian Berard and Jean Cocteau, as well as accessories by Boucheron, and Van Cleef and Arpels. Art showcases and auctions often brought in significant funds, including Renoir’s painting “Girl on the Rock,” which was donated by the Vanderbilt family and fetched $115,000 in 1947. Prominent guests were invited to galas, balls, and luncheons, including First Lady Bess Truman, Eleanor Gehrig, the famous Yankees first-baseman’s widow, Laure Gouin, the President of the Provisional Government of France’s wife, and the famous actress Marlene Dietrich.

France’s Ambassador to the United States, Henri Bonnet and his wife Hellé, regularly attended events hosted by AAF. Engaging Ambassadors was a common practice for relief agencies. For instance, the Norwegian Ambassador to the United States, Wilhelm von Munthe af Morgenstierne, was instrumental in the formation of American Relief for Norway in April of 1940, and helped to broker cooperation between the relief agency and the ARC during Norway’s occupation. Likewise, the Dutch Ambassador to the United States, Alexander Loudon, attended a reception in New York to thank American Relief for Holland for their efforts in April 1946. For their part, the Bonnets were a regular fixture at AAF’s events which assured the organization robust attendance and press coverage. It was widely commented amongst the AAF staff as well

69 “French Prepare Manikins for Exhibition in New York to Raise Funds for Relief,” NYT, 21 March 1946, pg. 34.
70 “$371,053 Donated for French Relief,” NYT, 6 November 1947, pg. 32.
71 A.N. Rygg, 10, 120.
as the diplomatic guard in Washington and Paris, that France had two Ambassadors in the Bonnets.  

Hellé Bonnet was in good company at AAF events among the organization’s female staff. AAF’s first secretary and longstanding director, Consuelo Balsan, was the only daughter of William Kissam Vanderbilt. Other members were connected to prestigious French families, such as Baroness Germaine Alice Halphen, who was married to Edouard Alphonse James de Rothschild, a French financier from the prominent Rothschild family. From the world of literature, AAF could look to Countess Alexandra Tolstoy, the youngest daughter of Leo Tolstoy, who served as a director.

AAF also attracted the attention of a new brand of working women. Dorothy Shaver, the first female president of the Manhattan retail store and fashion brand, Lord & Taylor, became a member of the board of directors in 1944. Shaver worked alongside the organization to secure clothing donations and provide uniforms for overseas staff. In addition, AAF relied on female volunteers with experience working in the realm of private voluntary relief. Anne Morgan was only one of a number of women who had worked in the relief sector during the First World War. Elizabeth Hudson was deployed as a nurse at the American Military Hospital in Paris in 1916, and when war broke out in 1939, she formed her own relief organization, Funds for France, which became part of the CCFRS. Margaret Olmstead volunteered for the relief organization, the Comité Franco-Américain pour la Protection des Enfants de la Frontière, in 1917. Gertrude Robinson-

73 “Mme. Henri Bonnet Dead at 61,” The New York Times, 6 April 1962, pg. 35  
74 Consuelo Vanderbilt married Louis Jacques Balsan, a French aviation enthusiast and textile heir after the First World War. “Mrs. Balsan Dies; Former Vanderbilt,” NYT, 7 December 1964, pg. 1.  
76 “Minutes of the Second Executive Committee Meeting, 5 October 1944,” AAF Records, Box 3, NYPL.
Smith worked alongside Edith Wharton during the First World War to raise funds for surgical motor units and ice-making machines for U.S. troops in France. All these women served on AAF’s board of directors and executive committee.

The women of AAF constituted an engaged and effective group of volunteers. While a handful managed to secure executive positions as vice-president throughout the years, the President of AAF was always male, and professional men dominated the organization’s high-ranking positions. AAF drew from existing pools of lawyers, bankers, businessmen, and civil servants in New York City. These men followed the path set forward by Herbert Hoover and the CRB, which prioritized the hiring of educated, wealthy, career men, and cast relief as a notable professional pursuit.

AAF’s first president was Henry Bruère, who led the organization until April 1945. Despite his French last name, Bruère came from German ancestors and had no discernable connection to France. He was one of a few members of AAF who seemed to become involved with the organization because of its connection to New York City. Before heading AAF, Bruère served in numerous municipal and federal positions, including president of the New York City Board of Social Welfare, chamberlain of the City of New York, and financial advisor to the Government of Mexico. At the time he joined AAF, he was president and chairman of the Bowery Savings Bank.  

While Bruère was widely admired by his peers, he fell out with the members of AAF in 1945. The origins of friction dated to January 1945, when several of AAF’s executives were troubled by Bruère’s advocacy of a proposal from the Société Israélite Française to assist 5,000 Jewish war victims from the Alsace-Lorraine region. The proposal called for the modest sum of $2,500 to be paid out to the organization once per

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77 “Henry Bruere, 76, Ex-City Aide, Dies,” NYT, 19 February 1958, pg. 27.
month for a duration of four to five months. Some members of AAF feared that
prioritizing the welfare of Jews would violate the organization’s mandate to aid all
French civilians regardless of religion, gender, or class. Whether this was anti-
Semitism, which was prevalent in New York at the time, or a strict adherence to the
organization’s operational mandate to assist all French civilians, is unclear. Protesting the
board’s decision, Bruère offered a letter of resignation. Morgan, who was friendly with
Bruère, immediately declared that she would not accept the resignation, leading other
members to do the same. Vice-president Elliott Lee reminded board members that Bruère
was “very uncomfortable” turning down the Société Israélite Française’s proposal. The
following week, on 21 February, the board approved a five-month grant to the Société in
coordination with the American Joint Distribution Committee. Bruère was appeased but
formally resigned in April 1945 citing health concerns, and on this occasion, his
resignation was unanimously accepted.

Like Bruère, a number of politicians and diplomats joined AAF for short periods
of time over the years. Allen W. Dulles worked for the U.S. Embassies in Vienna and
Bern during the First World War. He attended the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, and in
1922, served as Chief of the State Department’s Division of Near Eastern Affairs. During
the Second World War, the Office of Strategic Services recruited Dulles and sent him to
Switzerland. He served on the board of directors for AAF from 1945 to 1947, before
being named the director of the Central Intelligence Agency in 1953.

Another career diplomat to serve with AAF was William Phillips. Phillips worked
for the Department of Far Eastern Affairs, and during the First World War, served as

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78 “Minutes of the Tenth Meeting of the Executive Committee, 7 February 1945,” AAF Records, Box 3, NYPL.
Assistant Secretary of State under President Wilson. During the interwar period, Phillips was named Ambassador to Belgium, and Minister to Canada. Roosevelt appointed Phillips Under Secretary of State in 1933, followed by Ambassador to Italy in 1936 where he remained until 1941. During the war, Phillips was Ambassador to India from 1942 to 1943, subsequently becoming political advisor to General Eisenhower. Phillips was on the Central Committee of the ARC, which was a bonus for AAF, which sought to establish connections between other powerful relief agencies.

Robert Woods Bliss, a longstanding AAF director, was an established diplomat when the Second World War broke out. Bliss had served in various diplomatic and consular posts including Brussels, Saint Petersburg, Paris, and Stockholm, and was brought on as a consultant to the State Department during the war. He helped to engineer the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in 1944, which resulted in the creation of the UN. Bliss was no stranger to relief work prior to his directorship with AAF. Living in Paris with his wife, Mildred, during the Great War, the Blisses helped found the American Ambulance Field Service.

Perhaps the most recognizable figure to work with AAF was John J. McCloy. McCloy was trained as a lawyer, but the First World War interrupted his studies at Harvard in 1917. Stationed in France until the end of the war, McCloy returned to New York to practice law during the interwar period. When the Second World War broke out, McCloy became Assistant Secretary of War. McCloy served as president of AAF from the summer of 1946 until 1947, when left to become the president of the World Bank.

81 The conference was held on the grounds of Bliss’ former property in Washington, D.C., donated to Harvard University in 1940.
During his time with AAF, McCloy did not participate in the daily operations of the organization. However, he was a powerful and visible figure, which increased AAF’s exposure, and he used his influence to help the organization to secure funding from high-profile donors.\(^{84}\)

The formation of AAF was largely representative of the creation of other war-era relief agencies. The Roosevelt administration sought greater control over foreign aid and instituted a system of checks and balances that aimed to prevent the duplication of efforts and increase the efficiency of private relief. These relief agencies were bound by the regulatory demands of the President’s War Relief Control Board and the National War Fund. While prominent public figures lined up to serve these agencies, AAF appears to have differentiated itself from other organizations by attracting the participation of an unusual number of high-ranking politicians, diplomats, businessmen and women, wealthy established families, seasoned relief administrators, and volunteers, as well as propagating real and imagined connections between the United States and France in order to raise awareness and funds for its relief program.

*The Challenges of Providing “Emergency Relief” to Liberated France*

One day after AAF’s first meeting on 14 July 1944, the *New York Times* ran an article celebrating the newly “united” French relief organization.\(^{85}\) In reality, AAF was far from constituting a united front. After the meeting, vice-president Morgan submitted to Bruère a list of objections to proposals that had been discussed. These ranged from

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\(^{84}\) There is little information about McCloy’s role in AAF aside from what can be found in the organization’s board of director minutes. McCloy’s personal papers do not appear to disclose his role with AAF. For more on McCloy, see Kai Bird, *The Chairman: John H. McCloy: The Making of the American Establishment* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992).

\(^{85}\) “French Relief United,” *NYT*, 15 July 1944, pg. 4.
irritation over voting on an incomplete plan of organization, to reprimanding the executives for selecting a French woman to be in charge of field units in France when an American woman was available. Morgan followed up her objections with a lengthy list of recommendations to rectify these issues. This confrontation would be the first of many between Morgan and the male leadership of AAF. In the meantime, Bruère adopted most of Morgan’s recommendations and directed staff to reach agreements on disputed subjects, most notably deciding which ongoing relief activities should be continued.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the CCFRS and the FFRC were, at the time of AAF’s formation, in the process of administering aid to France. Bruère’s first task was to ensure that those relief activities continued until AAF could implement a comprehensive program of its own. A contingency budget was employed during the transition to fund ongoing relief efforts, however, AAF faced hurdles due to the President’s War Relief Control Board and the National War Fund’s regulations, which hindered the speed that relief could be administered. Relief was further complicated by the chaos of operating in Liberated France while Allied forces were still waging war across Europe.

The challenges faced by AAF can be illustrated in the attempts to continue the production of comfort packages for French POWs spearheaded by Morgan during the war years. In order for the President’s War Relief Control Board to approve AAF’s POW comfort package program, the organization had to submit a formal request to an officer of the Board. This request detailed the contents of the packages, the approximate disbursement location, and the plan for shipping and distribution. After the President’s War Relief Control Board granted budgetary approval, AAF then had to confer with the National War Fund. The National War Fund stipulated that all material included in the

86 “Objections and Recommendations, 2 August 1944,” Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 5, MLM.
comfort packages had to be prepared and packed in AAF’s warehouses to keep costs as low as possible. In addition, the National War Fund wanted AAF’s volunteers to make as many products as possible, specifically by sewing textiles into clothing, towels, and bandages. After some back and forth, the final list of items agreed to by all parties was:
two towels, two large Ivory soaps, one box of tooth powder, two handkerchiefs, two toothbrushes, one pair of leather slippers, one box of crayons, one deck of playing cards, three pencils, one package of vitamins, and one pair of woolen socks.  

After receiving approval from the necessary U.S. regulators, AAF had to consult with French authorities in order to ensure that its efforts were not being duplicated by another relief agency. AAF relied on their own Division of Overseas Relief Activities and Services to facilitate discussion with French authorities. The French Provisional Government reported that it was working with the ARC and CRF branches to distribute approximately 800,000 food parcels, 300,000 clothing parcels, 600,000 comfort packages, and 900,000 medical kits per month to French civilians. These supplies appeared to be sufficient to meet the needs of many French POWs in Germany, so French authorities recommended AAF should focus on supplying the civilian populations in Metropolitan France, where the demands were more pressing.

In addition to the bureaucratic back and forth between U.S. regulators and French authorities, determining France’s relief needs was further complicated by the chaos of Liberation. After the D-Day landings, relief agencies were operating under the assumption that their activities would be permitted the moment that France was no longer declared an active war zone. To the frustration of AAF’s board members, once combat

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87 “Minutes of the Second Executive Committee Meeting, 5 October 1944,” AAF Records, Box 3, NYPL.
88 Ibid.
ceased, Allied military personnel and the French government did not immediately allow
AAF’s relief operations.89 Aside from complications securing transport and delivery of
relief supplies, part of the delay was the result of Roosevelt’s failure to recognize de
Gaulle’s Provisional Government. Relief agencies did not share the Roosevelt
administration’s apprehension about de Gaulle, and AAF administrators grew frustrated
that relief efforts were being pushed back. UNRRA had formally recognized de Gaulle’s
Comité français de libération nationale (CFLN) as the official government of France six
weeks after the invasion of Normandy, and three months before Roosevelt and Churchill
would do the same.90 Many members of AAF discreetly expressed consternation that
Roosevelt’s support for de Gaulle was not immediate. In their closed meetings, AAF’s
executives bemoaned the agency’s ambiguous status in Liberated France, and confirmed
de Gaulle as the protector of French republicanism, democracy, and liberty.

While the Roosevelt administration dragged its heels, relief agencies tried to
negotiate the delivery of civilian aid.91 From July to October 1944, AAF supervised
shipments headed overseas, but these were technically pre-existing commitments made
before the creation of AAF by the CCFRS and the FFRC. Roosevelt finally recognized de
Gaulle’s Provisional Government late in October 1944, which improved communication
between AAF, Allied military personnel in France, and French authorities. Along with
securing shipments of emergency supplies, AAF’s first order of business was to send a

89 SHAEF forbade private voluntary relief agencies, except for the Red Cross, from functioning while
military operations continued. “Third Meeting of the Board of Directors, American Relief for France,
September 20, 1944,” AAF Records, Box 1, NYPL.
90 “UNRRA Recognizes French Committee,” NYT, 16 July 1944, pg. 8.
91 For example, in September 1944, AAF contributed $60,000 to a shipment of supplies leaving from
London in October, previously arranged by the CCFRS.
representative to France to report on the needs of French civilians and to determine the most effective ways to administer relief.

*Anderson’s Report: The Blueprint for American Aid to France’s Relief Policy*

In October 1944, Paul B. Anderson, a member of AAF’s executive committee, told his colleagues that he had received an invitation from the French government to conduct an exploratory mission as a representative of American foreign relief. Anderson was a sound choice. He served as the YMCA’s European secretary, and also worked as an education advisor for the American UNRRA delegation. Most importantly, Anderson chaired the French Committee of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Services (ACVAFS), a body of twenty-two American aid organizations that sought to promote cooperation amongst relief agencies in the private sector.92

After touring France from late November 1944 to March 1945, Anderson delivered a bleak report to AAF on the “especially devastated” areas of France, which included Normandy, the Moselle, the Vosges, the Aisne, along with specific cities such as Dunkerque, Calais, Lorient, and St. Nazaire. Normandy, in particular, was given priority due to the extent of destruction caused by Allied bombing as well as the heavy ground combat following D-Day. Townships had been reduced to rubble resulting in large homeless populations and internally displaced persons. The invasion had ruined farmers’ fields and livestock, which Anderson ruminated may have been “of greater relative importance to national life than the destruction of a town block housing 100 families, though the latter is more impressive to the eye.” Anderson cited French statistics that

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92 The ACVAFS was the precursor to the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), which exists today. AAF became a founding member of CARE.
placed the number of wholly destroyed dwellings at 400,000 and partially destroyed dwellings over 1,000,000; the majority were located in Northern France.\footnote{“Tenth Meeting of the Board of Directors, 18 April 1945,” AAF Records, Box 1, \textit{NYPL}.}

Anderson’s report explained that French civilians were suffering from shortages in food, coal, and gasoline, and they also lacked shelter and access to safe, hygienic medical services. U.S. relief shipments meant to address these shortages were often delayed by complications securing licenses and a shortage of space aboard the transporting vessels, or failed to arrive on schedule due to foul weather and the ongoing war. French ports had been badly wrecked by Allied bombing and the deliberate German policy of destruction. Some of the shipping containers that arrived at French ports were damaged en route, or lacked legible identifying information about their contents. Destroyed railway networks, along with automobile and fuel shortages caused delays that led to food spoilage. Even if shipments arrived intact and on time, AAF’s goods sometimes ended up on the black market.

As Anderson noted, France’s Provisional Government was spread too thin to handle the needs of all its citizens. French authorities attempted to ease the suffering of devastated civilians, refugees, and school children, as well as the surviving families of prisoners, deportees, and those executed by the Germans by providing daily subsistence allowances and rations, but AAF declared these efforts to be “wholly inadequate.”\footnote{AAF reported that a daily subsistence allowance was 840 francs per day for residents of Paris, but for other locations across France, it was between 15 to 28 francs per day (less than a U.S. dollar a day in 1944). “Tenth Meeting of the Board of Directors, 18 April 1945,” AAF Records, Box 1, \textit{NYPL}.} Anderson told AAF members in New York that France’s Provisional Government was depending heavily on supplies provided by private American relief agencies.
To facilitate AAF’s efforts in France, Anderson forged a collaborative partnership with France’s national welfare organization, *Entr’aide Française*, which oversaw all domestic and foreign relief agencies operating in France after the Second World War. *Entr’aide* provided AAF with visas and licenses, storage warehouses, port access, drivers and automobiles, and personnel with intimate knowledge of France. It was common for a national agency to supervise foreign relief organizations in Europe following the war. The equivalent of *Entr’aide* in the Netherlands was the *Nederland Volkherstel*, which worked with American Relief for Holland, and in Italy, the *Ente Naxion Distribution Social Italia* worked alongside American Relief for Italy. Cooperating with a national agency increased the effectiveness of the distribution process and saved U.S. private voluntary agencies resources once supplies had reached their intended ports.

Anderson concluded his report with two important recommendations for AAF’s ensuing relief endeavors. The first reflected the delicate ethical nature of conducting foreign relief work. Namely, Anderson recommended that U.S. relief authorities and AAF field workers should avoid presenting themselves as morally superior when dealing with the French; that is, the French were not tragic “victims” and the Americans were not heroic “rescuers.” Anderson noted that there was in France a “natural unwillingness” to accept the work of a foreign relief agency, especially from a country that did not necessarily understand France’s wartime experience as an occupied country. French civilians and the Provisional Government distrusted an extended American presence,

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96 For more on *Entr’aide*, see chapter four.

especially one that was condescending or paternalistic. According to Anderson, U.S. foreign relief implied “separateness or superiority at a time when the mood in France is one of unity of all in a renascence of the whole of French life.”

If AAF was to perform its tasks efficiently and effectively, AAF had to understand that French civilians might react poorly to foreign assistance if the Americans did not display a certain degree of sensitivity, despite the fact that the French desperately needed aid.

The second consideration was related to the nature of future assistance. Anderson noted that AAF’s primary purpose was to provide “emergency relief,” which the organization defined as “concerned chiefly with persons, and in particular with supplies for personal consumption, devastated or otherwise abnormally rendered necessitous.”

Using this metric, Anderson estimated that emergency relief was needed for approximately three to five million French civilians. However, Anderson anticipated that the French faced a far greater problem beyond immediate aid, concerning the funding of social welfare programs. He noted that in particular, France needed to restore general support for “family life and social habits,” which could be accomplished through the establishment of community or recreational centers, medical institutions, and childcare facilities.

To help address the shortages in social welfare services, Anderson suggested that once the French no longer needed emergency relief supplies, AAF should begin to develop and implement projects that contributed to the rejuvenation of French life and the reconstruction of France. Anderson’s report would form the basis of AAF’s relief agenda for years to come.

98 “Tenth Meeting of the Board of Directors, 18 April 1945,” AAF Records, Box 1, NYPL.
99 Ibid.
Anderson’s Plan in Action: American Aid to France’s Relief Program, 1944 to 1946

AAF’s board of directors was pleased to find that thousands of ordinary Americans appeared eager to contribute to the organization’s relief effort in France as the Second World War came to an end. Some of AAF’s donors, such as Ralph Montgomery Arkush, a lawyer from New York City, wrote the President’s War Relief Control Board in 1945, inquiring as to how he could become involved in the rebuilding of devastated French villages. Likewise, Bill Hughes from Vanport City, Oregon, was so keen to make a direct contribution that he requested the mailing addresses of hungry families in France in order to send them the proceeds of a community bingo game that he was planning as a fundraising event. Other Americans were interested in helping devastated civilians but expressed concern about who would receive assistance. Mrs. Harold B. Payne, for example, recommended to President Truman that children be prioritized over adults as relief recipients in Europe because they were innocent victims of the Nazi regime, which had “caused so much pain and suffering upon the whole world.” As she explained, “when I make sacrifices in my little family circle to give, when I buy my own little ones one less pair of shoes, give them less bread to eat, I like to know to whom I am making this sacrifice.”

As the historian Tara Zahra has suggested, the violence of the Second World War resulted in a humanitarian movement specifically aimed at saving and protecting children, whose perceived helplessness and innocence rendered them “objects of

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100 Letter, Ralph Montgomery Arkush to the President’s War Relief Control Board, 8 September 1945, RG 220: Records of Temporary Committees, Commissions, and Boards; RG 469: The President’s War Relief Control Board, Box 1, NACP.
101 Letter, Bill Hughes to President Harry S. Truman, 26 June 1946, RG 220; RG 469, Box 1, NACP.
102 Letter, Mrs. Harold B. Payne to President Truman, 22 May 1946, RG 220; RG 469, Box 1, NACP.
sentiment and charity” in the United States.\textsuperscript{103} It is not surprising that AAF placed special emphasis upon providing for the children and youth of France. The image of suffering children was then, as now, a powerful fundraising tool. AAF developed or sponsored numerous feeding programs across France to ensure that babies and children did not go hungry. For example, AAF contributed to a program in 1945 and 1946 that fed over 250,000 babies, infants, and children in Southern France, demonstrating that the organization was open to operating outside of bombed communities in Northern France, providing that the recipients of relief were children. In addition, oatmeal, milk, and vegetables were donated to children’s camps and schools, many of which sought to restore normalcy for orphans. AAF also established programs of parrainage, usually translated by AAF as child “adoptions” or sponsorship, across France. AAF’s volunteers collected the case history of French children so that interested sponsors in the United States could select a child to assist. Once the American sponsor had decided which French child to support, they promised to send two packages of food or clothing to their beneficiary per month. By the end of 1947, over 10,000 French children had been “adopted” by individual Americans, families, interested groups, and in some cases, by U.S. workplaces or businesses.\textsuperscript{104}

When collecting the case history of children, AAF paid specific attention to the children of resistance members. For example, in 1946, teachers at the Westwood School for Girls in Los Angeles sponsored an eight-year old boy from Paris named Claude Gerard. Gerard’s adoption biography card read: “Father was in ‘Evasion’ network,


\textsuperscript{104} Children were “adopted” from every department in France. On the American side, most adoptions were the result of sponsors in New York, Massachusetts, California, Washington, and the District of Columbia.
convoy of fallen aviators etc. Was arrested April 1944 and shot in Buchenwald Oct. 5, 1944. Mother worked in same network, arrested Feb. 10 1943 and deported to Ravensbruck. Need for help is urgent.”

Christiane Couture’s biography included a tattered picture and listed her as a fourteen-year-old girl from Nievre. Her card stated: “Father was a veteran of World War I, very active in the Resistance. One son was taken prisoner of war, two others active in Resistance, hid and assembled Resistance members in the house. Whole family was sought by the Gestapo. Father was caught and shot, son was tortured and massacred, farm burnt to the ground.” With these types of case histories, AAF highlighted the dangers of participating in the French resistance and its consequences for entire families, hoping to reach sympathetic American donors.

In addition to implementing their own relief programs, AAF also furnished financial support for independent or partner relief agencies. Financial sponsorship was a common feature of many private voluntary relief agencies due to the President’s War Relief Control Board’s insistence on one relief agency per devastated country. Various American relief agencies sought to target specific religious denominations and ethnic groups across Europe, but if they wanted to implement relief programs in France, they had to collaborate or ask for AAF’s sponsorship. The most conspicuous recipient of AAF’s sponsorship was Anne Morgan’s relief organization in France, the CASC. When AAF was formed in 1944, it had absorbed the American branch of Morgan’s CASC, AFF, but the CASC technically remained independent since it had been incorporated in France and therefore, was not restricted by U.S. relief regulations. Unhappy with the

105 Gerard, Claude: Package Adoption Cards, Margaret E. Hill Papers, Box 1, HIA.
106 Christiane Couture: Package Adoption Cards, Margaret E. Hill Papers, Box 1, HIA.
107 Some examples include: the National Catholic Welfare Conference; the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee; the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children; Save the Children Foundation; and International Rescue and Relief Committee.
forced merger of AAF, Morgan tried to use the CASC to facilitate her own relief agenda, which clashed frequently with that of AAF.

In the late autumn of 1944, Morgan had a disagreement with her fellow executive, W.E. Seatree, regarding the CASC’s autonomy.\(^\text{108}\) Their argument became animated and Seatree demanded that in the future Morgan limit her communication to scheduled appointments in order to avoid “uncongenial” exchanges. Seatree blamed Morgan for the deteriorating relationship, accusing her of speaking to AAF members in a “customary overbearing, dictatorial and contradictory manner” that was the result of “a complete misconception, misunderstanding or misinformation regarding the facts of the case you wished to discuss – and your unfortunate practice of not listening.”\(^\text{109}\)

Outraged by Seatree’s letter, Morgan took the matter up with AAF’s executive committee, declaring the memo to be “insulting.” Seatree issued an apology, but tension remained. Morgan frequently complained to her CASC staff in France that AAF’s executives were “abominable,” and their conduct made her “madder than a wet hen.”\(^\text{110}\)

To appease Morgan, AAF’s board of directors voted to officially sponsor the CASC’s work in December 1944. Under the terms of the agreement, the CASC acted as an “agent” of AAF and could count on approximately $200,000 per year to aid civilians in the Aisne department.\(^\text{111}\) The board reasoned that keeping Morgan happy was a

\(^{108}\) Seatree was the Senior Partner of Price, Waterhouse & Co.’s Continental European branch, and like Morgan, had been living in Paris and working at the company’s European headquarters during the onset of the Second World War. “V. Ernest Seatree, an Accountant, 68,” *NYT*, 3 November 1945, pg. 12.

\(^{109}\) “Inter-Office Memo, W.E. Seatree to Miss Anne Morgan, 25 October 1944,” Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 5, *MLM*.

\(^{110}\) Letter, Anne Morgan to Alys Reynolds, 27 February 1946, Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 15, *MLM*.

\(^{111}\) The term “agent” was significant because AAF referred to other relief organizations receiving assistance as “agencies.” Morgan insisted on a different term to distinguish the CASC from other relief organizations in order to guarantee that the CASC would receive priority funding from AAF. “Eleventh Meeting of the Board of Directors, 16 May 1945,” AAF Records, Box 1, *NYPL*.
worthwhile pursuit due to her “prestige and money-raising ability,” and the fact that her “great record in French relief activities entitled her to special considerations.”

As early as the summer of 1945, only one year after its creation, AAF began to rethink its operational policy. Inherent in relief work was the understanding that providing aid was not a permanent endeavour. Anderson’s field report had suggested that when the basic needs of French civilians had been met, AAF should shift its focus to more permanent projects of social welfare and reconstruction. As the year came to a close, members of AAF expressed enthusiasm about future rehabilitative projects: reconstructing schools, building training centres for healthcare workers, and community centres for social welfare. A temporary committee was formed in order to appraise AAF’s accomplishments and to consider the agency’s activities moving forward. It was determined by the committee that liquidation was impossible for the foreseeable future because “the real work in France is just beginning.”

Transitioning from “Relief” to “Aid”

On 7 August 1946, the ruling board of AAF (at that point, still titled “American Relief for France”) voted 13-1 to change its name to “American Aid to France, Inc.” The board hoped that that “the idea of ‘aid’ would prove more acceptable to the French people,” whereas “a continued use of the word ‘relief’ might prove a hindrance to the development of present plans.” For most executive members, the new name better reflected the organization’s desire to shift from providing emergency relief supplies to

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112 Letter, Elliott H. Lee to George Bakeman, 14 August 1945, Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 5, MLM.
113 “Meeting of the Board of Directors, 19 December 1945,” AAF Records, Box 1, NYPL.
114 “Minutes of the Thirteenth Meeting of the Board of Directors, 18 July 1945,” AAF Records, Box 1, NYPL.
115 “Minutes of Special Meeting of the Corporation, August 7, 1946,” AAF Records, Box 1, NYPL.
long-term rehabilitation, as advocated in Anderson’s 1945 report. The name change also reflected the shifting nature of relief management under President Truman that naturally occurred after the Second World War. The measures that had forcibly brought together various aid organizations under President Roosevelt no longer existed, or were in the process of being phased out. Truman’s Executive Order 9723 of 14 May 1946 terminated the President’s War Relief Control Board and National War Fund, which meant that agencies such as Anne Morgan’s AFF and Elizabeth Hudson’s Funds for France could now regain their independence. Morgan cheerfully planned her resignation and was “intensely amused” when other relief administrators followed suit, regardless of their reasons for departure.

AAF’s name change was uncommon. The only other relief agencies to change their names were American Relief for Holland and American Relief for Italy. American Relief for Holland became the United Service to Holland in November 1946, in order to reflect its independent status upon the termination of the National War Fund; it remained committed to providing emergency relief supplies, especially food which was essential after years of famine and the forced starvation of civilians in the Netherlands, but ceased operations shortly after its name change. American Relief for Italy, which became the Boys’ Republic of Italy in October 1949, decided, like AAF, to change its name to indicate that its relief program was no longer geared towards emergency assistance. Instead, the Boys’ Republic of Italy was recommitting itself to social welfare causes,

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116 Roosevelt passed away in April 1945, and Truman, as Vice-President assumed responsibilities immediately. It was not until after the Paris Peace Conference that Truman began to dismantle the Roosevelt administration’s coordinating apparatuses of wartime relief.

117 Letter, Anne Morgan to Alys Reynolds, 7 June 1946, Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 15, MLM.


119 “To Continue Aid to Dutch,” NYT, 25 November 1946, pg. 34.
specifically, establishing orphanages for young boys in Italy. All other agencies, including American Relief for Norway, American Relief for Poland, the Belgian War Relief Society, and the Greek War Relief Association, retained their original names until they ceased operations.

The biggest challenge for relief agencies moving forward after the termination of the President’s War Relief Control Board and National War Fund was fundraising. AAF’s executives were concerned that if Morgan left the agency, donations might suffer. Lee attempted to entice Morgan to stay, but her response was frosty: “we have reached a stage where it is essential that the operation be conducted in an atmosphere free from the disagreements and apparent lack of mutual confidence which have prevailed.” In private, Morgan told her longtime CASC partner in France, Rose Dolan, that she happily anticipated being free from the constrictions of AAF. Morgan described working for AAF using the analogy of designing a house: you had to describe to the builder in detail the house and everything inside its rooms, and if you strayed from your description at all, the builder would refuse to construct your house. “They do not understand,” Morgan complained, “that rehabilitation in the devastated regions is a long, slow process and you can never tell ahead exactly what you are going to need.” In April 1946, Lee reported to the board of directors that Morgan was leaving AAF; Morgan failed to appear in person for the announcement.

As relief agencies began to declare themselves independent from AAF, the Committee on Fund-Raising Plans was preparing the fiscal budget for 1947, the first year

121 “Twenty-Fourth Meeting of the Executive Committee, 6 February 1946,” AAF Records, Box 3, _NYPL_.
122 Letter, Anne Morgan to Rose Dolan, 5 March 1946, Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 11, _MLM_.
123 “Minutes of Twenty-Second Meeting of Board of Directors, Exhibit A,” AAF Records, Box 2, _NYPL_.

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the National War Fund would not supply the organization’s capital. The Committee reported that AAF’s current campaign, which ran on the platform of “bread and butter—we can’t let them starve,” was becoming less and less effective as the distance between Liberation and the present day grew. A new fundraising platform was needed. The Committee recommended shifting fundraising efforts to appeal to Americans’ “emotional and spiritual ties with France,” and to emphasize the organization’s importance to Franco-American relations.  

Instead of describing the dire conditions in postwar France, AAF tried to combat war weariness by emphasizing Americans’ responsibility as transmitters of prosperity and democracy. “The American public may be fed up with ‘relief,’ the board acknowledged, but “they cannot ignore the potentialities for international good will.”  

AAF adopted a more patriotic rhetoric in 1947, the same year as the announcement of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. AAF’s fundraising campaign from the same year upheld France as “the indispensable ground that had to be held to defend democratic civilization.” It asserted that Americans “want to see free democracy grow strong again in the major country in Continental Europe whose ideals most nearly parallel our own.” The campaign concluded that “every good American citizen will realize his or her responsibility to a truly representative American agency that is helping a less fortunate democratic nation recover from disaster.” These appeals mimicked emerging Cold War tropes by imploring American citizens to support nations struggling to repel communism and fortify democracy. Most significantly, AAF’s

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124 “Meeting of the Executive Committee, 5 December 1945,” AAF Records, Box 3, NYPL.
125 “Analysis and Survey of Responsibilities Incurred Through AAtF Publicity in France, 1947,” AAF Records, Box 2, NYPL.
126 “Thirty-Second Meeting of the Executive Committee, 7 August 1946,” AAF Records, Box 3, NYPL.
statement implied the need to preserve and nurture the special relationship between the United States and France, which had evolved over the years through a transatlantic culture of shared political philosophy.

AAF’s name reconfiguration and conscious adoption of a politicized operational mandate was relatively unique amongst private voluntary relief agencies, especially because many organizations, such as American Relief for Norway, United Service to Holland, and the Belgian War Relief Society, significantly reduced their efforts or terminated activities by 1946 or 1947. Relief agencies that remained active based their appeals on civilian suffering, not political expediency. For example, American Relief for Poland’s newspaper campaign from October 1947 featured an image of a blind, injured child, with an alarming caption declaring that 18,000 children would likely die of starvation over the winter if the American people did not donate generously.\footnote{127}{“Ad – American Relief for Poland,” \textit{NYT}, 9 October 1947, pg. 21.} Since Poland stood behind the Iron Curtain, American Relief for Poland’s executive body was wise to exclude overtly political themes in their fundraising efforts, as U.S. donors were already reluctant to support assistance to Communist regimes. In 1949, American Relief for Poland terminated its activities at the request of the Polish government, which ousted all foreign relief agencies.\footnote{128}{Curti, 461.}

The Greek War Relief Association was one private voluntary relief agency that employed a political platform similar to that of AAF. While AAF credited the French with advancing republicanism and liberal revolution in order to establish a shared cultural tradition between the United States and France, the Greek War Relief Association presented Greece as the birthplace of U.S.-style democracy and western civilization:
“Remember Greece! Remember ancient Athens where democracy and western civilization were cradled.”129 Put this way, donations were the least the American people could contribute to Greece because “western civilization owes Greece a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid.”130 The Greek War Relief Association’s slogans were communicated around the same time that President Truman pledged support for Greece against Communist insurgents. While France never experienced the same degree of left wing violence, James Callanan has observed that in 1947 the Truman administration mounted “defensive clandestine action” in France and Greece to undermine the radical left in both countries.131 It is no coincidence that the increased politicization of relief agencies occurred in countries experiencing mounting Cold War tensions.

Despite AAF’s new campaign, fundraising for the 1947 fiscal year did not meet projections; while $2 million was the goal, just over $1.2 million was raised, with the majority of funds coming from New York, New England, Maryland, and California. Fortunately, AAF’s Budget Committee had amassed contingency funds from previous years that were used to supplement specific projects throughout 1947. In the midst of an uncertain future and the fracturing of unified national relief efforts, AAF showed no signs of slowing its efforts.

Creating “Permanent, Useful Testimonials” of U.S. Friendship in Northern France

As other private voluntary relief agencies began to wind down their activities, AAF was beginning to implement its first major policy initiative that moved away from

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129 Greek War Relief Association Pamphlet, Margaret E. Hill Papers, Box 4, HIA.
130 “Appeal for Greek Relief,” NYT, 10 March 1947, pg. 20.
131 French communism and U.S. foreign relief are discussed in more detail in chapters three and four. James Callanan, Covert Action in the Cold War: US Policy, Intelligence and CIA Operations (London: I.B. Tauris & Co., 2010), 44.
emergency relief and entered the realm of social rehabilitation. The “sistering” of devastated French towns by American cities would create lasting bonds between France and the United States, fostering Franco-American friendship for decades to come. AAF envisioned that the American “sister city” would celebrate the new partnership by raising money or collecting material goods for a specific devastated French town.\footnote{While inquiries surfaced from American and French cities and towns regarding sistering and adoptions in early 1945, formal agreements did not occur until 1946 and 1947, following the demise of the President’s War Relief Control Board. In 1945, AAF was unable to sponsor adoptions without federal intervention since their charter limited the organization to emergency relief. Conscious of overstepping their relief mandate, the Board asked the State Department to look into the potential challenges of the project throughout 1945. By November, the Board created the Committee for Devastated French Communities to oversee the process of adopting townships in France.} In 1945, John J. McCloy, then Assistant Secretary of War, was asked by a representative of the State Department for a comment on the project’s merit, and he replied, “I have given careful consideration to the matter and feel that from the viewpoint of the War Department the object is a worthy one and one which the War Department would be glad to endorse.”\footnote{Letter, John J. McCloy to William Phillips, 26 February 1945, RG 220; RG 469, Box 1, \textit{NACP}.} The Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes, and Generals Eisenhower and George Marshall also backed the sponsorship project.\footnote{While most of the adoptions of French towns came from American cities, the project enjoyed global popularity: for example, Glasgow adopted Brest, Quebec City adopted Saint-Malo, and Ankara adopted Isigny.}

In order to determine candidate areas for sponsorship, in 1945, the American Ambassador to France, Jefferson Caffery, compiled a list of towns and cities in Normandy, Brittany, and in proximity to Paris, paying special attention to areas that had borne the brunt of the Allied invasion and bombing campaigns. French mayors from devastated townships across Northern France also approached Caffery when they learned of the sponsorship project.\footnote{For more on French mayors’ role in relief efforts, see chapter four.} Some American cities selected French towns to assist based on need. Westport, Connecticut adopted Marigny in the Manche department. Miami
Beach, Florida sponsored the town of Lens, close to the Belgian border. Other American cities made selections based on established connections between the two areas. The city of New Orleans adopted its namesake, the French city of Orléans. One prominent adoption was the French city of Dunkerque in the Nord department by the American city of Dunkirk, New York, which held a “Dunkirk to Dunkerque Day” on Thanksgiving to raise money for the French town.\(^\text{136}\)

Despite the widespread U.S. and French support for town adoptions, the details of the program remained vague into 1946. Joseph E. Davies, chairman of the President’s War Relief Control Board, was hesitant to grant wholesale approval of adoptions that favoured reconstruction projects. Davies remarked that U.S. adoption proposals that called for reconstruction or sought to build historical monuments to the war should be postponed until the “urgent human needs” of devastated French civilians had been met.\(^\text{137}\)

However, many adoption committees, largely composed of ordinary Americans, saw emergency aid as temporary or unremarkable, and as such, wanted a more permanent means of contributing to France’s recovery. In June 1946, George Bakeman, the director of AAF in Paris, warned adoption committees that “ill-will” would arise if the organization was seen constructing “fine buildings as an American memorial at the present moment while the people were still living in caves, shacks, or hodge-podge, patched dwellings in the midst of rubble.”\(^\text{138}\) As a compromise, AAF executives proposed the creation of “practical memorials” of Franco-American friendship in the form of socio-

\[\text{\(^{136}\) “Thirty-Fifth Meeting of the Executive Committee, 10 October 1946,” AAF Records, Box 3, \textit{NYPL}; “Dunkirk to Dunkerque Day Proves Huge Success,” \textit{Dunkirk Observer}, 29 November 1946.}
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\[\text{\(^{137}\) Letter, Joseph E. Davies to Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker, 9 November 1945, RG 220; RG 469, Box 1, \textit{NACP}.}
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\[\text{\(^{138}\) “Thirtieth Meeting of the Executive Committee, 5 June 1946,” AAF Records, Box 3, \textit{NYPL}.}
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welfare centres that offered essential programs or services to a devastated community, such as infant milk distribution, a laundry facility, or medical consultation.

By the end of 1946, AAF began to focus on establishing these socio-welfare community centres, sometimes referred to as “relief and rehabilitation centres” in areas bombed by Allied troops or suffering from war damage across Northern France.\(^{139}\) AAF’s board of directors hoped that these centres would make a “genuine contribution in leadership to France,” and reasoned that “the question uppermost in our minds should be not ‘how many’ but ‘how good’ these Centers will be.”\(^{140}\) Working alongside the French Ministry of Reconstruction and Urban Development, aid officials designed these centres to be “flexible social welfare bureaus” staffed and funded by AAF, until the appropriate time came when the centre could be turned over to the French.\(^{141}\) Between 1946 and 1949, centres were opened in Tergnier, Coutances, Dunkerque, Le Havre, Forbach, Calais, Corcieux, Beauvais, and Lorient, offering a range of social services, including health and feeding programs, nursery facilities, access to laundering and sewing equipment, family welfare assistance, medical and dental consults, hygienic or decontamination controls, language classes, and training programs.

Each AAF centre carved out a niche in the French communities they served. The Corcieux centre hosted a dispensary, gave classes in home economics, and threw an annual Christmas party with gifts of toys and chocolate for children. The Calais centre revolved around an infant nursery and a milk distribution program for school-aged

\(^{139}\) The relationship between the U.S. bombing of French cities and postwar projects of relief is discussed in more detail in chapters three and four.

\(^{140}\) “Thirty-Second Meeting of the Executive Committee, 7 August 1946,” AAF Records, Box 3, \textit{NYPL}; “Thirty-Fifth Meeting of the Executive Committee, 10 October 1946,” AAF Records, Box 3, \textit{NYPL}.

\(^{141}\) “Proposal Concerning the Future Activities of American Relief for France, 16 January 1946,” AAF Records, Box 1, \textit{NYPL}.
children. The Coutances centre was AAF’s flagship operation. The centre was open daily from 8am to 11pm and offered a number of different services. There was a fully equipped sewing facility, a lending library, educational classes, English lessons, and a foyer where young people could congregate to play cards, games, and dance.\textsuperscript{142} A facility offering free dental services was also opened under the guidance of AAF’s local dental consultants, Dr. Fouré and Dr. Gounelle. AAF capitalized on the Coutances centre’s extreme popularity among the local French population, filming the wide range of services offered at the centre for promotional purposes, as well as distributing the footage to other AAF community centres in order to motivate field workers.

The centres in Le Havre, Dunkerque, Lorient, and Forbach did not experience the same initial success as Coutances, Calais, and Corcieux. Construction of the centres was delayed or defined by setbacks. Le Havre was originally identified as being in dire need of a centre in 1945, and a plot of land next to a school was secured in 1946. By the end of 1947, the only progress made was in the construction of the foundation, delaying the centre’s opening until 1948. At Dunkerque, a plot of land with barracks formerly used by Allied forces was obtained, but little else followed. The physical centre was often described as two “huts,” and AAF workers complained about its limited capacities for providing relief. The barracks held an office, a workroom, and a foyer where clothing was distributed. As for the remaining locations, these centres appear to have been oriented around the distribution of food and goods. As 1947 came to a close, AAF was concerned that the lack of progress in Le Havre, Dunkirk, Lorient, and Forbach would create bad publicity for the organization and the United States. They believed that

\textsuperscript{142}“Thirty-Third Meeting of the Executive Committee, 11 September 1946,” AAF Records, Box 3, \textit{NYPL}. 
withdrawal was not an option until these centres were running effectively, and as such, continued to operate the centres as best as they could until the French could take over.

Near the end of 1948, AAF’s director of public relations, Denise Davey, toured the established community centres in France. She reported to the board of directors with pride that AAF had built up considerable prestige with French authorities and civilians by establishing an “American identity” of generosity that “has prompted the gratitude and understanding of the French people.” For the first time in AAF’s history, the board of directors genuinely considered disbanding the organization. While it was agreed that AAF should continue to transfer ongoing aid activities to the French, ultimately, the board of directors decided that AAF should not terminate because of its “intrinsic value” to the advancement of the Franco-American relationship.

Conclusion

AAF’s last recorded board of director’s meeting was held in September 1951. By this point, AAF had transferred its community centres to French hands and was no longer proposing new relief endeavors, but the board of directors insisted that the organization retain its “corporate existence” so that it could see through to the end any ongoing projects. Most notably, AAF was cooperating with the French Ministry of Education to build a student centre in Paris, and was contributing funds to the construction of a hospital in Saint-Lô. AAF anticipated these projects would be completed in the next couple of years and, despite the fact that the board of directors stopped meeting with any

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143 “Minutes of the Forty-First Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors, 17 November 1948,” AAF Records, Box 2, NYPL.
144 “Minutes of the Forty-Fourth Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors, 16 February 1948,” AAF Records, Box 2 NYPL.
frequency, they wished to remain incorporated so that AAF and its members could be
recognized when the student centre and hospital were finished. AAF would officially
disband in 1956, upon the inauguration of the Saint-Lô hospital.145

During AAF’s tenure, the organization shipped approximately eighteen million
pounds of material goods to over three million French civilians from the most devastated
regions across France.146 While there were many relief agencies like AAF that sprung up
in response to the Second World War, these organizations all had unique experiences
providing relief to a certain devastated European country. In AAF’s case, a number of
factors specific to France influenced the organization’s experience providing relief.
Allied forces liberated France before many other European countries including Belgium,
the Netherland, Poland, and the Baltic states, meaning that AAF was able to begin relief
efforts slightly earlier than aid agencies operating in these countries. However, the
ongoing war and the initial chaos that followed France’s Liberation posed logistical
problems for AAF when they attempted to transport relief supplies overseas in the
autumn of 1944. Other European countries faced similar wartime experiences of
occupation, collaboration, and resistance, but the distrust that defined the official
diplomatic Franco-American relationship further impaired AAF’s initial attempts to
provide relief until the United States officially recognized the Provisional Government
headed by de Gaulle.

From 1944 to 1946, the National War Fund granted AAF a large budget, but these
funds did not necessarily facilitate the organization’s distribution of relief supplies
because France had a large number of devastated civilians that needed AAF’s assistance

145 The construction of the Saint-Lô hospital is discussed in the conclusion.
146 “American Aid to France Facts and Figures for 1950,” Elliott Hugh Lee: VHPC, LC.
spread across a substantial geographic entity. In light of this challenge, AAF streamlined its aid to devastated communities located in Northern France, and focused relief efforts on children or orphans, the families of POWs, members of the resistance, victims of Allied bombings, or those who suffered during the Liberation. By implementing Paul Anderson’s 1945 relief agenda, AAF was able to conduct one of the longest lasting relief programs of all private voluntary aid agencies operating in Europe after the Second World War. The switch from emergency relief to rehabilitative services and reconstruction in 1946 was especially exceptional compared to other relief agencies, which largely began to terminate relief efforts the same year.

While other countries, including Italy and Poland, accepted UNRRA’s aid, France did not invite UNRRA to operate a relief program and thus, had to depend on private relief agencies. Until the Truman administration announced the Marshall Plan in 1947, AAF’s brand of private voluntary assistance dominated France’s relief landscape. The Marshall Plan pledged U.S. assistance in the reconstruction and modernization of France, which, in the eyes of AAF’s board of directors, affirmed the organization’s commitment to France’s recovery. The board of directors, however, correctly sensed that the Marshall Plan would change the tone of foreign relief, leading to an increasingly politicized private relief sphere. To continue to secure private donation and appeal to U.S. authorities, AAF adopted the political rhetoric that infused the Marshall Plan, claiming the organization had been fostering positive Franco-American relations and defending French democracy for years after the Second World War. According to AAF directors, the organization had helped to lay the groundwork for the successful implementation of the Marshall Plan and France’s subsequent recovery.
Chapter Three: American Aid to France, Washington, and the Politics of Relief

In August 1944, William Phillips, a U.S. political advisor at SHAEF in London, had become so “anxious for a glimpse of liberated France,” that he went to visit General Eisenhower in the French town of Bayeux. The two conversed over whisky and sodas about the rush to liberate Paris and de Gaulle’s recent visit to Eisenhower’s camp.\(^1\) Phillips lingered in France for a few days, visiting the Abbey of St. Étienne in Caen and the ruined city of Saint-Lô. Before departing, he dined with SHAEF personnel at their temporary headquarters in Granville, where he raised the question of “whether we Americans did not have a certain moral responsibility” to assist devastated French civilians, “who, though friends and allies, had lost everything as a result of our military requirements.”\(^2\) Phillips believed that the damages caused by the Allied bombing of Normandy, although necessary and just, required a humanitarian response from the United States. On the suggestion of the U.S. Ambassador to France, Jefferson Caffery, Phillips later traveled to Washington to discuss the matter with Assistant Secretary of War, John J. McCloy, and newly appointed Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes. McCloy and Byrnes authorized Phillips to formulate a program to assist the bombed communities in Northern France. Naturally, Phillips turned to AAF, which, in the autumn of 1944, was beginning to implement its program of civilian assistance.

The way that American officials responded to France’s devastation after the Second World War demonstrates the inherent political connection between civilian relief and diplomatic relations. As early as February 1943, an Inter-Divisional Committee on France, which included military and State Department personnel, had predicted that

\(^2\) Phillips, 417.
“relief will be an exceptionally strong political weapon in determining the course of domestic political developments.”\(^3\) Thus, AAF, a voluntary, apolitical philanthropic organization, rapidly succumbed to the political desires of both the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, which sought to use relief – from both government and private sources – as a means to stabilize volatile regions across Europe, promote friendly relations, and in extreme cases, manipulate foreign governments. In order to appeal to the State Department, AAF executives made the pragmatic decision to embrace Cold War rhetoric, claiming their organization was fortifying French democracy and capitalism, as well as advancing friendly Franco-American relations.

The following chapter demonstrates that U.S. relief to France following the Second World War was not inevitable. It was, however, a strategic decision crafted and honed by the Roosevelt administration and later, by that of Truman. Following France’s Liberation, the U.S. government decided to support a comprehensive program of private voluntary relief and eventually, rehabilitation and reconstruction, for three main reasons. The first motivation can be traced to Roosevelt’s judgment that the Free French were needed to secure the defeat of Germany. Despite his personal hostility towards de Gaulle, Roosevelt understood that providing resources to French civilians would be critical since France was to serve as a debarkation point for the Allied continental invasion, and would be instrumental in upholding Europe’s stability after the war.

The second factor that prompted the United States to assist France after 1944 was a desire to enhance America’s reputation abroad. While many French women, men, and children were grateful the Germans no longer occupied their country, the Allied bombing

campaigns and the presence of thousands of U.S. troops greatly disrupted French society. As supreme commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, Eisenhower felt a responsibility to help France recover, as did many British and American soldiers who surveyed the devastation after the invasion of Normandy. In addition, U.S. military police and commanding officers worried about American troops leaving “bad impressions” on French civilians as they made their way toward Berlin. U.S. Embassy reports explicitly mentioned the criminal behaviour of drunken soldiers and unruly troops stationed for rest in French villages. Allied military authorities recommended demonstrations of goodwill in the form of relief to ease tensions between U.S. soldiers and French civilians and to improve America’s image among the French population.

The third and most significant reason that the United States sought to establish a comprehensive relief program in France after the Second World War concerns geopolitics. Washington believed that France was a strategically important ally in the development of an emerging postwar order, and as such, moved to secure France’s allegiance after 1944. Roosevelt insisted on democratic elections in postwar France and U.S. economic assistance in order to propel France toward recovery, but in reaffirming friendly diplomatic relations with France after the war, the United States was threatened by both of its Big Three allies – Britain and the Soviet Union. Roosevelt and Truman regularly clashed with de Gaulle, while Churchill and his successor, Clement Attlee, enjoyed a modest working relationship with the French leader. The danger of a renewed

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4 Roosevelt ultimately believed that France was unable to fully realize its past as a Great Power owing to the Third Republic’s slow decline and Vichy’s wartime collaboration. Roosevelt made this clear by refusing to name France as one of his “Four Policemen.” However, France remained an important global ally and the United States supported French attempts to regain its previous continental power; after all, a strong France was more useful to the United States than a weak one. Robertson, 190-193; Alessandro Brogi, Confronting America: The Cold War between the United States and the Communists in France and Italy (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 63-64.
Anglo-French axis that could potentially challenge the U.S. bid for the leadership of Europe eventually led the Truman administration to step up its aid efforts in France, especially given that Britain was better positioned geographically than the United States to provide aid to France in the immediate aftermath of the war.

As for the Soviet Union, the Truman administration increasingly feared the rise of a formidable communist presence in France; a real danger given that the French left now enjoyed great political popularity for its visible role in the resistance. In fact, in 1944, Ambassador Caffery cautioned the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, that there was a possibility that France might reject the U.S. hegemony in favour of an alliance with smaller European states, or even worse, fall to Soviet-style communism.\(^5\) At the same time that the Truman administration expressed worries about French socialist and communist parties’ growing power, AAF’s publications began to increasingly suggest that private relief was an effective means of promoting American values, namely consumerism, democracy, international cooperation, and a commitment to individual rights, in France. AAF advanced these tenets of U.S. foreign policy for opportunistic reasons: to guarantee the U.S. government’s support, and to attract public donations in the United States. By the end of 1946, AAF had consciously adopted Washington’s Cold War rhetoric to justify their relief work, and continued to do so for years to come.

The Question of Providing Relief to France

The Roosevelt administration’s decision to provide relief to Liberated France was not a foregone conclusion. A majority of the French population had initially supported the Vichy government in some shape or form, or at least felt ambivalent about the

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\(^5\) Letter, Jefferson Caffery to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, 27 October 1944, RG 84: Box 1, NACP.
Armistice of June 1940. Many French citizens only abandoned Vichy when wartime conditions became unbearable and policies, such as the forced labour schemes, proved unpopular.\(^6\) Even though de Gaulle projected France as a nation of resisters and fighters in the wake of Liberation, many Americans remained skeptical. Certainly, some U.S. citizens empathized with their French counterparts, especially after reports began to surface detailing the extent of war damage and the hardships of the German occupation. This natural inclination to assist those in need, however, was dampened by the growing revelation that several French men and women had collaborated with Vichy and the German authorities. The *Washington Post* spoke for many Americans when it published an article in September 1944, calling for these French “traitors” to be “brought to stern justice.”\(^7\) However, the line between collaboration, accommodation, and resistance was often fluid. Recognizing that France was both a victim of war and an accomplice to Nazi crimes complicated the ways that foreign citizens made sense of France’s wartime experience, and potentially, their desire to help devastated French civilians.\(^8\)

Another issue that threatened to interfere with an American postwar assistance plan for France was the legacy and well-known tension between President Roosevelt and General de Gaulle. The historian André Béziat has characterized Roosevelt and de Gaulle

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\(^6\) Koreman, 3.


as stubborn, and “too different to be able to get along.” Much of the hostility between the two leaders boiled down to their mutual dislike, but Roosevelt and de Gaulle also clashed over their visions for France upon Liberation. Roosevelt feared that de Gaulle had authoritarian tendencies, and therefore, intended to impose a military occupation on France immediately following its Liberation to ensure the holding of free elections. De Gaulle believed that Roosevelt did not respect his authority as France’s leader despite his widespread popularity among the French. He resented that the Roosevelt administration had recognized Vichy while hesitating to do the same for the Provisional Government, and he worried that the United States would sideline the French from participating in their own Liberation and the ensuing peace process. Tensions between the United States and France remained high after Truman assumed the Presidency in April 1945. President Truman and the Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, became so frustrated with de Gaulle’s insistence that French troops participate in the Liberation of Germany that they began to privately refer to the General as a “psychopath.” To prevent de Gaulle from issuing his own military directives to French troops, Truman considered discontinuing aid to French civilians and military equipment to the Free French forces.

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12 Truman and Stimson’s frustration came to a head when French soldiers refused to take orders from Allied commanders during the invasion of Germany and Italy, and instead, listened to de Gaulle when he told them to hold their positions so that France could rightfully claim a zone of occupation, or as the historian Robert Donovan believed, annex contested territory in Northern Italy. Robert J. Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1945-1948* (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1977), 58-59.
Vichy’s collaboration and the strained Franco-American relationship were not the only factors that had the potential to impede U.S. postwar relief to France. It was unclear immediately after the war whether or not France actually required a comprehensive foreign aid program. Certain French communities in Northern and Southern France had suffered heavy damage, however, other interior regions were untouched by Allied bombing or the German occupation. Devastated communities desperately needed relief supplies but UNRRA did not establish a permanent mission in France, which signified to some Americans that France did not need assistance. As a condition of its operations, UNRRA was only willing to establish aid programs in countries that requested support and could not finance their own relief supplies. In autumn of 1944, UNRRA deemed France a suitable candidate for assistance, but the French Ambassador to London, René Massigli, indicated to UNRRA’s Director, Herbert Lehman, that “pride” would not allow France to ask for UNRRA’s help.14 De Gaulle declined to invite UNRRA to operate a relief mission in France not because his government was able to adequately assist its devastated civilians, but because he feared that the relief agency would undermine the Provisional Government by demonstrating that France was unable to feed and provide basic goods for its citizens. De Gaulle believed that if he accepted UNRRA’s assistance, France would appear to the world weaker than the United States and Britain, UNRRA’s principal donors. After the Third Republic’s decline and the humiliation of military defeat, collaboration, and occupation, de Gaulle refused to let the United States and Britain classify France as a feeble power.

Despite these complex factors at work, France was the recipient of a significant, prolonged relief program operated by AAF, and later on, received assistance through the Marshall Plan. In the end, U.S. officials and military personnel recognized that supporting private voluntary relief to France was a relatively straightforward way to help stabilize the country, improve the United States’ reputation among disgruntled civilians, and spread American values including democracy, capitalism, freedom, and individual rights.

Roosevelt and Relief Politics in Occupied and Liberated France

From the Fall of France until Liberation, Roosevelt was acutely concerned about the fate of France and the plight of its civilians. Although the United States remained neutral until December 1941, Roosevelt intervened with the help of the American Ambassador to France, William Leahy, to send relief supplies to French civilians in the Unoccupied Zone. Roosevelt sent Ambassador Leahy to Vichy early in January 1941, with the hope of maintaining diplomatic ties with France, and more importantly, to prevent the French colonies in North Africa and the French armed forces, specifically the navy, from falling into German hands. At his first meeting with the head of the Vichy government, Marshal Pétain, and Prime Minister Pierre-Étienne Flandin, Leahy attempted to demonstrate American goodwill by proposing a plan that would guarantee relief shipments of milk, medicine, and clothing for French children. Pétain proved receptive to this idea because the Germans had launched a propaganda campaign in France that blamed Vichy administrators for the deficiencies in foodstuffs or material

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15 Letter, William D. Leahy to President Roosevelt, 25 January 1941, FDR Papers as President: President’s Secretary File (PSF), 1933-1945, Box 29, FDR Library.
necessities. Pétain warned that unless the United States provided emergency supplies and eased the British blockade of France, the Vichy administration might fall, thus allowing the Germans to occupy the entire country. Leahy advised Roosevelt that “it would be patently advantageous to the cultivation of friendly relations with the French people and to the stiffening of the Marshal’s resistance to German demands if the American Red Cross should deliver in unoccupied France essential foods, clothing and medicine, where they are most needed.”

16 Leahy’s report on this meeting set the tone for the United States’ relief policy to France for the remainder of the war.

Two months later, Leahy celebrated Roosevelt’s decision to authorize two Red Cross shipments to Unoccupied France. He wrote to Roosevelt that “your invaluable assistance in providing relief for the distressed people will probably increase the much smaller percentage of those who expect a British victory.”

17 Leahy reported that the Embassy received approximately fifty letters a day from French civilians offering gratitude and requesting more supplies from the United States. Encouraged by the positive response, Leahy petitioned the Roosevelt administration tirelessly for increased aid to France throughout 1941. His requests, coupled with similar messages from the French Ambassador to the United States, Gaston Henry-Haye, eventually began to annoy the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, who supported civilian relief but felt bound to respect the British blockade. As the war developed and the blockade tightened, the Roosevelt administration grew increasingly hesitant to antagonize London. In May 1941, Roosevelt admitted to Leahy that relief shipments could not continue “unless we receive positive evidence not only from the Marshal but from his government that our efforts to

16 Ibid.
17 Leahy’s emphasis on “expect.” Letter, William D. Leahy to President Roosevelt, 19 March 1941, FDR Papers as President: PSF, 1933-1945, Box 29, FDR Library.
aid are creating a positive resistance to German demands for further collaboration in support of their military aims.”

Leahy pointed to the local press as evidence that civilian relief shipments were bolstering French resistance. He attached for Roosevelt a translation of an article that appeared in the collaborationist newspaper, *L’Oeuvre*, written by the politician and Vichy-supporter, Marcel Déat. The article denounced the “masked intervention” of the United States in France. Déat acknowledged that the French were grateful to the Red Cross for shipping desperately needed supplies, especially for children, but, he continued, “it is the Red Cross that is involved, and not the Government of the United States. And it may well be said that this charitable act, whatever its symbolic value may be, is little enough if one considers the volume of our needs and the economic capacity of the U.S.A.” Déat chided Leahy for travelling to Marseille to greet the Red Cross vessels: “Was it a tourist trip? Or was it a propaganda tour for certain policy?”

Leahy indicated to Roosevelt that Déat’s article was evidence of anti-American propaganda aimed at discrediting the widely popular relief shipments.

Despite French civilians’ positive reaction to American assistance, the United States was unable to guarantee the safe transport of additional relief shipments as Roosevelt recalled Leahy from France in May 1942, and the invasion of North Africa began six months later. German authorities moved into the Unoccupied Zone in response to Operation Torch and imposed harsher occupational terms across France. These conditions made it impossible for aid agencies and U.S. authorities to negotiate the

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18 Letter, Franklin D. Roosevelt to William D. Leahy, 23 May 1941, FDR Papers as President: PSF, 1933-1945, Box 29, *FDR Library*.
shipment and allocation of relief supplies with German authorities. At the same time, there was also widespread fear on the part of the U.S. and British administrations that relief would end up in the hands of the Germans, not the intended French recipients, thus thwarting the political and humanitarian purpose of sending emergency supplies.

In addition, Churchill’s insistence that the British blockade be “vigorously maintained” prevented efforts to deliver significant relief. The British blockade proved virtually unbreakable from spring of 1941 until France’s Liberation in the summer of 1944. Roosevelt tried to convince Churchill that civilian relief would “help to win over the French people,” and “strengthen our hand materially to be able to assure them of limited assistance,” but he was met with stubborn defiance. Churchill reasoned that civilians would blame poor living conditions in the occupied regions across Europe on the Germans, thus bolstering their resistance. Moreover, if the British allowed relief supplies to reach France, nothing prevented other occupied countries from demanding the same assistance. To oversee relief shipments and aid all occupied countries was an impossible feat for a British Empire already spread too thin. As late as January 1944, the Roosevelt administration, led by Hull, argued that if the case for relief could be “based on military grounds,” such as bolstering anti-German resistance amongst French civilians, Churchill would be more likely to allow operations. France’s Liberation a few months later effectively solved the issue, but the consistent effort of U.S. authorities to

21 Paxton, 89, 112.
24 Memorandum to the President from the Department of State (signed Cordell Hull), 26 January 1944, FDR Papers as President: PSF, 1933-1945, Box 29, FDR Library.
reach an agreement with their British counterparts demonstrates that civilian relief was an important element influencing Roosevelt’s policy towards France.

Roosevelt believed that restoring France’s grandeur after the Second World War was a worthy aspiration, but more than that, it was integral to the recovery of Europe as a whole.25 As such, postwar relief factored heavily into Roosevelt’s plans for Liberated France. In January 1942, he wrote to Ambassador Leahy that it was important to let the French people and Vichy’s authorities know that the United States intended to “see France reconstituted in the post-war period in accordance with its splendid position in history.”26 Roosevelt’s vision for postwar France included the following: the elimination of fascist agitators, the restoration of civil administration in the hands of the French, democratic elections and the establishment of a new republic, economic recovery and industrial modernization, the repatriation of occupied territory (namely Alsace and Lorraine) to France, and the forging of a new set of alliances among the United States, France, and other European countries.

To oversee the realization of these objectives, Roosevelt supported a robust relief agenda for Liberated France. Although relief was no longer needed to encourage the activities of the French resistance, the United States could still use relief to stabilize France and demonstrate the benevolent humanitarianism of Americans. Speaking on behalf of the National War Fund in October 1944, Roosevelt claimed that donating to private voluntary agencies was “typical of democracy at its best,” and an “expression of

26 Memorandum from President Roosevelt to William D. Leahy, 20 January 1942, FDR Papers as President: PSF, 1933-1945, Box 29, *FDR Library*. 

our own free will” in the face of oppression.\(^\text{27}\) The Yalta Conference in February 1945 solidified Roosevelt’s commitment to providing civilian relief as the Allies pledged to deliver “emergency relief measures for the relief of distressed peoples” across Liberated Europe.\(^\text{28}\) Although Roosevelt consistently presented relief efforts as a humanitarian gesture, just before his death in March 1945, he insinuated to the American people that providing relief to foreign civilians might have more serious ramifications for the U.S. army and Americans, in general. Previously, Americans donated to private voluntary relief organizations as a way to aid foreign civilians in the name of “humanity and decency.” “This year,” Roosevelt stated, “we give as well in necessity — necessity for our own. The need never was greater. It will not soon be less.”\(^\text{29}\) Citizens from Allied or occupied countries could die if the United States failed to provide adequate civilian relief, thus turning foreign populations against America and threatening the postwar peace.

To some degree, Roosevelt had anticipated the massive relief effort that would be required once the Allied forces had pushed the Axis troops out of occupied territory. As early as 1942, Roosevelt had set the stage for relief agencies to meet the needs of suffering civilians abroad by commissioning the President’s War Relief Control Board, the National War Fund, and the War Refugee Board to manage and coordinate U.S. relief agencies and programs of assistance. Like other private voluntary relief agencies, AAF enjoyed the full support of the State and War Departments, allowing the agency to implement a comprehensive program of relief that included the shipping of millions of


pounds of supplies to France, the establishment of semi-permanent community centres, 
the reconstruction of local institutions, and individualized aid programs like food 
packages, child-sponsorship, and the “sistering” of cities in France and the United States. 

One of the key methods that AAF used to garner support from authorities and the 
public in 1944 and 1945 was to mimic the rhetoric of the President. In dispatches to 
foreign diplomats, Roosevelt often mentioned the longstanding friendly relationship 
between France and America. For example, in one letter to Edwin C. Wilson upon his 
appointment as U.S. Representative to the CFLN, Roosevelt spoke of the “deep-rooted 
friendship of the American people for the people of France,” and the “unshakeable 
devotion of both peoples to democratic institutions.”30 When Roosevelt mentioned France 
in his public addresses, he often reiterated the themes of friendship, unity, and shared 
ideals. On Bastille Day in 1944, Roosevelt issued a press release proclaiming that “the 
fundamental principles which guide our democracies were evolved from the American 
and French revolutions.”31 Such pronouncements were adopted by AAF. For example, a 
pamphlet issued to celebrate AAF’s first six months of operations proclaimed that “the 
preservation of France, its people, its institutions and its traditions, is essential to world 
freedom and world civilization.” It was AAF’s hope that relief “brought to this fellow 
democracy may, in the days to come, be commensurate with the age-old friendship of the 
American people for the people of France.”32

30 Letter, Franklin D. Roosevelt to the Honorable Edwin C. Wilson, 5 January 1944, FDR Papers as 
President: PSF, 1933-1945, Series 2: Confidential File, Box 9, FDR Library. 
Series 3: “The Four Freedoms” and FDR in World War II, Box 79, FDR Library. 
32 “Pamphlet from the First Annual Meeting of the American Relief for France, 29 March 1945,” Elliott 
Hugh Lee: VHPC, LC.
The United States’ Reputation and the Utility of Private Relief in France

On 24 July 1944, General Walton H. Walker led XX Corps onto the beaches of Normandy, where it began combat operations on 5 August. As part of General George S. Patton’s Third Army, Walker’s troops rapidly moved across France, earning the nickname “the ghost corps.” In the fall and early winter of 1944, XX Corps liberated Metz in an unexpectedly hard-fought battle, and eventually crossed the Moselle River into Germany. After Metz’s Liberation, General Walker praised the local French population for aiding the U.S. army during the battle, and agreed to pass along to U.S. authorities a request from the mayor, Gabriel Hocquard, for relief as well as two photo albums documenting the city’s destruction. Walker recommended to the President’s War Relief Control Board that Metz would be an ideal candidate for adoption by an interested American town because “Metz and its environs sustained considerable battle damage, and its citizens exercised every possible cooperative effort to assist my XX Corps in both the assault on the city and its subsequent occupation.”

General Walker was not alone in his calls for civilian relief on the grounds of just reward as recompense for Allied destruction. Beginning in the summer of 1944, military officials feared that the extensive Allied bombing campaigns that predated the D-Day landings, and the subsequent destruction caused by warfare had negatively disposed French civilians toward the United States. Roosevelt and Churchill worried that a hostile

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34 For more on the XX Corps and Patton’s offensive, see Nathan N. Prefer, Patton’s Ghost Corps: Cracking the Siegfried Line (New York: Random House, 1998).
36 Letter, Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker to Joseph Davies, 2 November 1945, RG 220; RG 469, Box 1, NACP.
French population might hamper the ongoing Allied invasion of France and the Central European Campaign. The soft power of relief, however, could be used to enhance the United States’ reputation by pacifying tensions, demonstrating American goodwill, and showcasing the benevolence of the United States both as liberators and a future ally.

Eisenhower vocally supported the distribution of relief as a means to improve the United States’ reputation in France and relations with the local civilians. In March 1945, Eisenhower rebuked the War Department for preventing aid organizations from receiving priority shipment status at U.S. harbours. He reasoned that it would be beneficial for the United States to send ample civilian relief to Belgium and France since the Allied forces depended on their transportation networks to deploy troops across Europe. Eisenhower’s concern reverberated with Roosevelt who affirmed that Americans were “decent people” who did not want to see any foreign civilians starve.

Like Eisenhower, the President’s War Relief Control Board believed in the strategic utility of civilian relief. The Board suggested to AAF in autumn of 1945 that the organization should select “advantageous” areas for relief programs: “For instance it would seem that restoration should be concentrated in localities where American troops have fought or in towns where destruction was suffered as the result of American bombing.” From its inception, AAF’s executives were cognizant that the Allied bombing might provoke in the French feelings of resentment towards the United States.

At the organization’s annual meeting in March 1945, AAF executive Paul Anderson

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40 “Policy of the President’s War Relief Control Board, 17 September 1945,” RG 220; RG 469, Box 1, *NACP*.
reflected on his tour of France following Liberation. Anderson asked the French people he encountered if they were bitter about the bombing and Allied ground invasion. A man in the town of Vire had replied to him: “You tell the Americans we have nothing against them because of their bombardments. Tell them we have lost everything, but we have regained our liberty.”\footnote{Anderson’s anecdote seemed to validate AAF’s mission, yet it failed to capture the wide range of French attitudes toward the Allied bombing campaigns and invasion. While many French men and women thanked American troops and personnel for freeing them from Nazi tyranny, others were ungrateful because they thought that the cost of liberation had been too high. For more on the French perspective, see chapter four. “Report on France: Extemporaneous Remarks, 29 March 1945, by Paul Anderson,” Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 5, MLM.} AAF used such anecdotes to justify their relief program to U.S. donors. Early in 1946, AAF’s executive vice-president, Elliott Lee, indicated that the organization’s future relief activities would henceforth be projects that exclusively provided “bombed areas” across Northern France with the “bricks and mortar” they needed to rebuild, as well as the relief supplies and rehabilitative services these communities needed to recover.\footnote{“American Relief for France Minutes of the Twenty-Fourth Meeting of the Executive Committee, 6 February 1946,” AAF Records, Box 3, NYPL.} AAF officials repeatedly sought to remind France that while the United States could destroy, it could also rebuild.\footnote{“American Relief for France Bulletin No. 5, September 1945,” RAC, Record Group 2: Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller; Series: World Affairs – Q, Box 45.}

Eisenhower approved of AAF’s “bricks and mortar” relief agenda. In October 1946, he issued a statement of support for AAF and their assistance to French cities and towns where “the bombs fell daily for nearly a year.” AAF’s program was, according to Eisenhower, “a fitting tribute” to France’s “most devastated areas in which soldiers of our two nations died in order that victory might be won.” He concluded that AAF’s
community centres “will serve as tokens of lasting friendship to our great sister
democracy in whose future we have such confidence.”  

In the years to come, AAF frequently invoked Eisenhower’s rhetoric emphasizing
Franco-American friendship, unity, and self-sacrifice. In 1947, AAF’s Division of Public
Relations and Publicity reported to the board of directors: “with no intention of patting
ourselves on the back, it can be safely argued that [AAF] has done much, if not more,
than any other private or government agency to further Franco-American friendship.”
Not only was Eisenhower’s support advantageous during AAF’s fundraising campaigns,
but his statement indicated that the organization was justified in its transition away from
providing emergency relief to meaningful projects of reconstruction, especially in those
regions most heavily damaged by Allied bombs. For many members of AAF, remedying
war destruction was the most compelling explanation for providing sustained relief and
rehabilitative services to French civilians. Certainly, other countries that experienced
heavy damage occasioned by Allied bombing and combat, including the Axis nations,
received relief from private voluntary agencies, transnational relief organizations, and
eventually, the Marshall Plan, but the justifications for relief and reconstruction were
different. For Germany, the historian Jeffry Diefendorf argues that reconstruction was a
practical necessity of the American occupation and U.S. plans to modernize postwar
West Germany. The notion of improving the United States’ reputation, especially after
the severe bombing campaign, was not central to American foreign policy when it came

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45 “Analysis and Survey of Responsibilities Incurred Through AAtF Publicity in France,” 1947, AAF Records, Box 2, NYPL.
to relations with Germany, the war’s principal aggressor. In comparison, U.S. military and civil authorities constantly referred to France’s devastation as the responsibility of the Allies.

Another consideration was at work in shaping Washington’s outlook on providing relief to France. The Truman administration recognized that the prolonged presence of U.S. military personnel in France could potentially jeopardize America’s formal relationship with France, and damage its international image. In the summer of 1945, the Office of War Information (OWI) reported with alarm on the growing anti-French sentiments of U.S. troops: “American hostility, prejudice, and bitterness against France and the French is widespread, intense, and worthy of the gravest concern – now.”

U.S. military personnel frequently complained that the French were rude, inhospitable, and hostile toward the U.S. troops they encountered. OWI warned that such anti-French attitudes “may well become a part (and a dangerous part) of a potential revival of [American] isolationism,” and recommended portraying the French in military media as likeable allies who had sacrificed for the Allied war effort.

From the perspective of the French, U.S. military personnel treated France as a land of leisure, indulging in all kinds of debauchery and occasionally, criminal conduct. In some cases, excessive alcohol consumption by newly deployed troops or soldiers on leave in France was to blame. In December 1944, the American Vice Consul, Lee Randall, reported to the U.S. Consul General in Paris that a group of drunken U.S. Airborne soldiers cavorted through Nice in the middle of the night, breaking shop

47 Leo Rosten, “Confidential Memo: Attitudes of American Troops and Officers in ETO Towards the French, 26 August 1945,” Leo C. Rosten Papers, Folder 1, HIA.
48 Ibid.
windows, stealing merchandise, and carrying on in a disruptive manner. The American Consul in Cherbourg issued a similar report a few days later. The report began, “while it would appear that, on the whole, the local population is deeply grateful to the United States forces for liberating the country from German occupation it is also evident that there exists a certain amount of disappointment.” Resentment was, in fact, widespread. The French believed the United States had not done enough to compensate for the damage it had caused during Liberation because living conditions had not improved to a significant degree since the German occupation. French civilians were understandably upset at the seizure of public buildings and French homes to billet American soldiers. The most common complaint, however, was the conduct of U.S. troops, who were accused of drinking too much, driving too fast, corrupting French women, and taking advantage of civilians by demanding goods or services.

Race infused American perceptions of troop misconduct in France, especially when it came to sexual misconduct. As the historian Mary Louise Roberts has shown, African American soldiers were more likely to be indicted and, in some cases, executed, on charges of rape than their white peers. Roberts suggests that these circumstances were partially caused by French women’s “hysterical response” to being liberated by African American soldiers after years of socialization by Vichy’s racist campaigns that depicted non-white races as sub-human. At the same time, once a French woman had reported that she was raped by an American soldier, U.S. military officials generally failed to

49 Letter, Lee D. Randall, American Vice Consul, to Hugh S. Fullerton, American Consul General, Paris, 12 December 1944, RG 84, Box 2, NACP.
50 Letter, Carlton Hurst, American Consul at Cherbourg, to Hugh S. Fullerton, Counselor of Embassy, American Embassy, Paris, 18 December 1944, RG 84, Box 1, NACP.
51 Ibid.
thoroughly investigate the charges or assumed the perpetrator of any sex crime was African American, so it was not necessary to examine the corresponding evidence.\footnote{Roberts, \textit{What Soldiers Do: Sex and the American GI in World War II France}, 196-198.}

Given the prevailing climate of racism in the United States, it was easy for many white Americans to believe that African American troops would behave barbarically. In the style of “yellow journalism,” sensationalist mass media stories in the American press helped to foster racial stereotypes.\footnote{W. Joseph Campbell notes that the phrase “yellow journalism” has been used to criticize sensationalism in the press or “misconduct in newsgathering” as early as 1896. W. Joseph Campbell, \textit{Yellow Journalism: Puncturing the Myths, Defining the Legacies} (Connecticut: Praeger, 2001), 25.} For example, one \textit{Washington Post} article titled “Negro Truck Drivers Charge Nazis With Jungle Knives” accused African American truck drivers of abandoning their posts south of Saint-Lô in Percy so they could move to the frontlines to begin “carving up the Germans with enthusiasm and inspiring efficiency.”\footnote{Henry T. Gorrel, “Negro Truck Drivers Charge Nazis with Jungle Knives,” \textit{The Washington Post}, 2 August 1944, pg. 2.} Stories such as this helped propagate prevailing white prejudices that black troops were inherently violent, impulsive, and undisciplined.

As a nearly all-white organization, AAF also engaged in racial stereotyping. For example, one of the agency’s American consultants in France reported that in the Manche department, AAF could “do much towards reviving Franco-American friendship, and thus erase the terrible recollection of the tragic days and the bad impression, I should even say hostility, caused by the conduct of the American troops in the department, particularly negroes.”\footnote{“Report on the Present Situation in the Department of Manche, 9-15 April 1945,” Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 5A, \textit{MLM}.} Regardless of the veracity of these claims, what matters is the harmful impression they made on public opinion. In this respect, AAF hoped that their relief programs would counter some of the negative publicity surrounding the conduct of American troops stationed in France after the war.
Local French outlets frequently published accounts of U.S. soldiers’ mischief and illegal acts. Journals in Le Havre, a port city that saw the passage of more than three and a half million U.S. soldiers between 1944 and 1946, were particularly diligent in reporting the discretions of U.S. troops. In June 1945 alone, the Havre-Éclair and Havre-Libre ran a collection of stories about U.S. soldiers hitting French cyclists with their trucks and injuring or killing them, breaking into buildings and stealing food, drink, and francs from local residents, fighting or firing their guns at civilians, and kidnapping (“enlèvement”) local girls, one of whom was taken to a brothel against her will.\(^6\) A number of these stories explicitly identified the alleged perpetrators as “noirs américains” (black Americans).

Understandably, AAF’s executives in New York did not discuss in detail the behaviour of U.S. troops in France, but the director in France, George Bakeman, lamented to his colleagues in the United States that he frequently overheard U.S. soldiers criticizing the French, and vice-versa.\(^7\) AAF recognized that “enthusiasm” for Americans was at a low in France partially due to the post-Liberation conduct of U.S. troops, but empathetic, skilled relief workers could play “a highly significant role in the strengthening of friendly relations” between France and the United States.\(^8\) Bakeman noted that AAF’s success demonstrated to skeptical U.S. soldiers and French civilians that private American and French citizens could cooperate and bring about positive change to particularly devastated French communities.\(^9\) Therefore, AAF and its

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\(^6\) Clippings from the Havre-Éclair and Havre-Libre, June 1945, RG 84, Box 9, NACP.
\(^7\) “American Relief for France Meeting of the Board of Directors, 19 December 1945,” AAF Records, Box 1, NYPL.
\(^8\) “American Relief for France 10th Meeting of the Board of Directors, 18 April 1945,” AAF Records, Box 1, NYPL.
\(^9\) “American Relief for France Meeting of the Board of Directors, 19 December 1945,” AAF Records, Box 1, NYPL.
supporters in the military and government spheres anticipated the agency’s relief program would play a significant role combatting the anti-French sentiments of Americans, as well as the anti-Americanism of the French.

*Geopolitics and U.S. Private Voluntary Relief to France*

For many AAF members, remedying war destruction in France was the most compelling reason for prolonging relief projects. However, to the Truman administration, a larger concern was ensuring that the United States and France forge a strong postwar alliance. In the years following the Second World War, U.S. officials became increasingly concerned about the power of leftist factions in French politics, but in the days immediately following Liberation, it was actually rivalry with the British Empire that propelled the Truman administration to act. U.S. officials were bothered that the formal Anglo-French relationship was seemingly stronger than the Franco-American relationship. Churchill and de Gaulle may have shared their differences, but by the time France was Liberated, Churchill believed there was no way to ward off de Gaulle’s claims to leadership. Likewise, Churchill’s successor, Clement Attlee, had proved during the war his ability to push personalities aside and work strategically with de Gaulle and the Free French. While the historian H. S. Chopra points out that de Gaulle’s “personalistic political system was repugnant to Labour,” these differences did not amount to professional hostility between de Gaulle and Attlee.

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Moreover, the Atlee government’s Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, was committed to strengthening the Anglo-French relationship as Cold War divisions began to harden. Bevin worked closely with France’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Georges Bidault, to forge a united, powerful Anglo-French union to serve as a bulwark to Soviet communism and “American materialism.” The same type of collaboration did not exist between Bidault and the U.S. Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes. Bidault felt that Byrnes did not pay enough attention to French proposals on Germany’s future after the war, which reflected the United States’ larger failure to treat France as an equal ally.

Although far from exceptional, the relatively congenial relationship between British and French officials stood in stark contrast to the hostility and conflict that defined interactions between American and French officials following the war.

Further complicating the strained diplomatic relationship between the United States and France, U.S. authorities feared that the geographical proximity of Britain and France served to strengthen the two countries’ relationship at the expense of the United States’ relationship with both powers. In January 1945, SHAEF reported on the growing animosity of the French towards the United States: French civilians were beginning to “appreciate the tremendous war effort of Britain during five years of war,” while at the same time, “blame” the United States because it emerged from the war in a “fortunate”

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64 Hitchcock suggests that much of the hostility between Bidault and Byrnes arose because France was wary of U.S. plans to establish “central German agencies” so that occupational powers would be forced to ensure uniform treatment of Germany in all the zones. France was, in general, anxious to prevent the rapid recovery of Germany after the war, especially along their shared border. The French called for the revision of Germany’s western border, which Bevin openly supported, but Byrnes resisted discussing the matter. Hitchcock, _France Restored: Cold War Diplomacy and the Quest for Leadership in Europe, 1944-1954_, 57-60.
Making matter worse, Britain, considerably damaged in its own right, was able to send emergency relief supplies to France immediately following Liberation, while U.S. relief agencies experienced delays and difficulties shipping goods across the Atlantic.

AAF’s chairman, William Phillips, was also concerned about the rise of British influence in France. Phillips was especially anxious to prevent Britain from using relief to usurp political capital that could be potentially harnessed by the United States. In April 1945, Phillips informed the President’s War Relief Control Board of his concern that the British were “doing something in a very practical way to demonstrate their sympathy because of the suffering which has been caused ‘directly or indirectly from the effects of British bombing.’” Even the Chief of the Royal Air Force Bomber Command, Sir Arthur Harris, had donated a cheque of over $50,000 to aid French children made orphans by Allied bombing. In light of the large shipments of foodstuffs and clothing being sent across the English Channel by British relief organizations, Phillips concluded, “it strikes me that the British are beating us to it.” The President’s War Relief Control Board had to concede that U.S. agencies were in fact being out-performed by their British counterparts in 1945. The Board observed that “there are reports, some quite authentic, that the British are already doing something along the reconstruction line. There should be some effort made at coordinating their efforts with ours and we should not play second fiddle.”

65 “Political Report by SHAEF, French Mission, 11 January 1945,” RG 84, Box 3, NACP.
66 Letter, William Phillips to Arthur Ringland, Enclosure: Excerpt from the Manchester Guardian, 2 April 1945, RG 220; RG 469, Box 1, NACP.
67 Ibid.
68 “Policy of the President’s War Relief Control Board, 17 September 1945,” RG 220; RG 469, Box 1, NACP.
In retrospect, U.S. fears that the British would dominate France’s relief and reconstruction appear wildly exaggerated, as Britain’s own reconstruction took precedence over rebuilding France.\(^{69}\) The Blitz killed over 25,000 civilians and inflicted significant damage to London, Coventry, Hull, Manchester, and Liverpool, among other cities.\(^{70}\) Providing relief for devastated British civilians and the subsequent reconstruction of bombed cities was a massive undertaking for a country already supporting the astronomical costs associated with waging a war. Draining British resources further was UNRRA. Britain allocated millions of dollars’ worth of material goods to the transnational organization’s relief program; it scarcely had the funds to contribute to other relief networks.\(^{71}\) The United States and its citizens, on the other hand, were able to fund private relief organizations such as AAF, and official aid programs including UNRRA and the Marshall Plan, to deliver long-term assistance to France. Nevertheless, it remains significant that U.S. officials and relief administrators were concerned that Britain’s swift response to France’s devastation would sully the United States’ reputation, in comparison.

A problem more pressing to U.S. officials than British influence in France, however, was the possibility that French communists and socialists might come to power. One week prior to the D-Day landings, an Inter-Divisional Committee on France that included members from the State and War Departments, drafted a policy to guide foreign

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\(^{69}\) Morrisey, 285.


\(^{71}\) UNRRA’s supplies were mainly drawn from surplus military and civilian supplies worth $3.9 billion. Britain and the United States contributed 16% and 73% of UNRRA’s budget, respectively. Charles P. Kindleberger, A Financial History of Western Europe (Abingdon: Routledge, 1984), 428-9; Hitchcock, The Bitter Road to Freedom: The Human Cost of Allied Victory in World War II, 219-20.
relations with France moving forward. The report acknowledged that “the present somewhat increased strength and influence of French communism” could potentially result in a communist-led government in postwar France. Scholars, including Donald Sassoon, have argued that the Second World War granted French communists their “finest hour” because their strong presence in the resistance legitimized the Party’s platform. In order to prevent a communist take-over in France, the Inter-Divisional Committee stated the United States’ commitment to a “strong, independent, democratic, and friendly France.” These qualities were deemed important because “such a France will be most likely to collaborate in an effective world organization, will serve as a bulwark against the spread of anti-democratic movements, and will be an important factor in assuring political and economic stability in Europe.” The report went on to reason that the United States should move to reinforce France’s “military potential, strategic location, continental prestige, and democratic tradition” as the nation transitioned from occupied country to liberated republic. If the United States did not support French economic recovery and democratic institutions, civil and military authorities feared a coalition of small European states led by France would seek to thwart U.S. interests in Europe, or in the worst-case scenario, the French would be drawn into the “Soviet orbit.”

For Ambassador Caffery, France was the key to European stability and safeguarding democracy. Two days after the Roosevelt administration recognized de Gaulle and the Provisional Government in October 1944, Caffery informed Hull that “recognition has not cured all evils.” Despite the French centre and right’s general

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72 Donald Sassoon, “The Rise and Fall of West European Communism, 1939-48,” Contemporary European History 1, no. 2 (July 1992), 149.
73 “Policy Towards France for Review by the Inter-Divisional Committee on France, 30 May 1944,” RG 84, Box 1, NACP.
satisfaction with the long-overdue recognition, Caffery indicated that communist forces, both the Party proper and leftist sympathizers, remained undeterred in their efforts to influence France’s postwar order. He described the Parti communiste français (PCF) – the French Communist Party – as highly organized and aggressive, but not militant; they could, under the right circumstances, assume power. He concluded his report with the ominous statement: “as France goes, the continent of Europe will probably go, and it is not in our interest to have the continent of Europe dominated by any single Power – friend or enemy.”

Like Caffery, many U.S. officials were troubled by the ambiguous nature of France’s left, which included communists, communist sympathizers, socialists, resistance members, trade and labour unionists, left-leaning workers, and anarchists. This assortment posed a special challenge to U.S. analysts because it appeared that the communist threat could emanate from many different directions. In the lead up to the French elections in October 1945, Ridgeway B. Knight, a member of SHAEF’s Mission to France, reported to the Mission Head that French men and women who joined the resistance during the war had temporarily shed their pre-war political affiliation, resulting in the creation of an indistinguishable body of left-leaning resistance members without a concrete postwar political identity. SHAEF authorities feared that any French citizen who supported the resistance or harboured leftist politics was capable of being converted to a left-wing “extremist” in the immediate postwar period.

74 Letter, Jefferson Caffery to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, 27 October 1944, RG 84, Box 1, NACP.
75 SHAEF Mission France: Political Report, 11 January 1945,” RG 84, Box 6, NACP.
76 Fortunately for Washington, in 1947, Paul Ramadier’s government forcibly excluded Communist ministers from participating in the established postwar alliance between the Parti communiste français (PCF), the Section Française de l’Internationale Ouvrière (SFIO), and the Mouvement Républicain Populaire (MRP). However, the PCF continued to produce strong poll numbers in elections – 25.6% in 1951, and 25.7% in 1956 – effectively holding the title as the largest political party of France’s Fourth
If authorities were concerned about the growing influence of communists during the months following France’s Liberation, the harsh winter spanning 1944 and 1945 heightened these fears. In January 1945, Caffery reported to the Secretary of State, Edward Stettinius Jr., that living conditions in France had plummeted to such a level that the French were remarking they had been better off under German occupation. Media across North America reported in December 1944 that Europe was experiencing the “worst winter of the war.” Coal shortages meant that houses could not be adequately heated; the destruction of transportation lines prevented the distribution of foodstuffs and basic goods like soap, clothing, and medical supplies; and the ongoing war meant any existing resources were allocated towards the Allied war effort first and foremost.

In February 1945, U.S. officials toured France and reported a widespread “lack of confidence in Anglo-American policy towards France” due to food and equipment shortages. U.S. officials feared that these conditions were ripe for social upheaval, or in the worst-case scenario, civil war. While France managed to survive the winter after Liberation, the picture remained bleak into the summer of 1945. The Under Secretary of State, Joseph C. Grew, addressed the situation with Stimson in June. Grew predicted that “if the people of that area [Western Europe], particularly those in France, have to face another winter without heat or without adequate food and clothing, I can foresee disturbances of such serious consequence as not only to involve conflict with our troops, but to imperil gravely our long-term interests.” U.S. authorities cautioned that a lack of

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77 Telegram, Jefferson Caffery to Secretary of State Edward Stettinius Jr., 15 January 1945, RG 84, Box 3, *NACP*.


79 “Report on Trip to Central and South Eastern France, 8-22 February 1945,” RG 84, Box 3, *NACP*.

80 Letter, Joseph C. Grew to Henry L. Stimson, 8 June 1945, RG 84, Box 3, *NACP*. 
basic supplies might create in France an atmosphere conducive to a communist revolt. Civilian relief, therefore, was intimately connected to France’s general socio-political stability, and U.S. plans for a secure, cooperative, and capitalist postwar Europe.

As the divisions of the Cold War began to solidify, U.S. authorities championed relief as a way to provide consumer goods and demonstrate the “American way of life” to the French. Prior to the implementation of the Marshall Plan, AAF was on the frontline of this mission. Beginning in 1946, AAF began to frame its relief efforts as a means of encouraging international cooperation, supporting democratic progress, and upholding free enterprise and trade in France. For example, AAF’s vice-president, Elliott Lee, declared in the New York Times that “we shall be helping to restore our traditional friend in Europe… we know it is to the best interest of America to have a vigorous, healthy, democratic France in the world.”

Harold Sheets, a longtime AAF director, wrote to U.S. donors that he believed AAF was an important tool in the promotion of “western ideals of culture and political life.” Despite the urgency of these claims, AAF’s adoption of a more politically inspired mandate was opportunistic. Calls for relief on the basis of humanitarian goodwill were falling flat with war-weary donors in the United States. Long-standing members of AAF understood that donors were unlikely to continue supporting the organization for purely altruistic purposes, but instead, Americans might be attracted to the organization if it was seen to be supporting U.S. foreign policy goals in France. AAF’s political awakening gained further legitimacy when the former Assistant Secretary of War, John J. McCloy, joined the organization as president in 1946.

81 “Relief for France to Broaden in 1947,” NYT, 4 February 1946, pg. 19.
82 Letter, Harold Sheets to John D. Rockefeller, 8 November 1946, RAC, Record Group 2: Office of the Messrs. Rockefeller; Series: World Affairs – Q, Box 43.
Speaking about his appointment to AAF, McCloy stated that “the rehabilitation of France represents an A 1 priority. Without that, we cannot have a stabilized Europe, or a progressive foreign policy.” He concluded that unlike other countries, “France has always been spectacular in her concern for liberty, and if we contribute to the extent we can to her social and moral reinvigoration, we serve not only our two countries but the entire world." McCloy articulated AAF’s mission as one of stabilizing France in order to stabilize Europe, and beyond. For McCloy, France lay at the heart of U.S. foreign relations with Western Europe, and aiding French civilians was equated with supporting international liberty and democracy.

While McCloy only served with AAF for one year, he used his political influence to campaign on behalf of the organization for donations. In a letter to John D. Rockefeller III in January 1947, McCloy asked the Rockefeller Brothers Fund for a donation, or at the very least, to spread the word of the organization to those who might be interested. McCloy appealed to Rockefeller on the basis of France’s strategic geographic location on the Atlantic seaboard, rich democratic history, and commitment to free enterprise. McCloy’s message resounded with Rockefeller, who sent a note to McCloy demonstrating his support for the cause along with a cheque for $10,000. The dual themes used by McCloy, of France as a traditional democratic ally and hub for capitalism, resounded in AAF’s publicity materials throughout 1947 and 1948.

As the agency attempted to garner support for its ongoing program of assistance to French civilians, members of AAF regularly discussed France’s political environment.

Communications between overseas staff or consultants and board members in Manhattan often contained references to the Cold War and French attitudes towards the American presence in France. An American relief consultant communicating with AAF’s vice-president, Anne Morgan, toured France in spring of 1945 attached to a U.S. infantry division. The consultant contemplated the likelihood of France succumbing to communist influence. She wrote to Morgan, “the bugaboo of Communism for France doesn’t disturb me a bit. It simply isn’t psychologically possible for her people. In fact, I often think that France’s greatest defense against Communism also constitutes her greatest weakness, namely, the rabid or almost rabid individualism of the average Frenchman.”

Members of AAF wrote letters and reports that contained similar messages: the French were depicted as staunchly committed to democracy, liberty, and individual rights. Unlike the note penned by Morgan’s associate, however, most of these documents did not explicitly mention communism. Instead, they allude to America’s ideological position on the eve of the Cold War. For instance, in autumn of 1946, AAF’s Fundraising Committee hosted a lecture series across the country with speakers proclaiming to audiences that “American Aid to France is an expression of American faith in the future of a free and democratic France.” Likewise, Brigadier General Harold F. Loomis, who replaced George Bakeman as the director in France in 1946, spoke of AAF as preserving and defending France’s “strategic” location – a reference to the notion that if France fell to communism, so would the rest of Europe.

85 Letter, anonymous to Anne Morgan, 12 March 1945, Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 15, MLM.
86 “American Aid to France Bulletin No. 8, October 1946,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Records, Box 221, CUL.
87 “Press Release: General Loomis – Former Chairman Allied Committee for Rearmament of French Armed Forces – Accepts Direction of Relief Work in France,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Records, Box 221, CUL.
Developments in 1947 further affirmed AAF’s evolving political platform. In March 1947, President Truman announced to the U.S. Congress that the United States would henceforth support all democratic countries struggling to overcome domestic or foreign “totalitarian regimes,” or authoritarian forces. As many historians have shown, the Truman Doctrine became one of the most important pretexts for U.S. intervention on a global scale during the Cold War. To implement its anticommunist vision in Europe, the Truman administration devised the Marshall Plan, otherwise known as the European Recovery Plan, which delivered approximately $13 billion in aid, ranging from basic supplies to industrial development, to sixteen European countries from 1948 to 1952. The historian Richard Kuisel argues that the Marshall Plan’s mandate for reconstruction and modernization epitomized American attempts to secure hegemonic status in France. Alongside the transfer of significant funds, an accompanying “cultural offensive” was launched to improve the United States’ image in France including the transmission of American music, art, films, and literature, the establishment of English-language libraries, exchange programs, and Franco-American organizations, and the distribution of media that promoted “the benefits of the American way of life.” The Marshall Plan’s “cultural offensive,” however, was downplayed by U.S. officials such as the Under

Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, William Clayton, who informed the French that U.S. economic assistance was meant to “help get their financial house in order, and to hold the line on the standard of living of their people.”  

As public donations for private relief began to dwindle in 1947, AAF refused to roll back efforts, insisting that its work was of the utmost importance to Franco-American relations. As such, AAF tried to capitalize on the newly-announced Marshall Plan by framing their fundraising campaign as political intervention in support of a fellow democracy. AAF’s Campaign and Publicity Director, Charles Todd, recommended that the 1947 fundraising campaign should mention the organization’s “potentialities for international good will” – a coded phrase to describe AAF’s capacity to potentially influence Franco-American relations, which, Todd explained, would appeal to “internationally minded figures” in the State Department. As such, the 1947 campaign referenced the destruction of the Second World War less frequently, and instead, calls for Franco-American cooperation and unity resounded. A pamphlet from 1947 entitled, “Your Investment in France” touted the official message of Franco-American relations, emphasizing both nations’ democratic heritage, consumerism, and commitment to human rights and individual liberties: “We need strong and enlightened French people as good neighbors and good customers in the everlasting struggle to preserve private enterprise and a democratic way of life in the heart of Europe.” Since France was “not cut off from us by an iron curtain,” it might be “potentially one of the few free-enterprise areas left in

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92 Ellen Garwood, “My Interviews with Will Clayton,” Will Clayton Papers, Box 2, HIA.
93 Charles L. Todd, “Analysis and Survey of Responsibilities Incurred Through AAtF Publicity in France,” AAF Records, Box 2, NYPL.
the world.” In 1947, AAF’s executives began to contemplate whether the organization’s efforts to demonstrate “practical brotherhood between free peoples” might be “an essential part of the creation of a world in which free individuals can continue business, professions, education, religion, and progress.” They concluded that AAF’s record thus far indicated that the organization was capable of assuming this lofty place in the future of Franco-American relations.

AAF’s 1947 fundraising campaign, publicity materials, and internal communications were fundamentally different from previous years. In the years 1944 to 1946, AAF treated aid to France as a benevolent gift, or a manifestation of friendly goodwill. By 1947, however, AAF described its relief as a political “investment” in democracy, capitalism, and individual rights. Aid was no longer exclusively an apolitical gesture of humanitarianism. Instead, private voluntary relief was on the front lines of the battle against the Soviet Union.

**Conclusion**

When AAF was formed in July 1944, its members stated their goal was to deliver to French women, men, and children, “the American people’s good will and friendly aid.” In this pursuit, AAF was supported by the Roosevelt administration, which regulated and controlled private voluntary relief organizations, insisting these agencies broadcast apolitical messages of international friendship. However, once Roosevelt’s relief bureaucracy was dissolved under President Truman in 1946, relief agencies were

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95 “Report of the Executive Administration, 5 March 1947,” AAF Records, Box 3, NYPL.
96 “Minutes of Third Meeting of Board of Directors, September 20, 1944,” AAF Records, Box 1, NYPL.
free to chart their own course if they decided to continue to provide foreign relief. AAF decided to not only continue sending relief supplies, but also, to redefine the organization’s program by providing social welfare services and contributing to France’s reconstruction. In order to garner support for these types of projects from both U.S. officials and the general American public, AAF began to frame its work as promoting democracy, international cooperation, and capitalism in France; a private demonstration in support of U.S. foreign policy goals in France.

In the months following France’s Liberation, the Roosevelt administration tacitly supported AAF’s endeavours as a means of demonstrating Americans’ generosity. At the same time, the Roosevelt administration recognized that private voluntary relief would help to stabilize France after years of war. Ensuring France’s recovery was in the United States’ interest because French ports and transportation networks were instrumental to Allied troops entering and moving across Europe. Roosevelt believed that France’s support – that is, the support of its military as well as its general population – was integral to Europe’s postwar security.

Roosevelt’s belief in the power of foreign aid may have propelled private voluntary relief organizations into action during the war, but the Allied bombing of France and subsequent combat destruction proved to be a powerful justification to sustain relief efforts in the eyes of AAF’s members. Eisenhower and other U.S. officials endorsed AAF’s work in “bombed out” communities because they believed relief was one way to compensate French victims and assist in the reconstruction of the country. In addition, the President’s War Relief Control Board and U.S. Embassy officials in France championed relief as a means of improving the United States’ reputation in areas where
large numbers of U.S. troops were stationed. AAF agreed with U.S. officials that their relief services could go a long way to enhance the United States’ status in France.

Engendering a positive international image was of the utmost importance to the Truman administration as the Cold War division lines began to take shape across Europe. The Truman administration hoped France would serve as a bastion of democracy in Europe, and become an important ally in the fight against communism. Taking advantage of this political climate, in 1946 and 1947, AAF began to reorient its relief platform to better reflect the Cold War foreign policy concerns of the American people. Press releases and fundraising materials referenced altruism or humanitarian goodwill less frequently, and instead, AAF claimed its civilian relief efforts helped secure France’s democracy and its citizens’ freedom. By consciously adopting a political platform, AAF became entangled in the larger American effort to spread democracy, liberalism, and capitalism in France after the Second World War.
Chapter Four: U.S. Relief through the Eyes of the French

In the years following France’s Liberation, French civilians who received AAF’s assistance went out of their way to thank the organization and its donors. As one young French woman wrote to AAF in 1945, “I want to express all our gratitude to the friendly and generous people who, from so far away, have known how to express their sympathy for us.”¹ In some locales, the French elevated American relief workers to an almost-mythical status. Residents in Soissons designated Anne Morgan the town’s “patron saint.” They believed that the Allies had spared Soissons from its bombing campaign because of the town’s close proximity to Morgan’s residence at Château de Blérancourt, despite the fact that Morgan was not in France for the duration of the war.²

Certainly, the French were grateful for their Liberation and for the American relief that followed. As leader of the Provisional Government, de Gaulle understood that after Liberation, U.S. relief from both private and official channels would most likely be necessary until France’s agricultural, industrial, and transportation sectors were able to recover. As French civilians slowly came to terms with their country’s devastation, they reached out to American officials and relief administrators in order to secure aid, oftentimes suggesting that U.S. relief was their due reward for withstanding Allied bombing campaigns, or for assisting American soldiers during the Normandy invasion.

Despite the fact that many French civilians looked to the United States to provide assistance after the war, AAF attempted to implement relief services during a period of escalating anti-Americanism in France that lasted well into the 1950s. The list of French grievances against the United States was long and varied, including criticisms of

¹ “Letters of Thanks Written by French People, 1945,” Margaret E. Hill Papers, Box 1, HIA.
² Sixth Meeting of the Board of Directors, 20 December 1944,” AAF Records, Box 1, NYPL.
Roosevelt’s recognition of Vichy France, the large number of U.S. troops in France – many of whom were perceived by the French to be unruly – and the proliferation of American mass culture. The most virulent critique, propagated mainly by French communists and nationalists, likened U.S. assistance to France in the form of the Marshall Plan to “economic colonization.”

Although their political platforms were divergent on many subjects, France’s political left and right both agreed that U.S. intervention or “colonization” was a threat to France’s autonomy and way of life. That is not to say that the Marshall Plan lacked French supporters; a variety of influential industrialists, technocrats, economists, and political moderates hoped to capitalize on the influx of available U.S. funds to finance economic revival, industrial modernization, and postwar reconstruction. However, there was one aspect of the Marshall Plan’s international agenda that troubled the majority of French citizens: America’s commitment to the strengthening of the German military and the revival of Germany’s economy.

Although the voices were loudest on the left, denigration of the United States eventually spanned the political spectrum as non-communists in France routinely denounced the purported shortcomings of the Marshall Plan, or the Americanization that accompanied the economic assistance.

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3 Roger, 320-322.
6 Roger, 321.
Despite its label as a private voluntary relief agency, AAF sought to accomplish similar sweeping goals to that of the Marshall Plan in France, including to improve the Franco-American relationship by offering economic and material assistance, and help a fragile democratic ally recover after years of warfare. As the following chapter will demonstrate, AAF’s relief efforts, both before and after the distribution of Marshall Plan aid, were not subject to the same French criticisms directed at the Marshall Plan and Americanization, more broadly. One reason for this disparity was that AAF offered relief on a much smaller scale, both in terms of funds available and population served, and was not nearly as well known as the Marshall Plan. More important to AAF’s reputation, however, was its status as a private voluntary organization. AAF received no Marshall Plan funding which prevented French critics of accusing the organization of threatening France’s autonomy and security.

Unlike the political baggage that went along with France’s acceptance of the Marshall Plan, French civilians generally believed that AAF derived its support from individual Americans who had no political agenda. As such, the French recipients of AAF’s relief reacted to the organization primarily with gratitude. AAF did not need to fundraise or justify their operations beyond the humanitarian angle in France, which meant that the organization’s increasing reliance on the Truman Administration’s anti-communist rhetoric was not observed by those receiving AAF’s assistance. In fact, AAF’s operations in France suggest the organization was more ideologically flexible than its U.S. press releases and fundraising campaigns indicated. Specifically, AAF rarely discussed its political outlook with French authorities and proved eager to cooperate with socialist and communist mayors across Northern France. In short, AAF carried out a
difficult balancing act by trying to accommodate Washington’s global anticommunist agenda at home in the United States, while simultaneously disavowing politics in France and appeasing the French left that came to power after the war.

_De Gaulle and Relief Policy in Liberated France_

In December 1941, de Gaulle wrote to Marian Dougherty, chair of the Free French Relief Committee (a member of the FFRC), to thank her organization’s American volunteers for their “relentless dedication” in aiding French civilians.\(^7\) De Gaulle was pleased that a few months earlier, Roosevelt had convinced Churchill to ease the blockade of Axis-controlled countries to allow limited shipments of civilian aid to reach Vichy France. Three months after his original letter to Dougherty, de Gaulle wrote again to explain how “particularly prestigious” the aid was in the eyes of French civilians because it came from America.\(^8\) Establishing close relations with U.S. relief networks was part of de Gaulle’s larger goal to cultivate “national solidarity” between the Free French movement and “centres of French life” abroad – organizations, institutes, and groups that claimed French heritage, promoted French culture or language, or were dedicated to assisting the French during the war.\(^9\)

In the midst of France’s Liberation, de Gaulle reached out to Roosevelt in August 1944 to ensure French civilians would receive U.S. relief supplies. In a personal letter that was somewhat out of character given that de Gaulle and Roosevelt were not on

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\(^7\) Letter, Charles de Gaulle to Marian A. Dougherty, 17 December 1941, _Archives nationales (AN)_ , Paris: Saint-Denis, Record Group AG/3(1)/256: France Libre de Gaule, Affaire étrangères – États-Unis.

\(^8\) Ibid.

friendly terms, the General remarked that he hoped Roosevelt would travel across the Atlantic so that the President could witness firsthand France’s “material and moral” destruction. He indicated that providing civilians with supplies and basic public services would be the most difficult problem immediately facing France after Liberation, especially in cities like Paris, Marseille, Lyon, and “les grands centres du Nord.” Anticipating that American relief agencies would come to the rescue of French civilians, he thanked the United States for all it would do in the coming days to abate suffering.  

Despite these missives, civilian relief never ranked as one of the General’s primary concerns. As head of state, de Gaulle made overtures to foreign leaders and aid organizations, but he refrained from directly intervening in the private voluntary relief sphere. This does not mean that de Gaulle ignored issues surrounding civilian aid, but rather that they were secondary to more pressing concerns such as prosecuting Vichy collaborators or ensuring French participation in the Liberation of Germany. After touring France and taking in scenes of devastation in the late summer and autumn of 1944, de Gaulle came to the conclusion that France’s Liberation was a “moral emancipation,” not release from physical suffering. “The liberation,” de Gaulle declared, “was not going to bring any immediate material relief to a generally drained and dismembered nation.” While he could “see blue sky on the horizon,” the material shortages and physical destruction of the war had resulted in “a profound rift in the nation’s political, administrative, social and moral structure.”

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10 Letter, Charles de Gaulle to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 14 August 1944. AN, Record Group AG/3(1)/256: France Libre de Gaulle, Affaire étrangères – États-Unis.
12 Ibid., 691-692, 771.
Establishing order rather than alleviating the material needs of French citizens became de Gaulle’s top priority after Liberation. Dealing with the crisis of living conditions was a daily challenge for the Provisional Government, but de Gaulle conceded that he knew France’s problems “were not immediately solvable.” Instead, de Gaulle focused on reestablishing and normalizing the official channels of the state. These efforts revolved around revitalizing industry, stabilizing the economy, appeasing labour unions and workers, reinstituting democratic procedures, achieving legal justice against collaborators, and reestablishing the free press.

The main responsibility for regulating civilian relief thus fell to the Ministry of Public Health; the Ministry of Reconstruction and Urban Development; and in the case of displaced persons, the Ministry of Prisoners, Deportees, and Refugees. These different ministries referred back to a memo drafted by de Gaulle’s government in exile, the CFLN, in July 1943, which contained several important guidelines for the provision of relief and reconstruction. This document was generated in response to the upcoming launch of UNRRA, but its application pertained more broadly to foreign governments and private agencies that might offer relief to France in the years to come. In principle, the CFLN agreed that securing and coordinating emergency civilian relief would be of paramount importance once the Axis powers had been defeated. However, in 1943, the lines between relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction were unclear.

In order to guide future relief efforts, the CFLN defined relief and rehabilitation to be the immediate provision of food, shelter, and clothing, as well as any preventative or

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13 Ibid., 772-773.
rehabilitative medical services to stop the spread of epidemics and restore public health.\textsuperscript{14} Reconstruction, on the other hand, was a much more complicated and involved process that caused the CFLN to pause. As the historian Peter Davies points out, during the war “de Gaulle was reluctant to plan ahead, or even talk about, the hoped-for future.”\textsuperscript{15} While de Gaulle was willing to outline conditions for emergency civilian relief in 1943, he deflected discussion of reconstruction to an undefined time when France would be armed with “stronger political representation.”\textsuperscript{16} Part of the problem was that future reconstruction efforts would most likely require the sustained support of foreign governments owing to the economic and industrial weakness of France. For the CFLN, the presence or intervention of foreign authorities and organizations in France could not be tolerated until Britain and the United States recognized de Gaulle’s leadership and allowed for French control of its own domestic politics.

The other crucial condition that the CFLN proposed regarding emergency relief revolved around the distribution of aid supplies. Specifically, the CFLN insisted that a French organization control or oversee the internal distribution of all relief supplies, even those of foreign relief organizations.\textsuperscript{17} This regulation was intended by the CFLN to empower the war’s victims and survivors and helped counter the Allied image of the French as a “conquered people.”\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Koreman, 53.
position to regain its Great Power status, the CFLN reasoned, then French citizens needed to participate in their own recovery.

To ensure that French authorities remained in control of relief, de Gaulle reinvented the *Secours National*, France’s national welfare organization, as *Entr’aide* Française in August 1944. *Secours National* was formed in 1914 to provide assistance to the French military and their families, as well as civilian victims during and following the First World War. After the Fall of France, Marshal Pétain assumed personal control of *Secours National*, and the organization became a mouthpiece spreading Vichy propaganda, specifically messages that upheld forced labour programs. De Gaulle’s rehabilitation of *Entr’aide* in 1944 was part of a broader movement to rid France of its Vichy past and establish the Provisional Government’s legitimacy; rewarding the resistance with government positions was one way to achieve these ends. Raoul Dautry and Justin Godart served as *Entr’aide*’s presidents, and were supported by a central committee of ten to twelve delegates, including former members of the resistance, trade union leaders, religious figures, and experienced relief administrators. *Entr’aide* documented and investigated claims of devastation made by the French, supervised all

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20 Raoul Dautry became the first president of *Entr’aide* in 1944, but did not hold the position for long because de Gaulle appointed him Minister of Reconstruction and Urban Development in the same year. Justin Godart took over for Dautry at the end of 1944. Godart had a rich resistance pedigree. He voted against the constitutional amendment that brought Pétain to power and destroyed the Third Republic in 1940, and during the occupation of France, contributed to a resistance newspaper. During his tenure as president of *Entr’aide*, Godart also served as Mayor of Lyon. Du Secours National à l’*Entr’aide* Française par le Secours Social, August-November 1944,” *AN*, Record Group 307AP/159: Fonds Raoul Dautry.
domestic and foreign private relief agencies operating in France after the war, and
coordinated the distribution of relief supplies to devastated individuals across the country.

Entr’aide’s central committee granted local delegates the power to assess the
needs of French men and women in their districts. French citizens would present their
claims to the local Entr’aide delegate, who would then make recommendations to the
Ministry of Public Health, and any relief agencies interested in providing assistance.
Since Entr’aide’s delegates were local contact points, the Ministry of Public Health
trained these representatives to emphasize France’s role in its own relief and recovery.
For example, Entr’aide’s central committee told the delegate from the Haute-Vienne
department in Limoges to remind local authorities that Entr’aide was helping France
maintain its “autonomy and freedom of action.” Entr’aide’s desire to remain
autonomous while at the same time, depending on foreign supplies and services led to
tension between France and the Allies. Since the Anglo-Americans were still absorbed
with fighting the Axis powers in November 1944, Raoul Dautry proudly, but somewhat
naïvely, claimed that Entr’aide would recruit predominantly from pools of able-bodied
French women and men who had rediscovered their “long-lost freedom” upon
Liberation. In the early spring of 1945, however, Entr’aide’s new president, Justin
Godart, softened this message by informing the French Consul General in New York that
“France counts upon the energy of her own children to reconstruct the ruins but also upon
the help of her Allies. In assisting in the reconstruction of our cities and institutions the

21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Letter, R. Dautry to Commandant Borary, November 1944, Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 5A, MLM.
United States will give to our country permanent proof of the traditional friendship which united France with the United States.”

As de Gaulle had pointed out, flooding civilians with relief supplies would only temporarily solve France’s material problems resulting from several years of German occupation and the destruction incurred during Liberation. France’s agricultural production, industrial output, and public services would eventually be capable of restoring civilians’ health and improving living conditions, but these sectors needed time to recover. De Gaulle preached patience but time was a luxury that many devastated civilians could not afford. In the interim, AAF worked with *Entr’aide* to alleviate the suffering of French civilians.

*French Requests for U.S. Relief and Responses to American Aid to France*

AAF field workers began to arrive in communities across France in the summer of 1945, fearful that the French might be hostile to their presence. As one field worker explained to AAF’s board of directors, “I had been told by one or two people that the Normans were unresponsive to strangers, and disliked Americans in particular, so it would be hard, if not impossible, for me to work with them.” She was relieved to discover that the opposite was the case: “My experience has proved just the contrary. We have been so cordially received and welcomed into the life of the community, not only as representatives of a relief and service agency, but also as individuals.”

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24 Letter, Justin Godart to Monsieur Guerin de Beaumont, French Consul General, New York, 1 March 1945, RG 220; RG 469, Box 1, *NACP*.

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As this example demonstrates, AAF overseas staff anticipated that the French might not welcome American relief workers when they arrived in France. These fears were a legitimate reaction to the undercurrent of anti-Americanism that began to spread across France after Liberation, especially in areas with a strong socialist or communist presence, or in communities that hosted large numbers of U.S. troops. The post-Liberation wave of anti-Americanism initially revolved around the Roosevelt administration’s relationship with Vichy France, and evolved in the Liberation period around the perception that the United States failed to respect France’s autonomy. In October 1944, the prominent French writer, Claude Aveline, summarized French men and women’s principal points of contention against the United States in *Les Lettres Françaises*, a resistance magazine with ties to the Communist Party.²⁶ Aveline complained that while President Roosevelt claimed he supported democratic French elections, he had recognized Marshal Pétain as the head of the French state during the war. Roosevelt’s failure to recognize de Gaulle and the CFLN was made worse since French forces were dying alongside the Allies in the Liberation of Europe. Aveline also accused the American press of running “lurid stories” suggesting that greedy civilians in Normandy were celebrating the Liberation “like gluttons.” Most of Normandy, Aveline pointed out, remained on the brink of starvation given the years of the oppressive German occupation. Perhaps worst of all, Aveline declared that the United States was paternalistic in thinking it could teach democracy to the French as if they were “a lot of nazified small boys.” Americans simply did not understand France’s complicated wartime occupation,

²⁶ *Les Lettres Françaises* had a typical circulation of only approximately 50,000, but thousands more had undoubtedly read or heard about Aveline’s article due to its inflammatory nature, the U.S. Embassy noted.
and Roosevelt’s insistence that France hold fair postwar elections under the United States’ watchful eye was insulting to France’s history of liberal democratic revolution.\(^{27}\)

American officials were well aware of French criticisms of the United States. In January 1945, Ambassador Jefferson Caffery discounted French grievances against the United States as an “old story.”\(^{28}\) However, SHAEF officials expressed concern about the upswelling of anti-Americanism in France. “Ill-will” against the Allies was increasing among French civilians, SHAEF reported, partially because the ongoing war was interrupting the shipment of relief supplies earmarked for French civilians.\(^{29}\) A few months later, Lieutenant Colonel Van der Stricht alerted the Secretary of State, Edward Stettinius Jr., that the principal reason for French men and women’s increasing “coolness towards Americans” was the failure to provide adequate relief supplies.\(^{30}\)

The announcement of the Marshall Plan in 1947 did little to temper the existing French hostility towards the United States.\(^{31}\) The Marshall Plan addressed French calls for greater material supplies and economic support, but it also drew attention to France’s reliance on the United States. French nationalists and left-wing supporters, in particular, were suspicious of any policies that threatened France’s autonomy. French critics of the Marshall Plan declared that it was an “imperialist policy” designed to destroy France’s democracy and “national sovereignty.”\(^{32}\) Benoît Frachon, the Secretary-General of the Confédération générale du travail (CGT), France’s confederation of trade unions, argued

\(^{27}\)”Confidential Airgram, Chapin, American Embassy, Paris, to Secretary of State, 12 October 1944,” RG 84, Box 2, NACP.

\(^{28}\)”Letter, Jefferson Caffery to Secretary of State, 3 January 1945, RG 84, Box 10, NACP.

\(^{29}\)”Confidential SHAEF Memo: Political Report, France, 11 January 1945,” RG 84, Box 6, NACP.

\(^{30}\)”Report on trip through Central and South Eastern France by Lt. Colonel Van der Stricht, forwarded to the Secretary of State by Jefferson Caffery, 3 March 1945,” RG 84, Box 6, NACP.

\(^{31}\)McKenzie, 25.

that the Marshall Plan would hurt the working class’ ability to recover from the war with “independence, national sovereignty… [and] the emergence of a genuine democracy.”

Violent strikes against the Marshall Plan and in support of workers’ rights broke out in 1947, but over time, French workers began to feel alienated as the strikes failed to address their genuine labour concerns and instead, were commandeered by members of the PCF as agitation in support of communist politics. Despite French labourers’ dissatisfaction with the strikes, the historian Alessandro Brogi notes that French workers across the political spectrum continued to support the strike rhetoric denouncing the United States, even if they came to accept the Marshall Plan. In some French villages, farmers and artisans began to question exactly what improvements the Marshall Plan had brought about, claiming they saw no evidence of progress in their local communities.

When the Marshall Plan concluded in 1952, U.S. officials noted that the Franco-American relationship had deteriorated largely due to the “long continuance of aid.” Moreover, the French resented that the Marshall Plan had resulted in “an increasing number of intrusions into their internal affairs by an increasing number of Americans.”

French reproaches were often contradictory, targeting the United States’ failure to provide swift and adequate relief supplies, and, once those supplies were forthcoming, the alleged imperialist overtures of American economic support. While these themes

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35 Brogi, 97-98.
36 McKenzie, 79-80.
resounded in the French media, AAF’s private relief was not a direct target for criticism. AAF’s Division of Public Relations and Publicity liked to remind U.S. donors that the organization enjoyed “excellent press” in France, and amiable relations with the French civilians it encountered. Even French men and women who may have been justified in their anger towards the United States, most notably those injured or made destitute by Allied bombs, reached out to U.S. authorities to request private relief in a courteous manner.\(^{38}\) For example, Mademoiselle L. Saline wrote to Roosevelt in February 1945, asking if an American relief agency could provide clothing, nursery equipment, milk, and vitamins for her orphanage in Lisieux, where the number of orphaned children had doubled to sixty in the wake of the Allied bombing of Normandy. Saline asked if Roosevelt would serve as an honorary “godfather” to the children, thus appealing for relief based on the perception of Americans as benevolent patriarchs.\(^{39}\)

Many requests for U.S. relief seemed to respectfully imply that the United States should compensate the French for damages resulting from the Allied bombing campaigns and subsequent combat with German forces during Liberation. However, few French civilians placed blame explicitly on the United States. For example, Sister Clotilde, the Supérieure of the Religieuses Franciscaines in Nîmes, wrote the White House asking if an American philanthropic agency could help with the rebuilding of a surgical clinic that had been destroyed by Allied bombs on 27 May 1944.\(^{40}\) Although she discussed the destruction wrought by the Allied bombing, Clotilde appealed for American support by

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\(^{38}\) Most of the following letters addressed to U.S. authorities were written in 1945 by French men and women and sent to the United States, care of President Roosevelt, President Truman, or simply, the White House. The letters were passed on to the President’s War Relief Control Board, first, which forwarded requests specific to France to AAF.

\(^{39}\) Letter, Miss L. Saline to President Roosevelt, 20 February 1945, RG 220; RG 469, Box 1, NACP.

\(^{40}\) Letter to Truman care of Jefferson Caffery from Sister Clotilde, Supérieure des Religieuses Franciscaines, Nîmes, June 1945, RG 220; RG 469, Box 1, NACP.
declaring that the surgical unit would strive to assist anyone who needed help, regardless of religion, class, or nationality.

There were, however, rare exceptions to French men and women’s respectful appeals for U.S. relief. A French cleric named Abbé Renault, complained to President Roosevelt that indiscriminate Allied bombing on 20 June 1944, had destroyed a church and more than twenty houses in his village of Bures, located in Lower Normandy. Renault charged that since there were no evident military objectives in Bures, “perhaps the bombing of the village was a mistake.” He asked Roosevelt to organize the shipment of relief supplies and to help the community rebuild so that “the memory of the day when the village was bombed would be wiped out.”

Some of the letters sent to the President’s War Relief Control Board requesting assistance seemed to be suggesting that the French deserved a reward for having resisted the Nazis. In February 1945, Fernande Thibault of Planchez-en-Morvan in central France wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt, who was emerging as a powerful figure in the movement for human rights. Thibault requested relief for his hometown, which the Germans had burned to the ground in reprisal for a local uprising. Similar justifications appeared in a letter to the State Department from Auguste Leridez, who requested aid for a church that had been destroyed in the Allied bombing of the village of Cauquigny. She pointed out that the townspeople had helped to assist or hide U.S. paratroopers who had landed nearby on D-Day. Reconstructing the church would not only repair the damage caused by the bombing, it would also provide a place of worship for the hundreds of U.S. military

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41 Letter, Abbé Renault to President Roosevelt, 6 February 1945, RG 220; RG 469, Box 1, NACP.
42 Letter, Fernande Thibault to Mrs. Roosevelt, 8 February 1945, RG 220; RG 469, Box 1, NACP.
personnel stationed in proximity to Cauquigny.\textsuperscript{43} These types of requests were compatible with the Gaullist myth that France was a country of resisters, perhaps reinforcing the notion amongst relief administrators.\textsuperscript{44}

French requests for American cultural products, especially books, magazines, and films were also common. Professor Landré from the University of Caen wrote to his colleague, Professor Horatio Smith of Columbia University, requesting academic publications. The University of Caen’s well-established library collection had been destroyed in the Allied bombing campaigns, he explained. Landré hoped his colleague could coordinate efforts with U.S. relief agencies to replenish the library.\textsuperscript{45} Material requests also came from French officials. The \textit{Sous-Directeur} of the Ministry of Reconstruction and Urban Development, A. Fortin, wrote to AAF’s director, George Bakeman, in April 1946 to request that AAF establish “cantonments” in areas such as lumber yards, where French labourers were extracting raw materials for future reconstruction. Fortin hoped that AAF would support these work sites by providing a

\textsuperscript{43} Letter, Mrs. Auguste Leridez to State Department, 8 May 1945, RG 220; RG 469, Box 1, \textit{NACP}. Cauquigny is located about 4.5km away from the famous \textit{Sainte-Mère-Église}, which serves as a popular destination for World War II pilgrimages due to its Airborne Museum and proximity to other sites of D-Day commemoration. The story of paratrooper John Steele, who landed on one of the church’s spires and was stuck for hours as Allied forces clashed with Germans in the town below, attracts many visitors and tour groups. A parachute remains on the church spire to this day, serving as a memorial to the U.S. troops who Liberated the area. It is unclear if this is the church that Leridez is referring to in her letter.

\textsuperscript{44} The “Gaullist Myth” is generally used to refer to postwar claims, spouted by de Gaulle and other authorities to legitimize their power, that France was a nation of resisters. The myth claimed that the French who suffered, did so at the hands of the Germans, not Vichy. Collaborators had been a small, cowardly minority; the true French were the majority who had rebelled against the German occupation forces. This myth has been discussed and disproven in scholarship, such as: Paxton, \textit{Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944}; Jackson, \textit{France: The Dark Years 1940-1944}; and, Richard Goslan, “The Legacy of World War II in France: Mapping the Discourses of Memory,” in \textit{The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe} eds. Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 73-101.

circulating library with American books, magazines, and other literary materials.

Requests for AAF to provide American cultural products appear to contradict the notion, often propagated by French communists, that French men and women despised the influx of American films, music, magazines, and books that occurred in the postwar period.

Collectively, these letters soliciting U.S. assistance demonstrate that AAF and in general, private voluntary relief agencies, had successfully fostered America’s image as a benevolent provider of relief for the Nazis’ victims. Even though the Allies had aggravated devastation during France’s Liberation, French civilians did not want to risk alienating a potential donor by criticizing the United States’ wartime conduct. Moreover, these letters showcase the agency of French civilians, many of whom felt empowered to request U.S. relief as compensation for surviving the Allied bombing campaigns, contributing to the French resistance, or assisting U.S. soldiers during the Normandy invasion. AAF, however, routinely stripped the French of any agency by idealizing civilians as helpless but virtuous victims, who had suffered the horrors of war for the greater good of the Allied war effort. The reality of French civilians’ war experience and devastation was much more complex and individualistic, often depending on a combination of different factors such as an individual’s age, gender, familial relations, class, locale, religious denomination, and political affiliation. The French did not share a common wartime experience, which resulted in a range of attitudes on occupation, collaboration, resistance, justice, and devastation upon Liberation. Despite these differences, AAF clung to the simplified image of the “grateful French,” mainly as a method of humanizing French civilians for U.S. donors after years of collaboration with

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46 Letter, A. Fortin, Sous-Directeur, Ministry of Reconstruction, to George Bakeman, 25 April 1946, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Records, Box 221, CUL.
47 Koreman, 2-3.
the Germans, and in order to bypass any discussion of France’s moral transgressions
during the occupation.\(^{48}\)

From 1945 to 1948, AAF interpreted nearly every positive encounter between a
French civilian and an AAF relief worker as evidence of French reverence for the United
States. AAF’s overseas field workers routinely described the warm welcome of the
French, and civilians’ “uncontrolled joy” to be receiving U.S. relief.\(^{49}\) In some cases,
French gratitude was aimed at particularly competent AAF field workers. Many of these
American women and men became distinguished local figures in the French communities
they served, such as Anna MacIntyre, AAF’s director at the Coutances community centre.
MacIntyre was showered with praise by the community she served and named an
honorary citizen of Coutances in a ceremony held by Mayor Marcel Hélie in 1948.\(^{50}\)

In addition to the positive feedback that AAF workers received while on location
in French communities, the organization also received letters from French recipients of
relief. Although only approximately one hundred of these letters survived in a cultivated
archival collection, they provide insight into the positive French reaction to foreign aid
agencies.\(^{51}\) Women, especially mothers of children receiving aid, were more likely than
men to write to AAF presumably because the organization’s relief programs benefitted

\(^{48}\) Relief administrators were one of the many groups of people who turned a blind eye to Vichy’s
corruption and French citizens’ collusion. For more on French memory of the Second World War, see:
under the Occupation*; Gilda, Marianne *In Chains: Everyday Life in the French Heartland Under the
German Occupation* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002); Richard Goslan, *Vichy’s Afterlife: History
and Counterhistory in Postwar France* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 2000).

\(^{49}\) “Sixth Meeting of the Board of Directors, 20 December 1944,” AAF Records, Box 1, *NYPL*.

\(^{50}\) Letter, Margaret Olmstead to Mr. William Montgomery Bennett, 2 August 1948, *Archives municipales
de Coutances*, 8H Seconde Guerre Mondaile, 67-69; *La Reconstruction à Coutances*.

\(^{51}\) These letters tend to come in three distinct forms: individual letters sent to AAF or collected by overseas
workers, that ended up in the personal papers of the board of directors or members; letters or snippets of
writing compiled by AAF for press releases; and, booklets of thank you messages written or illustrated by
groups of children and staff who attended or were employed by programs sponsored by the organization.
them the most. Additionally, some of AAF’s assistance, such as the child “adoption” program, encouraged communication between French mothers or guardians and U.S. donors. On the other hand, the men who sent letters to AAF tended to be local authority figures such as teachers, village notables, religious leaders, or directors of various civic groups writing on behalf of a number of relief recipients.

In these letters, French men and women tended to provide a brief snapshot of their devastation along with messages of thanks: a widower whose son died after contracting tuberculosis in Germany, thanked AAF for providing his townspeople with clothes; an 89 year old woman whose house was burned to the ground by retreating Germans was grateful she received a care package; a schoolteacher wrote to thank the organization for providing her with a much needed new dress. Some of these letters appeared quaint, as in the case of a farmer with land outside of Corcieux, who donated three pigeons to AAF as a thank you for their help clearing fallen trees on his bombed-in property. The pigeons were taken to AAF’s warehouse in Paris where they became beloved mascots of the organization.

The majority of letters that AAF received came from French mothers, or children. In order to tailor relief supplies to fit the most pressing needs of devastated French children, AAF put U.S. donors in touch with the French families that they were “adopting.” These American sponsors could then send their “adopted” French children the appropriate sized clothing and shoes, as well as their favourite foods or toys. Madame

52 In a sample of letters taken for this dissertation from various, the following gender breakdown existed: women wrote 68% of letters, while men wrote 31%.
Pirodeau from Argy wrote to thank her children’s sponsor in June 1945, for the packages of food and clothing that had been donated. She explained that her youngest child, Michel, was born in August 1943, and one week later, her husband was shot by the Germans for his involvement in the resistance. She provided a picture of her three children and their measurements as requested for future relief packages. Most of the letters sent by French children’s parents or guardians followed the same pattern of describing the family’s misfortune during the war and Liberation, explaining the dire needs of the children, followed by profuse statements of gratitude for the sponsor’s generosity.

Although many on the AAF staff were bilingual and helped with translations, miscommunication did occur occasionally between sponsors and adoptees. For example, the mother of a boy named Jean Claude wrote to thank his benefactor for a recent package of clothing in July 1946. She explained that all the items “fit marvelously,” except there was one problem: Jean Claude was a boy, and therefore, she would have to refashion the “two pretty dresses” into “play suits.” Although Jean was a common male name in France, the U.S. sponsor assumed Jean Claude to be a female child (most likely Anglicizing and thus feminizing the name). Jean Claude’s mother was embarrassed to bring up the mishap and sought to ease the faux pas by forging a connection. She

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54 Letter, Madame Pirodeau to American Aid to France Sponsor, 14 June 1945, Margaret E. Hill Papers, Box 1, HIA.
55 In order to receive assistance from AAF, devastated French civilians had to register their claims with Entr’aide. Delegates from Entr’aide were supposed to investigate the legitimacy of claims, however, based on the sheer number of devastated civilians, it would have been nearly impossible to look with detail into every claim.
56 Letter, re: Jean Claude, 29 July 1946, Margaret E. Hill Papers, Box 1, HIA.
mentioned that her family hid two U.S. paratroopers, one of whom was from her benefactor’s hometown, Los Angeles, during the invasion of Normandy.  

Many sponsored children relied on their parents and guardians to thank AAF, but a number of children also penned their own letters. A majority of these letters came from children aged four to sixteen, who attended AAF’s “fresh air camps,” sometimes referred to as “vacation camps,” or “summer camps” (“colonie de vacances”) during 1945 and 1946. The absence of familial figures and the everyday dangers of the German occupation forced French children to assume adult roles prematurely during the war. AAF attempted to institute programs such as summer camps to re-normalize adolescence and allow children to revert back to more traditional juvenile roles. Understandably, children were more likely than adults to accept AAF’s assistance without critically analyzing the political nature of relief. Many of these children marveled at the American soldiers who came to help “free” France. For some French children, American soldiers filled emotional voids caused by the absence of familial figures who had been taken away by the war, a process that likely served a similar purpose for U.S. soldiers who were far away from their families and homes. As the historian Mary Louise Roberts has emphasized, the U.S. army’s effort to befriend children by offering them rides on army Jeeps, and gifts such as candy, chocolate, chewing gum, and fruit, helped to spread American goodwill and introduce the French to American consumer goods.

57 Ibid.  
58 These overnight camps lasted for three to six weeks and ran during the summer and autumn in various rural areas across France. The majority of letters came from camps south of Paris and within proximity to Orléans, Tours, Dijon, and Lyon, but others existed in Normandy, and outside of Lille and Reims. The camps’ main purpose was to feed and shelter devastated or orphaned children, while letting them recover from the war years in a peaceful, nature-oriented environment. French personnel operated the camps while Entr’aide supervised the camps’ activities and delivered AAF’s shipments of foodstuffs and clothing.  
60 Ibid., 161-178.
The children’s letters that arrived at AAF headquarters in the autumn of 1945 reflected a strong propensity for all things American. Food was the overwhelming focus of the children’s letters. The most popular foods sent by AAF were bananas, oatmeal, milk, fish, chocolate, and cake. In almost every letter, the children thanked AAF for these specific foods, which they claimed had helped them regain their health and happiness. One child from Préfontaines described entering the camps underweight and weak and exiting the camp three weeks later having gained a few kilos. A child from Cepoy declared that AAF’s donations of tuna fish and crackers had saved many children from starvation.61

Some of the letters were remarkably creative, such as the one written by a group of girls from a summer camp located in a château along the Loire. The letter was written in a fairytale-style based on the famous children’s book, Madeline, by Ludwig Bemelmans. The letter began, “Once upon a time, one hundred little girls in a pink brick château… to refresh their health and live in happiness once again, to forget the war and hardships, had to leave their homes.” The story goes on to describe the girls’ recovery through quiet rest, peaceful activities, games, and walks in the woods. Their “great friend,” represented by AAF, “pampered them” with chocolate, cakes, and candies. The letter concluded: “that is why today, in the château, one hundred little girls filled with laughter will sing and dance, and hoping to catch your attention, will launch a cry to the distant America, from the bottom of their hearts: thank you.”62

Many of the boys who attended the camps expressed their gratitude by embracing the idea of France and the United States as nations that both valued freedom and

61 “Bulletins September 1945 – Letters of Thanks from French Children,” Anne Tracy Morgan Papers: Box 5A, MLM.
62 Ibid.
independence. The theme of Franco-American friendship was most likely adopted through contact with adults, including family members, camp counselors, or teachers. Henri, who attended a camp in Douchy, wrote “Please believe, dear friends, that we shall never forget what America has already done for us, and is still doing. *Vive l’Amerique! Vive la France!*” Several male campers concluded their letters with the refrain, “long live France and America!” A camper from a colony outside of Lyon wrote, “La Fayette gave you your freedom, and today, you in turn generously send us ours. In doing this, you saved us from the threat of famine.”

Referencing U.S. troops’ participation in the invasion and Liberation of France was also a popular theme. Louis, attending a camp in Cepoy, wrote to thank AAF for the fish they had provided. The letter read, “[the food] shows that the Americans are thinking of France, that they are helping to reconstruct France which was so devastated by the war. We are grateful to the American soldiers who so generously spilled their blood to free the world, and France in particular. They drove the enemy from our midst.” Another child attending a camp outside of Paris referred to America the “country of hope.” He wrote, “Cheers to the Americans who crossed the great Atlantic and made an unforgettable landing and revived the country of France.”

Some children tried to imagine the landscape where the food they received had been produced. Jean, a camper from Cepoy, wrote “when eating the fish, I could almost see the marvelous rivers of America, where fishermen catch the delicious fish that make such an enjoyable food. In eating the oatmeal, my thoughts went to the vast grain fields, reaching as far as the eye can see in the great country called the United States.”

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63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
boy attending a camp outside of Paris, wrote, “I have always dreamed of going to America and I hope to go someday, because I want to be an aviator. I have heard about it as a marvelous country with prairies and cowboys and mushroom cities. It would be interesting to visit your great factories; thanks to them you won the war.” These letters demonstrate that the physical presence of Americans on French soil, whether they were soldiers or relief workers, greatly shaped French children’s views of the United States as a land of plenty that was happy to share its wealth.

In the years following France’s Liberation, AAF collected an abundance of relief requests and letters of appreciation from French civilians. The outpouring of support in these letters reveals that AAF was successful in positively influencing the lives of many individual French men, women, and children. Unlike the pervasive dialogue surrounding the positive and negative ramifications of the Marshall Plan and Americanization in France, AAF enjoyed the popular support, or at the very least, the gratitude, of a number of French men, women, and children.

Local Authorities, American Aid to France, and Relief in Northern France

When AAF’s relief administrators and field workers arrived in Normandy in 1945, they were met by local authorities who often held small ceremonies or gave speeches to welcome the workers to their villages. A British man hired by AAF to deliver donated clothing to the Manche department reflected that the speeches might appear to Anglo-Saxons as “too eloquent and flowery,” but they were in fact delivered with great sincerity. In one case, a local mayor had “tears in his eyes” when he told AAF workers

65 Ibid.
about “the sufferings of the people, of their gratitude for their liberation, of the severe shortage of clothing, and of the appropriateness of the gifts.”

For several communities in Northern France, the mayor was the most powerful voice when it came to securing foreign relief. Mayors from small cities and towns pursued their citizens’ claims for relief relentlessly within the broader channels that dictated aid. They worked with Entr’aide delegates and France’s Ministry of Reconstruction and Urban Development to ensure that the devastation suffered by their communities was part of the public record, eventually securing funding from Fourth Republic administrations, and retaining architects to help reconstruct townships. Beyond working alongside French authorities, they also wrote letters to U.S. consuls and the U.S. Embassy in Paris. Ambassador Caffery forwarded such requests to the President’s War Relief Control Board and AAF.

Mayors were prominent voices in AAF’s relief network partially because of the prominent status of local officials in Northern France following the Liberation. The German occupation had put local officials in a difficult position during the war. While mayors wanted to protect their constituents, they also had to cooperate with the occupation authorities to enforce Vichy’s policies. Unable to walk this tightrope for very long, some mayors, especially those who were socialists or troubled by Vichy’s conservative authoritarianism, resigned – whether coerced or of their own volition – in 1942. For those that remained at their post, mayoral autonomy strengthened as Vichy’s authority began to wane, a process that started with the appointment of Pierre Laval as

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66 “ARF Bulletin, No. 5, September 1945,” Unitarian Service Committee (USC) Records, ARF Files, Box 2, Harvard University Archives.
head of government in April 1942, and picked up momentum as unpopular forced labour schemes were introduced and the French resistance began to consolidate support.68 Once France’s Liberation appeared imminent, some mayors still in office began to defy Vichy authorities to justify maintaining their power after the war.69 There were, of course, instances of mayors charged with collaboration or detested by their local communities, but there was no shortage of local resistance figures waiting to fill their positions upon Liberation.

Communal networks of support were especially important in Northern France, where villages had been occupied since June 1940.70 The historian Julian Jackson has shown that Norman peasants did not necessarily welcome de Gaulle’s return to France after D-Day. Many of these peasants were social conservatives who, when forced to choose, preferred to be ruled by the Germans they had come to know rather than the unfamiliar Anglo-Americans.71 For instance, many Normans believed that they had better access to foodstuffs under the German occupation than in the immediate postwar period. As more and more Americans began to stream into Northern France in 1944 and 1945, mayors appeared to the locals as trusted figures who better understood the complexities of living under German occupation, and the blurred lines between resistance and collaboration.

Consequently, mayors were frequently the most influential advocates for U.S. relief in smaller locales. Throughout 1945 and 1946, French mayors inundated

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68 Jackson, France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944, 480.
70 The Germans occupied Vichy France, and therefore, the entirety of continental France, in November 1942.
71 Jackson, France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944, 551-3.
Ambassador Caffery and other U.S. officials in France with letters requesting relief.

Caffery remarked that many of the mayors who had requested U.S. relief came from French villages that were “so insignificant that they may not be reconstructed at all.”

Even though Caffery was sympathetic to such requests from rural villages with small populations, he understood that France’s Provisional Government was more likely to deploy resources to feed and relieve civilians in the large cities across France. He reasoned that French authorities favoured providing relief to cities instead of rural communities not simply because these cities were home to more people, but because it was logistically easier to transport and distribute supplies. Fuel and vehicle shortages, damaged roads and train networks, and the absence of necessary manpower greatly impeded the transportation and distribution of goods to France’s peripheral areas.

The Provisional Government’s temporary inability or reluctance to provide relief to these rural communities, however, actually helped small cities or towns across Northern France secure AAF’s assistance. These towns and small cities were bigger than an “insignificant” village, but they were not as large as a metropolitan city. A major city, such as Lyon or Bordeaux, necessitated more resources, funds, and coordination, and it could be hard to pin down the best course of action to serve a large, diverse population. AAF’s board of directors feared being out-performed by another relief agency or worse, going unnoticed if they operated in a large city. They reasoned that providing relief to an extremely devastated, smaller community in Northern France would eliminate the chance of any competitors, ensuring that the organization’s name and relief efforts gained recognition. In small cities and towns, calls for relief and reconstruction tended to be coordinated through the office of the mayor, making it easier for an American private.

72 Letter, Jefferson Caffery to William Phillips, 30 June 1945, RG 220; RG 469, Box 1, NACP.
voluntary relief agency, already hampered by a limited budget and resources, to provide the French with an effective program of assistance.

In order to effectively deliver relief, AAF worked closely with a wide variety of local officials from across the political spectrum in France (see table C). French citizens grappled with the fallout of Vichy and the German occupation by heading to the polls and in many cases, electing representatives from the socialist party, *Section française de l’internationale ouvrière* (SFIO), or the communist party, the PCF. In the legislative election of June 1946, the PCF received 26% of the popular vote while the SFIO received 21%. By November, the PCF increased its results to 28%, while the SFIO dropped to 18%.\(^73\) These left-leaning candidates ran on platforms that emphasized their resistance during the war; they also promised their constituents access to food and basic necessities, as well as economic recovery, and the return of POWs, forced labourers, and deported citizens.\(^74\) The overall strong performance of the PCF and SFIO in postwar France meant that AAF initially found itself cooperating with the leaders of both leftist parties.

U.S. officials closely monitored postwar elections in France not only because of the strong performance of the communists, but also because of rising anti-Americanism that seemed to infuse the left-leaning political parties.\(^75\) In some French communities, particularly those that voted along leftist lines, local authorities used anti-American


\(^74\) Koreman demonstrates that in 1945, resistance candidates, many of whom were communists or socialists, expected to be victorious in their pursuit for office because they believed their sacrifices during the war had earned them a leadership role in the postwar order and the respect of their would-be constituents. Mayoral candidates, however, could only run on platforms of “justice” for so long; economic realities rapidly came to outweigh the public’s desire for justice. Koreman, 231-2.

\(^75\) Brogi, 4-5.
sentiments to appeal to voters. For instance, mayors in industrial or working class communities in Northern France were particularly outspoken against the influx of U.S. tourists that accompanied the Marshall Plan, arguing that their constituents should be prioritized to receive paid vacations at French resort destinations, instead of wealthy Americans. Some French community leaders sought to marginalize American influence by restricting the route of U.S. travelling exhibits, especially those that promoted the Marshall Plan. The city of Le Mans, for example, successfully blocked an American exhibit on the Marshall Plan and France’s agricultural development. The Marshall Plan had allowed France to import U.S. tractors, which had, according to Le Man’s citizens, nearly put the nearby Renault factory out of business.

Local French officials may have expressed their displeasure at certain elements of Americanization when it hurt their communities, but they were still willing to work with American organizations to improve the lives of their constituents. By sanctioning AAF’s work, mayors invited private representatives of the United States into French communities regardless of the fact that this decision might draw outrage on the part of local communists or nationalists. However, AAF’s decision to disavow politics in France by working with local authorities from across the political spectrum most likely shielded the organization from any sustained French criticism and enabled its operational longevity. In particular, the fact that AAF did not discriminate against towns with communist and socialist mayors helped to legitimize its presence in rural communities and small cities across Northern France that may have been suspicious of the intensions of Americans.

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77 McKenzie, 67, 76.
Table C: Political Affiliation of Mayors Working Alongside AAF\textsuperscript{78}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of Program</th>
<th>Population (approx. 1946)</th>
<th>Mayor</th>
<th>Political Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentan</td>
<td>6,700</td>
<td>Wladimir Martel (1944-1947)</td>
<td>PCF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauvais</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>Henri de Ridder (1945-1947)</td>
<td>SFIO, RPF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calais</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>Hubert Défachelles (1945-1947)</td>
<td>PCF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corcieux</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>Jean Poirot (1945-1948)</td>
<td>Divers Droite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coutances</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>Edmond Paupert (1944-1947)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunkerque</td>
<td>10,500</td>
<td>Gustave Robelet (1945-1953)</td>
<td>SFIO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metz</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>Gabriel Hocquard (1945-1953)</td>
<td>PCF, Républicains indépendants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rouen</td>
<td>107,739</td>
<td>Jacques Chastellain (1945-1958)</td>
<td>Républicains Indépendants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Dié-des-Voges</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>Gaston Colnat (1945-1947)</td>
<td>Indépendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint-Lô</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>Georges Lavalley (1945-1953)</td>
<td>&quot;Républicain de Gauche&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tergnier</td>
<td>3,400</td>
<td>Jules Pouillart (1934-1958)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For their part, French officials performed the same political balancing act as AAF by treating relief as an apolitical issue. Many French mayors even went so far as to evoke historical connections between the United States and France to justify working with American private relief organizations. For example, Gabriel Hocquard, the Mayor of

\textsuperscript{78} Abbreviations are as follows: Parti communiste français (PCF); Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière (SFIO); Mouvement républicain populaire (MRP); Rassemblement du peuple français (RPF). All population statistics come from demographic census information collected in 1946, published on the Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (Insee) website: https://www.insee.fr/fr/accueil.
Metz (Indépendent; Groupe du MRP), pitched his appeal for aid to the President’s War Relief Control Board by pointing out that in 1775 the great French military leader, Marquis de Lafayette, had decided while he was in Metz to travel to America to assist the rebels in their struggle against Great Britain. The mayor also invited the Board’s chairman, Joseph Davies, to a celebration of the one-year anniversary of the Liberation of Metz, where there would be a memorial service to honour General Patton, Lieutenant General Walker, and distinguished U.S. soldiers. Davies was unable to attend the ceremony, but he promised that Metz’s application for aid would receive “prompt consideration” because the Board appreciated “the value, in terms of international amity, of the close ties between communities.” The tactic appears to have worked because Metz received approximately 1,250 care packages for children and former resistance members each month from AAF, beginning in 1946. 

By referencing historical events such as the American Revolution and the First World War, French officials hoped to tap into America’s sense of obligation to assist a former ally in need. Pierre Chevallier, the mayor of the French town of Orléans, asked the President’s War Relief Control Board if New Orleans, Louisiana, would like to become a sister city to its French namesake. Chevallier reminded the Board that “enterprising Frenchmen” had transported the memory of Orléans to the shores of the Mississippi in the eighteenth century. Even though these Frenchmen were “far from their birthplaces,

79 Mayor Hocquard appears to be referencing a dinner that the Marquis de Lafayette attended in Metz in honour of the Duke of Gloucester in 1775. Lafayette’s interest was sparked when the Duke spoke of the “conflict” between the British government and the “Insurgents” in North America. The two men discussed the matter at length, both sympathetic to the revolution. Gonzague Saint Bris, Lafayette: Hero of the American Revolution (New York: Pegasus Books, 2006; 2010), 52-53.
80 Letter, Joseph Davies to the Honorable G. Hocquard, 9 November 1945, RG 220; RG 469, Box 1, NACP.
81 New Orleans eventually adopted Orléans, however, AAF never opened a community centre nor provided substantial rehabilitative services to Orléans. For this reason, Orléans has been omitted as a location in Table C. For reference purposes, Mayor Chevallier was elected as a member of the Union démocratique et socialiste de la Résistance (UDSR) from 1944-1951.
they kept alive both the spirit and the love of the home-country, thereby creating a fraternity of souls capable of stirring up the enthusiasm of a La Fayette, and the brotherly aid of a General Pershing.\textsuperscript{82} Though such a tactic might appear farfetched, there was some truth to the idea that the United States and France shared political ideals. More importantly, the concept of a shared Franco-American historical connection resonated with AAF. An AAF pamphlet from 1946 stated that Americans should consider assisting France because “the friendship between France and America dates back to the founding of our country… we owe a debt to France – both historical and personal – in the growth of our Republic.”\textsuperscript{83}

Mayors also justified their willingness to accept private U.S. relief on the grounds that the Allies had a moral responsibility to help France recover from the Allied bombing campaigns and D-Day invasion. Aid applications often included photographs of destroyed buildings, industrial sites, and public services. In the autumn of 1945, the mayor of Coutances, Edmond Paupert, filed an aid application with the \textit{Les parrainages de la France dévastée}, a French agency whose purpose was to help French cities find Anglo-American benefactors and establish sister cities. To emphasize the urgency of his appeal, Paupert claimed that Allied bombings had killed 300 to 350 persons, produced 5150 refugees, and destroyed completely or partially 1,339 houses in Coutances.\textsuperscript{84} Paupert pointed to his town’s warm welcoming of American soldiers in 1944, despite the chaos that had been created during the invasion. Even civilians with legitimate reasons to

\textsuperscript{82} Letter, Le Maire d’Orléans to the Mayor of New Orleans, 29 March 1945, RG 220; RG 469, Box 1, \textit{NACP}.


\textsuperscript{84} Documentation: Parrainages de la France Dévastée, Coutances, \textit{Archives municipales de Coutances}, 8H Seconde Guerre Mondiale, 67-69; La Reconstruction à Coutances.
resent the Allies had decorated American tanks with flowers to show their appreciation.\footnote{Letter, Mayor of Coutances to Monsieur le Président de l’Œuvre des Parrainages, 25 September 1945, \textit{Archives municipales de Coutances}, 8H Seconde Guerre Mondiale, 67-69; \textit{La Reconstruction à Coutances}.} Based on this sentimental appeal, AAF funded the construction of a flagship community centre in Coutances that offered a number of medical and social services.

Requesting aid on the basis of wartime destruction required careful wording so as to avoid placing excessive blame on the Allies. Mayor Marcel Levindrey of Laon (SFIO) sent Ambassador Caffery a lengthy report with accompanying photographs detailing his city’s destruction. He reported that five major Allied bombing campaigns between 23 March and 17 July 1944 targeting the train station had caused the majority of damage inflicted on Laon.\footnote{“Exposé des Destructions de la Ville Laon,” to Jefferson Caffery, RG 220; RG 469, Box 1, \textit{NACP}.} Levindrey did not accuse the Allies of deliberately trying to destroy the town, but he suggested that the Allies had failed to consistently hit their targets at the expense of the population and Laon’s community services. Partially due to the mayor’s report, AAF established their first community centre in the nearby village of Tergnier, known for its rich resistance pedigree, in 1946.

Often French mayors sought out AAF’s assistance multiple times, usually beginning with a limited request for emergency supplies, and if that application was successful, they would pursue comprehensive programs of rehabilitation and reconstruction. Mayor Gustave Robelet of Dunkerque (SFIO) established a relationship with AAF early in 1946, when he wrote to the organization with a simple material request: could AAF collect shoes and raincoats for municipal employees that spent the majority of their time outside, specifically garbage collectors and sewage workers?\footnote{Letter, Le Maire to Monsieur le Délégué de l’American Relief for France, 22 March 1946, \textit{Archives de Dunkerque}, Fonds de l’ancienne commune de Rosendaël; Dossier 2 S 387.} Robelet’s successful attempt paved the way for Dunkirk, New York’s sponsorship of its
namesake city in France in 1946. That a Republican mayor from New York (Walter Murray) could collaborate with a socialist mayor from France (Gustave Robelet) to bring about this partnership demonstrates that both sides could put aside politics when it came to providing relief for the needy. In November 1946, Dunkirk, New York held a Thanksgiving fundraising tribute for their sister city, which was attended by the French Ambassador to the United States, Henri Bonnet. Citizens of the American city donated a wide variety of supplies, including foodstuffs, seedlings, livestock, clothing, textiles, an ambulance, and medical equipment. To celebrate its partnership with the Americans, Dunkerque held a ceremony of appreciation in which CBS broadcast a five-minute address from Mayor Robelet and local French children sang the American national anthem.  

AAF’s relief program in Calais developed in a similar manner. After obtaining dozens of cases of clothing, shoes, and household supplies from AAF, Mayor Hubert Défachelles of Calais (PCF) successfully applied to the relief organization for assistance in constructing a community centre.  

AAF’s Calais centre contained a women’s workroom and sitting room, a men’s social hall, a library, a kitchen, offices, and shower facilities. Its most welcomed service was a “goutte de lait” clinic that offered formula to 200 infants, as well as a distribution program that provided 6,000 school-aged children in the surrounding area with one to three cups of milk a day.

The relationship between a mayor and the relief organization was not a one-way street. AAF’s fieldworkers looked to mayors for assistance in processing their requests

and navigating the administrative red tape of the French state. Local officials routinely intervened on behalf of AAF in its efforts to establish community centres across Northern France. For example, Mayor Henri de Ridder (SFIO) of Beauvais played a crucial role in obtaining U.S. relief services for his town. In 1946, AAF had proposed building a community center in Beauvais but was stymied by a Ministry of Finance regulation that temporarily prevented foreign organizations from financing reconstruction projects.  

By writing a persuasive letter that described exactly how AAF would be helping Beauvais, Ridder managed to convince the Ministry of Reconstruction and Urban Development to help relax the regulation in 1947. This intervention set a legal precedent that allowed other towns, such as Lorient, Sotteville-lès-Rouen (Rouen), and Royan, to continue making arrangements with AAF for similar assistance.

Mayors also assisted AAF in organizing and coordinating relief on a local level. Mayor Pierre Courant (Républicains indépendants) of Le Havre worked with the French branch of the Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe (CARE – which would change its name to the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere in 1953), to ensure that donations were distributed to the rightful recipients in Le Havre. CARE officers regularly wrote to Mayor Courant, who provided the missing addresses of families that applied for CARE packages, as well as needy families “of his choice,” when excess packages were available.  

Mayor Paupert of Coutances demonstrated similar “hands-on” behaviour on behalf of his community. Paupert kept a detailed account of

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90 It appears that the changes were part and parcel of the moderate turnover rate of the Ministers of Finance between January 1946 and September 1948 (six different Ministers led eight different cabinets).
affected citizens in his town, including a separate list of the names and addresses of elderly men and women so that relief could be brought to their doorsteps. Another list of struggling families was compiled that contained the head of household’s name, the children in their care, and any mortality or sickness within the family. Many of the families had absent, injured, or sick patriarchs, and upwards of four dependent children.93

Local mayors in France were instrumental in coordinating French claims for relief. They formulated detailed accounts of their communities’ devastation, went out of their way to pursue the help of U.S. authorities, and worked alongside AAF to best address the needs of their constituents. The political affiliations of mayors proved to be an unimportant detail in AAF’s willingness to roll out a relief program, but a mayor’s impassioned request for assistance was of the utmost importance if a devastated city or town wished to receive U.S. private voluntary relief.

Conclusion

When historians discuss France’s recovery after the Second World War, they commonly begin in 1947 with the launch of the Marshall Plan by the Truman administration. Private voluntary American relief agencies like AAF, however, had long been operating in France before the Marshall Plan, and pursuing similar goals of advancing Franco-American friendship. AAF was proud to have established a strong reputation in France, and to this effect, received many letters of gratitude and support from devastated French men, women, and children who received U.S. relief. Given the American role in the destruction that accompanied France’s Liberation, many French

93 Documentation: Parrainages de la France Dévastée, Archives municipales de Coutances, 8H Seconde Guerre Mondaile, 67-69; La Reconstruction à Coutances.
citizens believed it was the responsibility of the United States to remedy the damages. French civilians anticipated or expected U.S. aid not only because the Americans were in a position to help relieve the humanitarian crises caused by the war, but also because the French believed they deserved to be compensated for the Allied bombings. Most requests were politely communicated to avoid alienating potential American benefactors, and instead, French women and men emphasized their own role participating in the resistance, or assisting American forces as they fought their way across France.

AAF’s experience in France reveals that it was not only possible for an American organization to work with local French officials regardless of their political affiliation, but moreover, French mayors actually sought out private sources of American assistance despite the mounting anti-Americanism of the period. Clearly, a discrepancy existed between the emerging Cold War rhetoric that AAF espoused in the United States and their cooperation with leftist authorities in France. This inconsistency suggests that AAF’s adoption of the Truman administration’s Cold War rhetoric was opportunistic. Congress passed the Marshall Plan in 1948 based primarily on the argument that it would combat Soviet aggression and prevent the spread of communism in Europe. Framing private relief to the U.S. public as a soft power tool in the defense of global democracy and capitalism helped AAF to secure U.S. government support and private donations. In France, collaborating with mayors from across the political spectrum enhanced the prestige of AAF, allowing the organization to effectively provide relief to communities that may have otherwise resented American intervention.

At the same time, the fact that the Truman administration did not intervene when AAF worked with leftist mayors in France, demonstrates that U.S. officials were more flexible in dealing with the communist threat than their Cold War rhetoric would otherwise suggest. In the early 1950s, U.S. officials admitted that the Marshall Plan did not have the intended effect of bolstering pro-American sentiments among the French, but private voluntary agencies like AAF were on the ground in France at the same time, actively displaying American generosity and goodwill. AAF’s good reputation among French authorities and civilians reveals the limits of French postwar anti-Americanism; specifically, that private voluntary organizations were not subject to the same French criticism of other forms of Americanization or American intervention at the time.

95 McKenzie, 232-239.
Conclusion

On 10 May 1956, a crowd of 15,000 assembled on the outskirts of Saint-Lô to celebrate the inauguration of a new, state-of-the-art hospital. Prominent guests attended the ceremony, including the U.S. Ambassador to France, C. Douglas Dillon, the French Secretary of State for Public Health, André Maroselli, the Under-Secretary of State for Reconstruction, Pierre de Félice, and the Mayor of Saint-Lô, Henri Liébard. The new hospital, dubbed L’hôpital mémorial France-États-Unis de Saint-Lô (the Franco-American Memorial Hospital of Saint-Lô), was the largest, most technologically advanced hospital in Europe and, according to French officials, a “symbole de modernité.” Its features included high ceilings and wide corridors, ovoid-shaped operating rooms, a floor plan that emphasized the “functional separation” between visitors and patients, and patient rooms adorned with vibrant colours and large windows that overlooked the countryside.

Saint-Lô’s former hospital had been demolished by Allied bombings prior to the invasion of Normandy in June 1944. U.S. authorities reported that 97% of Saint-Lô was completely or significantly destroyed, leading the Irish writer, Samuel Beckett, to declare that the town had been “bombed out of existence in one night.” In 1946, AAF directors,

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2 “Projet pour la mosaïque de l’hôpital mémorial de Saint-Lô par Fernand Léger,” Archives départementales de la Manche, 1 Num (Documents isolés prêtés), 2011/122.
4 “Foreign Service Dispatch on the Reconstruction of the City of Saint-Lo, France, from the American Consul, Cherbourg to the Department of State,” RG 59: General Records of the Department of State: 1950-54 Central Decimal File, NACP; Darren Gribben suggest that Beckett’s “revelatory” experiences
William Phillips and Robert Woods Bliss, consulted with Felix Gouin, Chairman of the Provisional Government, and his successor, Georges Bidault, who both specified their interest in the establishment of a hospital in Saint-Lô. AAF decided that it would raise funds to cover the town of Saint-Lô’s share of the costs, while France’s Ministry of Public Health pledged funds for the remainder. At the time, AAF was in the process of transitioning away from providing French civilians with emergency relief supplies and was looking to become involved in long-term projects of rehabilitation and reconstruction; constructing a hospital was deemed an appropriate pursuit by AAF’s board of directors. AAF’s executive members recognized that Americans might be particularly responsive to funding a major reconstruction project in Saint-Lô because the U.S. Army’s 29th Infantry Division had fought one of its bloodiest battles there resulting in significant American fatalities and, eventually, the Liberation of Saint-Lô on 18 July 1944. AAF’s board of directors noted that Saint-Lô’s Liberation was “a turning point in the American campaign.” Therefore, the town had “symbolic meaning on both continents” and was of “great psychological importance,” according to AAF.

The fanfare surrounding the Saint-Lô hospital’s inauguration in 1956, however, was a bit premature considering that the hospital, which had been under construction for

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5 “Minutes of the Thirty-Second Meeting of the Executive Committee, 7 August 1946,” AAF Records, Box 3, *NYPL*.

6 Training in Britain since 1942, the 29th Division stormed the western half of Omaha Beach during the D-Day invasions. By 14 June, troops were within five miles of Saint-Lô but had suffered 2,400 casualties in the eight days since embarkation, so they halted the offensive on 18 June and would not resume until early July. Joseph Balkoski, *Beyond the Beachhead: The 29th Infantry Division in Normandy* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1989), 275-278; “Meeting of the Advisory Council, American Relief for France, Baltimore, 31 May 1946.” AAF Records, Box 4, *NYPL*.

ten years, was not actually finished. Even though the hospital’s external structure had been completed, only about two-thirds of the interior was functional by 1956. Eleanor Roosevelt, who wrote a newspaper column about her visit to the hospital in September, was bothered by the underequipped nursery and pediatric ward, which had but one “wooly object no longer resembling a teddy bear” that multiple children shared. These shortcomings were especially distressing given that the hospital was, in Roosevelt’s words, “a kind of link” between Saint-Lô and the United States; particularly, between devastated French civilians and AAF’s donors from Boston, Baltimore, and Kansas City, who had been closely involved in the hospital’s fundraising efforts.8

When AAF’s board of directors committed to helping Saint-Lô construct a new hospital in 1946, they believed their involvement would be chiefly limited to a brief fundraising drive, hoping to secure $600,000 in donations from the American public.9 This fundraising goal was deemed feasible by AAF because the city of Baltimore “adopted” Saint-Lô, largely due to the initiative of family, friends, and military personnel connected to the 29th Division. AAF claimed the “bond of friendship” between Baltimore and Saint-Lô was representative of more sweeping sentiments of Franco-American friendship in both countries.10 In January 1947, the charismatic mayor of Saint-Lô, Georges Lavalley, a First World War aviation hero who had joined the resistance in the Second World War, travelled to the United States to take part in AAF’s fundraising efforts. Lavalley assured American audiences that Saint-Lô’s residents understood that

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9 “Minutes of the Twenty-Sixth Meeting of the Board of Directors, 21 November 1946,” AAF Records, Box 2, NYPL.
10 “Analysis and Survey of Responsibilities Incurred Through AAtF Publicity in France,” 1947, AAF Records, Box 2, NYPL.
the Allies had destroyed their town in order to prevent German forces from pouring onto Omaha Beach.\(^1\) Contributing to a new hospital in Saint-Lô was the best way for Americans to compensate for the damages and help prevent another war, which, Lavalley reminded his audience, could potentially draw more “American boys” overseas.\(^2\)

Donations began to roll in, and a few short months later, AAF had raised $180,000, the bulk of which came from donors in Maryland, New England, and New York. AAF continued to collect funds throughout 1947, eventually coming close to reaching the entirety of the organization’s proposed donation. Unfortunately, the Saint-Lô hospital’s design and construction suffered from extensive cost overruns, rendering the project a money pit. At the end of 1947, the town of Saint-Lô readjusted the sum needed to cover their share of the hospital from $600,000 to $1,000,000, meaning AAF was asked to contribute more funds. The hospital’s costs continued to increase due to France’s “galloping” postwar inflation, which went as high as 71% in 1946.\(^3\) By 1951, the hospital’s outstanding costs came to approximately $4.13 million, with Saint-Lô’s share of the remaining costs coming in just under $1.3 million.

To help meet these increased costs, AAF solicited donations from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, but these attempts fell flat. Eisenhower, who had once promised to rebuild the city and offered AAF statements of support, lost interest in the project once

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\(^2\) “St. Lo Mayor Asks a Strong France,” *NYT*, 22 January 1947, pg. 4.
he became head of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.\textsuperscript{14} AAF also submitted a progress report on the Saint-Lô hospital to the ECA, the agency created to administer the Marshall Plan, in the hopes of receiving financial assistance.\textsuperscript{15} In August of 1950, AAF’s Director in France, Robert Blake, complained that he was still trying to “get [his] fingers on some of [the ECA] money,” but there seems to have been a technical issue directly funneling Marshall Plan capital into AAF because it was an American private voluntary organization.\textsuperscript{16} Instead, AAF attempted to lobby the administrators of the ECA to persuade French authorities to contribute counterpart funds – the sum of francs equivalent to the value of American goods shipped to France that required no repayment – to supplement the Ministry of Public Health’s portion of the hospital’s construction. French bureaucrats resisted these advances because the counterpart funds had already been allocated, but ultimately allowed a very small amount, about 40 million francs, to be diverted from counterpart funds to finance France’s portion of the hospital’s cost.\textsuperscript{17} These counterpart funds were not nearly enough to bring momentum back to the project, and AAF was at a loss for ideas to solicit U.S. donations.

As cost overruns mounted, AAF’s board of directors began to worry about the “possible risk to good Franco-American relations,” should the organization fail to honour its financial commitment to Saint-Lô.\textsuperscript{18} In February 1954, \textit{New York Times} reporter Thomas F. Brady described the Saint-Lô hospital as a “controversial building” because inflation had caused construction costs to quadruple, and the building remained

\textsuperscript{15} “Minutes of the Forty-Seventh Meeting of the Board of Directors, 18 May 1949,” AAF Records, Box 2, \textit{NYPL}.
\textsuperscript{16} Letter, Robert H. Blake to Drew Pearson, 12 August 1949, Elliott Hugh Lee: VHPC, \textit{LC}.
\textsuperscript{17} Esposito, 100-101.
\textsuperscript{18} “Minutes of the Seventh Annual Meeting, 21 March 1951,” AAF Records, Box 2, \textit{NYPL}.
unfinished. Saint-Lô could no longer afford to cover the costs, and Brady claimed that AAF was unable to help because the organization had allegedly folded. Unless alternative funds could be located, he warned, the hospital would remain an “empty shell.” In response to Brady’s article, AAF’s president, Elliott Lee, explained indignantly that AAF was not extinct. In fact, the organization was still attempting to raise funds for the hospital, despite its soaring costs. In calling for public donations, Lee lamented that the hospital “in its present state, far from being a memorial to the American friendship for France which was its inspiration, is a source of embarrassment which both Americans and the French should cooperate in eliminating.”

Despite these obstacles, AAF and the French government eventually managed to raise sufficient funds to complete enough of the Saint-Lô hospital to allow for its official opening in May 1956. The entire project was completed soon thereafter, making the hospital one of AAF’s most significant achievements. The facility continues to provide medical services, and the Manche department has designated the hospital a commemoration site for Second World War ceremonies. A mosaic art piece celebrating Franco-American friendship welcomes visitors in the hospital’s lobby, accompanied by a plaque that reads: “This memorial hospital, a symbol of Franco-American friendship, is dedicated to the memory of all those who, through their sacrifices, contributed to the

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21 Edith Archambault notes that the Fourth Republic prioritized the “democratization of access to health care” by financing the “modernization of the hospital sector.” Beginning with the construction of modern medical facilities and research centres in the 1950s, the ample financial support given to the medical industry in France by its government helped reestablish the nation as a “medical powerhouse” by the 1970s. Edith Archambault, *The Nonprofit Sector in France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 163-4.
Liberation of France. Thanks to the donations collected by AAF, the American people helped the town of Saint-Lô construct this hospital.”23 To all those who had volunteered for AAF over the years, this plaque acknowledged the organization’s success in helping to reconstruct France, and the role played by ordinary Americans in strengthening Franco-American relations, which were in danger of rupturing after the war.

As this study has demonstrated, AAF was one of the most important private voluntary relief organizations operating in France after the Second World War; its work was made all the more significant because UNRRA did not operate a relief program in France. AAF’s predecessor agencies began sending relief to French civilians and POWs in 1941, and by the end of the agency’s existence in 1956, it had shipped millions of tons of material goods such as foodstuffs, clothing, and medicine; provided essential medical and dental services; established distribution centres across Northern France; and sponsored programs for infants, orphans, devastated families, school children, and other relief organizations. In Saint-Lô’s case, a hospital was deemed to be the most suitable project but for other destroyed townships and cities, community centres, distribution hubs, and childcare programs were developed based on the recommendation of local authorities. These efforts had earned AAF the gratitude of the French.

AAF’s aid was rooted in developments from the private relief sector that dated back to the First World War. During the first half of the twentieth century, America’s foreign relief efforts became increasingly secular, and relief agencies committed themselves to assisting civilians regardless of religion, race, class, and gender. After the First World War, Washington became disenchanted with relief administrators that acted

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23 “Projet pour la mosaïque de l’hôpital mémorial de Saint-Lô par Fernand Léger,” Archives départementales de la Manche, 1 Num (Documents isolés prêtés), 2011/122.
like autonomous government agents, most notably Herbert Hoover and the CRB, so that by the time of the Second World War, the President’s War Relief Control Board was put in place to monitor the proliferation of private voluntary relief organizations that had been formed by American citizens. The Roosevelt administration advocated for transnational cooperation when it came to governmental aid, backing UNRRA’s efforts to provide postwar relief to Europe.

After the Second World War, the Truman administration attempted to use economic aid to stabilize France in order to secure its cooperation as an anticommunist ally in the emerging Cold War conflict with the Soviet Union. Before the Marshall Plan could be implemented, however, the U.S. government had to rely on private voluntary relief organizations, like AAF, to represent American goodwill abroad, and protect the United States’ reputation. These responsibilities were considerable in France because Allied bombing campaigns had contributed to significant devastation, and because large numbers of U.S. troops were stationed throughout the country. As Cold War tensions escalated, and particularly, after the announcement of the Truman Doctrine, AAF tried to justify its relief efforts as promoting democracy, encouraging international cooperation, and spreading American-style capitalism to foreign markets. Projects such as the community centres in Northern France and the Saint-Lô hospital offered a way of showcasing Franco-American friendship, as American donors were encouraged to see such projects as an investment in the liberal, democratic bonds that united both countries.

AAF’s board of directors was not blindly supportive of an aggressive U.S. foreign policy when it came to implementing aid programs in France. AAF had to remain vigilant of the Truman administration’s overarching foreign policy concerns, but its status as a
private voluntary relief organization allowed the organization to operate with more ambiguity and autonomy than would have been possible for a government agency. AAF was able to cast aside Cold War rhetoric in order to do business with leftist mayors in France, such as Georges Lavalley of Saint-Lô. At the same time, French mayors from across the political spectrum sought out alliances with AAF, regardless of mounting anti-American sentiments that accompanied the introduction of the Marshall Plan. Both AAF administrators and their French political counterparts were more interested in helping French communities recover from the war, especially those that had been destroyed by Allied bombs, than they were in satisfying an assertive political dogma.

The evidence presented in this study may be specific to France and the United States, but the general conclusions of the dissertation can be applied to a broader range of scholarship on the history of philanthropy, postwar recovery, and foreign relations. Scholarship on Second World War era relief organizations tends to emphasize transnationalism through its focus on UNRRA. Certainly, this transnationalism existed and was a powerful development in the field of relief, and more broadly, a characteristic of the emerging postwar order. As the history of AAF demonstrates, however, the scholarship on postwar philanthropy could benefit from a closer look at the different ways that private voluntary relief agencies operated across Europe. In the case of countries that did not host UNRRA, such as France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, and Belgium, differing experiences of war, occupation, collaboration, liberation, and recovery surely altered the internal mandate and operational techniques of the private voluntary relief agencies that worked within their borders. At the same time, future studies of U.S. private voluntary relief agencies that operated in Poland, Greece,
Yugoslavia, Italy, Austria, and Czechoslovakia, could help determine the nature of private voluntary relief in countries that received robust UNRRA assistance.

The Second World War’s devastation presented unique humanitarian opportunities for ordinary American citizens. As was the case in France, many devastated civilians grasped that the United States was the only country willing and financially able to contribute to the restoration of their communities. The resulting American philanthropic movement predated and outlasted the Marshall Plan, and these private voluntary relief agencies ultimately maintained their independence. The perceived neutrality of private voluntary relief agencies suggested to U.S. donors and recipients in European countries that these organizations were void of politics, unlike the obvious ideological tenets that accompanied the Marshall Plan. It is difficult to tell if AAF’s increasingly politicized platform resonated with American donors, or if they preferred the organization’s initial appeals that framed relief as an apolitical philanthropic activity. Since it was the choice of thousands of Americans to contribute funds to AAF, it is likely that individual donors were driven by altruistic or personal motives, regardless of the tone of AAF’s fundraising platforms. As the same time, it must be acknowledged that individual American citizens who donated to these private relief agencies frequently shared the American ideals being promoted by the U.S. government, most notably, maintaining America’s international presence after the Second World War. As such, private voluntary relief organizations were responsible for giving thousands of Americans a means to contribute to the discourse on U.S. intervention during a crucial period of intensified global interactions.
Examining relief, especially after a conflict like the Second World War, helps to bridge the false barriers that create somewhat of a war-peace divide, popularly referred to by scholars as a “zero hour.” Dispatching and receiving aid was one of the most prominent ways that societies marked the passage from war to peace during the twentieth century. As such, relief teaches us about the ways in which individuals negotiated their place within the emerging postwar order, how societies understood their wartime experience, devastation, and recovery, and how the victorious powers responded to human suffering. At its peak, tens of thousands of American citizens were directly involved in AAF as donors, volunteers, event attendees, and members, while many more were indirectly involved; the same can be said for the hundreds of private voluntary relief organizations that were founded in the United States after the Second World War. Perhaps without realizing it, the private voluntary relief network brought ordinary Americans into contact with the “big questions” of the immediate postwar years. Namely, what role would the United States play in the postwar order? How would lasting global stability be achieved? And, what type of Europe would emerge after the carnage of war? In the case of AAF, their donors, volunteers, and members appeared to respond to the organization’s desire to see France restored as a significant global power, a meaningful democratic ally, and as a culture to be admired. More generally, providing support for foreigners to meet basic living standards, rehabilitate their societies, and assist with postwar reconstruction suggests that Americans actively supported the restoration of a

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strong, capable Europe, and helped to sanction the United States’ oversight during this process. Studies of other private voluntary relief agencies and NGOs that operated during this period would help to further flesh out our understanding.

At the inauguration of the Saint-Lô hospital, Ambassador Dillon pointed out that the American funds which contributed to the project came not from the U.S. federal government, but from “the American people themselves who spontaneously and individually gave money to aid in the construction of this medical center.” To evoke the sense of a common bond between French and American citizens, he continued: “These donors were neither millionaires or famous philanthropists. They were simple private citizens of every kind – workers, farmers, employees, small businessmen, all similar to the inhabitants of this town and this Department.”

This speech could have been given on behalf of any private voluntary relief organization operating in Europe during and after the Second World War. Dillon’s nostalgic rendering of Americans as do-gooders, however, neatly evaded the fact that private voluntary relief agencies such as AAF, also served as soft power instruments that supported Washington’s foreign policy goals. From its inception, AAF’s members believed their task was more significant than simply providing temporary relief supplies to devastated French civilians. They believed their efforts would fundamentally improve the Franco-American relationship in meaningful ways. By their own admission, AAF’s board of directors believed the agency’s work in devastated France had turned it into “something more than a relief agency”; AAF had become a medium for “cultural interchange” operating on behalf of “Franco-American friendship.”

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25 France Actuelle 5, no. 13 (July 1956): 1-2, in AAF Records, Box 6, NYPL.
26 Various publicity statements, 1946-1948, AAF Records, Box 2, NYPL.
AAF may have embodied the “kindness of Uncle Sam,” but the history of U.S. private voluntary relief is far more complicated than a simple story about the mobilization of the forces of goodness.
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