The Political Fight for Pacifism: The American Friends Service Committee and the United States, 1917-1955

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THE POLITICAL FIGHT FOR PACIFISM:
THE AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE AND THE UNITED STATES,
1917-1955

By

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A Thesis submitted to the
Department of History
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Degree Awarded:
Fall Semester, 2014
Hillary Sebeny defended this thesis on November 7, 2014.
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For my grandparents
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the support and assistance of my graduate advisor, Dr. G. Kurt Piehler. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Andrew Frank and Dr. George Williamson, for their advice and support in this process. I am very grateful for the tremendous research assistance I received from Ann Upton and Sara Horowitz at Haverford College Special Collections, as well as from Don Davis at the AFSC Archives and the staff at the Swarthmore College Peace Collection. Finally, I would like to thank four very important people: my mother, Helen Sebeny, whose love, support, and love of reading made all of this possible; my grandparents, Dr. Samuel P. and Sophia Jean Rowe, who taught me to love history and have always encouraged even my most tangential academic interests; and Kyle Bracken, whose patience and positivity proved crucial in finishing this project. Without their endless support and encouragement, as well as their willingness to read even the most unintelligible drafts I sent their way, this project would never have been completed.
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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the relationship between the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and the United States government and foreign policy between its inception in 1917 and the publication of its pamphlet “Speak Truth to Power” in 1955. Rooted in both Progressive-era thought and a particular Quaker ethic, the AFSC’s work found support within the government in both the Hoover and Roosevelt Administrations when the Friends’ goals aligned with the government’s, and through friendships at the leadership level, like Clarence Pickett’s strong working relationship with Eleanor Roosevelt. This relationship proved especially effective during the Friends’ World War II-era refugee and feeding relief work, which earned the organization a Nobel Peace Prize in 1947. However, the Friends’ reputation suffered in the atmosphere of the early Cold War years, as their opposition to the US-Soviet arms race and reluctance to condemn the Soviets earned them deep suspicion within the American government.
INTRODUCTION

According to Henry Cadbury, grateful war victims in Europe were not affected so much by the physical relief offered by Quaker volunteers, but by cheerful face-to-face contact emphasizing “the confidence in man, the belief that somebody cares.” He continued: “I may say that we find in governments too, that what cannot be done publicly can be done very intimately and privately with individuals, and that where you least expect it you will find help.” His Nobel Peace Prize lecture, delivered on 12 December 1947, outlined Quakerism’s history as both target of persecution and rescuer of the persecuted. For this history and their work during the two world wars, the American Friends Service Committee and its British partner, the Friends Service Committee received the 1947 Peace Prize. Indeed, since its inception in 1917, the American Friends Service Committee had worked both domestically and internationally to promote non-partisan, non-proselytizing relief, justice and peace, with astounding results.

Two years after their Nobel Prize win, the AFSC published the first of several pamphlets that proved to alienate the organization from the goodwill of an increasingly suspicious American political arena, “The United States and the Soviet Union: Some Quaker Proposals for Peace.” The 1949 response to the pamphlet frequently assumed the Friends to harbor pro-Communist sympathy, despite the fact that the pacifist language of the text remained in keeping with the group’s founding ideals—impartial humanitarian service based in a particular “Quaker ethic” and an understanding of social problems that traced its origins to American Progressivism. Postwar shifts in both American liberalism and foreign policy, however, ensured that the type of humanitarian work espoused by the AFSC became outmoded.

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Between 1949 and 1955, the AFSC’s opposition to the direction of American foreign policy toward the Soviet Union, especially with regard to nuclear proliferation, grew increasingly more vocal. In 1952, the organization published the pamphlet, “Toward Security Through Disarmament,” followed by 1955’s “Speak Truth to Power.” J. Edgar Hoover had ordered surveillance on the Committee by 1953, blocked visa applications made with the AFSC’s assistance, and actively sought out incriminating information about the organization.²

This level of government suspicion is somewhat shocking when one considers the AFSC’s status among the highest levels of government leadership in World War II and the interwar years. Amidst the chaos and destruction following World War I and thanks to the support and sympathies of fellow Quaker Herbert Hoover, the Committee retained significant political and personal influence into the Roosevelt Administration, throughout the 1930s and World War II. While AFSC leaders at home ensured the upper echelons of American power supported the Friends’ mission, the cause remained the reflection of a sophisticated and dedicated volunteer network conducting the AFSC’s tremendous groundwork.

Relief projects undertaken by the American Friends Service Committee have been the focus of a number of recent scholarly works, coinciding and conversing with a wider renewal of scholarly interest in the history of humanitarianism. This work thus aims to contribute to the history of World War II, Quaker history, and the history of twentieth century humanitarian crisis and response. The parameters of this work were selected to place the AFSC’s significant humanitarian response to World War II at the center of the study, while emphasizing that this success was achieved by a liberal pacifist organization whose politics were often out-of-step with United States leadership and policy, a trend that seemed to increasingly alienate the organization from the government or public interest, despite the group’s record of success. This ultimately

² “American Friends Service Committee Part 3 of 33.” FBI. <http://vault.fbi.gov/>
may have factored into the AFSC’s relative exclusion from broader histories of the United States during the New Deal and World War II.

Additionally, this work seeks to contribute to the overall literature on twentieth century humanitarianism – a sort of case study on the balancing act required in activist organizations working with and through foreign and domestic policy demands. Here I also strive to emphasize the notion that many of the significant humanitarian successes achieved by the AFSC in the era of the World Wars were not only won through political cooperation, but by a dedicated, effective group of volunteers who often risked life and limb in the service of others. In the broader scope of New Deal, World War II, and Cold War historiography, the significance of this reaction to unprecedented humanitarian disaster is worth further investigation, especially given the AFSC’s once-close relationship with the White House and their postwar alienation from the government.

This separation ultimately obscured the larger picture of this organization’s unique, integral role in humanitarian and human rights action, in America and abroad, through the mid-twentieth century. The AFSC earned its reputation and recognition through tireless efforts from spiritually-motivated representatives at all levels, and maintained domestic support for its activities in the 1930s through a close relationship with American foreign policy goals. America’s entry to World War II initiated the chasm between the Friends and the government. Conscientious objection and Quaker outrage over Japanese internment inflamed tensions between the two entities, but the post-1945 Cold War shift in American foreign policy priorities signaled the end of any strong working relationship.

H. Larry Ingle has made a similar argument in his article, “The American Friends Service Committee, 1947-49: The Cold War’s Effect.” Ingle finds that the Committee’s renown after the 1947 Nobel Prize prompted the organization to employ professionals not affiliated with the
Friends. And where Ingle finds that the resulting internal shift away from grassroots movements and toward the broader, national political arena within the AFSC dampened the group’s Quaker identity and overall effectiveness, I argue that the methods and rhetoric employed by the AFSC changed very little in comparison with the major developments in United States policy in the immediate postwar era. The fading spotlight on the AFSC in the late 1940s and early 1950s can instead be linked to heightened anti-Communist sentiment within both broader public discourse and within the State Department and other government agencies, as well as the Quakers’ dire opposition to nuclear proliferation and persistence in publishing and speaking on the matter. Moreover, this work aims to demonstrate that the esteemed public profile of the AFSC existed relatively consistently throughout the 1930s and began to wane in the late 1940s, beginning with the 1949 publication of “The United States and the Soviet Union: Some Proposals for Peace.”

Public perception and media reaction, while not the primary focus of this study, provide guideposts for understanding the path that the AFSC eventually followed in the 1930s and 1940s. This public perception played a major role in the group’s activity from its beginnings. As J. William Frost’s analysis of its 1917 establishment and founding principles indicates, the Committee’s success crucially hinged on the ways in which the American public accepted or did not accept the Quakers’ legitimacy as COs and pacifists. Perceptions of Quakers in America would continue to affect the AFSC throughout the twentieth century, particularly as popular support for military action waxed or waned at a given time. While First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, a close friend of the Committee’s General Secretary Clarence Pickett, praised and shilled for the organization on her radio show, and a February 1940 Saturday Evening Post feature proclaimed of the Quaker call for neutrality, “100,000 Quakers May Be Right,” the postwar years were less

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kind to the group’s image, and it largely faded from American consciousness, even in the historiographical record.  

This work argues that the successful partnership of the AFSC and the government was largely a product of its time, the result of social and political change initiated by the First World War and its aftermath. The relationship remained workable so long as American foreign policy (and in the case of the Depression and New Deal, significant elements of domestic social agendas) aligned with the mission of these liberal Friends, considered a group of radical outsiders, even among other American Quakers, prior to their post-1918 relief work. The American Friends Service Committee, with its commitment to principles often at odds with official and popular sentiment, ultimately delivered its remarkable impact on global catastrophe through an unwavering sense of ethic and its individual members, undeterred by shifting political tides.

During the Roosevelt Administration, the goals of the AFSC fit into both major domestic and international goals of the White House, particularly through the Progressive ideals that informed the Committee’s founding. However, the geopolitical shift that began during the war and hardened into the Cold War dealt two major blows to the AFSC: first, an international shift to the creation of institutionalized agencies tasked with humanitarian relief (the United Nations and its UNRRA, for instance); and second, the political climate within the United States that placed the Committee under deep suspicion. The old “fringe” group characteristics associated with both Quakerism and its more liberal strands, deteriorating relationships between Friends leaders and politicians, heightened government mistrust and fears of Communist sympathy among AFSC members, and a damaged media presence thanks to the homefront events during

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4 Stanley High, “100,000 Quakers May Be Right.” Saturday Evening Post (February 17, 1940): 14–42.
World War II present likely explanations. However, the overall divergence of AFSC interests from the major foreign policy directives of the federal government may explain the sharp decline of American Friends Service Committee influence on the world stage, and in later historical narratives.

While the 1949 publication of “The United States and the Soviet Union” and the 1955 publication of “Speak Truth to Power” will provide the primary end point of this narrative, these ideas find their origins in the seventeenth and eighteenth century emergence of Quakerism. Chapter One addresses the place of Quaker ideas and the AFSC, as seen by its founders, within Quaker tradition and analyzes the legacy of the group’s enormous post-World War I relief efforts alongside existing scholarly considerations of social and political change of the era. Chapter Two focuses on the Committee’s relationship with the Roosevelt White House prior to Pearl Harbor, arguably the peak of the organization’s influence. Chapter Three addresses the period of change beginning around 1941, when key differences emerged between the AFSC and American wartime policy, and traces that decline through the immediate postwar years. While much of this narrative is supported by official documentation and the theological works of AFSC leaders, considerable attention has been given to several Committee members whose records of service reveal the astounding dedication of that organization to its “fringe” ideals.
CHAPTER ONE

In describing his religious awakening, Quakerism’s founder George Fox wrote, “I saw that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but I saw also that there was an ocean of light and love which flowed over it.” Rufus Jones, cofounder of the AFSC and editor of Fox’s autobiography, recalled that particular line as he attempted to describe the group’s first twenty years. Jones, a prolific Quaker theologian, essayist, philosopher, and historian, placed tremendous value in Fox’s teachings as they informed a modern world.

While Fox’s spiritual descendants are best known in the United States for their connection to William Penn and the establishment of his eponymous colony, the Fox-Penn history also provides what might be seen as a natural beginning point to this story. Many Quaker historians argue that Penn, who famously led Quaker migration to North America, serves as the ideological origin behind liberal strands of Friends thought in the United States. Melvin Endy has written, in a comparative study of Fox and Penn’s relationship, that Penn’s political liberalism and social action, as well as his de-emphasizing of divisive Christian doctrines, provided the forerunner to Friends movements like the American Friends Service Committee. Moreover, William Penn’s guiding principles for American Quakerism, which would guide the Friends for the next two hundred years or so, provided a crucial guidepost for Quakers as “a public Friend engaged in speaking, writing, lobbying, lawyering, and eldering.”

That idea of Quakerism persisted in the nineteenth century, especially in the public debates over slavery. Margaret Abruzzo sees early stirrings of humanitarian thought in the Quaker debates over cruelty and pain as they related to slavery. Among eighteenth century

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6 Melvin Endy, “George Fox and William Penn: Their Relationship and their Roles within the Quaker Movement.” Quaker History 93, no. 1 (Spring 2004), 2.
7 Ibid., 34.
Quakers, opposition to the cruelty of slavery was frequently directed at slaveholders and their use of violence to enable earthly luxuries (which stood in opposition to Quaker beliefs in self-denial and martyrdom), rather than the institution itself. While Friends’ language against the infliction of cruelty and pain was directed originally at fellow Quakers, Abruzzo argues that early modern religious language of “martyrdom, self-denial, and the value of suffering” employed by the Society of Friends unintentionally helped generate the modern language of humanitarianism. Through a narrative that began with Friends experiencing suffering, and then refusing to reenact that suffering on others, Quakers were able to sort people into victims and perpetrators and “associated the human infliction of pain with abuse of power, and they identified suffering with witnessing to the truth.”

Abruzzo goes on to identify this sentiment as part of a growing geography of humanitarianism, wherein the Quakers saw themselves as part of a wider system of transatlantic cruelty, linking local actions to global effects.

When the United States entered World War I, military conscription presented a significant problem to Quakers, many of whom sought conscientious objector status instead of combat service. Those granted CO status were often assigned to medic positions or combat zone service, providing foundational experience for many activists in the AFSC’s World War II projects. The American Friends Service Committee was founded in 1917, by a group of young Quaker activists led by Rufus Jones. Historians have recognized the establishment of the AFSC as an integral moment in twentieth century peace movements and American Quaker opposition

9 Ibid., 37.
10 Ibid., 44-49.
to World War I was complemented by a similar aversion among British Quakers that saw the creation of the similarly-named Friends Service Committee.\textsuperscript{11}

The American Friends Service Committee’s ideological and theological roots can be traced to the reform movements of the previous century, and many of the AFSC’s guiding principles owe a great deal to their founders’ Progressive-era origins. The transatlantic Progressive exchange so famously articulated by Daniel T. Rodgers is apparent both in the Quakers’ conviction that the world could be improved, and in their methods of attempting to prompt that improvement. The late-nineteenth century liberalization of many branches of Christianity in Britain, the United States, and many parts of the world had given rise to new, more pragmatic approaches to theology and religious practice. Religious history has often focused on the shifting place of fundamentalists into the role of nonconformity, and the shrinking role of religion in political liberalism. Ian Packer, writing of liberalization among British Quakers, notes that in both the United States and Britain, however, finds that the convergence of liberal politics and reformist movements enabled many religious activists to embrace what they saw as their Christian obligation to social reform.\textsuperscript{12} Quakers were not exempt from these changes, and the founding principles of the AFSC not only represented newer, more liberal Quaker movements, but incorporated and welcomed more traditional theology as well. This successful merger would prove crucial throughout the war, as American pacifists felt outside pressure from a critical American public.

Allan Kohrman has analyzed the reaction of American Quakers to World War I in comparison to other Protestant denominations, using an insider/outsider model. He finds that the

\textsuperscript{11} For a thorough overview of the early years of the AFSC’s work, see J. William Frost, “‘Our Deeds Carry Our Message’: Early History of the American Friends Service Committee.” \textit{Quaker History} 81 (1992), 1-51.

larger Quaker population in America generally favored American involvement in the Great War, or at least understood support for the war effort to be a necessary component of maintaining insider status in American society. Quakers were by then one of the longest-established religious groups in America, but they had not forgotten their past persecution. Mainstream Quakers were often supportive of the war effort to retain their status, ensuring that Quaker conscientious objectors, relief workers, and pacifist opponents to World War I originated from the fringes or outsider groups of Friends. Frost claims that the American public had few preconceptions about Friends at this time, outside standard school textbooks that discussed William Penn and his policies of religious tolerance, so the AFSC began with public relations “center stage” in their work.

The American political climate in 1917 did not provide the perfect environment for the AFSC’s mission, but Frost has identified several advantages in their initial strategy: first, the Friends had a long history of both conscientious objection and an expression of humanitarian relief to those affected by war; second, that liberal founders like Rufus Jones and Henry Cadbury saw the war as an opportunity to transcend denominational differences among varying strands of Quakerism; third, that the British Friends’ work in France, which had been in operation for three difficult years prior to the AFSC’s founding, provided both practical example and lent the Committee an element of legitimacy in the eyes of the public. Jones and Cadbury, attempting to strengthen the case for conscientious objection, consulted with British Friends, a Quaker congressman, and the head of the American Red Cross, and they invited Mennonites and Brethren to join the organization.

15 Ibid., 7-9.
The founding of the AFSC also happened to coincide with a tremendous international moment for humanitarian relief. In *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism*, Bruno Cabanes grounds his work in the transnational history of rights and finds that the surge of advocacy for war victims’ rights in World War I led to the extension of both legal rights and sources of relief to those civilians unwillingly dragged into war. The moral roots of these humanitarian movements, he argues, influenced the legal and humane responses to World War I. Moreover, Cabanes insists that the efficacy of this relief depended on “networks in which international civil servants, diplomats, and jurists could make use of the work being done on the ground by doctors and social workers.”\(^\text{16}\) The idea of a network of partnership lay at the core of the AFSC’s foundational principles. Rufus Jones and his co-founders aimed to make the Committee “a connecting link for all of these scattered meetings…and one of the great pieces of service which we can perform is the amalgamation of the Society of Friends.”\(^\text{17}\)

In the study *Morality and International Relations*, Robert McElroy argues that the mindset of liberal internationalism emerged in the wake of Versailles, and dominated international relations until 1945. Triggered by the unprecedented destruction of World War I, the internationalists operated within an understanding that war emerged not from human nature but through “patterns of state interaction that could be altered through moral education and the collective action of the peoples of the world.”\(^\text{18}\) McElroy, similar to Cabanes, offers that the Great War’s signal of connectedness and collectivization of experiences among world powers thus led to the emergence of international humanitarian relief, as well as an international sense of morality. The global sense of disaster relief, writes McElroy of Herbert Hoover’s famine relief in


\(^{17}\) Jones, *Swords Into Ploughshares*, 11.

Soviet Russia, transformed dramatically after the International Committee of the Red Cross met in 1919 and 1920 to restructure these responses. For the interwar period, two principles led relief projects: future disaster relief “would require the financial and material assistance of the governments of the world,” and that the world needed the development of government-funded institutions that would without political consideration apply the resources where they were most needed.

Yet, before these ideas were cemented in international agreements, the American Friends Service Committee actively engaged in cooperative, privately organized international relief. The Committee’s first annual report in 1918 placed this cooperation as one of the primary motivations in their work among French war refugees, stating in the introduction that the needs of war victims were “sufficient to determine our obligation. Coupled with this clear call to service was the opportunity of joining hands and hearts and purses with English Friends who had acquired an unequalled experience in such work.” Moreover, the American Red Cross’ financial support for the Friends Unit in France through 1917 had totaled over $200,000 in addition to providing ambulances, trucks, and agricultural machinery for the AFSC’s work there.¹⁹

However, the virulence of anti-German sentiment in America both during and immediately after the war did present some difficulties to the Friends. Frost writes of the censorship that affected communication from workers in Europe back to their families in the States, as well as the necessary avoidance of aid to Germany during the war to ensure continued financial contributions from pro-war Quakers. Those pro-war Quakers proved more than willing to turn on their fellow Friends in an uncertain political environment. Henry Cadbury, then a professor of theology at Haverford College, was arrested for “seditious” language after writing a

¹⁹ 1918 Annual Report, AFSC Annual Reports 1917-1947, American Friends Service Committee Archives (hereafter AFSCA).
1918 op-ed criticizing the violence in anti-German rhetoric, narrowly evaded prosecution under the Espionage Act, and after some encouragement he resigned his post (though he eventually taught at Andover-Harvard Theological Seminary, Bryn-Mawr, and Harvard, and got to accept a Nobel Prize in 1947). Thus, as Frost emphasizes, the AFSC mission found its grounding not in rhetoric, but deeds, refusing to speak politically or to proselytize while conducting relief work.

Part of the AFSC’s uniqueness among other religious organizations of the time stemmed from the Quakers’ traditional ethic of service and commitment to impartiality, a characteristic that would remain with the group throughout the twentieth century. Some scholars have noted that the hesitancy among some Quakers to define their work through what they see as the oversimplified term “humanitarianism” stems from a desire for this service to be analyzed more holistically. Rufus Jones later wrote that, from the movement’s seventeenth-century inception,

> Quakers have always been sensitive to the ills of humanity. Their concern for suffering men and women is rooted in a reverence for human personality...When true to its heritage, Quaker service goes further than charitable relief. There is a more fundamental objective than passing kindliness. Quaker service tries to strike at the cause of the social ill rather than to cover up its effect. It extends itself as much to the aggressor as to the victim.

The Annual Report released in mid-1925 of the past year’s activity revealed a remarkable achievement, understated and never boastful, when it reported that the majority of their funds that year had been contributed by non-Friends: “various Protestant denominations, Jews, Roman Catholics, and people without church affiliations.” By 1924, the British and American Quakers had contributed a remarkable service to innumerable victims of war, providing an exemplary

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22 Rufus Jones, Under the Red and Black Star, 1944, AFSC Collected Records 1944, SCPC.
23 Annual Report, June 1924-May 31, 1925. AFSC Annual Reports 1917-1947, AFSCA.
case for both pacifist movements and humanitarian relief societies in the following decades. Thomas C. Kennedy cites the Quaker Renaissance in Victorian Britain as a foundational experience for both cooperation among differing branches of Quaker practice and the resurgence of the Peace Testimony as a major component of many individual Quakers’ practices. Others found that the Quaker Renaissance had not created a more unified international Quaker belief system or quieted all denominational quarrels by this time. Fiona Mendelsohn argues that the distinction between American (AFSC) and British Quakers (in this case, the Friends Service Committee) should not be neglected. The British FSC, Mendelsohn explains, was largely driven by ideological commitment to Quaker values, whereas the AFSC promoted American modernism and technology first, but supported it with Quaker belief. This characterization of the AFSC provides more context and complication in relation to the Committee’s relationship with the United States government by the 1920s, thanks in large part to Herbert Hoover.

Hoover, as the director of the United States Food Administration and its successor, the American Relief Administration, had already conducted large feeding programs in Belgium during the war, and provided the major government in-road for humanitarian relief in postwar Germany, which had been barred from accepting aid until the signing of the Versailles Treaty. In summer 1919, a small, all-female AFSC delegation led by Progressive activist Jane Addams visited Germany attempting to assess the status of children in that country. Their dismal findings prompted Hoover to authorize relief work in Germany by November 1919, and beginning in February 1920, the Friends were able to provide one hot meal per day to “several hundred thousand undernourished German children” that by the AFSC’s admission resembled Hoover’s

earlier programs during the war.\textsuperscript{26} Despite lingering anti-German feelings in the United States, the government proved ready to distribute the enormous American agricultural surplus and eager to help stabilize German society amidst growing fears of Bolshevism.\textsuperscript{27}

By September 1920, the badly-needed work in Germany had expanded rapidly under the auspices of Hoover (now recognized in AFSC publications as chairman of their German section) and the Friends were feeding about one million German children per day. In conjunction with the European Relief Council, the AFSC appealed for $33 million for children’s relief, received over 500,000 yards of flannel and 100 tons of clothing from the American Red Cross, and received donations from the German government of two million dollars’ worth of flour and sugar for their feeding operations. “Without [Hoover] the work would have been impossible,” the AFSC concluded. “With all those who are interested in the welfare of the people of Germany we are profoundly grateful for the humanitarian spirit which led Herbert Hoover to initiate the work.”\textsuperscript{28}

Hoover’s characterization as a “forgotten progressive” by Joan Hoff Wilson in 1975 served as a groundbreaking understanding of a president whose reputation and representation often lacks nuance.\textsuperscript{29} In many respects, what Wilson identifies as Hoover’s emphasis on apolitical, non-coercive, cooperative, and often private economic solutions to foreign and domestic concerns reflects the operating ethic of the AFSC’s work.\textsuperscript{30} The Iowa-bred, Quaker-raised Hoover had been orphaned early in life and benefitted both from the kindness of others and his own tremendous work ethic, which eventually propelled him through studies at Stanford University (funded through four years of full-time employment, to the detriment of his social

\textsuperscript{26} Annual Report (June 1919-September 1920), AFSC Annual Reports 1917-1947, AFSC.
\textsuperscript{27} Frost, 35-39.
\textsuperscript{28} Annual Report 1920-1921, AFSC Annual Reports 1917-1947, AFSCA.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., see esp. 168-170.
life) and a profitable career based in his training as a geologist. These experiences also enforced Hoover’s commitment to individualism, which may seem to exist in opposition to the cooperative international ethos pursued by the American Friends Service Committee, can actually stand alongside a Quaker belief in the power of the individual and his or her free expression of thoughts. Rufus Jones especially prized this sense of individualism, something he emphasized in a number of his theological essays.

In the early 1920s, the AFSC’s reputation for impartiality proved essential in gaining access to many European nations in need of relief and reconstruction after World War I, including Poland, Austria, Serbia, and Russia (where Hoover’s ARA conducted tremendous relief work). The Committee acknowledged this connection and expressed “no desire on the part of the Friends to establish Friends’ Meetings in these various countries, but rather to cultivate such a spirit as will make war less likely and bring the peoples of the world closer together.”

By 1924, the year which marked the end of many major relief efforts in Europe, as well as what Frost has identified as the early phase of the AFSC’s work, the organization was attempting to maintain a smaller presence in Germany and Austria (their work in France having closed in 1920), while pursuing medical needs throughout Europe, such as tuberculosis outbreaks among German and Austrian children, and malaria outbreaks in the Soviet Union.

However, the AFSC’s work was not restricted to foreign countries, and retained characteristics of American Progressivism. In 1922, the Home Service division of the Committee appealed to young people “just out of college or otherwise qualified” to spend a year of service “in connection with some of our social or industrial problems…in connection with Reform Schools, Prisons, Negroes, Indians, Settlement or City Neighborhood houses, City Playground  

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31 Annual Report 1922-1923, AFSC Annual Reports 1917-1947, AFSCA.  
32 Annual Report 1923-1924, AFSC Annual Reports 1917-1917, AFSCA.
Work, Foreign Teaching…and Consular Work.” Beginning in 1922-1923, social problems and strikes in coal-mining regions of the country prompted the AFSC to send special investigators to Pennsylvania and West Virginia, and they found “some very appalling conditions among the children in the coal fields.” After an appeal to the American public for donations, the Friends were able to establish feeding stations and provide clothing and medical supplies for the women and children of those communities, and “while this service did not affect the industrial situation, it did call public attention to the fact that as Friends we could not sit by and let innocent children suffer because of the inability of operators and miners to get together and settle their differences in a satisfactory way.”

This gesture of domestic aid proved to be foundational, as the Friends’ work in the country’s coal-mining regions later became a cornerstone of their Depression-era cooperation with both the Hoover and Roosevelt Administrations.

In 1924, the AFSC underwent reorganization and a reassessment of its mission. Initially established with Jones’ intent for it to be a temporary organization, the group held a conference that year to assess whether it should continue. Though they decided to continue, 1924 marked a number of important changes to the Friends’ mission. First, the Committee, “realizing that the limitation of funds and personnel would not allow [them] to undertake a great variety of work, [has] united on a few of the more fundamental issues that concern the welfare of the world,” so it reorganized into four “departments”—Foreign Service, “Inter-racial,” Peace, and Home Service. Next, they established “International Centers of Goodwill,” staffed by one or more workers in a foreign country, in order to “become better acquainted with conditions in other countries,” and so that these centers could become “the distributing point for information in regard to the progress that is being made in social and economic problems.” Through this, the AFSC hoped to

33 Annual Report 1922-1923, AFSC Annual Reports 1917-1947, AFSCA.
“combine faith and works, in order that both may be practicable.” The Friends established European centers in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and Warsaw that year, and sought to either establish or strengthen their presence in British East Africa, Belgium, China, Greece, Cuba, Denmark, Holland, Hungary, India, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Palestine, Siam, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, and Turkey.\(^\text{35}\)

At home, the Friends believed that they held an obligation in recruiting the service of young people “to render service of national importance in times of peace,” because “no matter what young men and young women might be called upon to do in time of war, it seems necessary to stress the fact that every person is under obligation to be of service to the state and nation.” These works of service took place in Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Arkansas, New York, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, and at settlement locations, “colored schools,” “Indian schools,” and schools for delinquent girls. Alongside this work came the establishment that year of the Peace Section and the Interracial Section, the latter of which intended to give special attention to “the Negro, Japanese, Mexican, and Indian problems in the United States,” expecting cooperation with other agencies “to encourage peoples of all races at home and abroad to render sacrificial rather than selfish service.”\(^\text{36}\)

That particular mission continued in earnest through the remainder of the decade. Undertakings such as a 1926 joint German-Polish conference on “the question of the minorities,” the establishment that same year of a “Friendship Village” for workers in Shanghai and other Chinese port cities, and continued work in Russian famine relief joined Home Service projects that continued largely in Kentucky and Pennsylvania. The Interracial Section, outraged by new immigration legislation and quotas that they felt to be “an act of race discrimination as far as the

\(^{35}\) Annual Report 1924-1925, AFSC Annual Reports 1917-1947, AFSCA.  
\(^{36}\) Ibid.
Orientals were concerned,” initiated an exchange program with Japanese college students in order to show Americans that “the Oriental was not a person to be feared.” The latter half of the 1920s also demonstrated the first inklings of international movements for peace in Quaker reports, as the Peace Section threw its weight behind the League of Nations and the proposed World Court, anxious that “the spectacle of Christian nations fighting each other has turned a great many thinking men and women in these nations, as well as the great majority of the non-Christian world away from Christianity.” A strong Friends presence continued in Austria, France, Germany, Poland, Russia (until the end of 1927), and Switzerland, while the language of the Interracial Section became increasingly related to the peace cause as well.

The 1928 Presidential election and onset of the Great Depression in 1929 marked a major shift in the way the AFSC and its projects related to the United States government. The election of Hoover lent the AFSC a sympathetic figure in the White House, as he campaigned on the promise of a “New Day” for American social and economic progress. President Hoover had entered the White House hoping to be known as the “children’s president,” with an ambitious plan to continue his current relief cause, the American Child Health Association (ACHA). The ACHA worked consistently throughout the 1920s and early 1930s to better the standard of living for American children, through programs as varied as professional training for Native American nurses and the standardization of purity regulations for milk that by 1930 eliminated diarrhea as one of the major contributors to infant mortality.
David Hamilton has posed the question as to why Hoover’s previous “mastery” of crises throughout his years of service proved so fruitless in the face of the Depression. He refers specifically to an era of rehabilitation for Hoover’s reputation that began in 1974 when FDR biographer Frank Freidel first identified the many continuities between the two presidencies, a line of thinking deployed by Wilson in her work *Forgotten Progressive*. Hamilton, however, utilizes a new way of dealing with Hoover’s response to the Depression: from “the best of the Hoover scholarship” comes an understanding that the crisis “was rooted in the ambivalence of American society about the costs of economic modernization. The Depression crisis, in crucial ways, was the crisis of a modernizing nation.” This crisis found its roots in the new mass consumption economy, which displaced old patterns of life, new social hierarchies dictated by the emergence of a “national elite” of university-trained professionals, and a new political landscape marked by a turn from locally-based, highly partisan political systems. Since Hoover was in many ways inextricably tied to these developments, his ability to face their existential challenges proved limited, as he continued to seek public-private partnerships as he had done during the Food Administration, and maintained his belief that a “new capitalism” would end poverty in America.41

The degree to which Hoover’s visions for America aligned with those of the AFSC thus seems to be more ideological than practical, though not for lack of official attempt to solve the ever-growing American crisis after 1929. In the early months of the Depression, Hoover entered what Joan Hoff Wilson calls an “offensive” phase, meeting with labor leaders in hopes of staving off strikes and holding to current wage levels, while simultaneously requesting that states and cities aid unemployment levels and increase construction by expanding their public works projects. Hoover had intended to expand public works to the tune of $3 billion upon his election,

according to Wilson, but he never intended for it to be an emergency measure. Hoover then
cancelled the plan after an investigatory board he personally selected confirmed his suspicion
that national-scale public works would be ineffective. Though the President eventually secured
$150 million appropriated for public works construction projects, the country’s financial
situation worsened throughout 1930. Hoover, always hesitant to admit a mistake, as Wilson
argues, refused to publicly acknowledge that his vision of and belief in “the laws of progress”
had failed him and the country at large.42

However, large-scale public works remained subordinate to Hoover’s hope that private
citizens would largely end the country’s depression. Hamilton argues that Hoover tried to build
on his success with the Food Administration and 1920s-era relief to urge businessmen, bankers,
and farmers into national service (not unlike the calls to service that the AFSC so frequently
emphasized in their literature), and asked too much of these individuals in the face of difficulties
sustaining wages, meeting the needs of emergency bank runs, and the high personal risk involved
for farmers to cut acreage.43

The work of First Lady Lou Henry Hoover provides one other important, less-invoked
political legacy of the Hoover Administration that warrants discussion. As First Lady, Mrs.
Hoover, who also chaired the Girl Scouts of America, used her position to advance some of the
causes most meaningful to her. While Eleanor Roosevelt, who will become an integral figure in
the remainder of this story, had little issue speaking her mind, her White House predecessor
broke important boundaries for the erstwhile wife of the President: she even conducted the first

42 Wilson, *Forgotten Progressive*, 147.
radio broadcast issued by the First Lady, a tool that both Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt would use to great effect in the next administration.\(^{44}\)

In 1932, Hoover lost his bid for re-election to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and the Progressive groundwork for public works relief and public-private partnerships for American aid laid during the Hoover Administration would be expanded and accelerated in Roosevelt’s New Deal. AFSC projects that had been in operation since the late 1920s in the country’s poorest regions would have a new champion in the White House, though it was not the President. The AFSC continued with intense determination the feeding and humanitarian work in Appalachia that had begun in 1929, but the Committee’s 1932 report on relief for children in mining regions revealed their desperate need for large-scale assistance.\(^{45}\) Between 1933 and the onset of war, the AFSC found a unique ally for their work not only in the New Deal policies of the President, but largely through his wife. Eleanor Roosevelt biographer Blanche Wiesen Cook attributes the First Lady’s introduction to Clarence Pickett and the work of the AFSC in August 1933 as the ignition point of her future as a national and international humanitarian activist.\(^{46}\) The meeting took place in Arthurdale, West Virginia, the site of a subsistence-homesteading project that would emblemize as much of the Progressive nature of New Deal policies as the significant joint impact of the AFSC and Eleanor Roosevelt in domestic relief during the Great Depression.


\(^{45}\) See “A Report of the Services and Relief in the Bituminous Coal Fields: September 1, 1932-August 31, 1933,” AFSC. This report was also published in coordination with the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, an ecumenical organization with which the AFSC would cooperate frequently in the 1930s both on domestic and international issues.

CHAPTER TWO

In this chapter, both the dedication to a particular Quaker ethic and the Progressive understanding of the American Friends Service Committee addressed in Chapter One will be applied to their relationship to the Roosevelt White House (here, used broadly). This chapter seeks to merge the history of the AFSC’s activities with the larger American political landscape of the New Deal Era and the changing international mood of the late 1930s, ending with the expanding European theater of hostilities in mid-1940. Recent scholarship has underscored the importance of public works to historical understanding of the New Deal’s successes, and between 1932 and 1936, domestic relief—primarily through public works or homestead projects—became the major focus of AFSC activity. However, after the Spanish Civil War began in 1936 and various humanitarian crises ignited across the globe, the primary focus of the Friends’ work once again turned to the global stage.

Scholarship on the New Deal has evolved since Richard Hofstadter and other representatives of the consensus generation of historiography characterized the New Deal as a haphazard series of government programs with little overarching ideology or direction. Alan Brinkley identified New Deal liberalism as both a culmination of the spirit of progressivism and

48 It would be impossible to fully describe the AFSC’s activity in the 1930s in a work of this scope—their work took place in so many locations, through so many volunteers, and affected so many millions of people—I have relied upon both official AFSC records (i.e., minutes, reports, official communication) and a few select individuals, primarily AFSC Executive Secretary Clarence Pickett and Berlin Quäkerbüro directors Howard and Katharine Elkinton. Pickett’s close connections with the Roosevelts and other public figures serve to illustrate both the domestic policy and the administrative element of events, while the Elkintons’ correspondence reveals the extent of and dedication to the Quaker ethic of service that guided the Committee’s work.
reform-minded liberalism that had dominated American ideas for decades, and as the start of a new type of liberal thinking.\textsuperscript{50}

While the Depression kept the Friends busy at home, the AFSC’s work for a cooperative international peace remained an equally significant element of the Committee’s work. AFSC General Secretary Clarence Pickett’s cozy relationship with the Roosevelts in the 1930s coincided nicely with a continued high point of American interest in pacifism and neutrality, a period in which American Quakers and members of other peace churches suddenly, in the words of Andrew Preston, found themselves “swimming in the religious mainstream.”\textsuperscript{51} This religious mainstream largely reflected the political mainstream in the interwar years, though as Preston indicates, that complement grew weaker as the far-reaching political upheaval caused by the Depression produced an uptick in American support for intervention.

After the European war erupted in 1939, many in the United States remained steadfast in their isolationism, and popular political movements like the America First Committee exemplified some of the civil reactions to the possibility of war, urging Americans to avoid entanglement in another European conflict. Other Americans, however, remained concerned for the stability of America’s historic allies, Britain and France, especially so after rapid German expansion through the Low Countries and the French Third Republic. Many isolationists decried this move as a subversion of official American neutrality. Historians like William F. Leuchtenberg have characterized isolationist attitudes as a rejection of supposedly unsurprising European violence, rather than as a monumental political struggle between fascist and

\textsuperscript{50} Alan Brinkley, \textit{The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War}. (New York: Knopf, 1995), Introduction.

communist ideologies, and in the years prior to Pearl Harbor, this conflict characterized a large portion of American foreign policy debate.

While the dual strategies of official neutrality and economic blockade characterized American foreign relations between 1939 and 1941, some American activity in Europe seemed to expressly contradict the nation’s official policies prior to the State Department’s late 1940 agreement to enforce the British naval blockade of the continent. Despite the blockade and official United States neutrality, Americans were involved in numerous aid projects, particularly in those countries occupied by Nazi Germany. Herbert Hoover once again spearheaded hunger relief, this time in occupied Belgium, and the AFSC worked diligently to aid war orphans and seek refugee status for German Jews. Hunger relief, however, comprised the majority of aid organizations’ attention, including those operated by Quakers.

The AFSC’s access to various channels of power within the United States government was unmistakably facilitated through Pickett’s work. For a man who repeatedly registered his distaste for politics, Pickett would have nevertheless made an excellent politician, as seen through the chronicling of his advocacy for the group throughout the 1930s. He was able to secure major accomplishments not just for the Committee, but also for New Deal economic rehabilitation and the larger peace movement. Though his diaries divulge myriad details related to interactions with dozens of significant politicians and policy groups, Clarence Pickett elaborated his own theology less frequently in these accounts. One of the more descriptive episodes, from a January 1937 Meeting at which he felt moved to speak, reveals what could be considered Pickett’s driving ethic:

Jesus lived in a physically static world—a world which believed that disease had to be accepted and only could be treated in exceptional cases by miracles [...] And yet in the midst of that static world, He talked a prophetic message about the capacity of the human mind and spirit to be changed. We, on the other hand, live in anything but a static world [...] We live in a world whose thought patterns are of change [...] And yet the great need is today as it was in Jesus’ time for an equally great conviction that the spirit and attitudes of men can be changed; that human nature is plastic and can be formed into something other than that which we see at the moment.  

The AFSC had been at work in West Virginia since 1931 in thirty-eight counties—a program begun through the Hoover Administration. But Eleanor Roosevelt became a more valuable ally for the Friends’ work in some of the most destitute regions in the country as she further dedicated herself to raising both publicity and funds for the AFSC. When a radio program approached the First Lady about performing a weekly broadcast for the fee of $500 per minute, she decided that “no one [was] worth $500 per minute,” and had the entirety of the money paid to the AFSC to distribute.  

Pickett’s own skills as fundraiser also proved crucial. Between 1934 and 1937, he frequently took meetings with steel executives and other industrialists to implore for funding for the AFSC’s schools and homesteads. By April 1935, Pickett wrote that Myron Taylor was finalizing plans for a $75,000 per year contribution to the Fayette County coal mining relief project.  

Pickett’s finesse in fundraising and access to high-profile contributors continued to benefit the various causes endorsed by the AFSC. Using his connections with men like Herbert Hoover and Myron Taylor, Pickett continued to draw in donations even as they became increasingly anxious about the economy in 1936, and more so as recession set in through

53 CPD, 3 January 1937.  
55 CPD, 11 April 1935.
1937. A map of the seating chart at one 1936 fundraising meeting with the Steel Corporations Finance Committee revealed the guests to include Taylor, J.P. Morgan, and Thomas Lamont.\(^{56}\)

Throughout the 1930s, the AFSC and by extension, Pickett, also worked tirelessly for the international “Peace Cause,” commuting between his home in Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C. several times a week for meetings with various government officials and luncheons with the First Lady, rarely missing a beat unless stricken with what seem to be unusually frequent colds and flus, for which Pickett sought treatment through homeopathy. A committed networker and steadfast diarist, many of the schedules written in Pickett’s journals from that era read more like that of a diplomat or politician. He recorded, for instance, meeting with one or both of the Roosevelts on twenty-one days in 1934. Pickett frequently took meetings with various public figures in attempt to gain high-level momentum for neutrality and peace plans, sometimes courting potential spokesmen for months at a time.

Several times throughout 1935, Pickett met with both the President and First Lady about issues of foreign policy. In January of that year, Pickett and Eleanor discussed the proposed World Court, which she said the President was “eager to see passed” as it was “the only step forward” that could be made in the present field of international relations.\(^{57}\) The issue of American-Japanese relations and naval disarmament also increasingly arose as a subject of discussion between the AFSC and the White House beginning in January 1935.\(^{58}\) By March, Pickett wrote that Eleanor Roosevelt had revealed in conversation her husband’s willingness to join alongside France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Poland in an economic boycott of Germany and Japan, backed by military force. The First Lady argued, “this did have dangers of war, but probably would not precipitate war; that if war came it would be brief and effective.”

\(^{56}\) CPD, 24 March 1936.  
\(^{57}\) CPD, 7 January 1935.  
\(^{58}\) CPD, 28 January 1935.
President had also suggested an agreement for Japanese naval reduction, similar to the German disarmament. Pickett felt the need to object: the proposal seemed “so startling and dangerous that I raised some questions at once,” though the ensuing questions and conversation were not recorded. Several subsequent diary entries reveal Pickett and liberal Protestant minister and theologian Harry Emerson Fosdick’s work to emphasize limited naval aggression, particularly with regard to Japan.59

While the 1930s encouraged a warm reception of pacifism among many segments of the American public, AFSC desire to work within and alongside the broader peace movement in the country brought many strange bedfellows, not all of whom shared their particular ideological origins. In 1936, Pickett expressed particular enthusiasm when Rear Admiral Richard Byrd, recently returned from months of isolation at his Little America base in Antarctica, approached him about the Peace Cause. Throughout his solitude, the polar explorer had been stricken by a deeply-felt “sense of the unity of all life…and he wanted to do something to make that a reality in present-day living.” Byrd “had been approached by a number of peace organizations, but has not felt yet like committing himself.” Pickett, seizing the opportunity, explained the various aims of the AFSC and the Peace Churches, and that they would happily work with Byrd to make room for his assertion that, were the country invaded, he would certainly feel a responsibility to fight. After that, it is difficult to determine whose plans were more starry-eyed, with Pickett dreaming of the publicity potential and Byrd, ever the self-promoter, offering to lead a mass demonstration of Canadian and American youth at the border.60 Throughout the Byrd courtship, which continued through the following year and culminated with a joint radio address by the explorer

59 CPD, 18 March 1935.
60 CPD, 30 September 1936.
and the First Lady in April 1937, Pickett also consulted periodically with Arthur Sulzberger, publisher of the *New York Times*, on how best to pitch ideas to the Roosevelts.

By the end of 1936, the international mood had generated a new set of crises, many of which the AFSC jumped to alleviate. Since mid-1935, Pickett and Rufus Jones had periodically met with representatives from organizations like the increasingly anxious American Committee for German Refugees Relief Campaign, and the eruption of civil war in Spain created a new location in need of relief, yet major planners like the International Committee of the Red Cross faced a roadblock. Individual member nations of the ICRC were adamant that their funds be distributed according to each nation’s particular allegiance – Germany, for instance, refused to have its funds allotted to relief for Loyalist citizens. The American Red Cross first brought these concerns to Pickett in a December 1936 meeting, imploring the AFSC to enter the stage of the Spanish conflict. The Friends began convening a special committee on Spain that same month. In May 1937, the Red Cross was back with Pickett, emphasizing that the AFSC’s reputation for fair and nonpartisan distribution of aid would be crucial to any international relief in Spain.\(^1\) 1937 also brought increased stress to both the Committee and leaders like Pickett and Jones. Pickett met repeatedly with representatives from groups like the American Christian Committee for German Refugees. At the close of that year, the AFSC found itself pulled in directions scattered throughout the globe. Continued need for relief in Spain, joined by humanitarian disaster in Manchuria and the ongoing German refugee issue, gradually occupied more attention in both the political and private arenas.

On November 15, AFSC member Howard Elkinton met with Pickett, expressing interest in quitting his business and dedicating himself to the work of the group full-time. By the following summer, Howard Elkinton and his wife, Katharine, would be en route to their new

\(^1\) CPD, 6 December 1936, and 12 December 1936.
position as directors of the Berlin Quakerbüro. The question of what to do with “non-Aryan Christians” seeking refuge from Nazi racial policy continued to provide the AFSC with subject for debate and served as the primary focus for Quaker efforts in Berlin. The domestic religious response to Nazism allowed Pickett and the AFSC to forge strong ecumenical relationships with Jewish, Catholic, Baptist, and Episcopalian organizations, and these ties proved crucial for raising concern.

The Nazi Anschluss with Austria in March 1938 brought new intensity to the refugee problem within the United States government, marking a period of new policy direction that began with the appointment of James McDonald as the head of the President’s Advisory Committee on Political Refugees on 16 May 1938. McDonald, the erstwhile High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany for the League of Nations, worked from 1938 through most of the war years with FDR to alleviate the plight of those displaced by political hostility and conflict.62 Creating this Committee also allowed FDR to bypass working with the League of Nations, an organization he had supported in the 1920s but disavowed during the 1932 campaign under pressure from William Randolph Hearst.63

Although the President was able to combine the German and Austrian quotas in attempt to aid the 190,000 Austrian Jews in ever-greater danger, he also saw little probability of State Department flexibility on immigration quotas. As part of what Robert Dallek calls a “series of small gestures” in lieu of a broader push, the President proposed an international conference in July 1938 at Evian-les-Baines, a French resort town, to attempt to alleviate the massive numbers

of German and Austrian refugees. Roosevelt seemed to express high hopes for the largely ineffective Evian Conference, as recorded by Arthur Sweetser, an American in the League of Nations information office. As the President explained to Sweetser, some of the cabinet, particularly Harold Ickes, opposed increased immigration, so, “why not get all the democracies to unite to share the burden?” Gliding over Sweetser’s interjections that the League of Nations had made a serious relief impact on the crisis, FDR observed that he was so far pleased with the international response to his invitation, with Italy remaining the only objection—an invitation sent “with malice aforethought,” he admitted with a smile. “I knew she would refuse, but I wanted her on record.” The lack of a British response up to that point also perturbed the President, who lamented, “the trouble is that England is not really a democracy. We made a great mistake in thinking it is.” He referred to recent news items on the Cliveden set of British fascists and the Archbishop of Canterbury’s support for the Anschluss and mused, “What can you do with people like that?”

The British eventually got on board with the July 1938 conference, for which Felix Frankfurter had high hopes, as expressed to McDonald: “there must be established an international agency, non-sectarian of course, entrusted with the whole refugee problem from the place of departure…to their settlement. […] But moral underwriting is not enough…the problem has come…too vast to be left to the resources of private philanthropy.” While grand plans were announced, like the Dominican Republic’s plan to take 100,000 refugees (an exaggerated number of what their government could feasibly accomplish), the only real result of the conference proved to be the creation of that international committee on refugees but little actual

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64 Ibid., 168.
65 Arthur Sweetser memorandum, 4 April 1938, in Refugees and Rescue, 125-127.
66 Frankfurter to McDonald, 1 July 1938, in Refugees and Rescue, 138.
assistance for the thousands of European Jews anxious to leave the continent.\textsuperscript{67} Their anxiety worsened after the November 1938 events of \textit{Kristallnacht} in the Third Reich. After the violent, nationwide pogrom, FDR recalled the American ambassador in Berlin and announced his intention to create new visitor’s permits for 15,000 German and Austrian refugees.\textsuperscript{68} The overall literature on FDR’s, and by extension, America’s response to the events rapidly becoming what we now consider the Holocaust is vast and covers a range of assessments on the President’s overall success or failure in his attempts to rescue Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany.

The refugee question remains another area in which the AFSC receives minimal consideration in scholarship on the World War II era. William Rubinstein identifies what he sees as a number of problems in David Wyman’s seminal laundry-list of Allied failures to save Jewish refugees, which included the establishment of the War Refugee Board too late in the war, a lack of American pressure on Axis satellites as well as neutral countries to aid Jews, and American failure to pressure the International Committee of the Red Cross and the British to break their European naval blockade during the war in order to admit food and other vital supplies to the suffering Jewish populations in Europe.\textsuperscript{69} But Rubinstein finds flaws in all of these points, arguing that the blockade could not have been broken, the ICRC had no access to ghettos or concentration camps, and perhaps most importantly, that after 1940, the Nazis would have allowed no Jews out of Europe, despite any Allied negotiations to the contrary. Crucially, he also emphasizes that the United States and Britain (along with many other European nations) did, in fact, accept a large number of Jewish refugees—seventy-two per cent of German Jews, including eighty-three percent of German Jewish children and youths, were able to emigrate

\textsuperscript{67} See editorial notes, \textit{Refugees and Rescue}, 138-139.
\textsuperscript{68} Dallek, \textit{FDR and Foreign Policy}, 167-168.
before the war—but the story of Allied rescue in the pre-war years pertained exclusively to German, Austrian, and Czechoslovakian Jews. Other European countries not yet under German rule did not even enter the American or British discussion prior to war, and the nearly five million Jewish citizens of the Soviet Union “were beyond reach by any means in the world, trapped behind Stalin’s already impenetrable iron curtain.”

The events of 1938 and 1939 do show a significant American response to the escalating crisis for European refugees. The failure of the Evian Conference to achieve meaningful advance for refugee visas among the world powers brought further consternation to Pickett and Jones. While American neutrality legislation and support for the British blockade of the continent after September 1939 speak to some of the more damning aspects of American responses to what many saw as a strictly European problem, the intent and work of the Friends never swayed as war crept into view and eventually pushed the Quakers out of more and more relief centers on the continent.

Yet, before war began in September 1939, few Quaker representatives in Europe faced a more trying situation than Berlin Quakerbüro directors Howard and Katharine Elkinton. The Elkintons and their children left the United States for Europe on the Georgic in June 1938. Politically active and both descended from prominent Quaker backgrounds, as a newly-married couple they had begun working in France in 1917 under the British Friends Service Council (before the creation of the AFSC) as an alternative to prison for Howard, a conscientious objector. Once again, the Elkintons had committed to spending the next two years of their lives struggling to obtain escape for those non-Aryan Christians that had been causing Clarence

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Pickett such frustration. The Elkinton family correspondence, circulating on both sides of the Atlantic, provides a revealing case of a family maintaining unity through extensive, often daily correspondence both with children in a neighboring country and with their parents and other relatives across an ocean.

En route to Berlin, the Elkintons had planned to part ways with their son Pete and daughter Theodora, affectionately called Dodie, at a Dutch Quaker school. The school, housed in an eighth-century fortress called Castle Eerde, had operated as a school for German refugee “Mischlinge” Jewish children and teachers escaping Nazism. Dodie Elkinton noted that her courses were conducted in German, but the courses at the school for older students were primarily taught in English, in anticipation of emigration to an English-speaking country. When the Elkintons arrived that summer, however, an outbreak of polio at the school and subsequent quarantine necessitated the children remaining with Katharine in Bad Pyrmont until the start of classes in September.  

Yet, to the unadjusted eye of the American newcomers, the notorious problems in Germany were nowhere to be seen. On July 21, Katharine Elkinton wrote to her family in Pennsylvania of her initial adjustment to her new surroundings,

How strange it is that the mental state of man is so influenced by the interior status of his stomach, —here we are…feeling most cozy, all due to a very good supper…We are beginning to wonder where all the stories originate that our ears have been so filled with at home. Such pleasant, kindly rosy cheeked people, such pretty girls mostly dressed in quaint dirndl dresses, such upstanding handsome boys, such picturesque towns, and nowhere a sign of repression or hunger that we can see.  

72 Ibid.
73 Katharine Elkinton to her parents, 21 July 1938. Howard and Katharine Elkinton Papers 1938, Elkinton, Waring Family Papers, Box 6. Haverford College Special Collections MSColl 1239.
Hertha Kraus, a German sociologist and socialist party member who had been categorized as “racially” Jewish and emigrated with Quaker assistance in 1933, aided the Elkingtons from the other side of the Atlantic with dogged perseverance. Kraus, who first experienced the AFSC while working with Friends volunteers in Germany after the First World War, also helped many of these refugees find employment in the United States. In 1937, the AFSC’s Foreign Relations Committee authorized the organization to formally work with Kraus on her efforts to find placement for German refugees in the United States.74 “Hertha could have run the United States—as a dictatorship,” wrote Christopher Isherwood, who resided in the Haverford College Co-Op during the war with a number of other prominent exiles.75 The pervasive fear of war left Katharine, in Denmark for a Friends Conference, unsure if she and Clarence and Lilly Pickett would make it back to Berlin, or if a sudden outbreak of hostilities would end their work on the continent.76

Perhaps the most sensational chapter in the Friends’ negotiations with the Nazis occurred in December 1938, when Rufus Jones, Robert Yarnall, and George Walton met with Gestapo officials in Berlin, presenting five particular requests to the secret police in the wake of the violence of Kristallnacht, including the cessation of further organized violence against German Jews and the guarantee that Quaker workers be allowed to aid German Jews in their attempts to emigrate.77 According to the delegation’s report, the Gestapo agreed, particularly emphasizing what they represented as a desire to facilitate as much Jewish emigration from the country as possible. While in Germany, Jones, Yarnall, and Walton filled a hectic schedule, meeting with the Elkingtons and others at the Berlin Quakerbüro, the German Foreign Office, the American

74 Hoxie Jones, Swords Into Ploughshares, 358.
76 KE to parents, 10 September 1938.
77 Hazel Whitman, “The Quiet Quakers,” Common Sense 11, 1942. Foreign Service Germany 1938, General File 1938 Foreign Service: France to Refugee Services (Staff and Volunteers), AFSCA.
Consulate, and the Central Jewish Organization. Through Yarnall’s report of the trip, a clear picture emerges of the seemingly ubiquitous international anxiety over the refugee issue emerges.78

The same week, Lord Stanley Baldwin’s appeal on behalf of the German refugees was broadcast in both Britain and America, establishing a British fund for the transport of refugees to England.79 In that day’s delegation report, Yarnall expressed hope that this would increase the likelihood of a more successful widespread movement for refugees. The following day, 9 December, Yarnall reported, “After lunch we visit a prominent leader, Dr. Wilfred Israel, who told us of the tragic situation and impending danger, he says, in only very short time – a still worse catastrophe will happen to the Jews than November 10-11.” That night, the delegation, along with the Elkintons and other German representatives, decided that “speedy emigration on a large scale” (emphasis Yarnell’s) should become priority.80

But the publicity generated by leaders back home did not always ensure success for their ground operations in Europe. As the new year opened on Howard and Kitty Elkinton’s return to Berlin from a holiday in Paris, their situation in Germany looked increasingly grim. Howard wrote to his brother on 18 January that they had made plans for a quick evacuation to Copenhagen in case of “the unexpected,” and Kitty believed things would soon “cut loose” and force them out of the country, though he personally doubted that. Worse, though, “recent publicity” from “R.M. Jones & Co.,” had a worsening effect on already very poor German-American relations.

78 Factual Notes on German Trip by Dr. Robert Yarnall, 7 December 1938. General File 1938, Foreign Service, France to Refugee Services (Staff and Volunteers), AFSCA.
79 See “The Refugees,” Times (London), Friday, 9 December 1938, p. 16
80 Factual Notes on German Trip by Robert Yarnall, 7 December 1938. Foreign AFSC
The truth is that an already tender situation was hardly helped but we must look on the bright side and mayhap the fact that these ‘big shots’ came, registered something on the authorities and may have stayed a hand that was pressing hard. As it is, however, true that all Jews are gradually eating up their hoardes [sic] and when that is gone they face starvation and death. The possibility of earning new money is gone. They are deleted by law from German life. The frontiers are for the average man and woman tight shut. A few specials get thru. Some children find harbor…The U.S.A. quota works constantly but it is preempted for 3-5 years. So there they are. All sorts of gay plans are buffeted about…but all these fancy plans end in hot air – which does not make our task any easier. For the Quakers to be published on the air as a rescue corps helps less when the situation is so grim.\textsuperscript{81}

Kitty’s letters also spare no detail about the daily frustrations she felt in the Quakerbüro, facing crises and roadblocks at every turn, her phone ringing incessantly from callers speaking German, Dutch, and English, and a rush of new cases every morning. Her desk at the Ludwigsstrasse office sported a collection of animal figurines given in appreciation by “[her] midwives,” as she liked to call them, including a donkey she appreciated for its “rather skeptical gaze.” As of January 1939, her cases only covered midwives, nurses, and “university women,” the rest of the women having been shifted “to a new ‘\textit{Stellung}’ that combines forces with the Church of England, & a German Lutheran group, & I (like my donkey) am a bit sceptical about the amicable workings out of this arrangement.”\textsuperscript{82}

The situation between Quakers and other religious groups in 1938 and 1939 continued largely successfully, though not without hiccups. Civil war in Spain continued to draw the attention of the AFSC, and the refusal of many American Catholic groups to participate in relief that might aid Loyalist Spaniards remained the major ecumenical roadblock the Friends faced in

\textsuperscript{81} HWE to J. Russell Elkinton, 18 January 1939, Howard and Katharine Elkinton Letters, 1/1-1/31, 1939. EWFP Box 7, HCSC, MSColl 1239.
\textsuperscript{82} KE to her parents, 27 January 1939.
the months before Germany initiated war elsewhere on the continent. In the years immediately prior to war, numerous American Jewish and Christian organizations and their leaders advocated for relief for Germany’s Jews that did not necessitate military intervention. A strong pacifist movement swept through other Christian churches in America in the interwar years, and many among them felt, like the Friends, that pacifism was not tantamount to isolation. Harry Emerson Fosdick, who remained virulently anti-war even after 1941, produced a film to raise funds for Jewish refugees, which Pickett publicized through his connections in the White House.  

Interdenominational concerns aside, Kitty confessed to her parents that the labyrinthine institutional processes surrounding emigration from Germany had begun to make both Elkintons “much depressed” that year—“the future of these people, whether they go, or whether they stay, is equally bad.” Her typical cases included that of a White Russian midwife, “too old to be a nurse, & made nervous by little babies…has a brother in N.Y. who will do nothing for her—has an affidavit which of course is no good, wants to go to Copenhagen and then the U.S. but can’t get a visa as the Russian Consulate is, of course, Soviet.”

Richard Breitman and Alan Lichtman have recently argued for yet another reassessment of FDR’s overall policy toward the imperiled Jews of Europe in the 1930s, based on what they identify as four distinct Roosevelts. The first-term FDR remained the only Roosevelt to act as bystander to Nazi persecution, and the second—beginning after his 1936 reelection and continuing until 1939—proved to be an activist, loosening immigration restrictions and pursuing Jewish resettlement plans. The third Roosevelt, wary of the possibility of sabotage and primarily concerned with military and foreign policy issues, stepped back a bit so as not to appear to be “[fighting] a war for the Jews.” The last FDR iteration emerged in 1943 with renewed interest in

83 See Preston, Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith, 329-330.
84 KE to her parents, 27 January 1939.
Jewish issues, founding the War Refugee Board, and denouncing anti-Semitism as an inherently un-American attitude.  

As the Friends dealt with a Roosevelt growing increasingly wary of new immigration throughout 1939, anti-Semitism flared in the larger American political climate, primarily within the Republican Party (but extending to anti-Roosevelt Democrats as well), and largely as a result of the President’s nomination of Felix Frankfurter to the Supreme Court. Citing Gallup polling from May 1939, in which twenty percent of Americans would either support or sympathize with a campaign against Jews in the United States, Breitman and Lichtman identify the Roosevelt Administration’s retreat from any policy move that could be perceived as too sympathetic toward Jews. This included retreat from legislation that aimed to bend quotas and allow the immigration of thousands of Jewish children similar to Britain’s Kindertransports.

The AFSC, however, never wavered in their efforts to aid refugees from Europe, even as their own records show the increasing difficulty of securing safe passage to the United States. At the end of January 1939, 650 cases remained active either in the United States or abroad (i.e., whether the refugees in question were in the US but still seeking employment, student status, or housing, or if the refugees remained in Europe, either in an interim location outside Germany, or languishing within the country awaiting paperwork or a quota opening). Of those active cases, fifty-five families were classified as “urgent,” with either the head of household in a concentration camp or family members lacking necessary affidavits. Most significantly, though, is the closing observation from the AFSC’s January 1939 General Meeting that, of the 27,300

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86 Breitman, *FDR and the Jews*, 144-149.
individuals permitted to immigrate under the German quota, “in no year from 1933 to July 1938 has advantage been taken of the full quota.”

On 20 April 1939, amidst Berlin’s celebrations for Hitler’s (or to use the non-sequitur the Elkintons utilized in correspondence to evade government suspicion, “His Nibs’”) birthday, military demonstrations marked what was otherwise a beautiful spring day. Kitty Elkinton wrote to her mother that she wondered “just where most of his army is at present, & what are they doing.” She also pondered the significance of Roosevelt’s proposals for Jewish settlements in places like the Dominican Republic and Alaska—as “a threat from a power whose distance makes it impotent”; as a piece of political propaganda for his own ends; as a “message from a land that once betrayed Germany (under Wilson) & will do so again if trusted”; but alternatively “as a wonderful place for a peaceful world settlement which would give reeling Europe a chance to catch her breath and take up a normal experience once more.” Yet the Friends’ tendency to find even the slimmest silver lining in all experiences shines through Howard and Kitty’s descriptions of Berlin that spring, where the weather, by all their accounts, remained lovely. “What a world,” Kitty wrote her mother on 5 May, “with nature struggling bravely to pretty things up and go about her business, and man trying just as hard to bust things to pieces.”

As tensions on the Polish border increased through the summer, Katharine Elkinton left Germany to visit her parents back in the United States, while Howard remained and continued the Friends’ work, though few who sought help were able to leave the country at that point. Katharine found herself unable to re-enter Germany after her trip home, and Howard accidentally

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88 KWE to her parents, 20 April 1939. Howard and Katharine Elkinton Letters, 1939 April-June. EWFP, Box 7, HCSC MSColl 1239.
89 KWE to Katharine Mason, 5 May 1939. Howard and Katharine Elkinton Letters, 1939 April-June. EWFP, Box 7, HCSC MSColl 1239.
got stuck in Denmark when the war began in September. Dodie and Pete left Castle Eerde at the end of the 1939 school year, noting that by 1940, many students had emigrated, and others had gone into hiding among Dutch citizens. The German occupiers forced the remaining Jewish students first into a single building, and then to a work camp. Frau Schmidt’s last twelve students ultimately died at Auschwitz.\textsuperscript{90}

Six days after the attack on Poland, Howard remained in Denmark and wrote his wife that in Berlin, “our work has very much changed. Quiet reigns supreme & some folks come in for the sad news that they waited too long…the constructive task of moving people is over.” He stressed the importance of keeping the Berlin Quäkerbüro open and tasked another American Friend to “fish in Baltic waters for a Quaker (neutral) who would be willing to carry on while I am away.”\textsuperscript{91} In a report written later that month, Howard Elkinton emphasized several times that while he aimed to return to Germany and stay in Berlin as long as possible, and as long as he could continue to serve the AFSC, “with your approval and Katharine’s consent.”\textsuperscript{92} His letters, however, retain an aura of calm even as the precariousness of his position intensified throughout September.

On 14 September, Clarence Pickett cabled Howard Elkinton: “Unanimous belief you…should return to Berlin stop Katharine willing.” In a letter to Kitty that same day, he indicated that “this may mean the duration of the war or it may mean a shorter term…The test, the Quaker test, is not now but when our Consulate clears out.” His anxiety, though, became more palpable as he explained, “it may not be realized but the crossing of any border now is no casual undertaking and if I can return (by no means absolutely sure) then whether I can get out

\textsuperscript{90} Theodora Elkinton, “Boarding School in a Dutch Castle.” EWFP Box 6.
\textsuperscript{91} HWE to KWE, 7 September 1939. Howard and Katharine Elkinton Letters, 1939 July-November. EWFP Box 7.
\textsuperscript{92} HWE Report, September 1939 (no date). Howard and Katharine Elkinton Letters, 1939 July-November. EWFP Box 7.
again is even less sure.” As to whether he should remain for the duration of the war, he was concerned that US neutrality would not hold, and that hostilities “may quicken pretty fast…I am not quite sure that 20 S. 12th St., really had all these things in mind. If thee thinks that CEP [Clarence Pickett] didn’t take that in, maybe thee can have a heart-to-heart with him before it is too late.”

Howard languished in Copenhagen awaiting clearance for his visa back to Germany, a brief visit from his sons appearing as the only bright spot at that time. His usual optimism had dampened considerably since the onset of war, and he wrote Pickett that, “I fear it is going to be a long and vicious war, with horrible prospects of what will happen to Europe, if Germany wins and Germany, if England and France win. In which case the Versailles treaty will be as mild as milk. It can hardly be otherwise – with so few Quakers in the world.”

Howard continued to push for a resumption of Quaker work in Berlin, with little success. “Maybe I did make a mistake in leaving the Phila. Quartz Co.?” he asked Kitty on 27 September.

By 10 October, Howard, along with AFSC representatives Homer and Edna Norris and Elizabeth Shipley, had made it back to the Continental Hotel in Berlin. Homer Norris wrote to Clarence Pickett that the group had been in touch with the German Foreign Office regarding the humanitarian situation in Poland, and the Germans had indicated that international aid would not be necessary, as the situation was under control – in fact, the NSV (Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt – Nazi People’s Welfare) had arranged to provide for newly-homeless Poles even before the invasion began, the Foreign Office claimed, and a representative of the International

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Red Cross said he saw little need for his organization’s work at the time. According to Morris, Erich Hilgenfeldt, the head of the NSV, promised him that if Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop approved, they could arrange for a Quaker visit to Warsaw to appraise relief needs there. Any Quaker efforts in Poland, though, would be conducted under the direction of the NSV. “I am not sure whether this is going to be an unusual opportunity for the AFSC or the NSV,” Morris confided to Pickett. “This is such an important mission that I have asked Howard to go with me.”

“Then, just as if the world was not complicated enough, along comes this cursed idea of piling into Polish relief,” Howard complained in a metaphor-laden note to Kitty on 12 October. “Whoever thought up that number should be petrified and rolled out on the desert…Phila. again is not content but we must rush at a windmill for another round…[Homer and I] caught a fish so large that we cannot find a boat big enough to hold it.” Worse, his seemingly concrete plans to return home by Christmas had likely been foiled. “Funny,” he mused, “I suppose we ought to be top-hole after pulling something that no other group has or will pull. It is a funny world.”

On 18 October, two cars set out on the Autobahn for the Polish border, one carrying the NSV representatives, Howard Elkinton, a German relief worker, plus their driver; the second carried Morris and his wife Edna, a New York representative from Herbert Hoover’s Commission for Polish Relief, and a Red Cross worker. They were headed to Warsaw to assess the feasibility of starting a Friends feeding program in Poland, albeit one that would be supervised by Nazi officials. For reasons unknown, the driver of the first car nearly swerved off the road, overcorrected, and when he did, Howard Elkinton’s passenger door flew open, ejecting him from the car. He suffered a double concussion, broken hip and collarbone, and was carried

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96 Homer Morris to Clarence Pickett, 10 October 1939.
97 HWE to KWE, 12 October 1939.
by ambulance back to Berlin, where he remained four more months under the care of a Schwester Molli at the Charité Krankenhaus in Berlin (at the expense of the Nazi government). This effectively marked the end of Howard Elkinton’s work in Berlin (with limited exceptions), and he returned home at the end of his hospital stay. The Elkintons’ daughter Theodora would eventually continue the family’s tradition of service by training as a Red Cross nurse during the war, and later, with her husband, performing postwar relief work in Finland.

When the Morrises and their traveling companions eventually made their way to Warsaw a few days after Howard’s accident, the NSV efforts there seemed to surprise them. While they were astounded by the destruction of Polish infrastructure, the members of the Friends delegation found themselves equally impressed by the food relief provided by the Nazis—their mobile food preparation unit could serve 300,000 hot meals a day (though, of course, not to Jews). Homer and Edna Morris also reported to Philadelphia that the Nazis had developed their “technique.” “One department shoots people up, another arrives before they are cold to clean up the mess, and to pour food into the tummies of the survivors as a means of…showing what wonderful humanitarians the Nazis actually are…As a result…the Poles probably hate the English more than they do the Germans!”

Cooperation with the Nazis on the Warsaw project quickly proved untenable, and the devolving international situation brought new problems each month. In November 1939, the General Meeting pondered the question of how far the Committee could reasonably go in dealing with totalitarian states—the Spanish project had succeeded, though “under difficulties,” and the Nazis’ conditions under which Quaker relief was permitted were “so contrary to the basic

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principles of Friends” that it had been impossible to proceed. The Friends wondered if they could send enough supplies to Poland to completely subsidize relief there and eliminate the necessity of playing by the Germans’ rules. Yet, their problems in Europe continued to multiply. The Friends faced the dilemma of whether to return to fascism in Spain the 60,000 orphaned or abandoned Spanish children they had evacuated to France, or if they should leave the children there under potential Nazi threat in the coming months. As for what the Friends expected of the White House, Clarence Pickett reported that a meeting with Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, Attorney General Frank Murphy, and “other members of the Administration” on the situation in Europe indicated that those in attendance felt that “every possible means should be brought to bear on the Administration to move at the proper time for a truce.”\footnote{Minutes of General Meeting, 17 November 1939, pp. 2-4. AFSC Minutes, General Meeting, 1931-1943, AFSCA.}

The Administration, however, pursued a different course of action, seemingly keeping in line with the idea of a Fourth Roosevelt emerging with the start of the war. Beginning in November 1939, neutrality legislation effectively severed the flow of private funds to belligerent nations. As the list of belligerents lengthened, so too did the number of agencies which sought to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in those countries. A postwar State Department report indicates that 545 such organizations existed by 1942, and the regulation of private aid through the State Department and neutrality legislation reflected a desire to engage in activities which “might be inimical to the interests of the United States.” So the President’s Committee on War Relief Agencies was established in 1941 to maintain some sort of supervision and ensure that these agencies were “bona fide.”\footnote{Joseph Davies, \textit{Voluntary War Relief during World War II: A Report to the President by the President’s War Relief Control Board}. Washington, 1946, pp. 2-4.}
The positive cooperation between Quakers and the United States government that characterized the interwar years had begun to show signs of unease, at least on the AFSC’s part, by 1940. In a January 1940 letter to the President signed by representatives from the Mennonite Church, the Church of the Brethren, and Rufus Jones on behalf of the Society of Friends, the traditional peace churches pled for conscientious objector status in case of conscription, and access to Poland in order to conduct relief work.\(^\text{102}\) The Quakers got their access to Poland once more, but after assessing the situation decided not to pursue a relief program of their own—relief seemed “pretty well organized” there under the auspices of the German Red Cross, German Embassy, and American Red Cross.\(^\text{103}\) By April 1940, the need for individual sponsorship of refugees reached a crucial level—steamship companies refused to accept payment in German Marks, those German refugees who had already made their way to neutral countries ruined their finances to do so, and anyway, American immigration policy prohibited agencies or corporations from assisting in passage to the United States.\(^\text{104}\)

The situation among the Spanish children in France seemed to be in better control by early May 1940, as the Friends representative in that country, Howard Kershner, had returned to report that the French government now handled 90% of the feeding programs for the Spanish children, assisted by French Brethren and Mennonites. Once again, darker problems loomed on the horizon, as Kershner and his wife Gertrude expressed the new needs created by Dutch and Belgian refugees pouring into France as they fled Nazism in their home countries. Roswell Barnes, a representative from the Federal Council of Churches spoke at the May 1940 General Meeting, expressing the organization’s confusion over whether the Protestant churches aligned

\(^\text{102}\) Rufus Jones et. al. to FDR, 10 January 1940. American Friends Service Committee Collected Records, 1940, Box 1. SCPC.
\(^\text{103}\) Minutes of General Meeting, 26 April 1940, p. 2. AFSC Minutes, General Meeting, 1931-1943, AFSC Archives.
\(^\text{104}\) Ibid., 4.
with the council should continue funneling their money for European relief through the AFSC, or if they should direct that money through the American Red Cross. Barnes “expressed the hope that more and more the Protestant churches of America could come to look upon the AFSC as [an] administrative, distributing, and guiding agent in the field abroad for relief work.”

The work of the AFSC in Europe received considerable attention in the American media prior to America’s entrance to the war, and the Committee’s efforts were frequently highlighted and praised in the press. The Roosevelt administration’s friendly relationship with the Quakers continued into the early years of the war in Europe, and the New York Times reported in April 1940 that the First Lady donated the proceeds from her newest radio contract with NBC to the AFSC. A September 1940 article from the Saturday Evening Post, titled “100,000 Quakers May Be Right” provides a major indicator of media perceptions of Quakers, stating in its opening paragraph, “the Quakers’ preparation for the next war cannot be regarded as precautionary measures. They are, rather, the latest expression of the purpose of a meek but dogged people to be of service to a society with which, periodically, they are sure to be out of step.”

Although the Friends had wide-ranging ecumenical support, late summer 1940 largely marked the end of American relief work on the ground in Europe, while the Quakers remained active in France throughout that year. Whereas as recently as February of that year, the State Department had encouraged American work through the British naval lines, Secretary of State Cordell Hull gradually moved to support the blockade. The AFSC, working in tandem with

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105 Minutes of General Meeting, 24 May 1940. AFSC Minutes, General Meeting, 1931-1943, AFSC Archives.
106 “Mrs. Roosevelt’s Broadcasting Income To Go to Quaker Charity, She Announces.” New York Times. April 5, 1940.
107 Stanley High. “100,000 Quakers May Be Right.” Saturday Evening Post 212, no. 34 (February 17, 1940): 14–42.
former President Hoover, led the call to break the blockade on the argument that Christian principles compelled them to merciful efforts on behalf of Europe’s suffering masses. Hoover launched a campaign in the press to energize Americans against the blockade, but the State Department and interventionists among American clergy eventually won out on the basis of a simple argument—it would be nearly impossible to ensure that the Nazis even distributed the aid money intended for their victims.  

Hoover and other Quakers’ spiritually-motivated conviction that aid to Europe sprung from a Christian obligation, along with the AFSC’s eagerness for America to remain both neutral in the conflict and supportive of the war’s victims eventually widened the Committee’s circle of affiliates to include some figures that proved ultimately distasteful to the American public. Anne Morrow Lindbergh delivered a Christmas Eve, 1940 radio broadcast titled “The Wind of Privation or the Sun of Mercy?” on behalf of the AFSC. Lindbergh proclaimed that “the English people, who wish to feed Franco’s Spain, do not want to starve the people of the hitherto democratic nations—if a practical way out can be found,” offering that the Quakers and other humanitarians (and she frequently uses the first-person-plural throughout the address) “are offering to be that practical way out. That is all we are offering to do.” In December 1940 and the early months of 1941, Pickett continued to meet with Farm Security officials on Arthurdale, attempted to raise funds and support from wealthy Americans like Marshall Field, and lobbied the National Refugee Service for increased access to occupied areas of the continent. By 18 January 1941, the once-tireless Clarence Pickett seemed to have lost his pep. He wrote of attending the annual Board of Directors meeting of the National Refugee Service,

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108 See Preston, 290-294.  
109 Anne Morrow Lindbergh, The Wind of Privation or the Sun of Mercy? AFSC Collected Records, 1940, Box 1. SCPC.
Loafed through most of the day because the first session was held at five o’clock in the evening, followed by dinner at which various members of the Jewish group presented the urgent necessity for the Jews taking care of their own immigrants lest the whole body of Jews in this country suffer because of neglect of their immigration.

It was a sloppy day and I didn’t try to get out much.\textsuperscript{110}

For all of the Friends’ efforts to sway official policy, the blockade remained largely successful and the issue gradually faded from public attention, despite unyielding attempts on the part of the Friends, the Federal Council of Churches, and religious leaders like Fosdick. Preston argues that Americans, “whose instincts were naturally sympathetic to the beleaguered and blameless civilians of occupied Europe,” signaled a major change to their view of the European crisis when they “acquiesced” to supporting the British blockade of the continent. He points to the peace movement’s lack of a unified response to the escalating military crises throughout the world in the 1930s (the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, the subsequent Japanese invasion of China proper, Italy’s 1935 incursion into Ehtiopia, the Spanish Civil War, German rearmament, to name a few), and the ascendance of Reinhold Niebhr’s “Christian realist” theology. Niebhr, who had both abandoned the pacifist movement in favor of interventionism and rejected Progressivism’s claim that repairing the causes of social problems would eliminate those problems, became a persuasive voice for interventionism among Christian theologians in America. Influenced by what Preston sees as an emerging “Judeo-Christian ethic”, President Roosevelt eventually became the loudest voice for a new, tolerant civil faith, not explicitly either

\textsuperscript{110} CPD, 18 January 1941.
Protestant or even Christian, and the defense of religious freedom as a central tenet of all democratic freedoms.\footnote{111 \textit{Preston, Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith}, 295-296, 298, 300-312, 341.}
CHAPTER THREE

“What we need most in this dark hour of history is to enlarge the scope of our estimate of
the intrinsic worth of human life,” Rufus Jones emphasized in the opening of the 1941 AFSC
Annual Report. The Committee’s work continued in earnest on the European continent
throughout that year, even as the British blockade remained firmly sealed and Friends offices
were forced to close in Occupied France and Rome. The Berlin Quaker Center remained open,
though under an entirely German staff, and American Quakers were gradually cut off from
centers in Vienna, Paris, Copenhagen, and Amsterdam, with Geneva remaining the stronghold of
the Friends’ European operations. Work continued in Shanghai assisting European refugees, and
even the Tokyo Center reported that its remaining American volunteer in Japan was safe and
well despite outbreak of war between the two countries.112

The refugee question persisted throughout that year, and the Committee reported that in
1941, “the Red and Black Star has carried Friendly contact to over 5,000 refugees and their
families scattered over the world, and in the United States where so many newcomers are
valiantly building a new life.” Moreover, speaking to the success of overall American relief
efforts before war closed the nation’s borders, “immigration to the United States from Central
Europe during the first eight or nine months of the year continued in almost the full numbers
permitted by United States law.” Truly, the AFSC’s commitment to refugees’ ability to both
survive and thrive in their new environment could best be described as holistic, like much of the
Friends’ work in this era. In addition to both funding and accessing the necessary paperwork,
Friends founded hostels for housing, established cooperative workshops for teacher education,
opened their private homes to those without another place to stay, and helped locate jobs for

112 AFSC Annual Report 1941, pp. 4-16. American Friends Service Committee Collected Records, 1941,
Box 1. SCPC.
refugees—all this despite a number of problems—“lack of boat space, the closing of United States Consulates in Axis-controlled territory, new and more complicated visa application procedure…and finally, the declaration of war reduced to a fraction the number of refugees.”\footnote{Ibid., 17.}

As America mobilized for war, problems for Quaker activists once again included conscientious objector status in the military draft. The CO problem was met with less apprehension by the military than in World War I, and the AFSC lobbied on behalf of conscientious objectors once more. Relations between peace activists and the government were more successful than in the previous war. Those granted objector status were usually assigned to public works projects in the Civilian Public Service (CPS), but unlike military service members, did not receive pay or benefits for their wartime labor. According to peace historian Scott Bennett, throughout the course of the war, many of the 12,000 COs in the CPS became radicalized by their disillusionment with what had been promised as “work of national importance.” Though the camps had been run by the traditional peace churches, nonviolent protests against military management of camps and by secularist pacifists notably marked the World War II CO experience, and ultimately radicalized many pacifist COs in their postwar political activities.\footnote{Scott Bennett, “‘Free American Political Prisoners’: Pacifist Activism and Civil Liberties, 1945-48.” \textit{Journal of Peace Research} 40, pp. 413-415.}

Racial discrimination against Japanese-Americans also troubled the Quakers during World War II. The Pacific Coast Branch of the AFSC, established in early 1941, collided with difficulties after the implementation of Japanese-American internment described in Executive Order 9066. The AFSC, along with the American Civil Liberties Union, was among the first to denounce Japanese internment on the basis of civil rights and social justice. AFSC member Gordon Hirabayashi’s legal protest against relocation eventually reached the Supreme Court in
1943, though the Court did not rule in his favor. Anne Blankenship has recently argued that although the Quakers remained one of the few groups to explicitly oppose the government’s decision to intern citizens of Japanese descent, other liberal and mainline Christian denominations working against poor conditions of the camps and relocation marked a new movement among many Christians working for racial equality in the twentieth century. The AFSC work on behalf of interned Japanese Americans would be echoed in the committee’s continued work for Civil Rights and desegregation in post-World War II social politics.115

While the significance of American governmental responses to refugee crises remains the subject of intense scholarly debate, little doubt can be cast on either the effectiveness or the dedication the Quakers pursued in their refugee work throughout 1941 and 1942. Records from the Lisbon office of the AFSC reveal the continued persistence of both refugees attempting to flee Europe and the Friends’ attempts to find solutions for them. Diary entries from the Lisbon personnel also reveal the variety of troubles brought to the AFSC offices—“Interview with a Hungarian refugee who had a letter to be mailed but no money for postage. Granted postage,” reads one brief account, while others proved more troublesome. “Called on a friend in the International Police for counsel…for two of our Spanish friends, an engineer and his wife, who are in prison threatened with deportation unless they leave the country within twelve days. Deportation would mean forced labor or possibly death.”116

In his January 1943 tabulation of the previous year’s activities, Pickett conveyed the continued importance of Friends work even in the face of a “constant shift in emphasis. During the past year certain services have decreased in volume. Immigration has practically ceased,

which means that services to refugees have declined.”117 In May 1942, many were unhappy when the Committee disbanded the Refugee Section and dramatically reduced the number of staff in that office—“partly for financial reasons, partly because there are no more refugees coming over,” noted Isherwood, who had attended the decisive meeting. He also indicated that Hertha Kraus, who had “made many enemies by her high-handed energy, is being politely gotten rid of—to write a book. Gosh, they’re demure and cunning—these Quakers.”118

But the Quakers, ending their wartime refugee service, were not alone in the need to reorganize their humanitarian efforts later in the war. On both a national and global scale, World War II signaled a shift in humanitarian emphasis with the development of new structures and organizations for the administration of relief. In the past four decades, several monographs have been published that deal with the issue of relief work during the Second World War generally. Tony Kushner and Katharine Knox’s 1999 *Refugees in an Age of Genocide* utilizes a broad view of humanitarian crises in the twentieth century and analyzes the international relief response on a global scale.119 Among the historical scholarship on Second World War relief efforts, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has fairly consistently remained the subject of the majority of scholarly attention, and this attention has remained largely focused on its role in the genocide of the Holocaust. Prior to the 1970s and 1980s, literature on the ICRC suffered from the organization’s barring of access to its archives, but a landmark monograph by Swiss historian Jean-Claude Favez signaled a change. *The Red Cross and the Holocaust*, which originally appeared in France in the 1980s, incorporated previously unavailable archival sources

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117 *A Summary of Activities*, 1942, Clarence Pickett, 22 January 1943. SCPC, American Friends Service Committee Collected Records, Box 1.
118 Isherwood, *Diaries*, 224.
into the narrative of the Swiss organization’s successful and unsuccessful responses to Nazi genocide.\(^{120}\)

Another focal point of historical research on wartime relief encompasses official political efforts and organizations outside the ICRC, such as the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). A critical point of discussion in this literature revolves around Allied planning for postwar reconstruction, and the subsequent shortcomings and successes of that wartime preparation. Scholars like Ben Shephard, whose 2010 book *The Long Road Home* provides one of the major new synthesis works on postwar recovery, have made the study of this humanitarian planning a revisited topic of analysis.\(^{121}\)

While the issue of German recovery and relief is a popular, recurring theme in many contemporary works, new scholarship also addresses recovery in geographic areas that were heretofore neglected.\(^{122}\) This narrowing of research on humanitarian problems has enabled the publication of a variety of new scholarly perspectives on war relief, many of which appeared in the *Journal of Contemporary History* in 2008. These important new studies include cases on a microhistorical level, such as those from Katerina Gardikas, whose work on malaria relief in Greece addresses the UNRRA’s use of DDT in disease control, and Flora Tsilaga, a scholar who utilizes a particular Aegean island group as the case study on UNRRA economic recovery programs.\(^{123}\)

\(^{120}\) Favez’ work is especially notable in its neutral approach to a topic that elicits a good deal of controversy among scholars.


\(^{123}\) Katerina Gardikas, “Relief Work and Malaria in Greece, 1943-1947.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 43, no. 3 (July 1, 2008): 493–508; and Flora Tsilaga, “‘The Mountain Laboured and Brought
A sense of the institutionalization processes that took place within the United States’ own relief agencies can be gleaned from a 1946 report from Joseph Davies, the chairman of the War Relief Control Board. The report ostensibly describes the ways in which Americans contributed “more than a billion dollars to voluntary war charities,” but also outlines the increasing trend of institutionalized means of processing and distributing that aid. After the establishment of the War Relief Control Board in 1942, regulations went into effect under Presidential order that attempted to consolidate and coordinate relief appeals on a national scale. The Board had licensing power and moved to consolidate local groups into national organizations, such as the American Relief for France and United China Relief. These efforts proved largely successful (if only due to the Board’s licensing power) as numbers of organizations receiving approval dropped from 235 in 1939 to just eleven by 1942.\footnote{Joseph E. Davies, “Voluntary War Relief During World War II: A Report to the President by the President’s War Relief Control Board.” Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1946.}

The War Relief Control Board’s activities fanned out after 1942, starting with the establishment of the National War Fund in 1943, which used local facilities to conduct a nationwide drive for approved charities, including major Jewish relief organizations (the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the United Palestine Appeal, and the National Refugee Service) under the Board’s licensing system. Between 1943 and 1945, the National War Fund drew in over $750,000. Pursuit of joint public and private charitable efforts also received significant attention, though the Friends remain conspicuously absent from Davies’ report.

The question of the adequacy of the Roosevelt Administration’s response to the Holocaust arose even before the war’s end. In December 1943, Josiah DuBois, one of Henry Morgenthau’s associates at the Treasury, drafted a damning report he titled, “Report to the
Secretary on the Acquiescence of this Government in the Murder of the Jews,” in which Breckenridge Long and the State Department had created the visa backlog that would ultimately resign so many of Europe’s refugees to annihilation under the Nazis. In January, Morgenthau met with the President to discuss the perception that State Department officials, motivated by anti-Semitism, had so blocked the flow of refugees into the country.125

Fearing political scandal, the President established the War Refugee Board on 22 January 1944. James McDonald spoke positively about the War Refugee Board’s creation, noting that its composition included the Secretaries of State, War, and the Treasury, so it had direct access to the significant routes of power within the country. McDonald also emphasized that the Board allowed all groups seeking to aid refugees access to a single governmental agency. “More significant, perhaps,” he added, “…during the first few months of its existence it was possible to employ a kind of psychological warfare in order to stimulate those willing to help the Jewish refugees…and to warn those who persisted in persecuting them.”126 Thus, while streamlining relief agencies into large, independent, quasi-governmental institutions diminished the overall significance of Friends work to the United States, it also attempted to repair, albeit late in the game, what began to seem a deeply-flawed system.

As the war progressed and Allied governments planned for the postwar world, humanitarian concerns remained a factor of preeminence in diplomatic planning and relief efforts.127 The establishment of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in 1943 represented a major shift toward international, non-governmental relief organizations in the size and scope of its efforts. While the UNRRA and Quaker groups both operated as a significant

125 See editorial notes on Josiah DuBois meeting with FDR in Refugees and Rescue, 315-316.
126 James McDonald, Address to the National Conference for Palestine, Chicago, November 19, 1944. In Refugees and Rescue, 316-317.
force for humanitarianism worldwide, the scope of humanitarian activity encompassed a variety of other religious organizations and principles as well. For example, Catholic war relief became instrumental in repairing a shattered postwar German society. Once again, religion provides a valuable tool through which the success of humanitarian work can be contextualized. In Poland, for instance, Quaker activists that had been removed from the country over fears of proselytization launched successful hunger relief and displaced persons projects, further adding to the case that can be made for pre-World War II relief work as a landmark experience in the development of religious humanitarian aid.

That book project assigned to Hertha Kraus that Isherwood seemed to regard as busy work evolved over the course of two years and was published in 1944 for the AFSC as *International Relief in Action, 1914-1943*. Intended to serve as a teaching aid for the peace churches and based on in-house archival research on the ground-level case work of the Friends, Brethren, and Mennonites throughout the world wars. Hertha Kraus’ book also served, in her own words, as a guide for constructing a course on “international aid to social reconstruction, the book is divided into three sections that succinctly categorize the types of aid distributed by the AFSC during the war: Providing Basic Protection, Building Community Services, and Relocating Displaced People (which would become an enormously more challenging subject for the Friends after 1945).

The AFSC and the Friends Service Council in Britain undertook a variety of projects that reached across the globe during the war—in China, India, and Britain. “Whenever possible,”

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Rufus Jones reported in 1944, “American and English Quakers try to work together.” The joint Friends Ambulance Unit established in China in 1941 was staffed by about a hundred young Quakers who developed three mobile medical teams for front line wounded and transported medical supplies throughout China. By the end of that year, the joint British-American Friends Ambulance Unit in India had shipped enough milk to feed 20,000 Bengal children suffering from severe famine.\(^{131}\) Much of their most significant joint work in Europe came after German surrender. The acclaimed hunger relief, refugee aid, and displaced persons efforts of Quaker activists continued in the immediate postwar years, particularly in Germany.\(^{132} \)\(^{133}\)

For their efforts in alleviating the trauma of a war unprecedented in its destructive capability, the American Friends Service Committee and the Friends Service Council shared the 1947 Nobel Peace Prize, but this ultimately did not exempt the Quakers from further conflict in their relationship to the United States government or the media – in the new Cold War environment of the 1950s, the AFSC became suspect of Communist sympathies, was monitored by the FBI, and the practicality of its ideology was questioned in the face of nuclear age anxiety.

Alan Brinkley describes the decades-lasting changes in American liberalism after the 1945 as a shifting focus from national and modern economic needs to a more rights-based liberalism concerned with the extension of civil rights and freedoms, often at the expense of those earlier New Deal-era efforts to fundamentally reshape the capitalist system. The AFSC’s critique of American postwar policy certainly extended to the basic economic engine of that

\(^{131}\) Rufus Jones, *Under the Red and Black Star*, 1944. AFSC Collected Records 1944, AFSC Box 1, SCPC.
\(^{133}\) Alice Weinreb, “‘For the Hungry Have No Past nor Do They Belong to a Political Party’: Debates over German Hunger after World War II.”
time—defense policy and spending—and possibly explains further why Quaker activist work in arenas such as race relations has received relatively more attention from scholars.\textsuperscript{134}

A series of American Friends Service Committee publications from this era reveal little indication of Communist sympathy, but simply a continued emphasis on nonpartisan solutions to international crises. The group’s public statements on the atomic bomb and the freezing of US-Soviet relations that became the center of international anxiety and attention reveal little shift in Friends rhetoric, just as their behind-the-scenes political movements continued to rely on the social savvy of representatives like Pickett.

The travails of William Lancaster, an elderly Wall Street lawyer and finance expert affiliated with the AFSC and his somewhat unusual attempts to use his Kremlin connections to arrange, among other events, a tour of the Soviet Union for leading American industrialists and a US-USSR chess tournament, reveal the strange turn of relations between the Committee and the government. Lancaster dealt with international trade in his career, socialized with Kremlin officials in America, and had served on a Council on Foreign Relations study group on American-Russian relations in 1945, but otherwise had little official diplomatic experience. He had, however, advised the group on the publication of their pamphlet, “The United States and the Soviet Union: Some Quaker Proposals for Peace.”\textsuperscript{135}

Published by Yale University Press, the text largely expressed recommendations regarding the United States’ relationship with the United Nations—that the UN recognize “the interrelationship between atomic and conventional armaments;” that the United States and Soviet Union agree to an international system of control, limitation, and inspection of armaments, “including atomic weapons”; that America sign conventions with the Soviet Union to destroy

\textsuperscript{134} Alan Brinkley, \textit{The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War}, 10.  
\textsuperscript{135} William Lancaster to Clarence Pickett, WWLP Box 1, USSR, HCSC.
their atomic stockpiles within a “specified time”; and that in the interim, present stockpiles of atomic bombs be placed under UN control.136 While these proposals may seem overtly idealistic, they appear in hindsight minimally different than similar Quaker calls for the United States to forge a truce among belligerent European nations in late 1939. The document concludes with a list of eight reasons the AFSC believed these proposals were possible, the last of which asserts that “neither the United States nor the Soviet Union intends at the present time to promote its foreign policy by means of direct military aggression.”137

The general response to these proposals did not appear very sympathetic to the Friends’ aims. The Saturday Evening Post, which had so praised their pacifist stance less than a decade prior, ran a story headlined, “Hard Facts Do Not Support Quakers’ Proposals for Peace.” The press also jumped on the unfortunately-timed AFSC support for Alger Hiss in mid-1949, after he had been invited to speak at a Friends-sponsored seminar and the group publicly spoke out in support of Hiss as a man “innocent until proven guilty” in July of that same year, statements that may have not earned the AFSC many friends in the State Department.138 Pickett resigned from his chairmanship of the Committee in January 1950, to be succeeded by Lewis Hoskins, though that did not signal the end of Pickett’s work for the Peace Cause. One of Hoskins’ first major statements as executive secretary, at the New York Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends, emphasized that the new Iron Curtain-based international mindset had hindered the AFSC’s postwar rehabilitation work in Europe, and problems facing their work in China were steadily accumulating. At that same meeting, the head of the new AFSC division on national legislation

137 Ibid., 38-39.
(taking its place next to the foreign service section and race relations section) called for increased attention to nuclear disarmament, economic development throughout the world, and “some form of limited world government.”

In 1951, Lancaster, Clarence Pickett, and a group of prominent American business leaders approached George Kennan about a proposed trip of American industrialists to the Soviet Union, a plan that Pickett had enthusiastically embraced. The reaction from the State Department proved remarkably less positive. George Kennan’s brief on Lancaster’s activities reveals first, the level of interest this unusual incident aroused within the State Department. Lancaster’s papers at Haverford College, only recently made available for research, reveal the kind of friendly thaw the Quaker group hoped to achieve between the Cold War rivals. The State Department took a very different view of these activities.

Reporting on the World Peace Council in Berlin two weeks later, the American ambassador to the Soviet Union expressed particular anxiety about the idea of the Friends harboring or developing pro-Communist sympathies. An American representative in Berlin cautioned the State Department against the Peace Council’s objectives, warning that the council hoped to ally itself with “world citizens, Quakers, churches, neutrality and pacifist movements.” Frederick Reinhardt and Dean Acheson talked with Pickett, Lancaster, and General Electric chairman Charles Wilson about the project again in 1951. Acheson expressed similar skepticisms to Kennan and strongly advised Clarence Pickett against both the

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industrialists’ trip and the AFSC’s continued push for the State Department’s blessing of a Quaker delegation to the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{143}

The last record of this matter within the State Department appeared in a February 1953 memo from General Electric chairman Charles Wilson, one of the business leaders who had been an attendee at the original meeting with George Kennan. Wilson beseeched President Eisenhower directly to reconsider the proposed trip to the Soviet Union, but he never received a response.\textsuperscript{144} If the constant suspicion of Communist sympathy among Friends from both the State Department and the reactions to the AFSC’s publications had not done enough damage to the Quakers’ image, 1955 ultimately marked the end of friendly relations between the AFSC and the government. That year, the Committee’s publication of “Speak Truth to Power” firmly asserted that the Friends proudly saw themselves once again as an outsider group in the American political mainstream.

“Speak Truth to Power” identified as the enemy of peace not “evil men” or poor statesmanship, but the total premise of American foreign policy, and rejected it soundly: “the assumption that winning the peace depends upon a simultaneous reliance upon military strength and long-range programs of a positive and constructive character,” and that communism presented the greatest evil currently facing the world and could only be met and defeated with violence. The center of the Friends’ dependence on deeds, not rhetoric, could no longer hold: barred by governmental barriers to many sites of action throughout the world, the AFSC was forced to fall back on rhetoric and thus lost one more crucial component to the success of their work.

\textsuperscript{143} Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of Eastern European Affairs (Reinhardt), 20 April 1951. \textit{FRUS}, 1951. \textit{Europe: political and economic developments}. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, pp. 1571-1573.

CONCLUSION

Thus, this uneasy denouement signaled the end to the kind of sympathetic press coverage that Pickett and the AFSC had garnered throughout the 1930s. For her part, Eleanor Roosevelt continued to sing Pickett’s praises in her My Day columns, defending her friend’s reputation in the fact of accusations that he might harbor secret Communist tendencies. Her 24 February 1953 column addresses a statement she attributed to Louis Budenz, former Communist spy turned anti-Soviet activist, who had referred to Clarence Pickett as a Communist. Budenz, apparently offended, demanded a retraction from the former First Lady. ER wrote that she was “delighted” to grant the retraction, emphasizing that “nothing could give me greater pleasure” as it was a “bit much” that Pickett had become known as a Communist.\textsuperscript{145}

The tremendous humanitarian response elicited among Friends by the one-two punch of the Great Depression and the Second World War had been facilitated through organizational commitment to the AFSC’s foundational “Quaker ethic,” and their international impact in the 1930s and much of the 1940s owed as much to this ethic as it did broad political and diplomatic movements. The changes in these political and diplomatic climates rendered the Committee increasingly ineffective in the Cold War, as some have argued that the dawn of the Truman Doctrine era pushed for the “Americanization of internationalism,” rendering liberal hope in the restraining power of the United Nations or other impartial international efforts somewhat ineffective.\textsuperscript{146}

The scholarly basis for this understanding is rooted first in the work of William Appleman Williams, whose landmark reassessment of American foreign policy as driven by

\textsuperscript{145} Eleanor Roosevelt, My Day, 24 February 1953, United Feature Syndicate.

economic motives ushered in a new understanding of the country’s motives in the early Cold War era. President Truman, he argued, initiated the equivocation of the USSR and Nazi Germany, a comparison that drove American conceptions of anti-Communism at the time, and which explains the postwar distaste for AFSC proposals to make peace with Stalin and the Soviets.  

Figures like John Foster Dulles, who believed in a “Christian way of compromise,” synthesized the tradition of the Open Door Policy with his own missionary background and hoped that America could lead the way for Soviet and Chinese liberation from “atheistic international communism.” Dulles’ anxiety over meeting with Communist leaders, according to Williams, took root in his fear that relations with Russia might turn Americans away from the Cold War, amidst a growing sentiment among many that “man was born to achieve and exercise his self-knowledge in more fruitful endeavors than a cold war which persistently threatened to erupt in nuclear horror.”

World War II produced a multitude of crises that required the evolution (and in many cases, creation) of humanitarian organizations on a global scale, but that evolution eventually excluded the Quakers from the American diplomatic perspective in the changing tides of the Cold War. While the scholarship on the humanitarian response to the war is slim overall, that statement is even truer when applied to the study of religious aid organizations. Peace history has acted as a steadily-growing field of scholarship since the 1970s, and Quaker history comprises a significant interest within that field. However, the larger pictures of both Quaker aid and the comprehensive history of religious aid have yet to be fully realized in current historical scholarship.

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148 Ibid., 274-275.
In his concluding argument concerning the postwar decline of Progressive influence in America, Daniel Rodgers asserts that the end of World War II brought with it the decline of Progressivism. Here I am not arguing that the waxing and waning of the AFSC’s influence was strictly founded in American attitudes toward Progressivism; rather, I mean that the AFSC was also founded on, and continues to operate under, a distinct Quaker ethic that happened to align with much of the political climate of the interwar years in the United States. The Committee’s official language and official practice, including their inclusive attitudes toward outside professionals involved in their work, remained rooted in that Quaker ethic even as the nature of global power politics changed with the dawning of the Cold War.

All told, the American Friends Service Committee became an organization largely excluded from the wider histories of the Roosevelt Administration and America’s World War II experience. While the overall scholarship on the humanitarian response to World War II focuses on secular or governmental agencies functioning in areas afflicted by war, the discovery of new information and ideas about the contribution of religious organizations enhances the overall picture of convergent social, ideological, and political trends operating in the uncertain environments of economic depression and war. Further study of the American Friends Service Committee, in particular, and its relationship to American military and political aims, serves to elucidate a variety of new views on pacifism, religion, and society in the World War II era.

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