5 The Allied blockade and British politics of food and famine during World War II

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Introduction

In August 1940, Winston Churchill delivered a famous speech on the Allied naval blockade, in which the prime minister outlined what would remain the British approach to famine in occupied Europe throughout the war:

> The only thing that can create famine in any part of Europe now or during the coming winter will be German looting or German failure to distribute the supplies which they command. […] Reserves of food will be built up all over the world and held in trust for the free Europe of tomorrow. These supplies shall go in when, but only when, Hitler's armies go out. Bread and Freedom shall go in together.[1]

The Allied blockade during World War II (WWII) aimed to cut off German-controlled Europe from overseas markets and sources of supply, including foodstuffs, forcing Germany to rely on accumulated stocks and on the production of raw materials available in occupied territory.[2] The blockade, which lasted from 1939 to 1945, consisted of a naval blockade, the bombing of economically important targets, and the pre-emptive purchase of war materials from neutral countries to prevent their sale to the Axis powers. Churchill's speech demonstrated that the British approach to food aid for civilians within the blockaded area would be completely different from that during World War I (WWI). According to the Ministry of Economic Warfare (MEW), led by Hugh Dalton, the experience with Herbert Hoover's Commission for Relief in Belgium, which had provided food to 7.3 million civilians in Belgium and 2 million in northern France under the Allied blockade and German occupation of WWI, had demonstrated that humanitarian aid would significantly 'prolong and strengthen German resistance' and that it was practically impossible 'to turn off the tap once it has been turned on'. In addition, the scale of relief required and the area involved was far greater than in the last war.[3] Based on the 'successes' of the naval blockade during WWI,[4] both Churchill and Dalton believed in maintaining a ruthless and rigid blockade policy. Relief should follow liberation and not the other way around.

This chapter examines the role of the Allied blockade and British economic warfare in European famines during WWII. While existing historical studies primarily focus on famines within their national contexts and examine domestic political factors, particularly enemy occupation, this chapter shifts the focus to international wartime food politics. It does so by comparatively investigating the effects of the Allied blockade on famines in three different contexts: (1) the Spanish famine under Franco's dictatorship (1939–42), (2) the famine in Axis-occupied Greece (1941–44), and (3) the 'Hunger Winter' in the German-occupied Netherlands (1944–45). Although excellent studies have been written on all three famines,[5] they have not yet been

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comparatively examined. This comparison is particularly relevant because, despite the vastly different contexts, the same state institutions and key political actors were largely involved, thus linking Allied responses to the famines. Drawing on extensive archival research in multiple countries, our study reveals the pivotal role of geopolitical interests in causing and/or exacerbating these famines. Our main aim is to bring to the fore the global political dynamics underlying modern wartime famines.

The Spanish famine and the Allied 'carrot and stick' approach

The Spanish famine occurred between 1939 and 1942, with a second stage in 1946. The main cause of the famine lay in the irrational and disastrous economic policy adopted at the end of the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) inspired by other fascist models: autarky (see Chapter 2 of this volume). The adoption of this policy was aimed at forcing Spanish industrialisation, achieving the country's economic independence and thus guaranteeing its imperial destiny. The autarkic policy had implications that extended far beyond the economic sphere, promoting an ultranationalist ideology that envisioned a new Spanish empire. Scholars estimate that in the first three years after the civil war alone, around 200,000 people lost their lives due to starvation or infectious diseases caused by undernourishment.[6]

The ultra-nationalism of Franco's dictatorship was deeply inspired by other fascist models in Europe at the time. The Franco-led 'New State's' alignment with the Axis powers was a consequence of the Spanish Civil War. The conspirators against the democratic Second Republic had established contact with Italy and Germany as early as the spring of 1936. Subsequently, when the insurgents staged the *coup d'état* on July 18th, Italy and Germany offered crucial military assistance to ensure the success of the uprising. German and Italian aid to Franco would continue throughout the civil war, contributing to the Republic's suffering and eventual demise.[7] With the civil war won, Franco's 'New State' openly displayed its friendship with the Axis. The signing of a cultural agreement with Germany (24 January 1939), Spain's adherence to the Anti-Comintern Pact (27 March 1939), and the Spanish-German treaty of friendship (31 March 1939) reciprocated this aid and offered beneficial conditions for Nazi Germany. The continued presence of German and Italian troops in Spain after the end of the civil war (until May and June 1939, respectively) and Spain's withdrawal from the League of Nations (8 May 1939) were clear signs of Francoist Spain's political orientation.[8]

Notwithstanding Spain's declaration of neutrality at the start of WWII in September 1939, the Allies had no doubt about Franco's Axis sympathies. They were also aware of Spain's crucial strategic importance in any future war. The existence of naval or air bases on the Spanish Mediterranean coast or the Balearic Islands posed a significant danger to the passage of British military and commercial traffic through the Mediterranean, threatening supply routes to and from the overseas colonies. The British position was clear, as military theorist Captain Liddell Hart stated in 1939: 'a friendly Spain is desirable, a neutral Spain is vital'.[9] To that end, and to keep Spain out of the approaching conflict, in May 1939, the British government decided to impose a strictly managed economic blockade on Spain, adopting a policy of 'carrot and stick'. This economic dependence would keep Spain out of the coming war while ensuring that it could not supply Britain's enemies. This dual-sided strategy consisted, on the one hand, of rigid control of trade and, on the other, of extending to Spain the possibility of financial aid to support reconstruction and promote friendly relations.[10]

From the first months of WWII, it was clear to the British and the French that Franco's regime was helping the Germans in any way it could. Franco permitted the supply of German warships and submarines in Spain. Spanish collaboration with the German navy had massive

consequences for the maritime war, as it contributed to the isolation of France from Britain. Following the fall of France, the *Kriegsmarine* intensified the blockade over the British Isles. An active programme of cooperation between Spain and Germany was established, through which 23 German submarines were refuelled in Vigo, El Ferrol, Cádiz, and Las Palmas (Canary Islands) between 1940 and 1942.[11] Spain was also one of the most important sources of raw materials and foodstuffs for Germany as a repayment for the assistance offered during the Spanish Civil War. The Third Reich exponentially increased its demand for Spanish products following the outbreak of war, leading to an increasingly favourable balance of imports and exports *vis-à-vis* Germany. This imbalance damaged Spain's post-civil war recovery and hampered the regime's ability to improve the food supply for a starving population.[12]

These collaborations between Spain and Nazi Germany coincided with the first phase of the Allied blockade, which would have damaging consequences for Spain's food supply. From 1 December 1939 onwards, the Royal Navy blocked the arrival of vessels bound for Germany and detained any vessel travelling to Spain without a 'navicert' (document approved by the British authorities which authorised exports and imports between neutral countries) until it could be inspected. Spain's Ambassador in London, the Duke of Alba, wrote to the Foreign Ministry in Madrid that Britain had '[presently] more than 700 vessels under detention'. The blockade intensified the disastrous economic legacies of the Spanish Civil War and Franco's calamitous economic policy of autarky. In the winter of 1940, deaths from starvation were reported in the southern region of Andalusia.[13]

As the winter of 1939–40 approached, Britain showed itself open to a trade agreement with Spain, hoping that this would distance it from Germany. Spain initially proved reluctant to negotiate, but Britain applied pressure by detaining merchant vessels, thus further restricting supplies. Facing an exhausted economy, Franco reluctantly authorised negotiations. Even though talks began in November 1939, the Anglo-Spanish Clearing Agreement was not signed until 18 March 1940. Britain offered a loan of £2 million, which had to be used to purchase British goods. Adopting the same strategy it used with neutral European countries during WW1, Britain would also permit the transit of essential goods to Spain, particularly food and raw materials. In exchange, Spain was not to allow their re-export to the enemy and was to provide detailed monthly reports of all exports and imports.[14] Through the blockade and carrot and stick approach, Britain had achieved its objectives: it had reduced Spanish exports to Germany, it had tied Spain's fate to that of Britain, and above all it had maintained Spain in its forced neutrality, notwithstanding its sympathy for the German cause.[15]

This situation would not last for long. After the fall of France and Italy's entry into the war in June 1940, Spain was tempted to join the war on the Axis side. Despite the terrible state of the country, Franco and his most loyal acolytes toyed with the idea of entering the war at the last moment, hoping to benefit from the victory of Nazism. On 12 June 1940, Spain moved from 'neutrality' to 'non-belligerence', imitating the moves of Italy and hinting at its future entry into the World War. The following day, taking advantage of Nazi entry into Paris, Spain occupied the international city of Tangier.[16] Collaboration with the Axis also accelerated in Spain. For example, the highest rate of refuelling Nazi submarines from Spanish ports occurred between June 1940 and July 1941, including the provision of food and water. Between 18 July 1940 and 3 June 1943, Italian warplanes conducted 15 air raids on Gibraltar with Spanish cooperation. At least five Italian submarines were also refuelled in Spanish ports during the war.[17]

In response, Britain tightened economic pressure on Spain by reducing deliveries, thus limiting the chance of re-exporting to its enemies, and insisted that Spain step back from its belligerent intentions. On 17 June, 1940, in agreement with the United States, Britain suspended its supply of petroleum. The economic blockade was intensified, and Britain declared that

'navicerts' would be obligatory for any commerce with the 'neutral' countries, including Spain.[18] The impact on Spanish imports was immediate. As British searches and detentions of vessels increased, the Spanish Foreign Minister Beigbeder and the Ambassador in London complained to British authorities about the difficulties that the navicert system was creating for supply.[19] In Murcia, one Falange report sent in July termed the situation 'very grave'. In that month alone, the ration had been 'shared out twice over'. The amounts were 'so meagre and so partial' that it was impossible to feed the population of the province.[20]

Spain faced a dilemma: food or empire. Spain could ask for assistance from the hated Britain to guarantee the survival of the population or enter the war alongside Germany to achieve its territorial claims on Gibraltar, Oran, and French Morocco. Facing an exhausted nation, Franco authorised renewed negotiations with the British. The mechanism of the British policy of economic appeasement resumed. On 30 August 1940, the British made their offer in an attempt to appease Spain's belligerent moods. The supply of petroleum would be renewed, a monthly quota of imports would be agreed upon for a couple of months, and Spain would agree not to re-export goods to enemy countries.[21]

Despite his dependence on the Allies, the critical socioeconomic situation of the country and the worsening of the famine among the poorest classes, Franco continued to make his support for the Axis cause very clear. On 3 June 1940, Franco sent an adulatory letter to Hitler, in which he offered 'services which you regard as most valuable'. On 16 September, Serrano Súñer visited Berlin to meet the *Führer* and negotiate Spain's entry into the war. The corollary of this pro-Axis escalation came on 23 October 1940, with the meeting between the *Führer* and the Caudillo in Hendaye (France). The aim was to remove the stumbling blocks in the negotiations for Spain's entry into the war. Hitler sought the immediate participation of Spain in the war through a joint offensive against Gibraltar (Operation Felix). Franco showed a willingness to fight alongside the Nazis, but pointed to difficulties in food supplies and fuel, and sought German economic support to enter the war in exchange for Gibraltar, all of French Morocco, and even Oran. Hitler promised that Spain would receive all the economic and material support from Germany, but only after it had entered the war. In truth, the key question centred on Spanish claims in North Africa, since it could pose a problem for Germany in its alliance with Vichy France and Fascist Italy. Spain's lack of entry into the war was not due to the dire socio-economic situation, nor to Franco or his wishes, but in truth to the imperial ambitions of Nazi Germany, which were incompatible with Spanish claims in North Africa.[22]

The Allies returned to the policy of carrot and stick. They understood that hunger was their best weapon in keeping Spain out of the war. Winston Churchill stated on 3 November 1940: 'We have in our hands a very powerful lever in the form of our economic blockade and I think that Spain's desire to obtain provisions from the United States and from this country will be the most powerful factor in keeping them out of the war'.[23] Considering the possibility that Spain would enter the war, the Allies made military preparations and suspended deliveries of cereals. The principal victims of the belligerent whims of the 'New State' would be the Spanish people. After the punishment came the carrot. With Britain's resources increasingly exhausted, it turned to the United States and convinced them to supply Spain with raw materials and foodstuffs, resulting in the signing of new agreements in the autumn of 1940, by obtaining credits and shipping wheat.[24]

Nonetheless, the Franco regime was far from embracing strict neutrality. On 12 February 1941, Franco met with Mussolini in Bordighera, Italy, the latter dictator was prodded by Hitler to see if he could convince Spain to enter the war. The German invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 emboldened the imperialist discourses of leaders of Francoist Spain. On 24 June, Serrano Súñer delivered a fiery speech, followed by the march of a crowd of Falangists to

the British embassy in Madrid, where they threw rocks at the building and shouted 'Gibraltar for Spain. British assassins' in front of authorities who barely reacted. Franco approved then the creation of the *División Azul* (Blue Division), a body of 18,801 volunteers under Army command, which would go off 'to fight against Communism'. The grand finale to all of this was a markedly Falangist-sounding speech by Franco on 17 July in which he declared, 'The Allies are on the wrong side in this war and they have lost it'. Once again, the thirst for an empire came before feeding the country.[25]

Spain's pro-Axis policy and the ensuing British policy of 'carrot and stick' continued throughout 1941. However, one factor changed the landscape: the entry of the United States into the war in December 1941. The new context hardened the stance of the Allies towards Spain, with the US consistently advocating harsher measures with Franco's Spain than the British, stretching the nation's supply problems to their limit. The detention of Spanish boats was sped up, stopping the arrival of essential products like potatoes, wheat, flour, and pyrites.[26]

It is important to reiterate that the main aims of the Allied blockade were to prevent Spain from entering the war and to ensure that Spain could not re-export the goods it received to Axis countries. Thus, the entry of the United States into the war meant the employment of a powerful new weapon. In addition to blockade and trade restrictions, a massive programme of pre-emptive purchases began of Spanish products that had wartime value – wolfram, iron, mercury, cork – with the aim of preventing them from reaching the Third Reich. In January 1942, a desperate Spain accepted the conditions imposed by the Allies. Spain agreed to send coveted products for inspection of petroleum supplies and prohibition of its re-export to Germany, Italy, Japan, or occupied nations. The dictatorship was forced to accept the presence of American and British observers. Franco began to understand that the entry of the US had signalled an important change in the fortunes of the conflict.[27]

Franco's distancing of Spain from the Axis and its belligerent ambitions, and consequently the improvement of food supply to the population from August onwards, was due to two factors. First, the emergence of an internal crisis within the regime. On 16 August 1942, at the Basilica in Begoña (Bilbao), Falangists threw two grenades into a crowd attending a Mass in honour of Carlists who had fallen in the civil war. On 2 September, Franco reshuffled his cabinet, dismissing pro-fascist Serrano Súñer and replacing him with ex-Minister (and General) Gómez Jordana, who favoured neutrality. The second factor was the favourable course of the war for the Allies. From September 1942, while *Wehrmacht* soldiers were fighting the Soviets in Stalingrad and Germany and its allies were in retreat in North Africa following the Allied landings of Operation Torch (November 1942), Spain began to shift its political posture.[28]

In this new context, 1943 proved to be a good year for Spain in terms of foreign trade. The momentum in the war had shifted, as did the Franco regime's explicit political position in favour of the Axis. Spain officially declared its neutrality on 1 October 1943. Accordingly, the supply of food to the country, although far from ideal, improved.[29] The worst of the famine had passed, even if Spain continued to be plagued by scarcity, rationing, and deprivation throughout the rest of the 'hunger years'. The worst of the rigid economic blockade was also over, albeit not for German-occupied Europe, where difficulties persisted.

The special case of Greece

In the spring of 1941, the British Foreign Office became increasingly concerned by the deteriorating food situation in Greece, which was occupied by German, Italian, and Bulgarian forces. The triple Axis occupation had split the import-dependent country up into patchwork pieces and imposed tough controls on markets, as well as restrictions upon population movement, shipping,

and fishing. A lack of reliable information and government authority in imposing laws further contributed to the difficult food situation, as did – of course – the Allied blockade of occupied Greece, which stopped outside foodstuffs from entering the country. As a result of all of these factors, food supplies in Greece dwindled fast, and prices on the black market rose exponentially, leading to widespread hunger conditions affecting both urban areas and multiple islands under German and Italian occupation. The 1941–44 Greek famine led to an estimated 400,000 excess deaths.[30]

Already in late April 1941, the Greek prime minister Emmanouil Tsouderos made a request to the Allies for food and medical supplies. In line with the blockade policy, the British Foreign Office responded to the prime minister – who had fled with the Greek King George II and his cabinet to Crete – that they regarded all foodstuffs as contraband and could not agree to food relief for Greece without doing so for other occupied territories.[31] From the terminology used in internal correspondence, referring to the 'genuinely starving Greeks', the British administration seemed to take the Greek case seriously. In light of 'the heroic example set by the Greeks to other nations' in their resistance against Italy and Germany, and the known insufficiency of local food production, the Foreign Office pushed for immediate relief plans; however, not just because of humanitarian concerns. Similar to the situation in Spain, the British attached great importance to Greece's strategic position, in this case in the Eastern Mediterranean, positioned favourably within Britain's sea communications with India and to supplies of oil in the Middle East. A friendly post-war Greece was also vital to the British, with the Foreign Office aiming for a constitutional monarchy under the pro-British King George II.[32]

The British War Cabinet initially concurred that the most convenient solution was to purchase wheat in 'neutral' Soviet Russia, but when this option was pushed off the table in late June 1941, the focus shifted to Turkey. Minister of Economic Warfare Dalton argued that, as they could not prevent Turkish produce from reaching the Germans, it may as well go to the Greeks. Naval forces operating in the Aegean would protect the Turkish vessels from attacks, but the arrangement needed to remain strictly secret as these sea transports still involved a technical breach of the blockade, which officially did not allow food imports into occupied countries, and could therefore possibly lead to difficulties with the other Allied governments.[33] The MEW explained to the US government that the Greek claim to relief was the strongest they had yet encountered: 'Their gallant fight has earned them exceptional sympathy, and there are reports that their present distress is exceptionally severe'.[34] All credits for the relief scheme nevertheless had to go to the Greek leaders, who by then had relocated to London: a policy that the Foreign Office described as 'selling the King to his people',[35] which underwrites the strong political dimension to British support for food aid for Greece.

In August 1941, the Turkish government agreed to the relief scheme, and the first Turkish vessels set sail to Greece two months later.[36] However, it soon became clear that this scheme would hardly suffice in providing for the basic needs of the Greeks, who needed wheat more than anything; something that Turkey could not supply. Mortality levels in Greece were rising rapidly, which increased pressure on the British administration to relax the blockade. In late 1941, the Greek-American community and Prime Minister Tsouderos sent urgent letters to Churchill and Roosevelt to allow a cargo of 8,000 tons of wheat to be sent to Greece, which Minister of State in the Middle East, Oliver Lyttelton, had already concurred to release from the Middle East Supply Centre.[37] Lyttelton wrote to London:

> I cannot believe that at the worst our blockade would be seriously impaired if even one full cargo found its way into German bellies, nor can I believe in the long run that to allow the Greeks to die in the streets is going to help us to win the war on their behalf.[38]

The Foreign Office anxiously agreed that the suffering might be attributed to British action, thereby 'producing a permanent anti-British feeling in those countries which may well dictate the post-war policies of their Governments'.[39] At the same time, the Greeks might look more favourably towards the Americans, who had persistently offered help. Yet, in the War Cabinet meeting on 24 December 1941, Dalton's view still prevailed – any supply of wheat to Greece through the blockade would open the way to demands from the other Allies and make it 'impossible to deny similar treatment to the peoples of other European countries overrun by the enemy'.[40]

Within a couple of weeks, the MEW and War Cabinet also shifted to the Foreign Office's stance. This shift was surely related to the US entering the war in December 1941, who were committed to winning the war through an internationalist foreign policy.[41] Additionally, in Britain, public criticism of the blockade was being voiced on an unprecedented scale. Yet perhaps even more decisive was the mounting internal opposition. In addition to high-ranking officials in Turkey and Egypt, the Foreign Office began openly opposing the War Cabinet's decision, stating that 'the Greek relief issue is one in which arguments of economic warfare cannot be allowed to outweigh arguments of political warfare'.[42] Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden warned about British public opinion and embarrassment in the event of future military operations in Greece, even explicitly stating that their policy was 'partially responsible for starving the most gallant of our Allies'.[43] Lyttelton similarly wrote to Churchill:

> I must recount my opinion that we shall undermine resistance of ally and lose a possible centre of successful insurrection against Axis if we continue starving the Greeks [...] I have no doubt where balance of advantage to win war lies.[44]

It became impossible for the War Cabinet to ignore this broad-based opposition, which clearly voiced British responsibility for exacerbating the famine.

In a meeting on 7 January 1942 with the Foreign Office, Dalton reluctantly agreed with Eden to allow an immediate 'token' shipment of 8,000 tons of wheat from Egypt to be sent under the auspices of the International Red Cross Committee (ICRC), provided the US and Soviet Union concurred. Furthermore, it would be made publicly known that this was an exceptional case and no further concessions would be made. Five days later, the War Cabinet approved this proposal. The Foreign Office's suggestion to keep the plan secret was firmly rejected, as Dalton considered it vital to 'get the maximum propaganda value' from the concession, suggesting it was more about the appearance of relief than actually relieving the famine.[45]

Significantly, Lord Privy Seal and soon-to-be Deputy Prime Minister Clement Attlee wrote to Churchill, who was not present during the meeting, that the War Cabinet's decision was made in view of the effect upon Greek crews serving with them and Greek public opinion.[46] Foreign Secretary Eden, on the other hand, explained to the prime minister that it was imperative to win public support for the Greek government, whose resigning would 'create a most damaging situation for us both at home and abroad'. He added:

> If [the] Greek population is seriously reduced it may take generations to restore the Greek state to healthy condition and a healthy Greece is essential to us in [the] Eastern Mediterranean. Three is a danger too that Italians might successfully infiltrate into and establish themselves in a half-populated Greece.[47]

Churchill briefly responded to both of them: 'I agree with your decision. Impossible [to] resist Minister of State'.[48] This suggests that the most significant breach of the blockade policy may

not have been prompted by humanitarian considerations, but because of public opinion and, perhaps even more so, post-war geopolitical considerations. All considerations by the British War Cabinet were clearly influenced by the role Greece could play to their benefit in the new post-war world order.

This did not conclude the discussions on Greece, as it was evident that sending just one cargo would not suffice. On Dalton's initiative, further concessions were drafted on very strict conditions, which while 'perfectly reasonable on the face of it' would be unlikely for the Germans to meet.[49] He suggested that the Germans would allow 'neutral' Swedish ships to carry imports from overseas to Greece, with all belligerents giving safe conduct and that a neutral commission consisting of 'reliable' Swedish nationals would be established in Greece to control the distribution under the auspices of the ICRC. The advantage of the Swedish scheme was that the British would not have to assume any commitment and that benevolent Swedes could inform the British on what was happening in Greece. Furthermore, neither wheat nor flour was considered a major factor in the blockade, as it was wrongly estimated that Germany was not short of cereals.[50] Both acceptance and rejection of the offer would work in favour of the Allies: in case of rejection, the Germans could be publicly and undeniably blamed for the famine in Greece. This indicates that, as was the case for the Axis, both hunger and food aid functioned as weapons of warfare for the British. It also demonstrates that Swedish 'neutrality' during the war was exploited and violated by both Allied and Axis powers, as well as by the Swedes themselves.

On 16 February 1942, Churchill chaired the War Cabinet meeting that approved the proposal and, in the following two months, the scheme was respectively approved by the US, Swedish, Canadian, Italian, and German governments. The Swedish scheme would aim at shipping 15,000 tons of wheat per month from Canada with the money for shipping coming from the Greek government and the wheat being a gift from the Canadians.[51] While the scheme was completely London-born, to the outside world – including the British House of Commons – it was presented as a Swedish plan.[52] The British interference and dominance in the scheme became even clearer in the following months when the composition of the commission was discussed and the MEW delayed the scheme until all their wishes for 'neutral' Swedish supervision were met.[53]

The scheme was inaugurated in August 1942 and continued well into 1944.[54] The experience of establishing a humanitarian corridor to provide food for the Greek population established an important model for addressing hunger in subsequent armed conflicts.[55] However, during WWII, after Greece, the War Cabinet turned down all proposals for allowing foodstuffs to pass through the blockade to relieve the populations in enemy-occupied territory, thereby reaffirming British dominance in wartime European military and economic matters.[56] Yet, in reality, the relief scheme was largely run by the US. In addition to Canadian wheat, the shipments eventually included pulses, dried fish, powdered milk, and vitamins: mostly produced in the US and largely paid for with US Lend-Lease money. After liberation, Greece would become one of the main United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) beneficiaries, which was similarly largely US-dominated.[57] Relief for wartime and post-war Greece thereby marked the shift in transatlantic relations that the British had been fearing all along.

Liberation before relief: The Netherlands, 1944–45

The tightening of the Allied blockade after the Greek exemption would play a central role during another European famine: the Dutch 'Hunger Winter' of 1944–45. The Dutch famine resulted from the cumulative effect of several transportation and distribution difficulties following the Allied liberation of the south of the Netherlands. In September 1944, the Allied advance

under Operation Market Garden stagnated at the Rhine River following the loss of the Battle of Arnhem. The northern part of the Netherlands remained occupied by the German forces until the spring of 1945, separating the western Netherlands from three major food-producing provinces as well as from the Dutch mining area in the south. The further impact of a national railway strike, a temporary German embargo on inland shipping, a heavy frost period, severe fuel shortages, and the German requisitioning of transportation means resulted in increased food shortages and ultimately led to famine in the urbanised western Netherlands between November 1944 and May 1945, costing approximately 20,000 lives.[58]

On the very day that the Allies lost the Battle of Arnhem on 25 September 1944, Dutch Queen Wilhelmina summoned prime minister of the Dutch government-in-exile in London Pieter S. Gerbrandy to approach Churchill to discuss relief for the occupied Netherlands.[59] After numerous requests, on 5 October 1944, the prime ministers finally met. Based on estimations of the food supply, Gerbrandy warned that people in the western Netherlands could survive only until 1 December of that year. But Churchill did not consider breaching the blockade policy again; he was adamant that any food admitted would directly or indirectly benefit the Germans and therefore prolong their resistance. Moreover, he also believed that there was a good chance that the Netherlands would be liberated before 1 December.[60]

In the meantime, the Dutch cabinet had already approached the neutral Swedish and Swiss governments to enquire about relief opportunities from their countries and, as early as 2 October 1944, Sweden declared to be agreeable to this idea.[61] Provided that the Dutch government made full arrangements with the Swedes, the British War Cabinet saw no objections from the blockade point of view. Since 1941, they had allowed this kind of foreign exchange within the blockaded area, enabling occupied territories to purchase food from neutral countries.[62] US General and Commander of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) Dwight D. Eisenhower also approved of the plan. In late October, he stated: 'I recognize [that] part of relief supplies will fall into German hands, but I accept this risk. Any assistance to the Dutch civil population that can be provided before liberation will ease the relief problem subsequent to liberation'.[63]

On 6 November 1944, the British Chiefs of Staff discussed four possible relief schemes: (1) A Swedish ship would bring relief supplies from Gothenburg to a Dutch port, most likely Amsterdam, (2) an ICRC ship would bring cargo from Lisbon, (3) supplies would be dropped by air onto three principle towns in the western Netherlands, and (4) a Red Cross barge would ship supplies from Basel down the Rhine.[64] In the following negotiations between the Allies and Germans, military considerations proved to be of prime importance. Germany quite clearly favoured the last plan: according to the SHAEF, this was only because they wanted the Rhine navigable for their own benefit. The Allied Headquarters dismissed the idea of airdrops, since there was no guarantee that the supplies would actually reach the civil population. The Allies did, however, regard an initial symbolic airdrop of supplies after liberation to be 'essential' in terms of 'psychological warfare'.[65] The first two plans seemed agreeable, but the British War Cabinet considered Red Cross shipments from Lisbon less desirable in view of the many requests from other occupied countries.[66] Thus, the only proposition left at this point to consider seriously was relief from neutral Sweden.

Despite the promising outlook, no progress was made in the following weeks. Shortly after SHAEF refused to open the Rhine for transportation, the Germans denied observers from the ICRC to distribute the Swedish supplies on grounds that the Netherlands was now a combat zone and any relief permitted needed to be distributed by the German and Dutch Red Cross. Although this would mean an enormous concession from the Allied side, Secretary of State Anthony Eden initially endorsed this change of plans. However, soon after, a secret report from the Netherlands

was received that stated that all lorries and petrol belonging to the Dutch Red Cross had been confiscated and its officers were resigning, as a protest against the forcible appointment of a Dutch Germanic SS official as its new chief.[67] While food relief ships in Sweden and Lisbon lay ready with German approval, the Allies immediately put the plans for Swedish relief on hold.[68]

By December 1944, the food shortage in the western Netherlands had turned into famine, but all relief negotiations seemed stranded. On 16 December, Dutch prime minister Gerbrandy wrote to General Eisenhower: 'Relief for the occupied Netherlands at the time of the liberation must have priority above everything, even above the slogan: first of all, defeat of Germany. The Netherlands government cannot accept the liberation of corpses'.[69] The Supreme Commander himself also grew anxious to get supplies into the Netherlands: 'a ton sent before starvation is worth five sent too late'.[70] But Churchill was not convinced about the severity of the situation and delayed approval of new relief plans:

> Before the liberation of Western Europe, we used to be told that most of the inhabitants would be starving. When we got to France and found the inhabitants alive, we were told that it was the Belgians who were short of food, and now that we are in Belgium, the Dutch are proclaimed as the principal sufferers. Where will it stop?[71]

Churchill was convinced that any relief shipments would compromise the principles of economic warfare, according to which principles of no foodstuffs were allowed to pass the blockade to enemy-occupied territories, except for the benefit of prisoners of war.[72] Other considerations also played a role. During the war, the question of food aid became intertwined with the British import programme, as diverting shipping and food supplies meant less capacity for domestic imports. Food imports in Britain had halved from an average of 22 million tons before the war to between 10.6 and 11.5 million tons in the years 1942–44. The British government had to account for the declining food supplies, and allocating shipping for food aid thus came with significant risks, including popular discontent and loss of British support for the war effort.[73] There was also the domestic aspect of the Channel Islands, where, following the blockade by the British Royal Navy after the invasion of Normandy, food shortages in the autumn of 1944 also evolved into a severe food crisis. The Channel Island's last winter also became known as the 'hunger winter' and diverted British attention from the pleas from the Dutch and many other occupied countries in this same period.[74]

Finally, on 19 January 1945 – over three months after the initial Swedish promise – an agreement was reached. In the months of February to April 1945, a total of five Red Cross shipments – three from Sweden, one from Switzerland, and one from the ICRC – arrived in the occupied Netherlands, bringing a total of approximately 14,000 tons of food into the country. In terms of measurable effects, the supplies meant eight weeks of daily rations increased by 200–400 kcal with greater allowances for the specific needs of different age groups, infants in particular. Nevertheless, the Red Cross shipments could certainly not bring an end to the famine. In total, the people in the occupied western Netherlands received less than 5 kg of food relief per capita during the Hunger Winter. In comparison, during the months of December 1944–May 1945, the still-occupied Channel Islands received 70 kg per capita from neutral sources.[75]

Meanwhile, negotiations about Allied relief also continued, in particular talks concerning the possibility of deploying aircrafts to drop food supplies onto the principal urban areas. The use of airplanes to drop food had been dismissed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff in the autumn of 1944 but was again re-examined in March 1945. One reason was that estimations of the Dutch food supply indicated that it would be completely exhausted by 28 April: after this point,

famine mortality would occur 'on a considerable scale'.[76] Another factor was that, from a military standpoint, SHAEF considered it far from advisable to undertake military operations in the western Netherlands, thus favouring preparations to enable relief.[77]

The British Chiefs of Staff agreed with SHAEF that an immediate attempt to drop suitable supplies ought to be made, in spite of the risk that these supplies might fall into German hands – a shift in mindset that was surely related to the imminent Allied invasion of Nazi Germany and the risks of liberating a half-starved country, for which they would partly be held responsible. Yet this time, it was the US Joint Chiefs of Staff who delayed the initiative, remaining adamant about not sending supplies through the blockade.[78] Despite this opposition, on 17 April, Chief of Staff of SHAEF Walter Bedell Smith summoned Air Commodore Andrew Geddes, the mastermind behind Operation Overlord and Operation Market Garden, to commence planning for an air operation with heavy bombers that would provide relief to the Dutch.[79] Six days later, the Combined Chiefs of Staff formally authorised Eisenhower to negotiate a truce with the German authorities in the Netherlands that enabled the introduction of relief, on the condition that it did not prejudice the principle of unconditional surrender.

While both the British and the Americans were apprehensive about upsetting Anglo-Soviet relations over the question of food aid for the Dutch, both sides did concede that the Russians should simply be informed and not consulted, as Roosevelt had proposed. Churchill warned: 'I have already made it clear […] that I am not prepared to let the Russians veto the plan'.[80] The Soviet command was, however, invited to be present at all discussions with German representatives. In response, Soviet Liaison Officer General Antonov added one more condition to the list; namely, that the local German command was obliged not to transfer its troops to other parts of the front during the armistice period, including to the Eastern Soviet-German front.[81]

Eisenhower assigned two strategic bomber forces – the RAF Bomber Command and the Eighth US Air Force.[82] The German authorities agreed to the airdrops and accepted the invitation to meet with Allied representatives on 28 and 30 April in the small village of Achterveld to negotiate matters directly connected with the introduction of food supplies into Western Holland. Following these negotiations, from 29 April until 8 May 1945, RAF Lancasters and USAAF B-17 heavy bombers dropped food onto the western Netherlands, in a total of 5,294 flights.[83] In the meanwhile, on 5 May, the German troops in the Netherlands officially surrendered. While the entire operation was impressive, the outcome for the population was somewhat less extraordinary: the total amount of the drops (7.8 million kg) equalled a mere 3 kg of food per head of population in the starving urban west. The true Allied contribution to relieving the crisis followed more than a week after liberation, predominantly through land and sea supply. In the end, the contribution of the famous airdrops was mostly symbolic, which was exactly how the Allies had intended it. For them, the food drops were a political instrument, important for their legitimacy and post-war power relations as it contributed to verifying an end to the war in a visible and spectacular fashion.

Conclusion

The Allied economic blockade was a powerful weapon of warfare during WWII. While the blockade was aimed at weakening the Axis powers by depriving them of resources and forcing neutral countries to align with Allied interests, it had devastating effects on civilian populations and even contributed to famines in Europe. This chapter has revealed the major differences in the British political decision-making process and approach to three of these wartime famines. In Spain, restrictive trade policies were a response to the Franco regime's pro-Axis stance, and leveraging food supplies and other vital resources was aimed at keeping Spain from entering

the war on the Axis' side. In Greece, the blockade contributed to famine conditions by reducing foodstuffs in the country, and then hampering large-scale relief operations, although public and political pressure eventually led to an exceptional relaxation of these measures to secure Greece as a post-war ally. By contrast, during the Dutch famine, the Allied blockade was strictly maintained until only a few days before the end of the war, as Churchill firmly believed that relief should follow liberation and any relief supplies sent through the blockade would only prolong German resistance.

Ultimately, the Allied approach to famine in wartime Europe was mostly dictated by political motivations – whether to force neutrality, defeat the enemy, or secure post-war alliances. At times, political pressures, unfavourable public opinion, and strategic interests led to adjustments in these tactics, as seen in the example of Greece. However, in other instances, such as in the Netherlands, psychological warfare tactics and propaganda were deployed to shape the post-war narrative of wartime deprivation and absolve the Allies of all responsibility for hunger and famine. Thus, the use of food and hunger as weapons of warfare comprised of a complex interplay of military strategies and political objectives, often with little regard for the long-lasting effects on the affected civilian populations.

Notes

1 The National Archives Kew, London [TNA], FO 837/1218, Statement for the Prime Minister's speech, 15 August 1940.
2 British Library [BL], IOR/M/3/939, *Handbook of Economic Warfare* (London 1939); BL, IOR/M/3/939, 'Three Years of Economic Warfare', 18 August 1942.
3 TNA, FO 837/1218, Minutes MEW, 15 and 24 June 1940; Ibid., Leith Ross to Cadogan, 1 July 1940; TNA, FO 837/1218, Draft minute MEW, August 1940; J. Beaumont, 'Starving for Democracy: Britain's Blockade of and Relief for Occupied Europe, 1939-1945', *War & Society,* 8 (1990): 58. On the WWI blockade: Clotilde Druelle, *Feeding Occupied France during World War I: Herbert Hoover and the Blockade* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019); and George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: The Humanitarian, 1914–1917* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988).
4 While the impact of the blockade upon German civilians had been severe, the British saw the military measure as the key driver behind the Allied Victory, as it had forced the Germans into submarine warfare, which ultimately brought the Americans into the war. M.E. Cox, *Hunger in War & Peace: Women and Children in Germany, 1914–1924* (Oxford, 2019). See also: N.A. Lambert, *Planning Armageddon: British Economic Warfare and the First World War* (Cambridge, MA 2012), Ch 2–3.
5 On Spain: M. A. Del Arco Blanco, 'Famine in Spain during Franco's Dictatorship (1939-1952)', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 56:1 (2021), 3–27; M. A. Del Arco Blanco and P. Anderson, eds*., Franco's Famine: Malnutrition, Disease and Starvation in Post-Civil War Spain* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021). On Greece: M. Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece: The Experience of Occupation 1941–1944* (New Haven, 1993); G.A. Kazamias, 'The Politics of Famine Relief for Occupied Greece', in R. Clogg (ed.) *Bearing Gifts for Greeks: Humanitarian Aid to Greece in the 1940s* (Basingstoke, 2008), 39–57; V. Hionidou, *Famine and Death in Occupied Greece, 1941-44* (Cambridge, 2006). On the Netherlands: B. Moore, "The Western Allies and Food Relief to the Occupied Netherlands, 1944–1945," *War & Society* 10 (1992): 91–118; I. De Zwarte, *The Hunger Winter: Fighting Famine in the Occupied Netherlands, 1944–1945* (Cambridge, 2020).
6 Del Arco Blanco, 'Famine'; Del Arco Blanco and Anderson, *Franco's Famine*.
7 A. Viñas, *¿Quién quiso la guerra civil?: historia de una conspiración* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2019). P. Preston*, The Spanish Civil War: Reaction, Revolution and Revenge* (London: Harper, 2006).
8 J. A. Durango, 'España y la política internacional del fin de la guerra civil al comienzo de la mundial', *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie V, Historia Contemporánea*, 5 (1992), 261.

9 Axis Plans in the Mediterranean. *An Analysis of German Geopolitical Ideas on Italy, France, the Balearic Islands, Gibraltar, Catalonia and Spain, with a Preface by Captain Liddell Hart* (London: General Press, 1939), 3–4.
10 D. W. Pike, *Franco and the Axis Stigma* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014). E. Moradiellos, *Franco frente a Churchill: España y Gran Bretaña en la Segunda Guerra Mundial, 1939–1945* (Barcelona: Península, 2005), 71–75.
11 J. J. Díaz Benítez, 'The Etappe Kanaren: A Case Study of the Secret Supply of the German Navy in Spain during the Second World War', *The International Journal of Maritime History*, 30:3 (2018), 477–478.
12 A. Viñas, *Guerra, dinero, dictadura. Ayuda fascista y autarquía en la España de Franco* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1984), 255–256; R. García Pérez, *Franquismo y tercer Reich. Las relaciones económicas hispano-alemanas durante la segunda guerra mundial* (Madrid: CEC, 1994).
13 W. N. Medlicott, *The Economic Blockade*, vol. 1 (London: HMSO, 1952), 94–101. Archivo General de la Administración [AGA], Asuntos Exteriores [AE], 82/5692, October 30, 1939. AGA, Presidencia del Gobierno [PG], 20495, February 5, 1940.
14 The experience of Sweden in the Great War may have prompted the British to adopt a more expedient approach towards Spain. See: Cox, *Hunger in War & Peace*, 31–33.
15 AGA, AE, 82/03975, folder 1, December 12, 1939. R. Wigg, *Churchill and Spain. The Survival of the Franco Regime, 1940–1945* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 9–10.
16 J. Tusell, *Franco, España y la II Guerra Mundial: entre el eje y la neutralidad* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1995), 71–72. *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, June 13, 1940.
17 Moradiellos, *Franco*, 117; Tusell, *Franco*, 237–239.
18 Medlicott, *The Economic Blockade*, vol. 1, 96, 431–434, 436–437, 509–510; A. Viñas, J. Viñuela, F. Eguidazu, C. Fernández, and F. Senen, *Política comercial exterior en España, 1931–1975, vol. 1* (Madrid: Banco Exterior de España, 1979), 331.
19 AGA, AE, 54/7293, 9 August 1940.
20 AGA, PG, 20557, *Informe de la Secretaría Local de FET y de las JONS*, June 1940.
21 Moradiellos, *Franco*, 159, 164–167.
22 P. Preston, *Franco: Caudillo de España* (Barcelona: Grijalbo, 1994), 487–490; N. J. W. Goda, *Y mañana…el mundo: Hitler, África noroccidental y el cambio hacia América* (Alianza: Madrid, 2002), 129–134, 149–156, 201–202 y 206–208.
23 E. Moradiellos, *Quo vadis, Hispania? Winston Churchill y la guerra civil española (1936–1939)* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2021), 164.
24 Viñas, *Política*, 334–335; Wigg, *Churchill*, 20–21; J. M. Thomàs, *Roosevelt y Franco: de la Guerra Civil española a Pearl Harbor* (Barcelona: Edhasa, 2007), 348–351.
25 S. Hoare, *Ambassador on a Special Mission* (London: Collins, 1946), 114–115. *La Vanguardia Española*, 18 July 1941, 5–6.
26 Examples: AGA, AE, 82/5444, folder 4, telegram, December 21, 1941. AGA, AE, 82/05444, folder 5, Gibraltar, salida 1941, December 28, 1941.
27 Moradiellos, *Franco*, 259–261.
28 M. Peña Díaz and F. Contreras Pérez, 'Carceller Segura y el origen del sector petrolero español', in Raúl Molina Recio, ed., *Pioneros. Empresas y empresarios en el primer tercio del siglo XX en España* (Granada: Comares, 2019), 93–94.
29 AGA, AE, 54/6940, Discurso del Duque de Alba, June 1943.
30 Hionidou, 'Famine in Occupied Greece: Causes and Consequences', in *Bearing Gifts to Greeks*, 25–26.
31 TNA, FO 837/1230, Memorandum Royal Greek Legation, 25 April 1941; TNA, FO 837/1230, FO to Canea, 1 May 1941.
32 TNA, FO 837/1230, Ronald to Stirling, 8 May 1941; TNA, FO 837/1230, FO to Lampson, May 1941; Clogg, 'The Greek Government-in-Exile 1941-4', *The International History Review,* 1, 3 (1979), 378; Hionidou, *Famine and Death in Occupied Greece,* 236; Kazamias, 'The Politics of Famine Relief', 50. See also: P. Papastratis, *British Policy towards Greece during the Second World War, 1941–1944* (Cambridge 1984).

33 TNA, FO 837/1230, Eden to Dalton, 28 June 1941; Ibid., Dalton to Eden, 3 July 1941; Ibid., FO to Angora, 14 July 1941.
34 TNA, FO 837/1230, MEW to Washington, 14 July 1941.
35 TNA, FO 371/33187, Memorandum on position King of Greece, without date; Clogg, 'The Greek Government-in-Exile', 379–380; Hionidou, *Famine and Death in Occupied Greece,* 18.
36 TNA, FO 837/1239, Summary Statement of the Greek Relief Program, 16 August 1944. From October 1941 until August 1942, a total of almost 20,000 tons of food was sent from Turkey to Greece. TNA, FO 837/1217, Lists of food sent to Greece by Embassy London, 6 December 1943; Kazamias, 'Turks, Swedes and Famished Greeks: Some Aspects of Famine Relief in Occupied Greece, 1941–44', *Balkan Studies,* 33, 2 (1992), 294–298.
37 TNA, FO 837/1232, Appeal Greek Relief Committee of America, 10 November 1941; TNA., FO 837/1233, Tsouderos to Churchill, 14 December 1941; TNA, FO 837/1233, FO to Dalton, 22 December 1941; A. Kyrou, 'The Greek-American Community and the Famine in Axis-occupied Greece', in *Bearing Gifts to Greeks*, 58–84.
38 TNA, FO 837/1233, Lampson to FO and MEW, 9 December 1941.
39 TNA, FO 837/1233, Memorandum on Greek relief by FO, 22 December 1941. See also: Kazamias, 'The Politics of Famine Relief', 48.
40 TNA, CAB 65/20/26b, W.M. 134 (41) Conclusions, 24 December 1941. Dalton suggested three other ways of helping the Greeks: (1) expanding the Turkish scheme, (2) a child emigration scheme, and (3) a scheme to allow free and safe passage to Axis vessels carrying food from Trieste. Earlier, they had also seriously considered retaliating against the Italian civil population in East Africa. TNA, PREM 3/74/5; TNA, FO 837/1231; Kazamias, 'The Politics of Famine Relief', 47–48.
41 S.A. Brewer, *Why America Fights: Patriotism and War Propaganda from the Philippines to Iraq* (Oxford 2009), 80–126.
42 FO 371/32455, Hoare to Sargent, 2 January 1945.
43 TNA, CAB 66/20/37, Memorandum Eden 'Greece: The Blockade', 3 January 1942. See also: TNA, PREM 3/74/5.
44 TNA, PREM 3/74/5, Lampson to Churchill, 9 January 1942. See also: Hionidou, *Famine and Death in Occupied Greece,* 17–18.
45 TNA, FO 837/1231, Minutes Dalton on meeting with FO, 7 January 1942; TNA, FO 837/1231, Note on position Dalton, 8 January 1942; TNA, FO 837/1231, CAB 65/25/4, W.M. 4 (42) Conclusions, 12 January 1942.
46 TNA, PREM 3/74/5, Attlee to Churchill, without date.
47 TNA, PREM 3/74/5, Eden to Churchill, without date. See also: 'The Politics of Famine Relief', 50.
48 TNA, PREM 3/74/5, Churchill to Attlee and Eden, without date.
49 TNA, FO 837/1235, Draft conditions MEW for admission of further relief foodstuffs into Greece, 2 February 1942; TNA, FO 837/1235, Minutes meeting MEW, 4 February 1942.
50 TNA, CAB 66/22/10, Memorandum Dalton 'Greece: The Blockade', 14 February 1942; TNA, FO 837/1235, Minute on Greek relief Camps, 15 February 1942. During WWI, neutral ships were also deployed to send food aid to warring Europe.
51 TNA, CAB 65/25/21, W.M. 21 (42), 16 February 1942; TNA, FO 837/1235, Sweden to FO, 18 April 1942; TNA, FO 837/1235, Canada H.C. to D.O., 12 April 1942.
52 TNA, FO 837/1235, FO to Stockholm, 27 February and 12 March 1942; Ibid., FO to British representatives in Stockholm, Washington, Ankara, Cairo, Berne and Vatican on statement House of Commons, 21 April 1942; TNA, FO 837/1235, FO 837/1237, Sargent to Tsouderos, 28 August 1942.
53 TNA, FO 837/1235, Minutes Camps on Swedish relief scheme, 17 May 1942; TNA, FO 837/1235, Agreements with notes Dalton, Selbourne and Morton, 19–22 May; Hionidou, *Famine and Death in Occupied Greece,* 131–34.
54 Kazamias, 'Turks, Swedes and Famished Greeks', 300–9.
55 Elisabeth Piller, 'The Blockade and the Making of Modern Food Aid in the Era of the Two World Wars', *The International History Review* (2024), 1–11.
56 TNA, CAB 66/53/46, W.M. 63 (43), Minute 5.

57 For more on the politics of relief in occupied Greece, see: A. Laiou-Thomadakis, 'The Politics of Hunger: Economic Aid to Greece, 1943–1945', *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora,* 7, 2 (1980), 47–62; Hionidou, 'Relief and Politics in Occupied Greece, 1941-4', *Journal of Contemporary History* 48, 4 (2013), 761–783. Kazamias similarly calls the Swedish relief scheme an 'early precursor of the shape of the post-war world under American dominance'. Kazamias, 'The Politics of Famine Relief', 50–53.
58 De Zwarte, *The Hunger Winter*. This section is largely based on Ch5 of that book.
59 Louis De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Amsterdam: NIOD, 2011), 10b, 1083; Moore, "The Western Allies," 96.
60 TNA, PREM 3/221/11, Minutes interview Churchill and Gerbrandy, 5 October 1944; NARA, 331, Entry 2, Box 117, Letter Morton to Bedell Smith, 12 October 1944.
61 NARA, 331, Entry 2, Box 117, Letter Foreign Office to Chiefs of Staff, 5 October 1944; NIOD, 233b, inv.no 28, Telegram Van Kleffens to Bern, 11 October 1944; Letter C.H.C. Flugi van Aspermont Genève to Dutch government, 19 October 1944. See also: Pieter Sjoerds Gerbrandy, *Eenige Hoofdpunten van Het Regeeringsbeleid in Londen Gedurende de Oorlogsjaren 1940–1945* (The Hage: Rijksuitgeverij, 1946), 128–129.
62 TNA, WO 220/668, AMSSO to SHAEF Forward, 6 October 1944; TNA, FO 238/303, Telegram FO to Stockholm, 19 October 1944; Beamont, "Starving for Democracy," 65–66.
63 National Archives and Record Administration, Maryland [NARA], 331, Entry 2, Box 117, Letter SHAEF Main signed Eisenhower to British Chiefs of Staff, 29 October 1944. Also cited in: Moore, "The Western Allies," 98.
64 NARA, 331, Entry 2, Box 117, Message SHAEF Main signed Eisenhower to British Chiefs of Staff, 6 November 1944.
65 NARA, 331, Entry 2, Box 117, Message SHAEF Main G-5 signed Eisenhower to War Office, 15 November 1944.
66 TNA, FO 238/303, Message FO signed W.G. Hayter to Ambassador Sir Neville Bland, 9 November 1944; TNA, CAB 119/140, COS meeting 27 October-7 November 1944; TNA, Letter Foreign Office to Secretary Chiefs of Staff Committee, 30 October 1944; TNA, WO 220/668, Admiralty to FO, 26 October 1944; TNA, PREM 3 221 11, AMSSO to SHAEF Main, 3 November 1944.
67 TNA, FO 238/303, Letter R.A. Gallop to Sir Nevil Bland, 7 December 1944; Aart W. Wassenaar. *Van Winterhulp via Oost-Compagnie en Marseille naar Rode Kruis: De Loopbaan van Carel Piek Voor, Tijdens, en Na de Bezettingstijd 1940–1945. Een Geschiedenis van Idealisme en Collaboratie* (Soesterberg: Aspekt, 2016), 139–145.
68 Bundesarchiv Berlin [BA], NS19/3403, Telegram Rauter to Berlin, 14 December 1944.
69 Cited in: De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk* 10b, 1115.
70 TNA, PREM 3/221/11, Message Eden to Churchill, 17 December 1944. See also: TNA, CAB 66/57, Report War Cabinet, 4 November 1944; Henri A. Van der Zee, *The Hunger Winter: occupied Holland, 1944–45* (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 1998), 170–172.
71 TNA, PREM 4/29/12, Cherwell to Churchill, without date.
72 TNA, FO 837/1223, Camps to Markbreiter, 20 January 1942. See also: TNA, FO 837/1232, Letter Dalton to Maitland, 8 October 1941.
73 Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain: Rationing, Controls, and Consumption, 1939–1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 32–44.
74 Charles Cruickshank, *The German Occupation of the Channel Islands* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 259–286.
75 De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk* 10b, 1103.
76 NARA, 331, Entry 2, Box 118, SHAEF Forward signed Eisenhower to AGWAR and AMSSO; NARA, 331, Entry 2, Box 118, Message to Blaskowitz, 23 March 1945. See also: TNA, PREM 3/221/12.
77 NARA, 331, Entry 2, Box 118, Report SHAEF FWD to AGWAR and AMSSO, 27 March 1945. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (London: William Heinemann Limited, 1948), 449.
78 TNA, WO 220/668, JSM Washington to AMSSO, 7 April 1945.
79 NIOD, 458, inv.no. 27, Hearing Schwebel, 14 June 1946, 11708–11709; Stephen Dando-Collins, *Operation Chowhound: The Most Risky, Most Glorious US Bomber Mission of WWII* (New York: Palgrave, 2015), 89–94.

80 TNA, CAB 122/993, Telegram Churchill to British Chiefs of Staff, 21 April 1945.
81 TNA, CAB 122/993, Message SHAEF Forward to War Department, 24 April 1945; NARA, 331, Entry 2, Box 118, Message Military Mission Moscow to Combined Chiefs of Staff and Eisenhower, 27 April 1945.
82 NARA, 331, Entry 2, Box 118, Message Air Staff SHAEF to USSTAF Main, 24 April 1945.
83 On two days, the RAF and USAAF had to cancel one of their missions due to bad weather. For more on these missions, see also: Onderwater, Hans. *Operatie "Manna": De Geallieerde Voedseldroppings April/Mei 1945* (Weesp: Romen Luchtvaart, n.d.), 60–85; 128–130; De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk* 10b, 1344–1351.

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