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The Office of War Information Vs. the Foreign Nationalities Branch: The Roosevelt Administration and the Poles

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THE OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION VS. THE FOREIGN NATIONALITIES
BRANCH: THE ROOSEVELT ADMINISTRATION AND THE POLES

by

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B.A. August 2003, Old Dominion University

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HISTORY

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The Roosevelt Administration created two information agencies during World War II. The Office of War Information, consisting of a Domestic Branch and Overseas Operations Branch, disseminated information to occupied nations overseas. The Office of Strategic Services’ Foreign Nationalities Branch gathered information on the political undercurrents of ethnic groups within the United States and provided information on their possible effects to the administration.

This work seeks to compare the policies of the Overseas Branch of the Office of War Information with those of the Foreign Nationalities Branch of the Office of Strategic Services, with the Poles and Polish-Americans as a case study. Poland was a bone of contention amongst Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin and symbolized both the horrors of Nazi aggression as well as the promise of democratic reforms to Roosevelt’s administration. For this reason, propagandists had to carefully craft policies towards the Poles and the Polish-Americans that would reflect American values while simultaneously reporting on events that directly concerned Poland’s position in the postwar world order. OWI’s Overseas Operations Branch, staffed by New Dealers, tried to win support amongst the Poles for American foreign policy and struggled to adhere to its ‘strategy of truth’ methodology as it reconciled its propaganda with the twists and turns of Roosevelt’s foreign policy. FNB, on the other hand, functioned more as an information
clearinghouse for the Roosevelt administration as it analyzed the possible effects of these military maneuvers on both national security and Roosevelt’s re-election campaign.
In loving memory of my grandparents,
Fred G. Bryant, Elizabeth V. Cochran, and Joann L. Bryant;
and for my family, especially Tom, Taylor, Kasey, Logan, Leah, and Keira.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

During World War II, the Roosevelt Administration created two agencies to mold public opinion both at home and abroad. The Office of War Information (OWI), created by executive order in June, 1942, had two branches: the Domestic Branch, which specialized in disseminating information about the war to American citizens, and the Overseas Operations Branch, which specialized in transmitting information about the war to occupied nations. The Foreign Nationalities Branch of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) had the task of gathering information on political undercurrents within ethnic groups in the United States and reporting to the administration on their possible impact on domestic politics and the overall war effort.

Among the groups targeted by both organizations were the Poles and Polish-Americans. Poland’s geographic position between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union made it especially vulnerable to aggression from its neighbors both during and after the war. The Roosevelt Administration charged the Office of War Information’s Overseas Operations Branch with providing selected information to the Poles during the war, when they were occupied by the Germans. These messages were always positive and reflected Poland’s place in the postwar world, which Roosevelt hoped would be free and independent of German or Soviet influence. However, Poland remained a bone of contention amongst Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin as World War II developed. This was due to Roosevelt’s realization that the Soviet Union would be a major power in the

This thesis follows the format requirements of A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations 7th edition by Kate L. Turabian.
postwar world, which caused him to retreat on territorial and political demands regarding Poland in the name of preserving the Grand Alliance and winning the war. The Office of War Information, staffed by idealistic New Dealers and committed to a ‘strategy of truth’ often found it hard to reconcile Roosevelt’s realism and resultant policy changes.

The FNB focused on a number of ethnic groups in the United States during the war, but targeted Polish-Americans as one of the most crucial because of the impact Roosevelt’s actions and decisions within the Grand Alliance might have on both Congressional elections and, ultimately, on his 1944 re-election campaign. The methodology employed by FNB, although initially linked to psychological warfare operations, focused more on intelligence gathering under the leadership of DeWitt Clinton Poole. The FNB gained important information within the Polish-American community through interviews and scanning of the Polish press. Since its task was to analyze rather than advocate or propagandize, the FNB had less difficulty accommodating changes in administrative policy.

Several historians have researched and written about the value of propaganda and the effectiveness of information agencies during the war. Allan M. Winkler detailed the creation of the Office of Facts and Figures, the parent organization to OWI, and the history of OWI’s two branches in *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945*. Winkler described OWI’s goals of communicating American war aims combined with ideals it hoped would emerge in the postwar world, but concluded that the OWI’s efforts amounted to “a vision denied” due to public fears about propaganda stemming from experiences during World War I, interagency squabbling, Congressional doubts, and the seeming lack of interest in idealism characteristic of
several members in the Roosevelt administration. Idealistic propagandists “accepted at face value the democratic pronouncements of the Roosevelt administration, only to discover that the ultimate commitment was far more ambiguous than they had believed.” a realization that forced propagandists in OWI to “accommodate themselves to realities they could not avoid.” Essentially, Roosevelt was concerned more with winning the war, but at the same time proclaimed that an Allied victory would have a greater meaning. While Roosevelt enunciated liberal, democratic principles in communicating war aims, propagandists often found that the president and members of his administration “were willing to compromise those aims in the interests of a quick end to the struggle.”

Clayton Laurie’s work, *The Propaganda Warriors: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945* also examined the history of OWI, but compared the work of the agency’s Overseas Operations Branch with that of OSS’s Morale Operations Branch and the Army’s Psychological Warfare Branch. Like Winkler, Laurie argued that all propaganda agencies suffered from Roosevelt’s lack of specific, central directives for his administration’s propaganda aims, and as a result each of the branches examined were left to interpret orders and form their own distinct ideas about the meaning of them in producing propaganda. Laurie’s work contained a comprehensive discussion of the inter-agency arguments occurring between OWI and OSS and rightly attributed these arguments to each agency’s political leanings. OWI’s New Dealers adhered more to Wilsonian ideals while OSS’s mostly Republican staff followed a more realist approach.

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and were not afraid to use propaganda tactics that mirrored those of the Nazis in order to achieve American domination of the anticipated new world order. After examining each agency separately, Laurie concluded that all of the wartime propaganda agencies were eventually forced to curb idealism in favor of more realist policies that more closely mirrored Roosevelt’s and could better facilitate a swift military victory for the Allies. When evaluating the effectiveness of each of the agencies, Laurie concluded that “the winning weapon in psychological warfare” was the Army’s approach, which was more “pragmatic and designed to appeal to the intelligence and common sense of the enemy’s populations…rather than to their political or ideological fears or preferences.”

In addition to the information available on the Office of War Information, there is a wealth of information available on the history of Polish-Americans as an ethnic group. These works highlight the role of Polish-Americans in the Democratic party and serve to explain their importance as a voting block in the election of 1944. John J. Bukowcyk’s *Polish Americans and Their History* contained articles that highlight political, economic, and intellectual contributions of Polish-Americans to the war effort as well as their reactions to actions undertaken by Roosevelt’s administration concerning Poland. F.F. Wasell’s “Attitudes of the Various Polish-American Organizations toward American Foreign Policy Affecting Poland, 1939-1945” offered an extensive history of major Polish-American organizations, their membership, and their political leanings before and during World War II and revealed the divisions within the Polish-American community that caused alarm for administration officials. Additionally, Wasell’s work focused on the reactions to decisions reached about Poland’s future and traced support for the war

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effort and the Roosevelt administration through a comparison of each organization's records available by May 1946.\(^5\)

Though there is a wealth of information on the history, policies, and development of OWI, historians have just begun to delve into the records of the Foreign Nationalities Branch and to explore this branch's impact on American politics. Most recent amongst these efforts is Lorraine M. Lees' *Yugoslav-Americans and National Security During World War II*, which highlighted the functions of the FNB and its successes under Poole's leadership during the war. Lees explored nativist sentiment in the United States that manifested itself in government officials' fears that "ethnicity in and of itself was un-American and a threat to national security."\(^6\) Lees further demonstrated, however, that Poole and the FNB were able to overcome those fears and argue instead for the use of influential persons within this ethnic community as a valuable source of political information that could only aid the American war effort.

This work seeks to compare the policies of the Overseas Branch of the Office of War Information with those of the Foreign Nationalities Branch of the Office of Strategic Services, with the Poles and Polish-Americans as a case study. This thesis is divided into three sections, the first of which explores the creation of information agencies during the war and the development of the 'strategy of truth' versus psychological warfare. The second section examines OWI's contribution to the war effort and evaluates its adherence to the 'strategy of truth' in the wake of decisions made at major meetings of the Big


Three. The third section examines FNB’s contribution to the war effort and compares its methodology with that of the OWI.

The OWI Overseas Operations Branch, staffed with idealistic New Dealers, struggled to live up to its motto of “Truth is Our Weapon” as it handled mostly “white” propaganda campaigns and information services in Poland throughout the war. The branch tried to adhere to the strategy of truth methodology when reporting to the Poles on developments that affected them throughout the duration of the war. The Foreign Nationalities Branch, on the other hand, with a parent agency run by a man unsympathetic to Roosevelt’s New Deal and staffed by diplomats and ethnics with a deeper knowledge of European affairs, was determined to aid the war effort through information gathering and analysis. This enabled the branch to maintain its credibility and simultaneously provide the government with priceless information on the political undercurrents of ethnic communities and their likely consequences for both the war effort and domestic American politics.

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Well before the United States joined the Allied forces in World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt realized the need for a government agency that would be responsible for disseminating favorable information about the war at home and abroad. The question for Roosevelt and his advisors was how to actively pursue and create a centralized information agency that would effectively propagate America’s war aims in both arenas without creating the type of hysteria generated by the Committee on Public Information during the Great War.

Roosevelt, whose policies were liberal in nature but realist in practice, “had entered the war thinking that, once Germany and Japan were defeated, European power politics and colonialism posed the greatest threat to a liberal, democratic, peaceful world.” At the same time, however, “such fears were soon joined by a realization that the Soviet Union had become a new player on the world scene, a development that greatly complicated things.”¹ Roosevelt’s policies were delicately balanced between liberal Wilsonian ideals of collective security, self-determination, strict adherence to the principles outlined in the Atlantic Charter and staunch opposition to traditional spheres of influences and empires, and a realism that revealed that all of these goals could only be achieved if unity among the Big Three was maintained. Therefore, any centralized information agency would need to reflect the desire “to create a world organization with a strong mechanism for collective security,” coupled with the conviction that “peace could

not be maintained and collective security could not function without the concurrence of the Big Three."

The propagandist during wartime must fight on three fronts. On the home front, the propagating agency is charged with turning public opinion in favor of the war effort, even when there is a wealth of opposition. It is important that information agencies be capable of persuading people to make sacrifices in order to help their country achieve the greater good, and to do this it is often necessary to convince the public that they are defending themselves and their way of life in order to convince them that the war is about self-defense rather than failed diplomacy. To accomplish this, agencies have to make people feel that any sacrifices made as part of the war effort will ultimately pay off in the form of a military and ideological victory.\(^3\) During World War II, these were the chief duties of the Office of War Information, which consisted of two branches, the Domestic Branch and the Overseas Operations Branch. In addition to peddling the war on the home front, OWI was charged with fighting enemy propaganda abroad in order to maintain and increase morale while selling the war and its aims to the rest of the world. These were the primary objectives of the Overseas Operations Branch of the Office of War Information during the Second World War.\(^4\)

OWI was not the first agency given these responsibilities. The first government agency formed for information control before the United States entered the war was the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI), which began in July, 1941. Roosevelt


charged William “Wild Bill” Donovan with the task of collecting information regarding public perceptions of the war and reporting to the president on his agency’s findings. Donovan, a World War I veteran who in 1916 spent time in distributing food and clothing as part of American relief efforts to war-ravaged Europe, was an anti-New Dealer Republican. Despite the fact that Donovan and Roosevelt were classmates at Columbia law school and that Roosevelt during the 1932 presidential campaign referred to him as “[his] old friend and classmate Bill Donovan,” Roosevelt and Donovan’s political ideologies left them far apart when it came to formulating foreign policy. For this reason, Donovan “always reminded people that Roosevelt never knew [him] in law school” when Roosevelt’s reference to him was noted.5

Because of the dangers of German propaganda, Donovan and Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox had pushed for the creation of a new agency that could effectively counter it within the United States. Knox, with Roosevelt’s approval, sent Donovan to England in July 1940 as an unofficial representative to “determine the ability of Britain to survive the expected German assault.”6 The result of this mission was a series of newspaper articles entitled Fifth Column Lessons for America, intended to warn the American public of the nature of totalitarian propaganda. Knox emphasized that propaganda was “Hitler’s ‘decisive weapon’” and that in order for it to be effective in the United States, the German propaganda machine would rely on foreign nationals in the country to spread the news of their big lie.7

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6 Troy, Donovan and the CIA, 32.

7 Lees, Yugoslav-Americans and National Security during World War II. 38-9.
Knox pressured Roosevelt to appoint Donovan as the head of COI, citing that Donovan would be "of the highest possible value to the country in this [capacity]." Although Roosevelt had charged him with "collect[ing] and assembl[ing] information and data bearing on national security from the various departments...and analyz[ing] and collat[ing] such materials for the use of the President and such other officials as the President may designate," Donovan viewed his appointment as COI in July 1941 as authorization from Roosevelt to "conduct a whole range of operations—psychological, political, or unconventional warfare," a task to which he devoted himself despite the lack of direction to do so." Donovan's commitment to the use of psychological warfare brought him into immediate conflict with the Department of State because its officials feared the subversive nature of the COI's activities would undermine and compromise America's then-neutral status in World War II. Donovan, for his part, was frustrated with the agency's vague executive order, which produced limited ties to the public and particularly to foreign nationality groups in the United States.

The creation of COI, however, did not immediately produce overt propaganda activities on the part of the U.S. government. That goal was not realized until Roosevelt created the Office of Facts and Figures (OFF), established in October 1941 and led by Archibald MacLeish, the Librarian of Congress. MacLeish continued as Librarian of Congress throughout his tenure at both OFF and eventually OWI. The fact that the American public was skeptical of the same sort of propaganda agencies that had left them

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8 Troy, Donovan and the CIA, 57.
9 Troy, Donovan and the CIA, 69.
10 Troy, Donovan and the CIA, 25-7.
11 Lees, Yugoslav-Americans and National Security during World War II, 39.
with “unfulfilled dreams and the realities of world politics” at the end of the Great War did not make the goal of rallying support for such agencies during the new world conflict at home or overseas easily attainable. Roosevelt, who was assistant secretary of the Navy during the Great War, did not want to “duplicate [the] oppressive atmosphere of fear and suspicion” that Creel’s propaganda agency caused by creating a centralized propaganda agency with little to no direct supervision. It was for this reason that most of the men involved with the COI and eventually with the Office of War Information (OWI) were responsible for issuing directives for the dissemination of information that was less emotionally charged and more informative in nature than that during World War I. The goal of World War II propagandists therefore was to distribute more complete information that was focused on actual facts rather than simply repeating what some government or military officials would prefer foreign audiences to believe.14

MacLeish’s leadership at the Library of Congress had effectively turned it into an “intellectual instrument of war by gathering, organizing, and subjecting to expert analysis a tremendous amount of scientific, technical, geographical, cartographic, cultural, economic, legal, political, and military information.” His experiences at the Library of Congress aided him in creating and mandating the “strategy of truth” for the collection and dissemination of war information. OFF believed that Axis propaganda on the eve of World War II “was a dangerous antidemocratic weapon that needed to be combated, but

12 Winkler. The Politics of Propaganda, 3.
without destroying democratic processes along the way."\textsuperscript{16} Fears of emulating the exact thing they were trying to combat led MacLeish and his subordinates to follow a "strategy of truth." MacLeish strongly opposed the "lies, deception, disinformation, atrocity stories, and the creation of false expectations," that Donovan adhered to in his psychological warfare campaigns. Instead, MacLeish saw his job as the "mobilization of intellectual and informational resources...and...the neutralization of the fascist propaganda directed at the U.S. public."\textsuperscript{17} Believing that "a democratic government is more concerned with the provision of information to the people than it is with the communication of dreams and aspirations" and that "the duty of government is to provide a basis for judgment; and when it goes beyond that, it goes beyond the prime scope of its duty," MacLeish and OFF furnished hard data and facts that were often sparse due to security precautions, and would not "pervert nor color the facts and figures" with elaboration on them.\textsuperscript{18} At the same time, however, MacLeish viewed the war as a "moral crusade" and described it as "a democratic revolution and an international civil war between democracy and fascism" with meaning only as "a united struggle for the liberation of the common man and for a new world order."\textsuperscript{19}

MacLeish was not alone in his pursuit for the strategy of truth. Donovan, although committed to the pursuit of psychological warfare, quickly appointed Robert E. Sherwood to the newly formed COI as the director of its Foreign Information Services

\textsuperscript{16} Gary, The Nervous Liberals, 15.

\textsuperscript{17} Gary, The Nervous Liberals, 153-4.


\textsuperscript{19} Warren, Noble Abstractions, as quoted in Lees, Yugoslav-Americans and National Security, 40-1.
(FIS) branch. citing his work with Roosevelt throughout the president’s bids for re-election as well as his ideas about what images should be projected during the war. A World War I veteran, Sherwood had become preoccupied with news of the impending European crisis as early as January of 1939. By February 1939, Sherwood was so obsessed with accounts of German aggression across Europe that he stopped writing plays completely and instead turned his full attention to world affairs. Sherwood was especially distressed by the isolationist role the United States was determined to play in 1939. To call attention to the war and Hitler’s brutality in occupied nations as well as his fears of Soviet aggression following that nation’s attack on Finland, Sherwood wrote *There Shall Be No Night*, which he hoped would be “a cry for intervention in the European war.” Like many liberals, Sherwood had initially sympathized with the Soviets and hoped that they would resist the fascism that was quickly engulfing the European continent. The Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of 1939 crushed these hopes and caused Sherwood and other liberals in the United States to become very disillusioned with Soviet policy. The attack on Finland only furthered this disillusionment. Sherwood, who accused the Soviets of “crushing democracy in the past.....realize[d] the communist nation could no longer even be considered a ‘force of world peace,’ but had become an aggressor and a collaborator with the fascists.”

*There Shall Be No Night* highlighted what Sherwood felt was utter insanity in war-torn Finland, and Sherwood’s anti-Soviet perceptions leaked into his early propaganda efforts even as Roosevelt “insisted on

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maintaining relations with the Soviets so that the United States could take advantage of the break that was bound to come between Hitler and Stalin.”

In May, 1940, Sherwood ran an advertisement in major newspapers in the nation containing a “belligerent tone guaranteed to offend” and stated that “Anyone who argues that [either the Nazis or the communists] will wait [to gain a territorial advantage] is either an imbecile or a traitor.” Roosevelt’s response to this ad was that it was “extremely educational.” Seeing Sherwood’s work prompted Harry Hopkins to hire Sherwood as one of Roosevelt’s speech writers in 1940. He continued in this capacity as well as working for the Foreign Information Service branch of the Coordinator of Information, where he spelled out his view on effective propaganda: “The only effective propaganda must follow a definite policy, must have a specific objective, and must stick to accomplishing that objective by continual repetition of the same thing in a thousand different forms of expression.” When following Pearl Harbor a Congressional committee asked why the FIS was so slow to progress, Sherwood responded that there existed “no clearly defined mandate [for] political warfare,” thereby leaving his agency fighting with the Department of State, the Army, and the Navy over what to tell the world. These problems also plagued OFF and interfered with its ability to follow the strategy of truth, as the Army, Navy, and State Department often limited what information MacLeish was allowed to release.

Long before the official creation of OWI, however, Sherwood and Donovan began to differ with regard to how information should be gathered and dispersed within the occupied nations. During his tenure at COI, Sherwood wanted to concentrate on sending “positive messages about the United States based on Rooseveltian ideals,” such as the provisions of self-determination, collective security, and freedom of the seas that were outlined in the Atlantic Charter. Donovan, however, was preoccupied with “secret, subversive operations, or black propaganda” that was not always truthful, but succeeded in starting rumors within the occupied nations and sought to counteract German propaganda messages there. At COI, Sherwood found himself constantly arguing for a proactive rather than reactive propaganda policy that was aligned with Roosevelt’s goals for the postwar world. He therefore wanted the freedom to propagate immediately when the need arose rather than get caught up in the red tape of a centralized bureaucracy. Donovan, however, wanted the military to control everything dealing with the gathering and dissemination of information about the war.

Tensions between Sherwood and Donovan reached a boiling point in early 1942. By the same time, MacLeish had become frustrated with the fact that OFF had become little more than a “clearinghouse for other government agencies, a place where a news reporter could find out ‘anything you wanted to know about the government...a feed trough where you’d get prepared information.’” Complaints from both organizations led to Roosevelt’s decision to abolish COI and OFF and instead create two separate

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29 Alonso, Robert E. Sherwood: The Playwright in Peace and War, 239.

30 Lees, Yugoslav-Americans and National Security, 91.
organizations. OFF and COI were each abolished in mid-1942 and transformed into the Office of War Information (OWI) and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), respectively. Elmer Davis would oversee OWI, with Sherwood as Deputy Director of the Overseas Operations Branch and MacLeish as Deputy Director of the Domestic Branch. Donovan would oversee OSS.

When OWI was officially created by Executive Order 9182 in June, 1942, Roosevelt wanted the new agency to focus on collecting information about American war aims and the war’s progress and then disseminating it. The new organization was not to participate in “espionage or subversive activity among individuals or groups in enemy nations,” as this work was reserved for the newly formed Office of Strategic Services, which was the new version of the former COI.31 Sherwood’s understanding of Roosevelt’s order was that the Overseas Branch of OWI had to follow the strategy of truth. New recruits for the OWI were chosen for their talents and ideological affinity to Roosevelt. Sherwood believed that these New Dealers would do the best job of projecting the war as “a struggle in which freedom and democracy could triumph everywhere, a struggle that could bring a positive upheaval in the world at large.”32 Believing truth was the only effective weapon against enemy propaganda as well as the only effective way to make America appealing to nations that were under Nazi control, Sherwood declared that “one form of strength which our enemies do not possess [is]...the power of [the] truth.”33 This was in line with MacLeish’s prescription for the strategy of

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32 Winkler, The Politics of Propaganda, 73.
truth, which would allow for the government to give facts for individuals to formulate guided opinions about American war aims. The strategy of truth would therefore include the gathering and repeated spreading of information about the war without coloring it with editorial commentaries. In Sherwood’s opinion, enemy voices “poison[ed] the airwaves” and their “blatant voice[s] [should be constantly contrasted] with the ‘sincere’ and ‘honest’ Voice of America.” The strategy of truth, therefore, would serve not only to project American ideals and policies to the rest of the world, but also would serve to counter the enemy’s strategy of terror.

Since enemy propaganda usually contained outright lies that incited the people of occupied nations, if OWI followed suit and did the same it would “only lend credence to the Axis charge that American ideals were hypocritical and hollow at best.” In short, Sherwood and his deputies had to find a way to deliver what the occupied nations wanted and needed the most: hard, factual news accounts of the war and what would come of them in the postwar world. In the words of Elmer Davis, the Director of the Office of War Information, “Many millions of people are completely dependent for any truthful account of what is going on on what we and our Allies tell them: and merely to know the truth is going to inspire them to a more stubborn endurance and resistance to the endeavors of the enemy to make them accept their defeat as final.” Davis further commented that, “This is a people’s war, and to win it the people should know as much

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32 Meserve, Robert E. Sherwood: Reluctant Moralist, 175. Voice of America (VOA) was the title of an ongoing radio show that regularly broadcasted news to foreign nations throughout World War II. It is capitalized here because Sherwood’s reference to it and to its mission came after the program’s inception.

35 Winkler, The Politics of Propaganda, 76.

36 Elmer Davis, “OWI Has a Job.” The Public Opinion Quarterly 7 (Spring 1943), 8.
about it as they can.” Additionally, the strategy of truth would fulfill Sherwood’s vision of an approach that was “touch, factual, military, and confident, based heavily on the facts of our new offensives,” and would therefore “sharpen the growing contrast between the tone of the United Nations statements and the...ideological line of the Axis [powers].”

Many of the people needed to support the war at home were of immigrant stock. In addition, the war had made the United States home to countless European refugees and representatives of governments-in-exile. The Domestic Branch of OWI had a foreign language division, which tailored information to America’s immigrant communities, but Donovan thought that OSS should also be in touch with immigrants and exiles for psychological warfare purposes. In 1941, Donovan, believing such a foreign nationalities branch within OSS should “be headed by persons of diplomatic and political experience who are familiar with the State Department’s methods and requirements,” asked John C. Wiley to organize a branch that would be responsible for “covering foreigners’ political activities in the United States and reporting [these activities and their possible consequences] to the State Department.” The resulting Foreign Nationalities Branch (FNB), created in 1942, was established to “provide and additional source of foreign political intelligence through study of activities and sentiments in the United States reflecting the situation abroad, as revealed through contact with influential political

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38 Central Propaganda Directive, 11-18 December 1942, Information Control and Propaganda: Records of the Office of War Information (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1987), microfilm, 4:065. All future notes related to this work will be cited as follows: Document information, date. Records of the Office of War Information, microfilm. reel number: frame number.

39 Troy, Donovan and the CIA. 109.
refugees and leaders of foreign nationalities groups, and by scanning the foreign language press." Wiley hired DeWitt Clinton Poole as his assistant.

Despite Donovan’s plan, the “Golden Directive” issued by the Joint Chiefs of Staff that officially created the FNB narrowed the branch’s role by “specifying that the duties assigned to the OSS included ‘contact with foreign nationality groups in the United States to aid in the collection of essential information for the execution of psychological warfare operations in consultation with the State Department.’” Nonetheless, Wiley, as supervisor of FNB, continued to exercise a “fondness for covert rather than open information gathering and [as a result caused] the Foreign Nationalities and Secret Intelligence Branches of OSS [to clash] repeatedly.” Though Wiley’s use of covert operations was more in line with Donovan’s ideas about psychological warfare, Donovan, to comply with limitations imposed on OSS at its creation, ordered him to “refrain from secret intelligence activities.” This led to Wiley’s departure and Poole’s promotion to command of FNB by early 1943. Poole, a former diplomat with Soviet and Central European experience, who had also served as the Director of the School of Public Affairs at Princeton University, sought “to enable the government, and particularly the Department of State, to analyze political conditions outside the United States in the light of their reflections here.” Poole’s methodology for this was simple: maintain contacts with important individuals such as those within the Polish-American

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42 Lees, Yugoslav-Americans and National Security, 91.

43 War Report of the OSS, 64.
community; collect information pertaining to foreign affairs on the sentiments and activities within foreign nationality groups in the United States; and collect information on the leaders of foreign nationalities organizations and their press and radio propaganda. He refrained from more clandestine activity because FNB was not to “uncover subversive activities in the United States,” as this was already handled by the Justice Department. \(^44\)

The FNB was much smaller than the Overseas Operations Branch and run more directly by Poole, which allowed for fewer intra-agency administrative problems or quarrels, but FNB, as part of OSS, had clashes with OWI over ideology and how to handle information nonetheless. OWI tried to adhere to a methodology that did not allow for interpretation or editorializing in information gathering or dissemination. In contrast, FNB, mindful of its analytical function, gathered information and when reporting to the Director of OSS often speculated as to the meaning of the information it was presenting.

Both OWI and FNB often focused on the Poles and Polish Americans. Sherwood and the OWI broadcasted Roosevelt’s war aims to the Poles, while Donovan and Dewitt Clinton Poole collected information from and disseminated information to the well-established Polish-American community within the United States. The Office of War Information’s Overseas Branch was charged with feeding information to the Poles that would compel them to support Roosevelt’s policies toward their homeland as it fought against their Nazi occupiers. In contrast, the Foreign Nationalities Branch of the Office of Strategic Services was designed to use both covert and open methods of gathering and disseminating information in order to garner support for the war effort from Polish-Americans at home. While Sherwood’s Overseas Branch and OWI as a whole relied

\(^{44}\) War Report of the OSS, 64-5.
upon an overall "strategy of truth" to deliver their messages abroad. the FNB under Wiley’s leadership initially relied on varied methods of psychological warfare within the Polish-American community. Under Poole’s leadership the branch’s methodology turned toward “the political reporting of an American diplomatic mission abroad...or that of the foreign correspondent of a first-class American newspaper.”145 Through interviews and observations, Poole successfully provided information regarding political undercurrents in the Polish-American community to Donovan and the President in a moderate tone that increased his and the agency’s credibility.

Of all the ethnic groups in the United States during World War II, Polish-Americans were amongst the largest in the industrialized northern cities. Centered in major northern cities such as Detroit, Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia, Polish-Americans were highly influenced by two factors: dual allegiance to their Polish heritage and now American home on the one hand and the Catholic Church on the other. Polish-American dualism did not stem from divided loyalties between their homelands old and new, but were instead derived from a devotion to developing Polish-American communities that would preserve Polish culture in the United States.46 A central part of that culture revolved around the Roman Catholic Church, which served as the center of their religious life as well as their social and political activities. The dualism coupled with a devotion to the Catholic Church made most Polish-Americans naturally anti-

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45 DeWitt Clinton Poole to Wallace R. Deuel, 27 April 1944, quoted in Lorraine M. Lees, “DeWitt Clinton Poole, the Foreign Nationalities Branch, and Political Intelligence,” Intelligence and National Security 15 (Winter 2000), 83.

Communist and therefore anti-Russian. Roosevelt, who had enjoyed the majority of the Polish-American vote during the elections of 1932, 1936, and 1940, wanted to continue to garner their political support.

Immigration to the United States from Poland before World War I stemmed from economic needs, while most immigration after World War I resulted from political and ideological conflicts with the Polish government. The political picture of Polish-Americans mirrored that of the Poles, as they sharply divided themselves for or against Roosevelt’s cooperation with Stalin and their support for the London government-in-exile. This created a worrisome conundrum for the Roosevelt administration, which strove to maintain the Grand Alliance without sacrificing support for the war and for Roosevelt at home.

While the Domestic Branch of OWI faced many challenges when selling the war to American citizens at home, the Overseas Branch prepared to propagate America’s war aims and, more importantly, Roosevelt’s diplomatic aims in German-occupied Poland. Meanwhile, the OSS’s Foreign Nationalities Branch (FNB) gathered information from the Polish-American community and circulated it to the president and other government agencies. The FNB proved less vulnerable to the twists and turns of Roosevelt’s Polish policies.

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CHAPTER III

THE STRATEGY OF TRUTH: THE POLICIES OF OWI’S OVERSEAS BRANCH

The OWI’s devotion to the ‘strategy of truth’ was tested virtually any time that the Overseas Branch dealt with Soviet-Polish relations. In fact, it is in this area that the strategy of truth was frequently compromised in the name of preserving the Grand Alliance. The relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union and the relationship between the United States and Poland shifted after Hitler broke the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact and invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941. Before Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, the United States remained sympathetic to Poland because officials viewed Poland as a victim of aggression from both the Germans and the Soviets. Once Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, however, the United States decided to include the Soviets in the list of besieged nations that it supported while they were fighting Nazi aggression. This decision was not popular in the United States, but Roosevelt’s “predisposition to aid the Soviet Union fit his grand strategy in 1941,” as he hoped to keep American ground forces out of Europe and leave that fighting to the Red Army, which military advisors told him was the only force capable of defeating the Germans at the time.¹ This coincided with Roosevelt’s decision to treat the Soviet Union “as an ally worth supporting, not an enemy or weak house of cards about to fall.” and a further demonstration of his realization that cooperation with the Soviets would be necessary for his larger goal of long-term postwar reform for Europe.²

¹ Kimball, *The Juggler*, 34.
Roosevelt’s determination to keep the Grand Alliance alive stemmed from his desire to use the wartime alliance with Churchill and Stalin to preserve peace and democratic ideals in the postwar world. As Warren Kimball noted.

Roosevelt’s dream of turning the wartime coalition into a peacetime ‘family circle’ relied upon convincing the Soviets that their interests were not threatened, despite American economic and military strength. That meant convincing Soviet leader Joseph Stalin that Roosevelt could lead the United States, and that the United States could lead the Western nations. It also meant taking both negative and positive steps to convince and reassure the Soviet Union that it could trust the President—and that the President could trust the Soviets.3

To further facilitate a working relationship with Stalin during the war and in doing so ensure the same in the postwar arena, Roosevelt included the Soviet Union as one of his proposed Four Policemen as early as late 1941. Yet the dilemma in including the Soviets as one of the four major powers policing the world, as Kimball so aptly put it, rested in that “peace and peacekeeping depended upon the Great Powers, but who was to watch the watchers?"4

For those officials directing propaganda, the alliance with the Soviets that Roosevelt desired to maintain often placed the United States in an awkward position between the Soviets and the Poles and usually led them to bend, if not completely ignore, the strategy of truth when dealing with Soviet-Polish relations for the remainder of the war.5 On the one hand, OWI officials saw value in depicting the Polish forces fighting alongside Soviet troops because it would add a “moral factor in [the] European

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3 Kimball, The Juggler, 84.


If citizens in Nazi-occupied countries saw the Poles participating in Allied offensives, propagandists hypothesized, it would serve to rally them to the Allied cause. Roosevelt began to worry, however, that when the Soviets and the Poles were in disagreement about border issues or Polish sovereignty in the postwar world it would hinder plans to highlight Polish contributions to the United Nations' war effort and therefore cause problems with Stalin and place strain on the Grand Alliance. To Roosevelt, Poland represented the short-term goal of winning the war, but the Soviet Union represented both the short-term goal of winning the war and, more importantly, the long-term goal of preserving the peace and promoting democratic reforms to the postwar world. This caused dilemmas as OWI struggled to reconcile the 'strategy of truth' with Roosevelt's changing policies as the war progressed.

Sherwood and other OWI officials knew that Roosevelt's ultimate goal was to preserve the alliance with Churchill and Stalin in order to win the war and craft a postwar world friendly to the United States, and they therefore went to great lengths to fashion policies and directives that supported this goal. The problem was that this often led them to gloss over major issues that the Poles wanted the United States and Britain to back them on and somewhat hindered the effectiveness of their goal of telling the truth in their propaganda to the Poles. OWI's task became even more difficult as several key events in Polish-Soviet relations threatened to destroy the diplomatic relationship amongst the Big Three.

The first of several challenges that OWI faced involved border issues. When Donovan issued a memorandum to Sherwood in June 1942 regarding guidance for

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broadcasts to Poland, he instructed the newly-created OWI and the Voice of America to point out in overseas broadcasts that the Soviets agreed in a treaty with Britain not to infringe on the sovereign rights of independent countries.\(^7\) This was obviously done to reassure the people in Eastern European nations that they would not simply be fighting Germany to be besieged by the Soviet Union following liberation. In December 1942, fearful that the Soviets would not abide by this agreement, Jan Ciechanowski, the Polish ambassador to the United States during World War II, told OWI officials that the Polish people wanted to hear “news about America and especially her war effort, her postwar plans, and her moral leadership,” instead of pro-Soviet propaganda like that they were already getting from Moscow.\(^8\) Since Sherwood and OWI only took orders directly from Roosevelt, however, this plea fell on deaf ears.\(^9\) By January of 1943, however, it was probable that the Red Army would invade Poland within a short period of time in order to facilitate an offensive against the Germans from the east. Armed with this information, OWI began a series of directives and propaganda campaigns that went back and forth between assuring the Poles that this would not happen and then simply refusing to comment on boundary issues at all. Thus began the complicated United States-Poland-Soviet relationship that guided much of OWI policy for the remainder of the war.

Sherwood issued a special directive on January 3, 1943 that stated OWI officials were to avoid addressing Polish boundary questions when at all possible. This is


\(^8\) Ciechanowski. *Defeat in Victory*, 130.

\(^9\) By Sherwood's own account, he took orders for propaganda rarely from Davis and more often from Roosevelt or Hopkins, who got his orders from Roosevelt; see Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), 77-122.
probably because, as a later directive noted, Roosevelt and U.S. policymakers wanted to "settle boundary questions after the war." Additionally, Sherwood reiterated that although the United States may not agree with Soviet policies toward Poland, "[policymakers would] discuss controversial matters after the war." Following Roosevelt's lead in avoiding the issue, Sherwood ordered OWI propagandists and broadcasters to "avoid involvement in the Polish-Russian crisis." Less than a week later, however, OWI insisted through Voice of America broadcasts that the Soviets should be presented as an "associate of the United States...preparing to cooperate in post-war world organization with the United States, England, China, Poland, etc." However imprecise this information was and however vague OWI remained throughout January about the boundary issue, Sherwood and OWI did issue the following statement from General Wladyslaw Sikorski, the Polish Prime Minister in exile during the war:

Poland desires to live on a basis of friendship and loyal cooperation with Russia, a power with which she shares many mutually complementary economic needs...At the root of this friendship there must grow up the deep conviction that the rights of [all] nations will be safeguarded in accordance with the principles of the Atlantic charter, of which both powers are signatories.

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10 Both quotations in paragraph can be found in the Weekly Propaganda Directive for Poland, 12 February 1944, Records of the Office of War Information, microfilm, 4:0842. The discovery of the Katyn atrocity in April 1943 and its aftermath caused an official diplomatic break between the Soviet Union and the London Poles (Polish government-in-exile), which was diplomatically recognized and supported by the United States. A full discussion of this incident and its political consequences comes later in this chapter. This directive was issued a full year after the break and serves to demonstrate that boundary issues were continually avoided by the Roosevelt administration.


Shortly after broadcasting this somewhat reassuring information to the Poles, OWI went back to avoiding the issue of disputed boundaries altogether and once again reassured the Poles that the Soviets wished to cooperate with them where the questions of boundaries or independence emerged. It was also here that OWI compromised the strategy of truth as early as February 1943. Instead of simply reporting the fact that Stalin was becoming increasingly adamant about Poland’s boundaries being as they were following World War I, OWI continually “recall[ed] official and authoritative Russian declarations denying claims to foreign territory,” and “play[ed] up statements, acts, visits and meetings which show[ed] Russia’s cooperation with America, Great Britain, and the other United Nations.”

OWI also played up Polish hopes that the dissolution of the Comintern by the Soviets in May 1943 signaled a change in the Soviets’ imperialistic activities in neighboring nations. To Americans, the dissolution of the Comintern indicated that the Soviets were ready to embrace the American democratic ideals outlined in the Atlantic Charter. By June 1943, OWI was back to “refrain[ing] from boundary discussions, from all references to Russian atrocities, and [references] to news or comments about special Russian-Polish problems.” In the same directive, however, OWI operatives were instructed to “not try to whitewash Russia before the Poles, not tell them that they are wrong in their relations to Russia.”

In July 1943, Sherwood rightly admitted that “…problems connected with the external [boundary] relations of Poland are

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15 Cicchanski, Defeat in Victory, 169-70.

centuries old and cannot be solved by our propaganda."\textsuperscript{17} The "atmosphere of silence" that the OWI both advocated and maintained on the question of Soviet-Polish boundary disputes spawned a passive policy towards the Soviet Union and its territorial gains that caused a major rift in United States-Polish relations as Polish officials began to feel neglected in light of America's seemingly nonchalant attitude towards the restoration of their borders.\textsuperscript{18}

By 1944, OWI had no choice but to comment on the boundary issue, "refer[ing] to Poland's pre-war eastern border as the border of 1939." Realizing that this would not settle the issue once and for all, the January 8 directive further instructed OWI propagandists to use Polish names for cities when broadcasting to Poland and to use Russian names for cities when broadcasting to Russia.\textsuperscript{19} A directive from February 2, 1944 reaffirmed the "atmosphere of silence" but also stated that OWI should "allow the impression to arise in Europe that [the United States] regard[s] the Curzon Line as a not unreasonable frontier."\textsuperscript{20}

Aside from the boundary disputes that all parties but the Poles agreed to disagree about until after the war, Soviet-Polish relations were further complicated by several key events, resulting U.S. and Soviet policies, and their outcomes. OWI struggled time and again to adhere to the strategy of truth in its broadcasting, leaflet and pamphlet campaigns, and other propaganda initiatives as Polish-Soviet events unfolded. At the

\textsuperscript{17} Weekly Propaganda Directive for Poland, 10 July 1943, Records of the Office of War Information, microfilm, 3:0633.

\textsuperscript{18} Lukas, The Strange Allies, 264.

\textsuperscript{19} Annex on Poland. Special Directive, 6 January 1944, Records of the Office of War Information, microfilm, 1:0505.

\textsuperscript{20} Central Directive, 24 February 1944, Records of the Office of War Information, microfilm, 14:0353.
same time, however, the agency’s approach was always positive in nature. As Clayton D. Laurie pointed out, for example, differences between the United States and the Soviet Union on any given subject related to Soviet-Polish relations was summed up time and again in the OWI directives as “indicative of United Nations openness and strength, and environment in which settlements were democratically negotiated and compromised effected for the common goal of defeating the Axis powers.” The Katyn massacre, the death of General Sikorski, the Moscow conference, the Teheran conference, the Warsaw uprising, the Crimea conference, and ultimately the Yalta conference all proved to be challenges for OWI propagandists, as they were charged with relaying America’s policies toward Poland and the Soviet Union to the Poles truthfully. Each of these events had to be carefully addressed or avoided because of fissures apparent in the Grand Alliance as early as May 1943.

The first major quandary for OWI in propagating American foreign policy and war aims to Poland came in early 1943. As early as 1940, over 15,000 Polish soldiers, 8,000 of them officers, were taken prisoner of war and imprisoned in Kozielsk, Starobielsk, and Ostashkov in the Soviet Union. Sikorski was convinced as early as 1941 that something was terribly wrong and asked Roosevelt and the United States government for assistance with locating the missing officers. The U.S. refused to intervene openly on behalf of the Polish officers, and in April 1943 Radio Berlin announced that the German Army had discovered over 3,000 corpses buried in a mass grave in the Katyn Forest. Suspicious that the entire episode was no more than a hoax from the German propaganda machine, U.S. officials initially “stated that of course the entire story might have been

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1 Laurie, *The Propaganda Warriors*, 213.
concocted out of thin air." Subsequent reports, however, confirmed that the bodies exhumed were more than likely those of the missing Polish officers, and the Polish government-in-exile petitioned the International Red Cross for an investigation. Stalin immediately broke relations with the Polish government-in-exile as they pushed for international intervention on behalf of the now dead officers, claiming that the killing of the officers was the work of the Nazis and not the Soviets. American officials, wary of both German and Soviet propaganda machines, believed that Stalin had "exploited the Katyn affair to establish its hegemony over Poland." OWI, trying to maintain positive United States-Soviet relations and at the same time attempting to uphold the strategy of truth, simply "reported charges and countercharges without comment, emphasis, or analysis." As the directive issued on 1 May 1943 pointed out, OWI propagandists were not to mention the massacre, but instead "refrain from all allusion to the Poles' hard lot...[and] report without comment official American expression of regret that strained relations have come to exist between two of our Allies." The organization's refusal to openly editorialize on the Katyn massacre, however, only strained relations further between the United States and Poland and

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23 The Ambassador to the Polish Government in Exile (Biddle) to the Secretary of State (Hull), 17 April 1943, FRUS 1943: The British Commonwealth, Eastern Europe, the Far East, 379-80.

24 Lukas, The Strange Allies: The United States and Poland, 1941-1945, 39.


prompted Congress to claim that OWI was pro-Soviet and therefore pro-communist.\(^\text{27}\)

OWI responded to these accusations by reaffirming that they only wanted to reflect the Roosevelt administration’s desire to emphasize that the Soviets were a “friendly Allied power” and were in no way to be considered as brutal as the Nazis. For this reason, OWI continually directed its propagandists to play up the role of the Nazis as brutes who were making life difficult for the Poles.\(^\text{28}\)

The relations between the Soviets and the Poles and the United States reactions to them were only further strained by the death of General Sikorski in July 1943. Sikorski had cooperated wholeheartedly with the United States and depended heavily on Roosevelt to state Poland’s postwar desires to Stalin. Since Sikorski himself had met with Stalin on a couple of previous occasions, the United States had been hopeful that Soviet-Polish relations would return to a state of stability once the consequences of the Katyn affair had passed. Sikorski’s untimely death in an airplane crash following the inspection of Polish troops in the Middle East and shortly after his departure from Gibraltar shook the Grand Alliance to its core as Roosevelt and OWI officials struggled with balancing Stalin’s demands for a new Polish government to be established and reassurance to the Poles that the existing government would have continuity. Once again Sherwood relied upon OWI’s declared strategy of truth to bail the agency out of the awkward position it found itself in by issuing a directive on 10 July that stated propagandists were to “report changes in the Polish Cabinet without speculation as to


their meaning” and to “refrain from all editorializing about probable or possible effects of Sikorski’s death on Polish-Russian relations.”

Rather than embracing the new leader as Roosevelt had hoped, Stalin and the Soviet government responded to Sikorski’s death by openly sponsoring the Union of Polish Patriots (Lublin Poles), headed by Wanda Wasilewska. It immediately became clear to American, British, and Polish officials that Stalin’s refusal to recognize the government-in-exile in London was not going to change in the near future. OWI, however, continued to report that Poland was represented solely by the government-in-exile in London and that “it alone can be regarded as the trustee of the [Polish] people.” Considering that the Soviets were repeatedly bombarding the Poles with reports of the activities of the Wasilewska group, OWI had to acknowledge the group’s existence without giving it any sense of credibility or making the Poles feel that the Americans or other allied nations had any intent of recognizing the authority of any government other than that in London.

In the end, however, Stanislaus Mikolajczyk, who had been the vice premier of the government-in-exile in London became the officially recognized premier following Sikorski’s death. Mikolajczyk worked to reach agreements with the Lublin government and the Soviets regarding border disputes and Poland’s postwar government throughout the remainder of the war.

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29 Weekly Propaganda Directive for Poland, 10 July 1943, Records of the Office of War Information, microfilm, 3:0633.

30 The Soviet Union openly supported the Union of Polish Patriots, hereafter referred to as the Lublin Poles, which consisted of individuals that favored compromise with the Soviet Union, sometimes at Poland’s expense. From 1943 onward, the Soviets only recognized the Lublin Poles continuously, though at times indicated willingness to compromise and work with the London Poles, which was supported by the United States officially until the Yalta Conference in 1945.

OWI’s effectiveness and intentions of delivering the truth through news, leaflet droppings, and broadcasts was severely hindered as Sherwood continued to quarrel with other leaders in OWI and OSS over the nature of overseas propaganda and exactly what role it should play in American foreign policy both during and after the war. In December 1942, conflict between OWI and OSS accelerated when Roosevelt ordered OSS to participate in both “black” and “white” propaganda activities, only to receive vehement protests from OWI. “White” propaganda, including leaflet campaigns and Voice of America broadcasts, was something OWI saw as being their domain, and OSS’s demands to participate in “white” propaganda campaigns would encroach upon OWI’s control of this entity. Roosevelt’s response to the protests was Executive Order 9312, issued on March 9, 1943, that guaranteed OWI full control over propaganda but at the same time ordered them to coordinate with and work under the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Departments of War and the Navy when dealing with any reports of military operations. At the same time, accusations that Sherwood was trying to globalize the New Deal with liberal propaganda that would also serve to “jump-start FDR’s 1944 election campaign” bred conflict between him and Elmer Davis and begged more criticism from the leaders of OSS.32 By 1943, dissention in OWI was rampant and most of it revolved around Sherwood, whose administrative abilities were called into question by Davis once he became aware of Sherwood’s desire to make overseas operations an autonomous

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unit. Most critics felt that the only reason Sherwood was allowed to remain in his post as dissention grew was because of his close personal friendship with Roosevelt.

Adding to Sherwood’s woes in 1943, he rewrote and reissued *There Shall Be No Night*, adding outright war propaganda to the new version that focused on the Soviet Union now being an ally rather than the foe it was depicted as in the first version of the play. This upset many members of Congress, who accused Sherwood of being supportive of “communist policies towards Poland” and failing to follow the strategy of truth by objectively reporting facts. Congressional doubts about OWI’s administrative squabbles and effectiveness, coupled with the “conservative effort to dismantle the liberal framework Roosevelt had created” with the appointment of the agency’s leaders led to severe budget cuts for the Domestic Branch in 1943. The Overseas Operations Branch, which had enjoyed as much as ninety percent of the organization’s budget and had functioned somewhat autonomously since OWI’s inception, was not as deeply affected because Congress felt their role was more conducive to helping obtain an Allied victory. This raised the ire of Elmer Davis, who quickly tried to gain control of the Overseas Operations Branch, which he felt the president supported more than he did the Domestic

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33 Sherwood’s Overseas Operations Branch functioned almost autonomously from Davis since its inception in 1942. Davis was more focused on domestic operations and championed the cause of MacLeish and Milton Eisenhower, Deputy Directors of the Domestic Branch of OWI, throughout the war. Davis and Sherwood often engaged in power struggles, as Sherwood saw no need for supervision in Overseas Operations from someone that he perceived to be preoccupied with the daily undertakings of the Domestic Branch. Sherwood began to petition for the Overseas Branch to become an autonomous unit as early as 1943, when conflict between himself and Davis began to escalate. See Meserve, Robert E. Sherwood: Reluctant Moralist, 175-90.

34 Meserve, Robert E. Sherwood: Reluctant Moralist, 177-80.

35 Laurie, The Propaganda Warriors, 173.

Though Sherwood and Davis both pled their case for larger budgets to Roosevelt personally, Roosevelt responded that he would not intervene between the agency and Congress, a decision that Alan Winkler stated indicated that Roosevelt was "simply not willing to put his own credibility or credit on the line for something that he was not particularly concerned about." This left propagandists at OWI disillusioned but also led to less ideologically-charged broadcasts as they struggled to reconcile their liberal, democratic internationalist views with those of a Congress unsympathetic to anything other than winning the war as quickly as possible.

The Moscow Conference, held from October to November 1943 among the foreign ministers of the Big Three, revealed further rifts among the Grand Alliance powers; OWI officials viewed it as the "political turning point of the war." The United States agreed to open a second front and committed itself to developing a postwar peace organization, but OWI recognized that the "apprehensions long felt by many Poles regarding plans of the Soviet Union will not be allayed by the declarations of the Moscow Conference." At the same time, OWI knew that the United States decided following the conference not to give munitions or supplies to the Underground Army of

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38 Winkler, The Politics of Propaganda, 70.


40 Central Propaganda Directive, 5-12 November 1943, Records of the Office of War Information, microfilm, 4:0223-5. See also Summary of the Proceedings of the Eleventh Session of the Tripartite Conference, 29 October 1943, FRUS 1943: General, 667-9, which details the declarations made by the powers on the Polish boundary question. In it, each power expressed their concerns, then agreed to table the issue until Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met at Teheran. Additionally, the powers discussed giving aid to the Underground Army of Poland, but just after the conference all discussion of aid was dropped. See FRUS 1943: General, 667-781.
Poland, but at the same time propagandists upheld the belief that the United States would
do all it could to help its allies. Propaganda directives in fact directly quoted
Ciechanowski's statement on the conference's declaration when referencing the
reservations of the Polish citizenry concerning the agreements:

The framework for war and postwar collaboration outlined in the Moscow
Agreements is to be wholeheartedly welcome if it insures the re-establishment of
the sovereign rights and territorial integrity of all the European peace-loving
nations and helps toward their harmonious cooperation in accordance with the
principles of the United Nations concept.

In light of the continued uncertainty of the Polish-Soviet situation, Sherwood ordered
OWI propagandists to “give only official reports” and “avoid any speculative comment”
regarding the situation. Further, the directive specifically stated that though
propagandists were not to comment directly on Polish-Soviet relations that may or may
not result from the conference, they were to “stress the Declaration regarding Italy and
the pledges of the signatory powers that the Italian people shall be given every
opportunity to establish their government according to democratic principles.” in order to
reassure the Poles that the United States hoped the signatory powers, including Russia,
would acknowledge the same self-determination in postwar Eastern European nations.

By the time Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met for the first time at Teheran in
December 1943, Churchill and Roosevelt had placed more strain on the already fragile

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41 Ciechanowski, Defeat in Victory, 233.

42 Weekly Propaganda Directive for Poland, 5-12 November 1943, Records of the Office of War
Information, microfilm, 4:0223; Ciechanowski, Defeat in Victory, 233-5.

43 Weekly Propaganda Directive for Poland, 5-12 November 1943, Records of the Office of War
Information, microfilm, 4:0223-4. The Declaration from the Moscow Conference contained a Declaration
regarding Italy that stated that fascism should be completely destroyed and that the Italian people should be
given the opportunity to establish their own government based on the democratic principles outlined in the
Atlantic Charter, which presumably would be afforded the Poles as well; see The Moscow Conference,
FRUS 1943, 1:513-781.
alliance by delaying the opening of a second front in Europe, which they had promised through their emissaries to the Soviets at the Moscow conference earlier that year. It was for this reason that the United States and Britain specifically avoided any discussion of solutions to problems between the Soviets and the Poles. Instead, as the declaration from the conference states, they "[sought] the cooperation and active participation of all nations, large and small, whose peoples in heart and in mind are dedicated, as are our own peoples, to the elimination of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance." 41

The lack of specific solutions to the problems that plagued Soviet-Polish relations led OWI to simply "make the most of the reaffirmation of...the principles of the Atlantic Charter, and stress the emphasis laid on the non-discriminating attitude with regard to smaller nations." Further, OWI propagandists were instructed to deliver news of the conference in a way that would reassure the Poles that the Allied nations were still fighting for self-determination of all nations: "Make reference to 'sovereign equality,' a phrase that has a familiar and cherished sound to Polish ears as the Poles like to think about their historical Commonwealth as an association of 'equal with equal'." 45 In short, OWI was to continue to avoid the question of future Polish-Soviet relations and simply issue reports of the conference. At the same time, however, OWI leaders acknowledged that the Poles would be greatly disappointed by the conference because it offered them no solid promise of American support in the postwar arena. Once again, Roosevelt and
Churchill avoided an open break with the Soviets at the conference and OWI found itself in a difficult position.\textsuperscript{46} OWI’s insistence on glossing over major Polish-Soviet issues that were not addressed at the conference represented another departure from the strategy of truth because OWI officials did not report Stalin’s statements on the need for a government sympathetic to the Soviet Union to the Poles, instead choosing to emphasize Poland’s role as one of the United Nations and assuring the them that the Americans would fight for their self-determination following the war. The United States continued, therefore, to “not pass judgment on the points at issue” between the two states, but instead “just urge[d] the Poles and Russians to get on speaking terms at once, regardless of who is at fault.”\textsuperscript{47} With this in mind, Ciechanowski pointed out what was becoming painfully obvious to the Poles despite OWI propaganda touting the United Nations creating one world that would prosper in peace following the war:

One thing was becoming painfully evident. The actual trend of American policy was preparing not one world of united peace and security, but at least two worlds, vastly different. In the Western Hemisphere, the nations of the Americas were to continue to enjoy the blessings of the good-neighbor policy which, above all, was the basis of security and peace. At the same time, it was becoming increasingly certain that these blessings would not be made available to many countries of the Eastern Hemisphere which, for the sake of unity among the Three Powers, were being handed over to the totalitarian domination of one of the Big Three.\textsuperscript{48}

The Polish perception was that Poland was being slowly handed to the Soviets as Roosevelt and OWI struggled to maintain the fragile Grand Alliance. The results of these

\textsuperscript{46} The Teheran Conference, \textit{FRUS 1943: Conferences at Cairo and Teheran}, 457-652.


\textsuperscript{48} Ciechanowski, \textit{Defeat in Victory}, 354.
actions meant that OWI no longer adhered fully to the strategy of truth and instead propagated reports that would reassure the Poles of their position as a United Nations ally. These messages did not inform the Poles that American foreign policymakers were avoiding advocating issues critical to the Polish people in order to maintain an alliance with a nation whose leaders appeared to have one thing in mind: having complete territorial and ideological control of Poland in order to protect its own security.

Roosevelt’s main goal of winning the war and maintaining the Grand Alliance trumped Polish interests at the conference, but OWI did its best to report on the conference in the most positive manner possible.

The Warsaw uprising in August 1944 for the first time fully "revealed how far apart the White House and the Kremlin were on the question of Polish self-determination." 49 The Soviet Union through Radio Moscow encouraged Warsaw residents to rebel against the German occupants in the wake of Soviet advances toward the city, but at the same time the Kremlin did not expect that the Poles would pre-empt the Soviet troops’ arrival with the uprising. The Poles, however, wanted to take control of their capital before the Soviets arrived, presuming that the Soviets would gain control of the city and refuse to leave just as the Germans had. The United States, faced with the awkward situation of openly reassuring the Poles through OWI broadcasts, leaflet droppings, and other propaganda activities and at the same time worried that the Grand Alliance would fall apart if America sent aid to the Warsaw residents, requested Stalin’s permission to use American planes to drop much-needed supplies into the city. Stalin

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granted this request, but refused to allow American and British planes use Soviet air fields to carry out the operation, which made it all but impossible to do so. 50

At the same time the United States was bargaining for access to Soviet air fields in order to aid the Poles, Stalin was trying to gain recognition from Roosevelt and Churchill for the Lublin Polish government, which he favored over the London government-in-exile. The London Poles and Lublin Poles arrived in Moscow within days of each other but were received very differently, with the Lublin Poles receiving preference. Mikolajczyk met with the Lublin Poles and with Stalin to try and secure assistance for the Warsaw uprising only to gain promises from both groups that were never realized. Stalin demanded that his earlier request for the Polish government-in-exile in London to get rid of any anti-Soviet members be fulfilled before Soviet recognition, let alone aid, would be granted to the government-in-exile. Despite pleas for aid from Mikolajczyk, Stalin seemed dumbfounded when two communications officers he sent to scout the situation in Warsaw sent word that “urged [him] to send aid to the heroic population of Warsaw.” 51

These events also coincided with a change in the Overseas Branch’s leadership. In August 1944, while in Europe to promote the re-opening of the new version of There Shall Be No Night, Sherwood received a letter from Roosevelt asking him to return to the United States to work for his 1944 re-election campaign. Seeing an easy way out of a situation that became more heated with the passage of time, Sherwood resigned from OWI in September to do this, but not before leaving detailed instructions for his


51 Lukas. The Strange Allies. 78.
successor on how OWI should handle Voice of America and all other propaganda efforts once Germany was defeated. Sherwood's departure left Wallace Carroll, who was previously a Deputy Director and worked primarily in the New York and London offices, in charge of the Overseas Branch.

As the month of August wore on and aid came from neither the Soviets nor the United States and Britain, Mikolajczyk threatened to resign his position as the leader of the London Poles. Since neither Roosevelt nor Churchill wanted this to happen, each agreed to send aid. Though the United States was in the best position to send aid to the Warsaw fighters, officials did not hurry to do so because of fears that this would alienate Stalin and deliver a lethal blow to the already fragile Grand Alliance. By September, Roosevelt and Churchill secured clearance to use Soviet air fields for relief efforts, but this relief came too little, too late to be of any real help to the fighters in Warsaw.

With regard to Mikolajczyk's visit to the Soviet Union to meet with Stalin and the Lublin Poles and the Warsaw uprising, OWI instructed its propagandists to only report facts about the meetings' results and then added that broadcasters should "use judicious and balanced American editorial opinion on the subject." A week later OWI reaffirmed this directive but added that propagandists should "quote American Press stories about the fighting in Warsaw as a sign of our interest [in] and recognition [of]" the brave fighting of the Poles. In the same directive, Sherwood insisted that broadcasters give full attention only to the official statements of the American or British governments when

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54 Weekly Propaganda Directive for Poland, 4 August 1944, Records of the Office of War Information, microfilm, 6:0037.
commenting on the situation, hinting at the fact that by reporting only the official information from these two parties two purposes would be served. First, the Poles would be reassured that the American and British governments were intent on helping them as they fought in Warsaw as propagandists were directed to "tell the fighters of Warsaw the American people are informed of their struggle which they follow with interest and sympathy." Additionally, following a policy of reporting only the official commentaries on the subject would reassure Stalin enough that the alliance between the Big Three would continue. OWI further reassured Stalin when they gave direction for broadcasters to use "appropriate press comment stressing American interest and sympathy and American belief in the need for the cooperation of the Soviet Army with the Polish forces of resistance." 

By December 31, 1944, the Polish Committee of National Liberation, which was supported wholeheartedly by Stalin, proclaimed itself the Provisional Government of Poland. Shortly after, appeals for a multi-partisan provisional government came from groups within Poland and the western allied nations alike. The United States, meanwhile, continued to legally and diplomatically recognize only the London Poles. As this recognition continued, however, the Soviet Union announced by January 1945 that it regarded only the Lublin Poles as the true provisional government and would therefore only deal with them diplomatically. After issuing tersely worded protests, Mikolajczyk issued a statement that expressed misplaced Polish confidence in American foreign

55 Propaganda Directives for Poland, 11 August 1944 and 17 August 1944, Records of the Office of War Information, microfilm. 6:0082, 6:0130-1.

policymakers as the Yalta Conference neared: “...the Big Three at their next meeting will find enough good will and character to assure to the Polish nation a truly free, strong, and independent Poland.” Instead, however, the Big Three at their next meeting did what Ciechanowski had feared was happening all along as they discussed Poland’s future at the Yalta conference. Though OWI knew of the conflicts in both internal and external Polish political arenas, they constantly directed propagandists to target all Poles in the name of unity rather than paying specific attention to any individual group. This policy was not followed, however, as most of the OWI directives gave preference to working closely with the Polish Underground rather than giving information to communist underground operations in Poland as well.

As the Big Three prepared to meet at Yalta, representatives of the Polish government-in-exile continued to express “apprehensions as to the frontiers of future Poland as well as its genuine independence,” apprehensions that were the result of the establishment in Poland of a “provisional government, representing solely and exclusively the authority of one trifling group, namely, of the Communists.”

Additionally, possible solutions to the Polish question were offered on the eve of the Yalta Conference and included three options, proposed by Rudolf Schoenfeld, the United States ambassador to the Polish government-in-exile:

(1) The simplest solution would be the return of the Polish President to Poland where he would appoint a new government.

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59 Schoenfeld to Hull, FRUS 1945: Europe, 115.
(2) The second alternative would be an agreement on a person in Poland in whose favor the President should resign his office. The new legal president would then appoint a new government.

(3) The third solution...would be for the representatives of the Council of National Unity and of the National Council of the Homeland (Lublin Committee) to assemble in the presence of the representatives of the Three Great Powers with the object of choosing a new government to be created in Poland.

(4) Still another way out—also outside of legal procedure—would be to create in Poland a presidential council which should be composed of the most widely known leaders and representatives of political life, the churches and the science.60

In February 1945, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met at Yalta to discuss and plan for the postwar world and a lasting peace. At the conference, the three powers made a series of agreements that directly affected Poland and caused a great deal of disillusionment amongst the Polish people, as the final declarations concerning Poland took little of Schoenfeld’s advice to heart. The Yalta Declaration called for the Soviet Union to retain its claims to the eastern part of Poland and in return for Poland to be able to set up a provisional government through free elections and obtain territory in the north and west from Germany following the war.61 After following a policy that constantly reassured the Poles that Wilsonian and Rooseveltian ideals such as freedom of the seas, disarmament, and, most importantly, self-determination would be adhered to in America’s foreign policy dealing with Poland, OWI was presented with the challenge of factually reporting the Yalta declaration to the Poles without losing sight of these assurances. As Wallace Carroll stated in the directive from February 16.

The decision of the Crimea Conference on Poland presents us with a challenge and an opportunity. It is a challenge because, while it brought some satisfaction to the Lublin Poles, it meant disillusionment and disappointment to many of those Poles who followed the Government in Exile. It is an opportunity because, for the

60 Schoenfeld to Hull. FRUS 1945: Europe, 119.

61 Minutes and Related Documents: Saturday, 10 February 1945. FRUS 1945. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 871-907.
first time since September 1, 1939, the Polish people can be shown a future in which there is hope and in which they can rebuild their shattered lives. 62

Further, Carroll acknowledged the extreme challenge in propagating hopes for Poland’s future by stating that Polish disillusionment with America would come from the fact that the United States had time and again made statements on self-determination and non-intervention on boundary disputes and now appeared to have changed that policy by allowing territorial acquisitions for the Soviet Union at Poland’s expense. Therefore, OWI was directed to emphasize that Poland’s future was no longer racked with uncertainty when reporting on the territorial agreements made at the conference. They were also to emphasize that in return for the territorial concessions, Poland would be governed by a Polish Provisional Government of National Unity that would be responsible for holding free elections as soon as possible after the war. This government, however, was to be friendly to the Soviet Union and at the same time have the support of the Polish people, something that considering both Polish fears of Soviet intentions and disillusionment with American foreign policy towards them would be difficult at best to realize. In an attempt to calm Polish fears about Soviet intentions, Carroll instructed that propagandists report that the Soviets would not treat Poland as part of their sphere of influence, but rather had agreed at the conference to work with Britain and the United States to foster free elections and a provisional government. 63

This represented a break from the lack of editorializing that OWI had tried to follow in the past, but was more disturbing to the Poles as they realized that OWI


propaganda had really deviated from the truth all along when dealing with Polish-Soviet relations. As the London government-in-exile rejected the Yalta declaration, Carroll instructed propagandists to repeat a New York Times editorial from February 14 that stated, "We think that history will say that it missed an opportunity," perhaps to serve as part of the new Polish Provisional Government of National Unity. Ciechanowski, the Polish Ambassador to the United States, summed up the Polish sentiments on the Yalta agreement: "From the point of view of the interests of the Western Powers, of the principles of democracy, of the rights of smaller nations and the common man. I regard the Yalta Conference as the final act in the bankruptcy record of the policy of appeasement of Russia." The Yalta communique was rightly "appraised as a surrender of American leadership, principles, and prestige" by himself, the Polish people, and even prominent American officials, some of which were propagating that the communique should in fact calm the fears of the Poles by reassuring them that their once uncertain future was now clear.\(^65\)

While addressing the twists and turns of Roosevelt's policies, OWI also pursued other, more general propaganda lines designed to assure Poland of its importance within the Western alliance. This too came into conflict with the constant attention being paid to the Soviet Union as an equal ally at first, and as a more important ally in America's long term postwar goals. The United States did, however, give special attention on a number of occasions to Polish resistance efforts such as the Polish Underground Army and Polish Underground Press. Throughout Sherwood’s tenure, OWI emphasized the bravery of

\(^64\) Quoted in Weekly Propaganda Directive for Poland, 16 February 1945, Records of the Office of War Information, microfilm, 7:0704.

\(^65\) Ciechanowski, Defeat in Victory, 359.
Polish troops on the battlefield as well as the bravery of those fighting at home with the resistance movement. Though acknowledging that the underground press operatives in Poland fell into “various political and ideological groups,” and “may vary in their political, social and religious ideas and may even indulge in a certain amount of controversy amongst themselves, there is…. one point in common to them all, and that is the most important of them all – hatred of the occupier and the oppressor combined with a burning desire to get rid of them.”

Additionally, OWI made special efforts throughout 1943 and 1944 to inform the Poles of the contributions of Americans of Polish descent to the American war effort, with commentators using this to stress unity among the United Nations fighting forces. As OWI officials struggled to assist in reaching Roosevelt’s goal of preserving the Grand Alliance, they continually emphasized the bravery of Poles and Polish-Americans while simultaneously ignoring the fact that there were political and social rifts amongst both groups. Instead of allowing information about the slow but sure turning over of Polish territory to the Soviets to be distributed, OWI focused on emphasizing their role and the Soviet Union’s role as United Nations allies fighting for the ideals of the Atlantic Charter. Unfortunately, however, OWI officials and Roosevelt and Churchill themselves were forced to realize early on that Stalin was more concerned with winning the war and defeating the common enemy than he was with allowing democratic ideals to take hold in Eastern Europe following the war.

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67 Kimball, The Juggler, 92.
Amongst the reassurances found throughout the directives, OWI was careful to include information about punishing the Nazis for starting the war as well as information concerning the prosecution of Nazi officials for war crimes following the Allied victory. At the same time, however, OWI went to great lengths to caution the Poles that there was a difference between Hitler’s guilt and a very peaceful German people. In other words, OWI wanted to ensure that Poles did not blame all of Germany for Hitler and the Nazi Party’s horrific acts. Although this was the official propaganda line of the United States, it was not consistent, as an early directive from 1943 announced that OWI propagandists were to “Avoid references to any distinction between the German people and their Nazi leaders.” By July 1944 OWI changed its focus in this area by delivering broadcasts that specifically emphasized Hitler’s guilt for the war and for its atrocities rather than the guilt of the entire German nation. Acknowledgement of the Holocaust and its effects on Poland specifically came as early as April 1944, when a propaganda directive stated that “Poland was destined to become the slaughterhouse not only of the Jews living [in] its territory but also of the Jews brought [there] from Western Europe: from Germany, Holland, Belgium, France, and Norway.” OWI asked the Polish people to “keep a record of the German crimes and criminals” and “keep the temporary masters

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70 Weekly Propaganda Directives for Poland, 7 July 1944 and 14 July 1944, Records of the Office of War Information, microfilm. 5:0944-6 and 5:0974-7.

constantly aware of the fact that they will not escape justice." While OWI openly and willingly acknowledged the barbarism of the Nazis in broadcasts to Poland, it is interesting to note that domestically OWI did not address the plight of European Jews under the Nazi regime until 1945. This is because Elmer Davis, the Director of the Domestic Branch of OWI, did not consider lying by omission an open violation of his agency’s campaign for the strategy of truth. This is the one area where the strategy of truth actually prevailed, as promises of justice were confirmed at the Yalta conference in 1945 and eventually upheld as Nazi leaders were prosecuted for war crimes at Nuremberg.

One of the greatest tools that OWI had at its disposal for propaganda to Poland and other European countries was its radio broadcasts through Voice of America, which “penetrate[d] deep into enemy and occupied territory in Central Europe and into the Near East...a sealed Nazi prison” and were an important medium for the projection of America because “friendly and neutral nations [could] be told about the American people and their institutions, their music and their general attitude on the war and the postwar world.” Through Voice of America, OWI shifted its policy between November 1942 and February 1944 from being reactionary and defensive to being actively on a propaganda offensive in Western Europe. As Roosevelt pursued a realistic policy that sometimes

72 Weekly Propaganda Directive for Poland, 11 November 1943, Records of the Office of War Information, microfilm. 4:0457.

73 Laurie, The Propaganda Warriors, 180.

overshadowed ideology.\footnote{Kimball, \textit{The Juggler}, 18-9. According to Kimball, “The war demanded policies; not only to deal with immediate military strategy and geopolitical problems that go with wartime coalitions, but also because the war presented an opportunity for long-range reform.” Roosevelt therefore “did not seek the ‘golden mean’, but rather used compromise as a means to his ends.”} OWI continued to propagate ideals openly through Voice of America broadcasts. This is because Sherwood believed that the Voice of America should be used to project American war aims as something more than simply a military defeat of the Axis powers. Instead, Sherwood argued, Voice of America should concentrate on making the destruction of the political systems that created the problematic powers and their imperialistic policies a central part of the American war effort.\footnote{Holly Cowan Shulman, \textit{The Voice of America: Propaganda and Democracy, 1941-1945} (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 75-9.} This is reflected throughout the directives as well as Sherwood repeatedly directed OWI propagandists to put forth American ideals and the desire to spread them to oppressed parts of the world. Throughout 1942 and 1943, Voice of America followed OWI directives and placed emphasis on playing up resistance in the occupied countries, especially Poland, and in 1943 broadcasts began to emphasize the coordination of internal resistance movements with the overall Allied military efforts throughout occupied Europe.\footnote{Shulman, \textit{The Voice of America}, 86-8.} This was because broadcasts with an emphasis on resistance in the occupied nations served a much greater purpose than simply helping to militarily win the war. Rather, it “[gave] truth to the idea that the war was being fought for domestic rejuvenation and liberalization in all countries,” which served to somewhat marry ideology and military goals for the war and Poland’s role after its conclusion.\footnote{Shulman, \textit{The Voice of America}, 84.}
Sherwood, worried about the concentration on reports of military events, began to emphatically demand that America’s political goals be married to its military goals in order to ensure a postwar world with governments friendly to the United States. This was reflected in the central directives from the Overseas Branch as Sherwood ordered that “our main theme is to drive home the military strength and unity of the United Nations,” but at the same time still placed emphasis on playing up resistance and gave attention to fostering democratic ideals in the occupied nations so they would willingly adopt them after the war. Ideology began to play a smaller role in American foreign policy as it was broadcast through Voice of America as early as 1944, as Sherwood and other OWI officials began to craft policies that would “support and extend [an] American military victory,…provide information to listeners who were eager for hard news, either on the eve of liberation or in the midst of battle; and once liberation was achieved, give [liberated nations] access to news about [America’s post-war plans and policies].” The Roosevelt Administration’s goal of promoting its postwar goals were thereby met through broadcasts from Voice of America.

Aside from Voice of America, OWI most often used literature campaigns and leaflet droppings to get information about the Allied war effort and America’s postwar aims to the Polish people and those in other occupied nations. Early efforts included 1942’s “The United Nations Fight for the Four Freedoms,” “The Thousand Million,” and “The Unconquered People.” The first, based upon a speech given by Roosevelt, outlines the need for unity in fighting to free all nations from fear and want. “The Thousand

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80 Shulman. The Voice of America, 162.
Million” brought together “brief stories about the United Nations, where one thousand million friends of the United States live, work, and fight” in order to inform the American people and the people of occupied nations of the plight of other occupied nations and reiterate that the United States and United Nations supported freedom for all and that only unity in fighting for this goal would attain it. This publication, along with “The Unconquered People,” stressed resistance in the occupied nations and served the purpose of encouraging the Poles and others to continue to resist with the belief that their hard work would pay off in the form of liberation at the end of the war. Most important to the Poles, however, was the publication entitled “Tale of a City,” which detailed the struggles in Warsaw since the Nazi occupation and emphasized the need for support of the Polish underground movements there. This was circulated both throughout America and overseas, fostering both sympathy and support for the city’s plight. In all of these publications, OWI stressed reporting hard facts and generally followed the strategy of truth as it set out to do, but at the same time completely ignore the “very real differences among the United Nations.”

Several events throughout the course of World War II caused OWI to compromise its adherence to the strategy of truth when reporting on the variations in Roosevelt’s foreign policy concerning Poland. By 1944, OWI clearly began to express and support foreign policy rather than try to create it or change it, which made it a vital tool for the

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United States in assisting with obtaining military objectives and victories. It compromised its adherence to the strategy of truth, however, as the agency often found itself lying through omission about important developments and alterations to policy when reporting on these events to the Poles.
CHAPTER IV
THE OSS’S FOREIGN NATIONALITIES BRANCH: AN ANALYTICAL APPROACH

As Sherwood and the OWI Overseas Operations Branch struggled to adhere to the strategy of truth in the wake of several events and policy formulations amongst Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin, Poole and the Foreign Nationalities Branch maintained contact with influential leaders in the Polish-American community and reported findings on political undercurrents and their possible impact on domestic American politics. Though OWI’s tone when propagating information focused on promoting democratic ideals, Poole’s reports served to inform rather than call to action. There were numerous Polish-American organizations that Poole canvassed through interviews with prominent individuals in the community, and all information received from these interviews was forwarded to the Director of OSS. Most of the reports warned of Polish nationalism\(^1\) in the United States in the wake of decisions made amongst the Big Three.

Polish-American organizations in the United States numbered 10,000 during World War II and can be divided into three groups that ranged politically from the ultra-conservative to center moderate to “the special ‘Polish brand’ of left”\(^2\): right-wing organizations, which were staunchly anti-Soviet; left-wing organizations, which supported the Soviet-American alliance and eventually the Lublin government; and moderate blanket organizations that initially supported the London government-in-exile

\(^1\)“Nationalism” in this sense refers to the allegiance to or sympathies toward Poland that many Polish-Americans still maintained, even as American citizens. A discussion of this dual allegiance can be found in Wasell, “Attitudes of the Various Polish-American Organizations toward American Foreign Policy affecting Poland.” 12-9. Poole used the term to describe the pro-Polish and anti-Soviet sentiments that were deeply seeded in the Polish-American community and caused leaders of various Polish-American organizations to question, and at times oppose, the Roosevelt Administration and fear any concessions made to the Soviet Union in order to maintain the Grand Alliance.
and recognized its legitimacy yet still harbored suspicions about the Soviet-American alliance and its impact on a post-war Poland. Right-wing organizations included the Polish Roman Catholic Union and the Polish National Alliance of the United States of North America, each centered in Chicago, and the National Committee of Americans of Polish Decent (KNAPP), centered in New York. Left-wing organizations included the Polish-Socialist Alliance of the United States of America, the Polish Labor Group, and the Polonia Society of International Workers' Order, all headquartered in New York. The more moderate organizations included the Polish-American Council (Polish War Relief), centered in Chicago, and eventually the Polish-American Congress, which maintained headquarters in both Chicago and Washington, D.C. All of these groups enjoyed active members who remained politically well-informed if not always politically active. Politically conservative organizations considered the London government-in-exile too conciliatory towards the Soviet Union when it came to territorial demands, while those on the political left considered the London government-in-exile too harsh towards the Soviet Union on territorial issues.

KNAPP, the leading right-wing organization in Polonia, was led by Maximilian Wegrzynek, a Polish-American ultranationalist who denounced Sikorski’s moderate policies and subsequently criticized Roosevelt for not taking a strong stance against Soviet demands on Polish territory. This group was considered “fanatical” at times, and

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FNB informants continually monitored and reported on their meetings and activities as Polish nationalism grew throughout the course of the war. Additionally, KNAPP labeled Sikorski's government "tepid" because he refused to make a firm stance on territorial or boundary issues and, perhaps in order to secure Roosevelt and Churchill's approval and assistance, "purposely distanced himself from anti-Soviet leaders among both Poles and Polish-Americans."5

Aware of the incredible political sway that the Polish-American organizations held, Roosevelt desired a way to keep in contact with them and reassure them of America's policies toward Poland both during and after the war. Stanislaus A. Blejwas summed up Poland and Polonia's importance to the Roosevelt Administration as follows: "Whereas Poland was for Stalin a question of boundaries and defense and for Churchill a question of honor, it was for FDR a mater of domestic electoral and ethnic politics."6

While the Polish-American community "lacked effective political pressure to influence the administration's actions," it did hold enough political pressure to worry administration officials as midterm and presidential election seasons neared.7 Though a small minority of Polish-Americans were Republicans and could actually pose a political threat, most Polish-Americans had a "sort or religious faith in Roosevelt, that he is and will do the right thing, that American policies cannot possibly be interpreted in any other

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7 Blejwas, "Polonia and Politics," 143.
light except in terms of justice for all. For the Poles as well as for the Polish-American community, this meant that Roosevelt would do all in his power to uphold the terms of the Atlantic Charter and work to guarantee a free and independent Poland following World War II. For this reason, Polish nationalism waned in the early days of U.S. involvement in World War II, but as international events unfolded, Polonia experienced a surge in nationalism that the Foreign Nationalities Branch of the Office of Strategic Services often warned the Roosevelt administration about. The FNB’s intent was not to influence policy; rather, the Foreign Nationalities Branch sought to determine how policy was influencing the Polish-American community and, eventually, how the reactions of the Polish-American community to these policies could possibly affect the fate of Roosevelt’s administration. Ultimately, the gradual rise in Polish-American nationalism proved worrisome for the administration, but not fatal.

Given Poole’s expertise, FNB was much more realistic than OWI as it reported to the administration on political situations affecting Poland than OWI was in conveying information to the Poles. The period from June 1941 to April 1943, when the London government-in-exile and the Soviet Union still had an official and diplomatic relationship, “witnessed...the partial elimination of the long-standing suspicion of Poles against the Soviet Union, a suspicion deepened since the end of 1942 by reports of the treatment of the Poles in Russia.” Such treatment was brought to light by the Katyn Forest massacre, about which the Polish-American community had many mixed feelings.

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9 OSS, Foreign Nationality Groups in the US. 167.
Reactions to the discovery of the mass grave of Polish officers varied amongst Polish-Americans, and though FNB reported that for the most part “Polish organizations in America [were] more solidified than ever in their anti-Russian stand,” they also noted many voices of dissention amongst Polish-Americans in Sikorski’s handling of the situation. Many within the Polish-American community held doubts about the fact that the massacre was revealed by the Germans, and some hailed it as mere work of the Goebbels propaganda machine that the Polish government-in-exile too willingly accepted as fact. Though some willingly accepted that the Soviets were capable of executing the Polish officers without regard to their role in the United Nations’ war effort because “such men are against [Stalin],” others criticized Sikorski’s government and alleged that they were “simply stupid” in appealing to the International Red Cross for an investigation into the tragedy, a move that led to the break in official relations between the Polish government-in-exile and the Soviet Union.

Support for the Sikorski government within the Polish-American community was tepid before the Katyn affair, and this event led to a shift further away from the Sikorski government for the more moderate and leftist organizations. This can be attributed somewhat to the American press, which blamed Poles for pushing the issue and therefore causing the ensuing Polish-Soviet break in diplomatic relations. KNAPP blamed both the atrocity and the diplomatic crisis on the Soviet Union and as a result of the Katyn affair modified their attitudes towards Sikorski and the London government to more accepting


11 “Reactions to the Russo-Polish Break.” Records of FNB. 27 April 1943. microfiche. INT-21PO-353. 3-4.
ones. Poole noted that many of the organizations that criticized Sikorski’s reactions to the Katyn affair also admitted that the affair and its aftermath could be “advantageous to Poland” and noted that this view was “especially evident in the extremely rightist publications.” Additionally, Poole noted that many organizations saw a broader Soviet agenda behind the break and that “some newspapers are sounding warnings for America to beware of the Communist danger.” KNAPP therefore concentrated its criticism on the Soviet Union for the slaughter of Polish officers rather than on the Sikorski government. KNAPP’s attacks on Sikorski’s government resumed in early June.

However, as the editor of Nowy Swiat and president of KNAPP, Ignacy Matuszewski, announced that after observing an appropriate time period of silence in the wake of the Katyn affair he would again contribute editorials to the publication that criticized Sikorski’s role as both Premier and as Commander-in-Chief of the Polish forces.

Though OWI simply reported news of the charges and countercharges concerning the situation to the Poles, the FNB concluded that one consequence of the Katyn affair for Polish-American groups is that a new rallying cry developed amongst Polonia concerning all Polish “hostages” still in the Soviet Union. As Poole reported in late June 1943, “the Poles [in Detroit] no longer talk about ‘murdered’ officers, merely about ‘missing’ officers or imprisoned’ officers. The Polish Daily News and the [KNAPP] have turned

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14 “Memorandum for the Director of Strategic Services, Department of State, Office of War Information.” Records of FNB, 2 June 1943, microfiche, INT-21PO-426, 1-2.
their attention from a discussion of the Polish officers to a discussion of 1,000,000 Polish hostages.\textsuperscript{15}

A second instance in which the FNB gathered important information from Polish-American officials and consequently revealed their fears of Soviet intentions and a simultaneous rise in Polish-American nationalism came with the dissolution of the Comintern. OWI reacted to this action by openly playing up Polish hopes that the dissolution of the Comintern by the Soviets in May 1943 signaled a change in the Soviets’ imperialistic activities in neighboring nations, but Poole’s reports of reactions to the dissolution in the Polish-American community sharply contrasted these hopes. While most Polish-Americans welcomed news of the dissolution, many articles in the Polish-American press highlighted Polonia’s “view [of] the move with distrust and reservation...even repudiate[ing] it as a hoax.” As Poole noted in a memorandum to Donovan in early June 1943, “Many skeptical voices want to see evidence of sincerity in the Comintern’s liquidation in changes of future Soviet policy toward Poland. They demand the release of Polish deportees in the Soviet Union, liquidation of the Union of Polish Patriots, etc.” KNAPP was especially skeptical of the sincerity of the move, and “s[aw] in the liquidation of the Comintern a hoax to conceal new plans of the Soviet government.”\textsuperscript{16} Though moderates in the Polish-American community adopted a “wait and see” view of Soviet intentions in taking such a drastic action, most Polish-American leaders in Detroit noted that “to assume that no intervention [by the Soviet Union in

\textsuperscript{15}“Shifts in Polish Opinion in Detroit Since the Suspension of Diplomatic Relations between Poland and the U.S.S.R.” Records of FNB, 23 June 1943, microfiche. INT-21PO-466, 1-2, 7.

Polish affairs during or after the war will take place is to nourish a dangerous illusion” and asserted that the real question is rather Russia would “behave with a sense of responsibility” following the war. Further, the Polish Daily News, centered in Detroit, asserted that “in spite of warm and enthusiastic press statements on the part of those that admire Moscow, the world knows from experience that it cannot believe that the Comintern has ceased to exist. By their deeds ye shall know them. Can you change a wolf into a lamb? The world of today needs deeds, not promises.” This was in direct contrast to OWI’s treatment of the topic, as propagandists overseas promoted the idea that the dissolution of the Comintern suggested a shift in the Soviets’ imperialistic activities in its neighboring nations and hinted at the possibility of Soviet acceptance of American democratic ideals outlined in the Atlantic Charter.

The death of General Sikorski following the inspection of Polish troops in the Middle East brought an air of uneasiness to the Polish-American community, which had for the most part supported him despite criticisms that he was too soft on the Soviet Union in echoing territorial demands for a post-war Poland. OWI reacted to Sikorski’s death by issuing messages of reassurance to the Poles and reaffirming the American commitment to them as one of the United States’ allied partners in the war. Karol Piatkiewicz, editor of the Polish National Alliance’s newspaper Zgoda, indicated that he “hoped for someone moderate to be appointed to the Polish premiership” following Sikorski’s death. As Polonia mourned Sikorski’s death as “a great loss not only to

Poland, but the cause of the United Nations, especially to the United States,” the FNB observed that prominent Polish-Americans also “felt certain that a competent successor will be found and that Poland will carry on until the ultimate victory.” This desire was fulfilled with the appointment of Stanislaus Mikolajczyk, a moderate who had served under Sikorski and who many in Polonia expected to continue his policies. With Mikolajczyk’s appointment however came opposition from KNAPP, who immediately began to “dedicate itself to the more vigorous prosecution of the anti-Russian campaign...under the intellectual leadership of Ignacy Matuszewski” with a “sense of haste,” as it feared that “as much as possible much be said as forcefully as possible and as soon as possible because the United States authorities might at any time proceed against the group on the ground that relations were being troubled with an important ally.”

Though conceding that the London government was the legal and constitutional government of Poland and temporarily silencing criticism of the government following Sikorski’s death, after a few weeks KNAPP began once again to argue that the conciliatory “foreign policy which the Government-in-Exile pursued had paralyzed American Polonia” and accused the London government of “withholding the truth from [Poles and Polish-Americans]” when it came to matters dealing with the Soviet Union. KNAPP supported Sosnowski, a member of the old “colonels” rightist group, as the new Premier, while moderates celebrated Mikolajczyk’s appointment as necessary for...


“Poland’s democratic aspirations” to come to fruition.\textsuperscript{21} OWI, too, celebrated Mikolajczyk’s appointment, as it furthered their cause of advocating sole support for the London government-in-exile and, even if only for a short time, assisted them in adhering to the strategy of truth.

Although Polish-Americans as a whole had been supportive of working with the Soviets as part of the United Nations, FNB’s reviews of the Polish-American press beginning in late 1943 evidenced a shift in Polonia’s public opinion of American policies and that of the London government-in-exile that displayed a move toward nationalism by mainstream Polish-American groups. Detroit’s Dziennik Polski remarked on the officials in Washington who may favor conciliatory policies towards the Soviets, stating that, “Only the blind and mentally undeveloped person can fail to realize that Russia is taking steps to ally herself with German. It is not difficult to guess that such an understanding will be directed against the Allies,” and especially Poland.\textsuperscript{22} OWI, on the other hand, continued to tell the Poles that they were an important American partner in the war against Nazi aggression and worked to encourage support of the Soviet-American partnership for the duration of the war.

The Moscow and Teheran Conferences and their outcomes left Polish-Americans leaning more towards Polish nationalism than before, as many organizations called for a united front against the Soviet Union rather than in support for American foreign policy. Poole reported that the Press Attache of the Polish Embassy, Wladyslaw Besterman.

\textsuperscript{21} “Polish Press Comments on Sikorski’s Tragic Death.” Records of FNB, 19 July 1943, microfiche, INT-21PO-485, 1.

\textsuperscript{22} “Polish Press Comments on Sikorski’s Tragic Death.” Records of FNB, 19 July 1943, microfiche, INT-21PO-485, 1.
countered the official commentary on the results of the Moscow conference, which had emphasized the need for unity amongst the United Nations and that the decisions reached at the conference “will contribute to assure the sovereignty and the integrity of all peace-loving countries...[and] should be welcomed,” with what he called the “real reaction,” which was that the conference was “really a capitulation to Joe Stalin and must be counted as fatal a blow for Poland as Munich was for Czechoslovakia.”

Besterman’s statements, Poole concluded, represented the fact that the Poles and Polish-Americans would not give up on the fight for Poland’s postwar independence. Moderate publications in the United States continually professed belief that boundary issues were kept off the table at the Moscow conference, while the pro-Soviet organizations celebrated the Moscow conference as a guarantee for the “future of Poland...and for Europe and the world.”

These statements were in line with OWI’s propaganda lines to the Poles made during the same time period, as overseas operatives noted that no specific decisions were made regarding Poland, but stressed the Declaration regarding Italy in order to reassure the Poles that the Soviets would hopefully acknowledge the same self-determination in postwar Eastern Europe.

Shortly after the Moscow conference the FNB reported on the leftist sentiment within the United States that supported Roosevelt’s desires to continue to work within the Grand Alliance, noting a mass meeting of Polish-Americans in December 1943 in New

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23 “Memorandum for the Director of Strategic Services and Secretary of State,” Records of FNB, 4 November 1943, microfiche, INT-21PO-577, 1.


York “gives notice that a [national] Polish-American movement is under way to promote the thesis that Poland’s future can best be served by immediate and friendly settlement of differences with the Soviet Union.” Though acknowledging that “it is still early to know how lasting the impetus of this movement may prove to be,” Poole noted that the resolutions made at the New York meeting “made no mention of territorial questions, but evidenced wholehearted support of the Moscow and Teheran agreements, called upon Polish-Americans to stand behind President Roosevelt and the war effort, expressed hope for an invasion of Europe and the liberation of Poland within the near future, and sent greetings to the Polish army in the USSR.”

This represented a more moderate view of Polish-Soviet relations and a lessening of nationalistic tendencies in the Polish-American community that lasted until the Polish-American Congress was established in Buffalo in May 1944. Since Roosevelt’s goals for Poland were sometimes overshadowed by his desire to keep the Grand Alliance alive, news of added moderate sentiment from the Polish-American community in support of continued friendly relations with the Soviet Union as an election year approached must have been cause for celebration within the administration.

That satisfaction was cut short by the Polish-American Congress meeting of May 1944. Whereas thousands of Polish-American organizations had existed before and during the war and FNB had reported on each of them individually, the nationalistic and some of the moderate organizations now joined as one large organization. On the eve of the Congress’s meeting in Buffalo, New York, in May 1944, FNB received information

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of a separate congress being formed by left-wing Polish-American trade unions to combat the nationalism they perceived would result from the Buffalo congress. Leading supporters of this separate congress included Oskar Lange, who proposed that the new congress be called “a national congress of liberation” whose goals were the following: “greet the armies of liberation [including the Red Army] upon their arrival in Poland, contribute full support to the Polish people in exercising their right to obtain a truly democratic Poland [following the war], and organize economic help from America to the people of Poland, both in immediate relief and in general post-war assistance.”

As the Polish-American Congress in Buffalo scheduled for May 1944 approached, FNB published information on Polish nationalism in the United States that sought to both warn and reassure the administration. In this report, Poole noted that “Polish spokesmen have been insisting that if the Administration does not safeguard Poland’s rights, the Polish-Americans will throw their influence to the Republican side,” and that “There is considerable evidence to show that active use of the election threat is being made in the campaign to line up support [for Polish territorial claims and for Polish nationalism] in America.” The reassurance came in the conclusion of the report, which asked if Polish-Americans, 80% of whom were registered Democrats, would actually

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27 Oskar Lange was a professor of economics at the University of Chicago after emigrating from Poland to the United States in 1937. He became a United States citizen in 1943, and was among the most vocal proponents of a pro-Soviet government being instituted in Poland following the war. In 1945, Lange renounced his American citizenship and returned to Poland, where he worked as ambassador to the United States for the postwar communist regime. See Walter D. Fisher, “Oskar Ryszard Lange, 1904-1964,” *Econometrica* 34 (October 1966), 733-8.


shift their support to the Republicans. To this, Poole responded that “The evidence so far is highly inconclusive.”

Comments made on the eve of the Congress by Winston Churchill on Poland’s future and Britain’s role in preserving Polish independence and sovereignty presented more worries for the Administration. At Teheran, both Roosevelt and Churchill proposed acceptance of the Curzon Line as Poland’s eastern boundary, which indicated de facto recognition of the Soviet Union’s territorial claims. This decision was intended to be kept secret, so as not to indicate Roosevelt’s “participat[ion] in any discussion on Poland for at least a year, lest he antagonize the six to seven million Polish-Americans living in the United States.” Knowing news of this decision would obviously alarm Polish-Americans if it were revealed, Poole collected information from the Polish-American press and presented these findings to Donovan. Though initial reactions were cautious and even conciliatory, the fact that Churchill purposefully stated that Britain would not make territorial demands from the Soviets, voices from Polonia became “more unanimous in their repudiation of Churchill’s stand on the Soviet-Polish boundary issue.” Additionally, however, Poole gave cause for reassurance amongst Roosevelt’s administration officials already bothered by the possible implications of the upcoming Polish-American Congress by stating that the Polish-American press expressed that, “charges of unfriendliness toward Poland in the boundary question are directed solely against Britain, pictured as selfish and evil…; in contrast. America is being absolved of all responsibility and is being described as the only remaining hope of all mistreated

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30 “Polish Nationalism in the United States.” Records of FNB. 12 February 1944, microfiche. IN1-21PO-712. 25.

31 Pula, Polish Americans, 92.
nations.” In short, Roosevelt had not completely lost his image as being fair and just and adhering to the terms of the Atlantic Charter in the Polish language press. The document went on to note that several Polish-language publications in the United States were “pointing to the necessity of rallying American Polonia to the support of the Polish refugee government in its efforts on behalf of Poland’s pre-war territorial integrity,” a mission that was somewhat accomplished with the calling of the Polish-American Congress in Buffalo in May 1944.

The Polish-American Congress briefly caused some alarm for the Roosevelt Administration and for FNB officials because it was thought that it represented the forming of a Polish-American voting bloc that could possibly turn Polish-American support away from Roosevelt in the fall of 1944. This was echoed by FNB’s warnings starting as early as June 1943 that the rupture of Polish-Soviet relations had increased Polish-American political awareness and that this “coupled with the numerical strength of the Polish American community may make Polish aspirations in Europe a matter of some consequence in American politics,” including the 1944 presidential election. While this was certainly not an unreasonable fear, it turned out to be an unrealized one. KNAPP officials intended to use the Congress as a political tool to threaten the administration in the upcoming elections, and the possibility of other organizations that had previously been considered moderate joining them in this effort undoubtedly disturbed administration officials. While Poole warned that KNAPP could gain control of the

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33 Lukas, The Strange Allies, 107.

34 Ibid., 117.
Congress and “bring to full flood tide the Polish nationalist sentiment in the United States,” he also noted on the eve of the Congress that traditional differences between the moderate and nationalistic groups came to the surface again and were “probably important enough to prevent the adoption of an extremist program at Buffalo but not sufficiently large to prevent the anticipated unification.” He went on to note, however, that the moderates in the organizations would most likely prevail, as “an expression of support for the administration...would not only be consistent with their generally Democratic stand on domestic American questions, but would in the long run be most helpful to Poland.” He did warn, however, that pro-Soviet organizations were not invited to attend the Congress, something that could stand in the way of future efforts to sway the Polish-American opinion toward friendly relations between the United States and the Soviet Union in the future.

The Congress, held in Buffalo May 28-30, 1944, proved to be little cause for alarm for the Roosevelt administration. It urged Roosevelt’s administration to recognize only the London government-in-exile in the wake of the emergence of the Lublin Poles, supported by the Soviet Union, which was to be expected because many of the organizations present had already demanded this in the past. The Congress was not able to achieve its major objectives of persuading Roosevelt to refuse Soviet influence or territorial demands. Though KNAPP had intended the Buffalo congress to be a demonstration against Roosevelt’s administration’s friendly relations with the Soviet

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35 Pula, Polish-Americans, 95.


Union and perceived unfriendly policies towards Poland, this did not come to fruition. In Poole's report of the Congress, he noted that most of the attendees “followed more moderate Catholic and Midwestern leadership in toning down the resolutions adopted” but that they still “expressed with no uncertainty a deep suspicion of the course of American foreign policy since Teheran.” Results from the conference, Poole speculated, would be that the nationalistic press would continue to be anti-Roosevelt and would attempt to sway the Polish-American vote during the 1944 election season, but he once again reassured administrative officials that moderation would rule, stating that “Signs do not lack that the rank and file [of Polish Americans] will not be swayed en masse to vote as the nationalists suggest.” He warned, however, that much would “depend on the progress of the war,” and added that “it may be by fall...that the Polish questions will be haven settled by the Red Armies in Europe and not by the voting of Polish-Americans in the United States.”

By the fall of 1944, Polish-Americans turned their attention away from political action and electoral politics briefly in order to rally for humanitarian aid during the Warsaw ghetto uprising. While advocating the uprising in its broadcasts and leaflets, OWI left the impression with the Poles that they would be supported by the Americans and British in these efforts. When this did not happen, the Poles and several Polish-American organizations pleaded for aid and openly criticized the American and British governments for their perceived lack of action. Here again it appeared that the Polish-American press was more critical of Churchill than Roosevelt, as a statement issued by the Coordinating Committee of American Polish Associations in the East asserted that “in

many British circles the Warsaw call for rescue produced rather bitter criticism, words of reproach, and even threats," a reaction that most Polish-Americans hoped would not be echoed in America.39 Multiple campaigns for war relief in Warsaw emerged in the United States, including the Provisional Committee for Assistance to Warsaw. Most Polish-American organizations, however, took aim at Roosevelt's refusal to push the Soviets on the issue of aid to Warsaw and at both Roosevelt and Churchill's refusal to stand behind the principle of self-determination for Poland. As the Poles attempted to liberate themselves from the Germans rather than wait to be liberated by the Red Army, Polish-Americans perceived the Allies as doing very little to assist them. This provoked the ire of several prominent Polish-American officials, who criticized not only the Soviets but also the Americans and British. When Warsaw was liberated in early 1945 by the Red Army, the Polish-American press ran several editorials calling upon the administration to take action that would ensure that the Polish capital was not simply passing from the hands of one conqueror to another. Cool reactions to the liberation were duly noted by the FNB as it surveyed and reported that several Polish-American officials felt celebration would only be justified if they could be assured that "the Russians had arrived in Warsaw as liberators and not as conquerors."40 The fact that American press announced Warsaw would be under the jurisdiction of the Lublin Poles added fuel to the fire that was kindled by the perceived lack of action by the Roosevelt Administration during the Warsaw uprising.

39 "Polish-American Committee Demands British Aid to Warsaw," Records of FNB, 19 September 1944, microfiche, INT-21PO-966, 1.

Fears of what impact American foreign policy toward Poland and the Soviet Union would have on domestic electoral politics were calmed when Roosevelt won re-election in November 1944. Until the election, however, it was unclear how many Polish-Americans would vote because of their continued criticism of the administration and its British and Soviet allies during the course of the war. Some organizations, including KNAPP, openly opposed Roosevelt and supported Thomas Dewey based on "Dewey’s outspoken friendship for Poland in contrast to the President’s silence on the same issue." Other more moderate organizations, including the Polish National Alliance, refused to officially endorse either candidate and instead published that it was "leaving it up to the free power of decision and the civic conscience of the individual members" of its organization to choose the appropriate candidate. In the end, as FNB reported, Polish-Americans as a whole once again voted Democratic, the majority of them assisting Roosevelt in his re-election bid.

After being re-elected, however, Roosevelt angered many Polish-Americans by gradually offering his acceptance of Soviet territorial and political demands and of the Lublin government at the Yalta Conference. Before the conference, Poole noted the "resignation, even acceptance of the inevitable [becoming] a growing mood among the generality of Polish-Americans," but still highlighted "the agencies of protest in the

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community [that] continue to agitate perforce for a Poland [both] independent and intact."43

The Yalta Conference agreements represented the final blow to most Polish-American hopes, yet even FNB officials were surprised by the moderate tone in which these opinions were conveyed, with many Polish-Americans adopting a wait and see attitude toward the new government. Though leftists in the Polish-American community believed that the Poland created at Yalta was "much stronger and happier" than the one created at Versailles, the majority of Polish-Americans objected to the Yalta Agreement and its meanings for their former homeland.44 Many formerly moderate organizations and their leaders condemned the Yalta agreements as a violation of the Atlantic Charter ideals that the Polish-American community so faithfully believed Roosevelt would uphold. At the same time, however, many were "moderate in their criticism," evidence of a break in the ranks of the anti-Soviet groups. One group stated that it would "not rule out a compromise" with the new government while rumors swirled of another group "preparing to join the projected Provisional Government of National Unity." As expected, however, KNAPP's Nowy Świat portrayed the most hostile objections to the agreements and called for "public opinion...to be mobilized against ratification by the Senate of any international agreement resting on the Crimean decisions."45


Whereas resentment of the agreements was exhibited by the rightists and total acceptance, if not celebration, of the leftists, most opposition to the agreements had begun to wane by March 1945. As Poole states in a report dated 17 March 1945, “there have been signs that some individuals...are beginning to soft-pedal their opposition to Yalta.” This group of course did not include those in KNAPP. Most of the clergy who opposed the agreements had their oppositions tempered by the relief efforts of the church. Most clergy opposed to the agreements, therefore, tempered their hostility regarding the agreements in order to put that energy into programs that would help what was left of Poland for the remainder of the war and in the post-war world. In this respect, it can be argued that moderate Polish-Americans and their organizations, though principally opposed to the agreements made at Yalta, gradually adopted a realistic view similar to the one that Roosevelt followed for the duration of the war. OWI also began to follow a more moderate policy as early as 1944, shifting from reporting idealistic goals for the postwar world to strictly reporting on military maneuvers for the remainder of the war.

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Roosevelt’s desire to centralize information gathering and dissemination during World War II resulted in the creation of the Office of War Information and the Office of Strategic Services. The OWI had origins in the Office of Facts and Figures, led by Archibald MacLeish, and used a strategy of truth to propagate information through its Overseas Operations Branch under the control of Robert E. Sherwood. The OSS had origins in the office of Coordinator of Information, led by Colonel William Donovan, and its Foreign Nationalities Branch worked to gather information from reputable sources in the Polish-American community in an effort to help shape American policy towards Poland and maintain support for America’s war efforts and Roosevelt’s Administration.

The OWI pursued an overall “strategy of truth” while the FNB pursued policies that were initially more closely related to Donovan’s visions for psychological warfare but gradually changed into an information clearing house that provided the government with invaluable information about the political undercurrents of ethnic groups in the United States. The leaders of both agencies occasionally found their respective missions compromised as each struggled to support Roosevelt’s goal of preserving the Grand Alliance and fostering an Allied victory while at the same time maintaining credibility amongst their audiences.

OWI’s adherence to the strategy of truth was sometimes compromised as its leaders tried to win support amongst the Poles for American foreign policy, which changed as Roosevelt worked to maintain unity within the Grand Alliance. These
compromises are demonstrated by OWI’s reporting of actions taken by Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin during the war, including reactions to the Katyn affair and the dissolution of the Comintern as well as decisions made concerning Poland’s future at the Moscow, Teheran, and Yalta conferences. By 1944, however, OWI began to express and support foreign policy rather than try to create or change it and favored reporting military maneuvers and advances. OWI’s effectiveness was therefore somewhat hindered as it struggled to win support for Roosevelt’s policies and at the same time often found itself lying through omission about important developments and alterations to those policies. Though propagandists somewhat succeeded in winning support for these policies during the war, this support was short-lived as the Poles reacted adversely to the Yalta declaration and to OWI’s reporting of it.

FNB’s mission was much easier than OWI’s. While OWI struggled to reconcile their strategy of truth methodology with the twists and turns of Roosevelt’s changing policies concerning Poland, FNB functioned more as an information clearing house and focused on reporting the effects of these policies amongst Polish-Americans. OWI initially tried to create or alter the effects of wartime diplomacy amongst the Poles, while FNB consistently analyzed and reported the possible effects of wartime diplomacy amongst Polish-Americans. As OWI shifted toward a focus on military objectives and achievements beginning in early 1944, FNB reported on and analyzed the possible effects of these military maneuvers on both national security and Roosevelt’s re-election campaign. FNB focused on reporting factual accounts of political undercurrents in the Polish-American community using information gathered through interviews and observations, which maintained its credibility. OWI, on the other hand, focused on
propagating American war aims in the wake of major decisions made amongst Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin and sometimes found its credibility amongst the Poles compromised.

Both OWI and FNB contributed to the American war effort and to Roosevelt’s diplomatic and political goals. OWI worked to gain support overseas for American military efforts while simultaneously propagating Roosevelt’s postwar aims to the Poles. FNB worked to report political undertakings of prominent Polish-Americans and observations of actions taken by various Polish-American organizations in response to the changing dynamics of the Grand Alliance and Roosevelt’s actions within it.
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