“Under Two Flags”: Women’s Philanthropy in the American Committee for Devastated France
By
Olivia Cocking

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Supervisor: Dr. Leslie Paris
Committee Members: Dr. Courtney Booker and Dr. Heidi Tworek

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Introduction

In a December 1920 interview with the New York Times, Anne Tracy Morgan, Vice President of the American Committee for Devastated France, offered an appraisal of the contributions of American women to the Allied war effort. Although hostilities had ceased, Morgan asserted that France needed the contributions of American women as much as ever. Desiring neither “sightseers who would like to go over for half a year to view France’s battlefields” nor “girls who are unhappy at home,” Morgan called upon “women who can do hard, necessary, specialized work.” To explain why American women should take an interest in French reconstruction, Morgan made an emotional plea:

Does the woman who sent her boy over in 1917 to save humanity expect now to withdraw to splendid isolation? She cannot. We women must carry through the work these boys were doing when they fell—thirty thousand of them lie in one field alone! And the American woman also must consider the future of her own sons and grandsons by upholding the standard of civilization in France. France is the balance wheel of Europe. France will never have Bolshevism. France must be helped. It is absurd to consider withdrawing before our work is done.¹

In her interview, Morgan called for volunteers for the civilian relief organization based in the Aisne, Marne, and Oise Regions of northeastern France that she established in 1918 in partnership with Scottish-born doctor Anne Murray Dike. Morgan framed women’s service with the American Committee for Devastated France (ACDF) as a patriotic duty to the United States, a memorial obligation to the young men who perished in service during the war, and a maternal imperative to preserve the precarious European peace for the well-being of future generations.

I was drawn to study the actions of the American Committee by a 2015 visit to their reconstruction headquarters in Blérancourt, France, today the site of the Musée Franco-Américain. Morgan was actively involved in restoring the château in Blérancourt and transforming it into a museum devoted to the legacy of Franco-American cooperation. I found the story of an American heiress dedicating decades to the restoration of rural France immediately curious. What drew Morgan to France and motivated her work during the First World War? Was Morgan unique or were there other American women directing similar projects? Furthermore, what did it mean that Morgan was involved in social causes in France and the United States simultaneously? How did the fact that Morgan was the daughter of one of the United States’ most prominent financiers, J. Pierpont Morgan, shape the way that she carried out her work in France? These were the questions that immediately interested me upon learning Morgan’s story. As I began to think about this project and look for answers to my questions, I was struck by the fact that, although Morgan was seemingly everywhere in the American press during this period, her Committee was seldom given more than a paragraph of coverage in historians’ analyses of American involvement in the First World War. As I continued my research, it became apparent that the American press was not merely interested in the Committee as a curiosity; on the contrary, the ACDF raised large sums of money for French reconstruction and sent many volunteers overseas.

This paper tells the story of the American Committee for Devastated France and the women who served within its ranks—with particular emphasis on Anne Morgan—during the six brief years of its operation between 1918 and 1924. With this project, I sought to understand how Morgan was able to carry out her work and what it meant that an American heiress was able to build such an apparently successful war relief organization in France. While her title of “Vice President” suggests a secondary status, Morgan was central to the origins, operation, and public
image of the American Committee. Morgan orchestrated the separation of the Civilian Aid Division from the central leadership of the military-relief oriented American Fund for French Wounded that led to the creation of the American Committee in 1918.² Morgan maintained regular weekly correspondence with Anne Murray Dike, who oversaw the Committee’s programming in France, wherein the two women discussed organizational strategy and established a vision for the group’s work. Finally, Morgan presented herself as the public face of the American Committee in the United States, conducting speaking tours of the country and providing interviews and quotes to the American press regarding the ACDF’s work.

The story of Anne Morgan and the American Committee for Devastated France is representative of larger trends in American history in the early twentieth century. In particular, the American Committee belongs to a period of widening opportunities for American women, beginning with the post-Civil War expansion of women’s voluntary organizations and social reform initiatives.³ The First World War accelerated this trend, creating new opportunities for American women both in the United States and in service to the war effort overseas.⁴ Following the armistice, American women continued to seek new avenues for personal and professional opportunities.

² Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, 16 February 1918, ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 1, Anne Tracy Morgan Papers, Archives of The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, NY (hereafter cited: ATMP).
fulfillment at home and abroad. The ACDF’s work therefore took shape as Americans became accustomed to women’s presence in a broader range of social and professional spheres. Furthermore, the ACDF illustrates how women’s experiences of the expanded opportunities for personal and professional fulfillment created by the First World War were shaped by class. In forming the American Committee, Morgan converted her class privilege into power over resources and people and strategically mobilized her wealth and social status to advance the profile of the ACDF.

The American Committee’s programs likewise reflect trends in American diplomacy during the Republican presidential administrations of the early 1920s. As popular support for American intervention overseas declined and the Republican-controlled congresses that dominated from 1918 through 1933 expressed their hostility towards the internationalist ambitions of the final years of Woodrow Wilson’s government, the United States relied increasingly on private organizations to promote its interests abroad.5 The American Committee, which touted American Ambassador to France Myron T. Herrick as its President, promoted themselves as representatives of American values during their work in France and received the endorsement of President Warren G. Harding.6 Both American and French officials recognized that an alliance with the American Committee would allow them to promote their international interests through the intermediary of a theoretically neutral private organization.

The American Committee’s actions as a private diplomatic intermediary between France and the United States demonstrate how upper-class women used philanthropy to participate in diplomatic politics following the First World War. Philanthropic work engaged the women of the

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ACDF with issues of formal politics not traditionally understood as belonging to women’s realm of authority by drawing on women’s recognized authority in humanitarian activities. While the Committee’s diplomatic endeavours were not entirely unprecedented and indeed took place at the same moment as other American women of similar class backgrounds used charitable work to develop new roles for themselves, the intersection of female philanthropy and the postwar expansion of private diplomacy represents an area that historians have yet to fully explore. An analysis of the ACDF provides an opportunity to connect themes in historians’ work on American women’s involvement in the First World War, with their observations regarding the emancipatory potential of philanthropy for monied women, and the expanded role of private organizations as emissaries of diplomatic interests in the 1920s. In this respect, the American Committee presents a case study of how the strategies that historians observe in the work of female philanthropists in the early twentieth-century United States translated to the international sphere and made diplomatic politics a potential focus for women’s philanthropy.

The American Committee for Devastated France: An Overview

Formed on March 23, 1918 as an independent organization of ten women with a combined capital of $25,000, the American Committee for Devastated France expanded upon the work of the Civilian Division of the American Fund for French Wounded (AFFW), a private military relief organization headquartered in Paris.\(^7\) Anne Morgan, who served as the AFFW’s United States-

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\(^7\) The AFFW was formed in Paris in the autumn of 1915 by members of the Paris Depot of the London-based French Wounded Emergency Fund who sought autonomy from the London leadership in order to concentrate on providing aid to the French war effort. See Correspondence from E. Marion Bryce to Anne Tracy Morgan, 30 March 1916, MssCol 73, Box 1, Folder 1, American Fund for French Wounded Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library, New York, NY, (hereafter cited: AFFWR); Annual Report of the American Committee for Devastated France, Inc., Year Ending March 31, 1922, 1922, MC026, Box 1, Folder 4, American Committee for Devastated France Records, 1919 – 1926, Princeton University Library Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton, NJ, (hereafter cited: ACDFR).
based Treasurer and Anne Murray Dike, Chairman of the AFFW’s Civilian Committee, in collaboration with AFFW Secretary Elizabeth Scarborough and Executive Chairman Elizabeth Stillwell, as well as several other Civilian Committee members, orchestrated the plan to separate from the AFFW and to form the American Committee for Devastated France as an independent organization dedicated to providing relief to France’s civilian population. Morgan, officially designated Vice President, led the new organization’s United States-based work while Dike, as Commissioner in France, headed the group’s reconstruction work overseas. As American President Woodrow Wilson granted the American Red Cross (ARC) complete authority over American wartime military and civilian aid efforts in Europe in 1917, private groups such as the ACDF needed to form agreements with the ARC in order to operate in France. In addition to gaining the cooperation of the Red Cross, in November 1918, the Commander-in-Chief of the French army, Philippe Pétain, allocated the Committee the authority to conduct civilian relief work in the four counties of Vic-sur-Aisne, Soissons, Coucy le Chateau, and Anizy le Chateau in the departments of the Aisne, Marne, and Oise, which the war left most severely damaged.

The American Committee consisted of a Board of Directors and Executive Committee headquartered in New York City, as well as a field headquarters located in Blérancourt, France. In addition to Morgan and Dike, the ACDF’s executive leadership featured most notably Myron T. Herrick, the Republican statesman and American Ambassador to France from 1912 to 1914 and 1921 to 1929, as President. André Tardieu, who was best known to Americans for his role as French President Georges Clemenceau’s lieutenant during the 1919 peace negotiations, served as

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8 Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, 16 February, 1918, ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 1, ATMP.; Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, n.d., ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 1, ATMP.


10 The American Committee for Devastated France pamphlet, n.d., MC026, Box 1, Folder 3, ACDFR.
Honorary President. The other members of the Committee’s predominantly female executive leadership represented influential factions of American business and political elites and included the wife of a Senator (Maude Wetmore), the wife of meatpacking and railroad executives (Lola Sheldon Armour and Pauline Revere), and the widow of President Grover Cleveland (Frances Folsom Cleveland). The ACDF’s executive leadership also featured noted business executives such as Edward Dean Adams, Charles Lathrop Pack, and Otto Hermann Kahn; political figures such as future Republican Senator George Wharton Pepper; and intellectual elites such as university professor John Huston Finley and New York attorneys Francis Lynde Stetson and Henry Waters Taft.\textsuperscript{11} What these members of the American Committee’s United States-based executive leadership shared was their comparative wealth and influential social status among New York, and in some cases national, elites.

Morgan belonged among the most elite of the Committee’s ranks. Born in 1873, Morgan was the youngest child of American financier J. Pierpont Morgan, a man who navigated with equivalent ease the worlds of New York’s established upper-class and nouveau riches.\textsuperscript{12} While Anne Morgan did not receive the college education sought by increasing numbers of middle-class American women at the turn-of-the-century, she possessed an uncommon degree of financial independence. Morgan was free to draw on her father’s extensive personal finances for her own expenses, meaning that her financial security did not depend on either inheritance or marriage.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11} Each annual report of the American Committee for Devastated France includes a list of the Committee’s executive leadership. These members come from the ACDF’s 1919 annual report, see Annual Report of the American Committee for Devastated France, Inc., Year Ending March 31, 1919, 1919, MC026, Box 1, Folder 1, ACDFR.


\textsuperscript{13} Govenaar and Maack, \textit{Anne Morgan}, 18.
Her ready access to funds gave Morgan an unusual degree of personal autonomy to set her own course.

The elite status of the executive leadership’s constituents not only entailed a network of connections in the highest echelons of American business and political circles, but likely helps to explain the ACDF’s desire to preserve a harmonious relationship between France and the United States. The American upper-class displayed a particular fascination with France. In the early twentieth century, travel to France had become a seasonal activity for the new class of American elites who acquired their wealth through finance and industry. The Morgan family actively participated in this trend as both Anne and her parents made frequent trips to France prior to the war. In the period following the conflict, American business elites tended to be in favour of preserving the United States’ active role in the international community, often out of a desire to seek out international markets for their goods and expand American economic influence abroad. This vested interest in developing the United States’ role as a global financial leader, as well as the personal connections of many in the American upper-class to France, may have contributed to a degree of internationalism among the elite ranks of the ACDF’s executive leadership which exceeded that of the broader American population in the postwar years.

The American Committee’s membership expanded beyond the upper-class circles of New York City to encompass a total of 373 local committees in municipalities throughout the United States over the course of the ACDF’s 1918 to 1924 period of activity. In France, a majority of

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17 The ACDF published guidelines for how to establish a local committee. See ACDF pamphlet, “How to Form a Branch and What to Do,” n.d., Mss-Col 2036, Box 25, Folder 4, Montague-Collier family papers, Manuscripts and
American volunteers, and a select number of trained professionals who received monetary compensation for their services, carried out the Committee’s programs on a day-to-day basis. Over the course of the Committee’s activities, a total of 625 American, French, and British recruits served in France.\textsuperscript{18}

The Committee’s members led a diverse array of activities in France and the United States. A report of the Committee’s activities from 1921 described the significance of their work as follows:

Bare statistics cannot tell the tale! How can figures and dollar signs reveal the courage gained from a ‘gouter’ of hot chocolate and bread, or the easier bearing of burdens because of the loan of a book? These are not things to be measured on the page of a ledger for they are vital links in the chain of the coming manhood and womanhood of France of tomorrow.\textsuperscript{19}

While their work began as a form of emergency relief, the American Committee ultimately worked towards the permanent reconstruction of the regions under their authority. In addition to their Blérancourt headquarters, field centres in each of the Committee’s assigned counties carried out the ACDF’s work at the local level.\textsuperscript{20} The American Committee framed their objectives as a combination of “moral and material reconstruction,” aptly symbolized by the image of the “gouter” (afternoon snack).\textsuperscript{21} These ambitions entailed work to re-establish the region’s productive capacity
and the physical health of its inhabitants, as well as programs that sought to cultivate a sense of community among a population divided by the violence of war. For example, the ACDF’s initiatives included encouraging the formation of agricultural cooperatives to rebuild the agricultural capacities of the region and financing the loan of essential supplies such as tractors; the establishment of a hospital in Blérancourt; and the creation of a Public Health Department, which provided medical and dental services to local residents through the cooperation of American and French medical women in a network of 44 village dispensaries. The Committee also focused its attentions on improving the well-being of children. To this effect, the American Committee established a “Children’s Colony” at Boullay-Thierry to care for those orphaned by war; in some cases, the Committee sought out adoptive parents in United States for Boullay-Thierry children.

Recreation programs merged the Committee’s interests in physical and “moral” reconstruction. The ACDF established five “foyers,” envisioned as centres of community life, throughout the region. The Committee used these foyers as sites for concerts, cinema screenings, and local celebrations such as Christmas and May Day parties. The Committee saw its public libraries as serving a similar community-building function. By the ACDF’s own estimation, these libraries were a resounding success; at the moment of the ACDF’s dissolution in 1924, 5,352 residents of their four counties held library cards granting them access to the 15,715 books stocked in the Committee’s five permanent, and fifty-nine travelling, libraries. In addition to the public

22 Summarized Statement of the work of The American Committee for Devastated France Inc., from April 1, 1918 to March 31, 1924, 1924, MC026, Box 1, Folder 7, ACDFR.
23 Summarized Statement of the work of The American Committee for Devastated France Inc., from April 1, 1918 to March 31, 1924, 1924, MC026, Box 1, Folder 7, ACDFR.; Annual Report of the American Committee for Devastated France, Year Ending March 31, 1920, 1920, MC026, Box 1, Folder 2, ACDFR.
24 Summarized Statement of the work of The American Committee for Devastated France Inc., from April 1, 1918 to March 31, 1924, 1924, MC026, Box 1, Folder 7, ACDFR.
25 Summarized Statement of the work of The American Committee for Devastated France Inc., from April 1, 1918 to March 31, 1924, 1924, MC026, Box 1, Folder 4, ACDFR.
26 Summarized Statement of the work of The American Committee for Devastated France Inc., from April 1, 1918 to March 31, 1924, 1924, MC026, Box 1, Folder 7, ACDFR.
library system that they created in their four counties, the American Committee established a permanent library in the Belleville neighbourhood of Paris in partnership with the Carnegie Foundation for Universal Peace, of which the *New York Times* reported a very positive reception.

In the words of one local interviewed by the *Times*, “There was no reading for any of us unless we bought our own books until these Americans came along and helped us fix up this place.”

The ACDF sought to leave a permanent legacy in the counties under its authority. While they understood their own presence to be temporary, the Committee worked to create institutions that would outlast the tenure of the ACDF and ultimately be turned over to the administration of local French committees. To this effect, they financed training for French women in American nursing and library methods and created permanent organizations to take over training and administration for their hospital and library facilities, notably the Comité Français de la Bibliothèque Moderne, and the Association pour le Développement de l’Assistance aux Malades.

In the United States, the Committee’s work centered on raising the funds necessary for the realization of its ambitions in France. The Committee obtained its funding through membership dues paid to the 373 local committees, as well as through a variety of fundraising campaigns conducted by the executive leadership in New York. These efforts included benefit concerts and partnerships with local women’s clubs, as well as seasonal campaigns and larger scale endeavours, most notably the “Good Will Elections” of 1922 and 1923. In the course of these Elections, the

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28 Summarized Statement of the work of The American Committee for Devastated France Inc., from April 1, 1918 to March 31, 1924, 1924, MC026, Box 1, Folder 7, ACDFR.
29 The ACDF issued suggestions for fundraising to their local committees. See ACDF leaflet, “Suggestions for Summer Entertainments for the Benefit of The American Committee for Devastated France,” 1919, n.d., MssCol 73, Box 2, Folder 6, AFFWR.
30 Summarized Statement of the work of The American Committee for Devastated France Inc., from April 1, 1918 to March 31, 1924, 1924, MC026, Box 1, Folder 7, ACDFR.; on the “May Basket” effort, see ACDF dime collector, “May Basket,” n.d., Mss-Col 2036, Box 25, Folder 5, MCFP.; on the “Hundred Clubs” partnership with women’s clubs see Annual Report of the American Committee for Devastated France, Year Ending March 31, 1920, 1920, MC026, Box 1, Folder 2, ACDFR.; on the prize fight, see “Mitchell to Fight Leonard in Garden,” *New York Times*,
Committee called for contributions in the form of votes to elect delegates representing cities throughout the United States to be chosen for an ACDF-sponsored tour of France.\textsuperscript{31}

Over the seven years of its operation, the American Committee raised a combined total of $4,341,391 and touted over 18,000 members and donors.\textsuperscript{32} In contrast to the majority of American humanitarian relief organizations that operated in Europe during this period, the American Committee conducted most of its work after, rather than during, the war itself. In its early years, the Committee’s work in France centered primarily on emergency relief intended to re-establish the populations of the devastated regions in their homes and restart agricultural production. From 1922 onwards, the ACDF focussed on ensuring the stability of its legacy in the counties under its authority by securing local administration for its library and health programs and by forming successor organizations to perpetuate the Committee’s diplomatic goals of Franco-American reconciliation.\textsuperscript{33}

\textbf{Historiographical Review}

The story of the American Committee for Devastated France resides at the intersection of three main areas of historical work: analyses of the participation of American women in the First World War, studies of female philanthropy in the early twentieth-century United States, and accounts of humanitarian aid work in the postwar years. Works in the first of these categories

\begin{itemize}
\item December 16, 1920, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; on the Good Will Elections, see Facts About the Good Will Elections, Conducted under the auspices of the American Committee for Devastated France, n.d., Mss-Col 2036, Box 25, Folder 5, MCFP.
\item Facts About the Good Will Elections, Conducted under the auspices of the American Committee for Devastated France, n.d., Mss-Col 2036, Box 25, Folder 5, MCFP.
\item Summarized Statement of the work of The American Committee for Devastated France Inc., from April 1, 1918 to March 31, 1924, 1924, MC026, Box 1, Folder 7, ACDFR.
\item Summary of Six Months’ Accomplishment in France From April 1st to September 30th, 1922 and Program for the Termination of the Work, 1922, MC026, Box 1, Folder 4, ACDFR.; on the ACDF’s successor initiatives, see American Good Will Association the Franco-American Branch Incorporated, It’s Origin, Purpose, Program, n.d., MC026, Box 1, Folder 5, ACDFR.
\end{itemize}
focus on questions of the war’s significance for the social roles available to American women and the ways in which women understood their place in the American nation. Historians largely concur that the unique context of wartime opened a range of novel opportunities for American women’s personal and professional fulfillment.\(^{34}\) Many of the women who ventured overseas belonged to an expanding cohort of middle-class college graduates who sought roles beyond those of wife and mother.\(^{35}\) For example, women served in Europe as nurses and physicians with the American military, allowing them to employ their skills at a moment of limited employment avenues for female medical professionals in the United States. As Kimberley Jensen argues in her analysis of female military nurses’ efforts to obtain full military rank, American women took advantage of the war context to use their patriotic service to make radical claims to equality.\(^{36}\) Lynn Dumenil argues that suffragists used the example of women’s war service to make a similar argument regarding women’s entitlement to full citizenship.\(^{37}\) These historians concur that, while the First World War did not completely overturn notions of distinct male and female social roles, it accelerated women’s access to a more diverse array of professional activities and allowed them to make more expansive claims to political equality.\(^{38}\)

Historians’ treatment of American women’s roles during the Great War years largely remains temporally limited to the 1914 to 1919 period, and therefore does not often address the postwar continuation of initiatives, such as the ACDF, formed during the conflict. In part, this


periodization reflects the reality of the American role in the war, as the United States quickly scaled back its presence in Europe following the armistice and advocated disarmament among the European powers.\(^{39}\) In 1920, the United States Senate rejected the treaty that President Wilson brought back from peace negotiations in Paris, closing the door on American membership in the League of Nations. The following year, Republican President Warren G. Harding took office on a promise to reduce American commitments overseas.\(^{40}\) In recent years, historians have critiqued traditional interpretations that framed American foreign policy during the 1920s as “isolationist,” proposing instead that reduced popular support in the United States for Wilsonian internationalism did not in fact imply a complete disengagement from global affairs. On the contrary, these historians suggest that post-Wilson foreign policy relied on the business and philanthropic communities, as opposed to the military, to promote American interests abroad.\(^{41}\)

Historians of American humanitarian aid such as Emily Rosenberg and Julia Irwin note that this close cooperation between private voluntary organizations and Washington had its roots in wartime trends. Irwin observes that the First World War represented the apex of American popular enthusiasm for overseas humanitarian work; by 1919, a third of the American population were registered members of the national Red Cross society.\(^{42}\) The concerted efforts of the Wilson administration to build broad public support for the ARC, capitalizing on the patriotic fervor


\(^{40}\) Palmer, *The Twenties in America*, chapter 1 – 3.


\(^{42}\) Irwin, *Making the World Safe*, 68.
cultivated by the war, no doubt played a significant role in explaining this statistic.\textsuperscript{43} For ARC members and supporters, humanitarian work represented an opportunity to demonstrate America’s commitment to her European allies and to build ties between American and European civilians that would guard against the divisive forces of nationalism.\textsuperscript{44} Support for American humanitarian intervention became the dominant position during the war years, uniting Americans across partisan lines and contributing to a marginalization of antiwar or non-interventionist perspectives.\textsuperscript{45}

Although popular opinion following the war favored a diminished role for the United States overseas, Americans continued to play an active role in international philanthropy in the postwar years through organizations such as the American Red Cross, Herbert Hoover’s American Relief Administration, and the Rockefeller Foundation.\textsuperscript{46} While historians’ treatment of these organizations provide helpful frameworks for approaching a study of the American Committee, their focus is largely restricted to the major players in postwar humanitarian aid. As a result, they do not address the role of individual philanthropists in smaller groups such as the ACDF.

Historians have also studied the work of American female philanthropists outside of the context of humanitarian work. These historians emphasize the ways in which monied women strategically leveraged their wealth and social influence to pursue personal ambition and political aims.\textsuperscript{47} However, these works remain largely limited to philanthropy conducted within American

\textsuperscript{43} Irwin, \textit{Making the World Safe}, 68.
\textsuperscript{44} Irwin, \textit{Making the World Safe}, 68, 79.
\textsuperscript{45} Irwin, \textit{Making the World Safe}, 81.
borders and do not address how individual philanthropists may have engaged with events on an international scale. While the example of the American Committee presents an intersection between the individual philanthropy of American women and global humanitarian aid, existing treatments of the Committee have not fully explored these themes.

The primary analyses of the American Committee come from French historians Nicole Fouché and Evelyne Diebolt. Fouché and Diebolt are principally interested in the ACDF’s legacy in France, arguing that the Committee’s efforts to import American methods, particularly in the areas of public health and libraries, had a lasting influence in France as they were assimilated and adapted by a new generation of French professionals. French historians who have offered analyses of the ACDF note the extent to which the Committee’s work was anchored in early twentieth-century American ideologies about social reform and demonstrate how these beliefs shaped their work in France.

In contrast to Fouché’s and Diebolt’s focus on the French significance of the ACDF’s work, Michael E. McGuire addresses the ACDF’s role in postwar American diplomacy. McGuire argues that the ACDF’s goal of Franco-American reconciliation conflicted with the otherwise tense relations between the two countries. According to McGuire, this disconnect contradicts the arguments of historians such as Julia Irwin and Emily Rosenberg, who claim that American

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postwar foreign policy increasingly relied on private voluntary organizations to represent its
diplomatic interests overseas.\textsuperscript{50} However, McGuire’s analysis does not take into account the
numerous ways in which the American Committee did in fact cooperate with American foreign
policy representatives during this era of diplomatic tension between the United States and France.
Indeed, while Anne Morgan spoke out against the Harding administration’s reluctance to agree to
relief on French war debts, the ACDF continued to operate in cooperation with American officials
who publicly praised its sympathetic tone towards France.\textsuperscript{51}

Neither Fouché and Diebolt nor McGuire use the story of the ACDF to connect women’s
philanthropy with the role of humanitarian aid in postwar diplomatic politics. In order to address
this theme that existing analyses of the American Committee leave unaddressed, I will suggest that
the American Committee offers a case study of the ways in which individual female philanthropists
participated in the expanded importance of private organizations in diplomatic politics following
the First World War.

**Methods and Sources**

This paper draws principally on the American Committee’s publications, consulted at the
Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library at Princeton University, and the private correspondence of
Anne Morgan with Anne Murray Dike, as well as a selection of letters between Morgan and her
mother, held at the Pierpont Morgan Library. Additional archival sources come from the records

\textsuperscript{50} McGuire, “A highly successful experiment in international partnership?,” 102.
\textsuperscript{51} Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Frances Tracy Morgan, 10 March 1919, ARC 1215, Box 37, Folder
7, ATMP.; Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, 25 February 1921, ARC 1215 Box 23,
Folder 2, ATMP.; Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, 25 April, 1921, ARC 1215, Box
23, Folder 2, ATMP.; “Good Will Delegation Visits White House,” *New York Times*, April 18, 1923, ProQuest
Historical Newspapers.; “Harding Lauds French Relief Work,” *New York Times*, September 23, 1921, ProQuest
Historical Newspapers.; “Good-Will Ship for France,” *New York Times*, December 25, 1921, ProQuest Historical
Newspapers.
of the American Committee’s precursor organization, the American Fund for French Wounded, held at the New York Public Library. Digital archives of the *New York Times* provided an extensive repository of press coverage of the American Committee’s activities.

The most significant aspect of the Committee’s story that these sources have been unable to clarify fully is the figure of Anne Murray Dike, the ACDF’s Commissioner in France. Dike’s relative obscurity contrasts sharply with the wealth of sources concerning her counterpart, Anne Morgan. Morgan’s personal papers constituted one of the most informative resources for this research, containing a significant quantity of Morgan’s correspondence for the years of the ACDF’s operation. Moreover, as a member of one of New York City’s most prominent families and the public face of the ACDF, Anne Morgan was a subject of interest for the *New York Times*; many aspects of her activities and publicly-expressed opinions not addressed in the American Committee’s records or in her personal papers can be gleaned from the Times’ digital archives. While Morgan was known to the American public for aspects of her biography other than her work in France, the tone adopted by the *Times* in its rare reporting on Dike suggests that this may not have been true in Dike’s case. Morgan’s name required no epithet to clarify her identity to readers; however, the *Times* introduced Dike as “President of the American Committee for Devastated France,” and described her as “a stanch personal friend of Miss Anne Morgan.”52 A Scottish-born doctor, Dike moved to the United States upon marrying the university professor Francis Dike—whom she would subsequently divorce in 1914—in 1908.53 Beyond the statements that she made on the Committee’s behalf and the letters that she exchanged with Morgan, the Princeton University and Morgan Library archives add scant detail to Dike’s personal background. The lack


of sources pertaining to Anne Dike is something that future studies of the American Committee should make an effort to probe further.

In addition, the narrative that this paper offers centres on the American significance of the American Committee. I chose this direction as most of the French historians who have written on the ACDF have addressed its legacy to France. Difficulties accessing digital archives of French newspapers from this period to examine for coverage of the Committee’s work further contributed to limiting my analysis to the American context. However, I recognize that this paper would have benefited from an examination of coverage of the group’s activities in the French press in order to further clarify how its programs may have been received by local populations and the significance that they held in postwar French society.54 This is another area that future analyses of the American Committee should work to address.

This paper aims to examine the work of the American Committee for Devastated France, and Anne Morgan’s role as the most visible figure in that story, in order to identify points of connection between scholarship on the involvement of American women in the First World War, works on early twentieth-century women’s philanthropy, and studies of the role of private organizations in the conduct of diplomacy in the 1920s. I argue that Morgan’s work with the American Committee illustrates how the practice of philanthropy enabled elite women to cultivate

positions of authority for themselves within the realm of private diplomacy following the First World War.

This paper is organized in three sections that seek to demonstrate how the American Committee expanded female philanthropy to the international sphere. In the first chapter, I will address the ACDF’s origins in the context of trends in early twentieth-century American women’s voluntary work and the expansion of roles available to women occasioned by the outbreak of war. In this chapter, I will also examine the connections between these broader trends and the personal story of Anne Morgan. In the second chapter, I will analyze how Morgan used the organization of the ACDF to convert her class privilege into organizational power for the Committee and a position of authority for herself, which enabled the ACDF leadership to create opportunities for personal and professional fulfillment for other American women. In the third and final chapter, I will examine how the American Committee’s philanthropic work enabled them to act as a private diplomatic intermediary between France and the United States in the postwar years. Over the course of these three chapters, I hope to draw connections between scholarship on women’s philanthropy and the role of private organizations in diplomacy in order to suggest that philanthropy enabled monied women to cultivate expanded roles for themselves in the international sphere, and that, in the process, their philanthropy contributed to the importance of private organizations in international diplomacy during the postwar years.
Chapter 1: Female Benevolence and the Origins of the American Committee for Devastated France

In 1909, Anne Morgan became a member of the Women’s Trade Union League (WTUL), lending her support to this coalition of working and upper-class women. In so doing, Morgan allied with WTUL garment workers who were at that very moment engaged in a large-scale strike movement for improved working conditions. Morgan participated in sponsoring a rally of the WTUL at New York’s prestigious Colony Club, a women’s social club of which she was a founder.\(^1\) In speaking to the *New York Times* of the poor working conditions that had motivated the strike movement, Morgan remarked, “If we come to fully recognize these conditions we can’t live our own lives without doing something to help them [the workers], bringing them at least the support of public opinion.” In Morgan’s opinion, “when you hear of a woman who presses forty dozen skirts for $8 a week something must be very wrong.”\(^2\)

When she became a WTUL member, Morgan joined other New York society women, such as Alva Belmont and Elisabeth Marbury, who brought their social prestige and financial resources to the aid of the striking workers. The women of the WTUL came together in a cross-class alliance based on the belief that shared experiences of gender united women across class lines and gave upper-class women both the ability, and the obligation, to advocate on behalf of their working-class peers.\(^3\) For Morgan, membership in the WTUL was only one of many ways in which she performed the benevolent activities anticipated from women of her social class. Through these activities, Morgan developed her own opinions about how best to conduct philanthropic work, as well as connections to others engaged in similar projects. In 1918, Morgan drew on her experiences

\(^1\) Lewis, *Ladies and Not-So-Gentle Women*, 226.


with social reform work in New York in order to establish the American Committee for Devastated France in partnership with Anne Murray Dike. The outpouring of female social and political activism that marked the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the United States, and in which Morgan was an active participant, represents the contextual background for the founding of the American Committee.

Women and Social Activism in Turn-of-the-Century America

In establishing the ACDF, Morgan and Dike drew on a tradition of female social work grounded in the long-standing Christian association of womanhood and charity that facilitated much of the social work of American women from the Civil War into the first decades of the twentieth century. Prior to obtaining the right to vote, social work offered to a distinct stratum of American women the opportunity to claim positions of authority in work beyond the home. In the nineteenth century, middle- and upper-class Anglo-American women deployed the rhetoric of “Republican Motherhood” to justify social work as an expansion of the domestic sphere. As historian Molly Ladd-Taylor notes, these women based their mobilization of maternalist imagery in an understanding of society as structured in separate male and female spheres. This idea of gendered spheres held significant rhetorical power, even if the reality of men’s and women’s social relations often did not correspond to this framework. According to the principles of “Republican Motherhood,” women fulfilled their citizenship duties by cultivating morality and civic virtue in their husbands and children. In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, women asserted

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6 Ladd-Taylor, Mother-Work, 3.
authority over social issues, in particular the wellbeing of women and families, by framing such work as a natural extension of their roles within the home. Accordingly, these women deployed the rhetorical linkages of womanhood and morality recognizable in middle- and upper-class Anglo-American culture to forge a role for themselves as guardians of social well-being in a wider public realm.

The expansion of higher-education opportunities for women with the foundation of women’s colleges in the tradition of the male liberal arts college in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century further contributed to widening the social roles available to middle-class American women. Indeed, empowered by the experience of a college education and the bonds that they formed with their peers during these years, many young women sought to devise a social role for themselves that would surpass conventional domesticity. Drawing on the opportunities for professional social work forged by an earlier generation, a turn-of-the-century cohort of educated middle-class women recognized an opportunity to apply women’s accepted authority over social issues to the increasingly prevalent concerns surrounding the nation’s growing rates of urban poverty, which were accentuated by the rapid influx of primarily European immigrants in the waning years of the nineteenth century. Prominent among these women were “settlement house” workers, such as Jane Addams in Chicago or Lillian Wald in New York, who endeavoured to palliate urban poverty at the same time as they sought innovative career paths for themselves wherein they could preserve a sense of independence and autonomy. American settlement house founders such as Addams sought to forge cross-class ties through an experiment in communal

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8 Muncy, Creating a Female Dominion, 4.; McCarthy, “Parallel Power Structures,” 6.
9 For an overview of these trends, see Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, Alma Mater: Design and Experience in Women’s Colleges from Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993).
10 Muncy, Creating a Female Dominion, 16 – 17.
living, offering settlement house residents—often young, educated, middle-class women—the experience of living among the less-affluent, often predominantly immigrant, communities for whom they provided a range of social programs, such as children’s nurseries, access to nursing services, and residential facilities for working women. Indeed, for some settlement house workers, life in the settlement community afforded them a path by which to pursue a career that accorded with socially-recognized roles for women while rejecting traditional domestic roles of marriage and children. This generation of women merged established ideas about women’s capacity to exert a “mothering” influence with new theories concerning the role of scientific approaches in treating social ills. The settlement house movement reflected a broader shift in American approaches to social welfare away from ad hoc charity provision to systematized forms of “scientific” philanthropy. These latter approaches adopted methods informed by social science to address the root causes of social ills rather than merely treating their effects.

The settlement house movement by no means encompassed all the currents of women’s activism in the early twentieth-century United States. On the contrary, as the social sphere came to be accepted as an arena for women’s public activities, women adopted increasingly diverse approaches to social work and focussed their attentions on a wider range of causes. Women’s activism in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries took place not only within American borders, but also expanded overseas as the United States sought to expand its global influence. In the late nineteenth century, the Protestant foreign mission movement flourished to become the

11 Muncy, Creating a Female Dominion, 13.
12 Muncy, Creating a Female Dominion, 16-17.
13 Ladd-Taylor, Mother-Work, 8.
largest American women’s social movement by 1915. Historians suggest that the women’s mission movement, much like other forms of women’s activism at the turn of the century, drew on a maternalist rhetoric to offer American women opportunities for work beyond the home. American policymakers recognized the value of missions as a tool to advance American interests abroad, while female missionaries understood their own power as conduits of American benevolence in foreign lands. In other words, American officials understood that the rhetorical separation of women and formal politics rendered female missionaries non-threatening emissaries of American imperial interests, while missionaries themselves drew on their recognized cultural power to advance their own status within the missionary movement, as well as to vocalize an authentic belief in the “civilizing” potential of America’s “benevolent imperialism” in many cases. Women’s involvement in the foreign mission movement represented a precursor to the active participation of American women in secular humanitarian aid work during the First World War.

Anne Morgan and Elite Philanthropy

During the early twentieth century, wealthy American women drew on their recognized cultural authority in benevolent and social reform work to cultivate their own influence as philanthropists by using their wealth to promote their own ambitions and effect social change.

19 Irwin, Making the World Safe, 9.
As a product of Anne Morgan’s inspiration, the American Committee for Devastated France fell squarely within the realm of philanthropy conducted by some of the United States’ most socially prominent women. The primary unifying factor among the ideologically varied threads of action taken by elite women was these women’s capacity to strategically mobilize their wealth to advance both personal and political aims. Monied women such as Olivia Sage, Alva Vanderbilt Belmont, Phoebe Apperson Hearst, and Harriot Stanton Blatch staked out a public role for themselves by offering to contribute funding to causes they valued. In many cases, these women made funds conditional on the fulfillment of specific conditions. For example, Mary Elizabeth Garrett, daughter of Gilded Age railroad tycoon John Work Garrett, offered funding critical to the establishment of the medical school at John Hopkins University on the condition that admission be open to women. Similarly, Olivia Sage established the Russell Sage Foundation in 1907 in order to develop social work as a profession that would bring scientific approaches to the resolution of social problems. With authority over trustee appointments to the foundation’s board, Olivia Sage exercised her wealth-derived authority to guide the foundation’s policy direction. In the realm of political activism, Alva Vanderbilt Belmont made her funding to the national suffrage campaign conditional on a guarantee of authority in strategic and organizational decisions.

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24 Crocker, “From Gift to Foundation,” 211.
25 Hoffert, Alva Vanderbilt Belmont, 79.
Belmont’s biographer Sylvia Hoffert observes, wealth provided such women with the individual autonomy to act on their own terms, which at times translated into the pursuit of a seemingly eclectic range of interests.26

Anne Morgan belonged to this selective group of socially-engaged women with funds at their disposal. Morgan’s upper-class Protestant upbringing and social surroundings in adulthood would have primed her to assume the role of the “lady bountiful” bringing charity to the poor. As the youngest child of American financier J. Pierpont Morgan with free access to the family fortune, had she so desired, Morgan could have contented herself with a lifetime of leisure among the New York elite, pledging her support for whatever cause may have been in vogue at the moment with other society women.27 Despite this unusual degree of personal liberty, however, Morgan’s active presence in the public sphere suggests that she, like many other women of her generation and class, aspired to more than a lifetime of carefree comfort within a circumscribed female domain. Although Morgan herself did not attend college, in many of her actions she resembled the college-educated “new woman” who created a public role for herself through participation in the variety of social work initiatives which proliferated during the Progressive Era.28 Indeed, by the time Morgan came of age at the turn-of-the-century, the range of roles open to socially-engaged women who sought a measure of personal independence had widened significantly beyond the traditional “lady bountiful” image of ad hoc charity provision.29 As the examples of Garrett, Sage, and Belmont suggest, this was especially true for women who had funds to use as they so pleased.

Morgan’s work involved her in many of the principal reform spheres of early twentieth-century New York City, from settlement house work, to the movement to establish “working girls’

26 Hoffert, Alva Vanderbilt Belmont, x, 144 – 145.
27 Govenaar and Maack, Anne Morgan, 18.
28 Govenaar and Maack, Anne Morgan, 26.
clubs,” to trade union activism. Much as Hoffert posits of Belmont, for Morgan financial freedom seems to have enabled her to cultivate an independent persona in the public sphere. Morgan took an early interest in various settlement house projects in New York City, where she became familiar with living and working conditions in Manhattan’s Lower East Side.\(^{30}\) Morgan translated her acquaintance with conditions in the Lower East Side, where many of the city’s garment factories were located, into her 1909 support for the striking workers of the Women’s Trade Union League.\(^{31}\) Membership in the WTUL helped Morgan to develop a belief in the value of women’s work of various types. In her later projects, Morgan remained vocal about her commitment to “working girls.” For Morgan, “work” outside the home was an admirable activity for women; in a 1921 interview with the \textit{New York Times}, Morgan remarked that “every woman in the community must of necessity be a worker” in some form or another. Indeed, she described women’s aspirations in the twentieth century as a desire for “individual and industrial opportunity.”\(^{32}\) Morgan viewed work as a source of personal independence for women of all classes, reflecting the historian Nancy Cott’s observation that many early twentieth-century female activists valorized wage-earning women as “exemplars of independent womanhood.”\(^{33}\)

Morgan’s role as Treasurer for the Vacation Savings Fund (VSF), established earlier that year under the auspices of the Woman’s Department of the National Civic Federation, likewise reflected her belief in the fulfilling potential of work for women. The VSF aimed initially to help female workers save a portion of their income towards vacation trips away from the bustle and grime of early twentieth-century Manhattan, and ultimately transformed into a more

\(^{30}\) Govenaar and Maack, \textit{Anne Morgan}, 26.
\(^{33}\) Cott, \textit{The Grounding of Modern Feminism}, 33.
comprehensive working girls’ club, offering room and board as well as social activities for its young female members. Morgan and the other leaders of the Fund vociferously rejected the possibility that their work be considered “charity” or “philanthropy.” Rather than claim that they were “working for” their young depositors, the Fund’s organizers saw themselves as “working with” the women who participated in their activities. Morgan framed her denouncement of philanthropy by emphasizing the importance of cultivating self-sufficiency in the VSF’s female clients. In so doing, Morgan and the other VSF organizers sought to distance themselves from accusations of the inefficiency of traditional methods of upper-class benevolence. For Morgan, traditional “charity” had deteriorated into “indiscriminate giving,” while the “philanthropy” of her own epoch was overly focussed on “investigation” and therefore failed to cultivate “mutual understanding” between both sides of the exchange, leaving “the helped and the helper far apart.”

Morgan’s repudiation of the “charity” label for the VSF aligned with contemporary trends among female reformers and social workers in the early twentieth century who sought to distance their own work, which they saw as addressing concrete social problems, from what they considered to be the inefficient, haphazard, and often self-serving efforts traditionally expected of upper-class women. At the same time, however, Morgan appears to have desired to preserve a measure of the personal connection emphasized by traditional upper-class female benevolence in her stress on the development of “mutual understanding.” In so doing, Morgan was likewise distinguishing

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36 Morgan is quoted speaking in these terms in “To Open Unique Centre for Self-Supporting Girls,” New York Times, December 14, 1913, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
herself and the VSF from the philanthropic approaches increasingly popular among wealthy donors at the turn-of-the-century that promoted the use of social science-informed methods for measuring poverty and fashioning a response to social ills. For Morgan, of foremost importance was that both sides work together such that both could benefit from the exchange. Morgan viewed this form of cooperation as conducive to the personal development of both “helper and helped,” as well as to the preservation of social harmony between classes more broadly.\(^{39}\)

**American Women and the First World War**

Through her range of engagements with New York City’s female community of social reformers, Morgan formed connections with other socially-engaged women and developed leadership strategies that would serve her subsequent work in France during the First World War. Morgan and Dike formed the ACDF in this early twentieth-century context of female involvement with a wide variety of benevolent and political causes. In so doing, Morgan and Dike relied on the recognized authority of women in charitable and social reform work which had, by the first decades of the twentieth century, become an established tradition. Morgan’s and Dike’s creation of the ACDF fit within the context of widespread wartime support for American humanitarian work overseas and the extensive participation of American women in war relief work, both prior to and after the United States’ 1917 declaration of war.\(^{40}\)

In the context of the First World War, questions of women’s relationship to the American state intersected with broader dilemmas regarding America’s obligations to the international community. American women forged novel roles for themselves in the war context at home, as

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\(^{40}\) Irwin, *Making the World Safe*, 38.
well as abroad. Women organized in support of European populations affected by the war through established networks of voluntary associations even prior to the United States’ formal entry into the conflict in 1917. Following the United States’ declaration of war, female voluntary organizations provided a resource to which the federal government turned in order to encourage the mobilization of resources and popular support for the war effort. The work of women’s organizations in the United States pertaining to the war—particularly during the years prior to official American involvement—encompassed both pacifist and militarist sentiments. While some asserted that women’s maternal roles gave them a particular interest in preserving peace, others framed their support for war mobilization as a justification for women’s entitlement to full citizenship, including voting rights. Following congressional authorization for the United States’ declaration of war in 1917, pacifists became less vocal, in many cases adopting the belief that war mobilization presented an opportunity to claim an expanded social role. For suffragists, this meant in particular framing their contributions to the war effort as evidence of their entitlement to full citizenship. As historian Kimberly Jensen argues, these women perceived the American state during war as a “responsive institution” upon which they could assert claims for expanded social and political authority.

American women’s public actions during the First World War likewise took them to Europe, where many served as nurses and physicians, relief workers, ambulance drivers, and telephone operators, among other functions. Organizations such as the American Red Cross

appealed to women with a rhetoric of gendered patriotism that emphasized the potential contributions of women’s maternal capacities to the chaos of war. To their service abroad, many American women came equipped with prior experience in American social work and voluntary associations, whose techniques influenced the ways in which they carried out their programs in Europe. The war provided these socially-engaged women with an expanded range of spheres in which to develop their professional skill and personal autonomy.

As historian Lynn Dumenil notes, the First World War did not prove revolutionary for American women; rather, it continued, and perhaps accelerated, trends towards expanded social and political roles for women already in progress. American women took advantage of the exceptional circumstances of wartime to advance their own personal and political agendas. Neither did the armistice and ratification of the 19th Amendment granting women suffrage in 1920 set in motion a period of complacency among American women. On the contrary, women’s activism surrounding social issues expanded during the 1920s, such that lobbying efforts on behalf of women’s organizations culminated in notable legislative achievements at the federal level, such as the Sheppard-Towner Act combatting infant mortality in 1921 and the Married Women’s Independent Citizenship Act in 1922. Furthermore, as Cott asserts, during the 1920s American women increasingly characterized their activism more by the causes for which they worked, rather than by its gendered character. Similar patterns are evident in the ways in which some American women sought to continue their work in Europe following the end of war and the United States’ official withdrawal from the continent.

51 Cott, The Grounding of Modern Feminism, 96 – 97.
Although the United States withdrew official personnel from Europe following the armistice, various American relief agencies continued to develop their work among the war-ravaged populations of the continent. These included the American Red Cross, as well as the American Relief Administration directed by Herbert Hoover, and Morgan’s and Dike’s American Committee for Devastated France. Unlike the Red Cross, who scaled back their work after the armistice, the ACDF’s efforts gained in momentum following the war, framing their work as a demonstration of the continued American commitment to the well-being of the French nation.

In forming the American Committee, Morgan and Dike followed in the trend of women’s voluntary associations since the nineteenth century in articulating a role for themselves within a realm of action considered to be broadly within women’s sphere of authority, wherein they sought to address an identified problem and to achieve a measure of personal independence. In their program of work, Morgan and Dike drew on a long-standing rhetoric of female benevolence and social authority at the same time as they recruited personnel from among their own circles of socially-engaged upper-class women and extending to a wider network of women with social work experience. Morgan and Dike framed their work through the lens of the contemporary emphasis on resolving—rather than merely lessening the effects of—social ills by cultivating self-sufficiency among aid recipients. In this respect, the ACDF’s approach reflected Morgan’s own rejection of “charity” and belief in the personally liberating potential of “work” of all kinds. Finally, the ACDF bridged more modern philanthropic approaches to aid provision by emphasizing efficiency and systematization with the more traditional belief in the value of forming personal connections between aid providers and recipients.

Morgan and Dike drew upon a long American tradition of female benevolent work and their unique position as American women of independent wealth to mobilize the resources and
cultural authority to translate their visions for the ACDF into concrete form. The ACDF was not the only American organization to continue relief work after the war had ended. However, Morgan and Dike saw their work as transcending mere war relief, as their organization combined emergency aid with efforts to import American social work models to France, and to create personally fulfilling roles for themselves and the other women of their committee.
Chapter 2: Turning Class Privilege Into Organizational Power: The American Committee as a Site of Personal and Professional Opportunity for Women

Writing to the American Committee’s co-founder and Commissioner in France, Anne Murray Dike, as the Committee began to plan for its dissolution in 1923, Anne Morgan bemoaned the challenges she experienced in finding leaders for the Good Will Foundation, an organization under development to succeed the ACDF and continue its legacy. Morgan judged the men of her social class to be disinterested and unimaginative leaders, principally concerned with their own power and reluctant to support new endeavours. She classed these professional men into two groups, “the big outstanding ones at the top who have already assumed so many responsibilities outside of their business connections, who fight shy of anything else, and the younger ones who are working so hard to take the place of the big ones that they have no time for anything except their own personal work.” Believing that the men of her class could not be relied upon to accept leadership positions in a novel initiative such as the Good Will Foundation, Morgan determined that she would need to seek out a group of women to lead her project. Morgan wrote to Dike that women made up America’s “only leisure class,” by which she meant “people at liberty to chose [sic] their own occupations.” Effectively, Morgan was saying that with less institutional and business standing at stake, American women of her elevated social status had more freedom than their male counterparts to innovate and build institutions according to their personal inclinations.

Morgan’s observation in her 1923 letter to Anne Dike speaks to a phenomenon well-documented by historians of women’s philanthropic endeavours in turn-of-the-century America. As I outlined in chapter one, following the Civil War women, predominantly of the middle- and upper-class, drew on assumptions of women’s moral virtue and maternal instincts to legitimize an

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1 Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, 20 December 1923, ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 3, ATMP.
expanded social role in public space through charitable and social reform work. These women mobilized understandings of separate male and female spheres of authority to create female-led institutions. The noted historian of American philanthropy, Kathleen McCarthy, refers to the institutions created by turn-of-the-century American women as “parallel power structures,” which “sometimes challenged, sometimes complemented, but rarely precisely replicated” existing structures led by men.²

Through her work in France, Anne Morgan forged the “parallel power structures” that McCarthy describes. Morgan’s efforts to establish the American Committee as an independent and influential humanitarian aid organization in wartime France reflected strategies employed by other female philanthropists in the United States during the same period. In particular, Morgan used her financial independence and extensive social network to claim organizational independence for the ACDF from its origins as a subcommittee of the American Fund for French Wounded; to establish herself in a leadership position with the Committee wherein she functioned as its most visible representative in the United States; and to build the ties with business and political elites in the United States and France that provided the Committee with the governmental support, publicity, and connections to affluent donor networks necessary to conduct its work. Through the creation of the ACDF as an independent group parallel to similar existing organizations, such as the American Red Cross and Herbert Hoover’s American Relief Administration, Morgan translated her latent class privilege into power over resources and people in an independent institution.

Converting privilege into power allowed Morgan to construct the American Committee as a site for the personal and professional fulfillment of other American women. Much as historians of female philanthropy in the early twentieth-century United States have shown, elite women were

able to use their wealth and social privilege in service of others. Work with the American Committee allowed its leaders and volunteers to cultivate a sense of personal independence and, in the case of the trained professionals whom the ACDF recruited, to put their training to practical use. Much as philanthropists like Olivia Sage and suffragists such as Alva Vanderbilt Belmont strategically deployed their wealth and associated social privilege to command a measure of authority traditionally denied women, Anne Morgan and the ACDF leadership relied on their elite class status to assert themselves on equal terms in the context of postwar humanitarian relief. This made them powerful advocates for their own power as well as for the capacities of other women on the basis of the social influence that they wielded.

**Turning Privilege Into Power**

As the historian Joan Marie Johnson argues in her analysis of female philanthropy in the first half of the twentieth century, philanthropy provided monied women with a means by which to cultivate their own social influence, often expanding the roles available to other women in the process. For Anne Morgan, establishing the American Committee as an independent organization constituted just such an occasion to make herself a consequential figure in forging civilian ties between France and the United States in the immediate postwar period.

With the establishment of the American Committee, Morgan combined several of her main interests in a project of her own making. Unlike some of the earlier causes in which she had

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4 Johnson, *Funding Feminism*, 9.
participated, the ACDF was truly Morgan’s own initiative. The outbreak of war signaled for Morgan, as it did for many other American women, an opportunity to lend her past experience with philanthropic work in the United States to France, a place with which she had a long-cultivated familiarity and which held a particular cultural significance to other Americans of her class. Morgan’s work with the ACDF unfolded in an established context of Franco-American mutual aid, at the same time it drew on the networks of upper-class sociability that had for decades connected the elite strata of the two republics. Upper-class Americans such as Morgan benefited from a certain degree of cultural authority in France that drew on the vibrant rhetoric of the historical Franco-American allegiance and acquired renewed potency in the postwar years as Europeans looked to the United States as a symbol of cultural modernity to be emulated. This context of widespread French admiration for American social models and cultural products, in spite of the diplomatic tensions that arose between the two countries in the postwar period, provided the backdrop for Morgan’s efforts to establish the American Committee as an independent organization centered around the provision of civilian aid.

In demanding independence for the ACDF, Morgan asserted that her vision for civilian aid provision in war-torn France was somehow distinct from that promoted by the congressionally-chartered Red Cross. Rather than work within the dominant American humanitarian aid organization in the field, Morgan worked to establish the ACDF as a “parallel power structure” which would represent her vision for postwar reconstruction and over which she would exercise decision-making authority. The American Committee originated in late March 1918 out of a power

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7 Costigliola, *Awkward Dominion*, 20, 168.
struggle within the leadership ranks of an existing military relief organization where Morgan served as Treasurer, the American Fund for French Wounded (AFFW), which had itself originated in a similar leadership dispute with the London-based French Wounded Emergency Fund several years prior.\(^8\) The American Committee represented a continuation of the Civilian Division of the AFFW, whose members had grown dissatisfied with what they felt was a lack of attention accorded them by the AFFW’s central leadership.\(^9\) As Morgan explained in letters to Dike and her mother at the height of the organizational dispute in January and February of 1918, the United States-based leadership of the AFFW seemed unwilling to comprehend the importance of civilian reconstruction work, and in fact took steps to pass a resolution that would abolish Morgan’s Civilian branch in order to focus the organization’s work solely on military relief.\(^10\)

In Morgan’s correspondence from this period, the supposedly philosophical dispute among AFFW leaders over the organization’s direction appears to have been perhaps as much a competition for resources and influence within the group, as a conflict between competing ideals.\(^11\) As Morgan wrote to Dike in a February 1918 letter, “You know that my inclination is always to fight to the last ditch and from every point of view it would be an intense satisfaction to lick them, as I think we might be able to do, with lawyers’ advice, and then resign. On the other hand this would mean airing a large amount of bad feeling and we would always have the feeling behind us that we had interfered with much help going to France, which at this time cannot be considered for

\(^8\) The AFFW was started in Paris in the autumn of 1915 following a break of the Paris Depot of the FWEF with the fund’s London-based leadership, see Correspondence from E. Marion Bryce to Anne Tracy Morgan, 30 March 1916, MssCol 73, Box 1, Folder 1, AFFWR.

\(^9\) Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Frances Tracy Morgan, 13 January 1918, ARC 1215, Box 37, Folder 7, ATMP.; Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, 16 February, 1918, ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 1, ATMP.

\(^10\) Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Frances Tracy Morgan, 13 January 1918, ARC 1215, Box 37, Folder 7, ATMP.; Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, 16 February, 1918, ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 1, ATMP.

\(^11\) Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, 16 February, 1918, ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 1, ATMP.
a moment.”\(^{12}\) An appreciation of the concrete authority that derived from setting the Committee’s organizational direction certainly underlay the 1918 dispute within the ranks of the American Fund for French Wounded. As Morgan observes, divorcing the ACDF from its parent organization would mean the ability for ACDF leaders—specifically Morgan—to determine the group’s objectives and to act as spokespeople for these aims. Morgan was particularly frustrated by the ACDF’s inability to control its own funds when it remained subsumed within the Fund for French Wounded. Without financial autonomy, Morgan was unable to advance either her vision of the sort of relief work that the ACDF should be engaged in, or her own independent status as a leader of the group, as she was left unable to speak, either literally or through the “power of the purse,” on the ACDF’s behalf.\(^{13}\) Put simply, the independence of the ACDF constituted a matter of such significant concern for Morgan because the authority to determine the organizational direction of the ACDF was intimately bound up with her ability to advance her own profile within the American philanthropic community and circle of relief work organizations in postwar France.

Morgan’s social status proved influential in facilitating the independence of the American Committee, wherein Morgan could convert her elite privilege into leadership power. Morgan was able to negotiate the separation of the Civilian Committee from the overarching leadership of the AFFW thanks to her network of connections with French and American political and business elites. Morgan turned to this network for the guidance and official authorizations necessary to establish the ACDF as an independent humanitarian aid organization. In her correspondence with Anne Dike from February 1918, the two discussed plans for the separation of the Civilian

\(^{12}\) Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, 16 February, 1918, ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 1, ATMP.

\(^{13}\) Johnson, *Funding Feminism*, 7.; Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, 16 February, 1918, ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 1, ATMP.; Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Frances Tracy Morgan, 13 January 1918, ARC 1215, Box 37, Folder 7, ATMP.
Committee. Outlining her strategy to secure support for the proposed group, Morgan described a day of meetings with potential backers for the new Committee. First, she would negotiate an agreement from the Red Cross to allow the ACDF to act as an independent civilian relief group. Then, she would seek the endorsement of the University of Pennsylvania trustee, vocal Episcopalian lay church leader, and future Republican Senator for Pennsylvania, George Pepper, before asking French statesman André Tardieu for authorization from the French government. Morgan’s position as a member of New York’s most elite social circles and her reputation of past involvement in female-led philanthropic work gave her a network of influential connections upon whom she could call to realize her vision of an independent American Committee.

These same social ties enabled Morgan to secure authorization and endorsement for the ACDF’s actions from both the French and American governments. In France, the Commander-in-Chief of the French army, Philippe Pétain allocated responsibility for reconstruction of their four counties in the Aisne, Marne, and Oise departments to the American Committee. Morgan succeeded in procuring further evidence of official French support for the ACDF in 1919 when she and Dike convinced Tardieu, who was well known in the United States for his role as President Clemenceau’s lieutenant during the peace negotiations, and with whom they had already been cooperating informally, to serve as “Honorary President.” In the United States, Morgan similarly succeeded in securing diplomat and, at the moment of the ACDF’s founding in 1918, former American Ambassador to France Myron T. Herrick as the group’s president.

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14 Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, 16 February, 1918, ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 1, ATMP.
15 The American Committee for Devastated France pamphlet, n.d., MC026, Box 1, Folder 3, ACDFR.
16 Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, 10 December, 1919, ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 1, ATMP.
17 Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, 1 March, 1918, ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 1, ATMP.
Morgan’s elite status served the ACDF in other ways as well. In particular, Morgan used her celebrity power to develop a comprehensive publicity strategy for the American Committee, and to promote her own visibility as a spokesperson for the group. In the scope of their media campaigns, the American Committee solicited partnerships with newspapers and women’s magazines such as *McCall’s, House Beautiful,* and *The Delineator,* who agreed to publish articles on a monthly basis highlighting the ACDF’s work and the ways in which enthusiastic Americans could join the cause. As the daughter of banking tycoon J. Pierpont Morgan, Anne Morgan was herself an attractive subject for the American press, judging by the *New York Times*’ attentive coverage of her activities. Attuned to her power to attract media attention, Morgan drew on her perceived newsworthiness as a publicity strategy for the ACDF and effectively made herself the public face of the Committee in the United States. Morgan’s awareness of the value of using her celebrity status to promote her causes mirrors strategies employed by other wealthy philanthropists of her era. Historians of women’s philanthropy have shown how these elite women used their social status to court media attention, which they employed both to publicize their cause and to promote their own position as activists. For example, the historian Johanna Neumann argues that an appreciation of their celebrity power proved crucial to the success of New York’s elite suffragists in obtaining the vote, while Nancy Schrom Dye illustrates the cross-class tensions engendered by the celebrity of upper-class members of the Women’s Trade Union League (WTUL) during the 1909 New York garment worker strikes.

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18 Annual Report of the American Committee for Devastated France, Inc., Year Ending March 31, 1919, 1919, MC026, Box 1, Folder 1, ACDFR.; Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, 16 February, 1918, ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 1, ATMP.; Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, n.d., ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 1, ATMP.
19 Hoffert, *Alva Vanderbilt Belmont,* 144.
As a member of the WTUL, Morgan demonstrated an awareness of the publicity value of the Morgan name that predated her founding of the American Committee. Morgan and her fellow Women’s Trade Union League “allies” capitalized on their social status to draw attention to the poor working conditions and low wages of female garment workers. The “allies” lent the prestige of their names to the workers’ cause, holding benefit concerts and decrying the injustices that workers faced to the New York press. The curiosity that the Morgan name aroused among readers of the New York press proved a valuable asset, as Morgan sought to establish the legitimacy of the American Committee nine years later in 1918.

By forming partnerships with media organizations in the United States and putting herself forward as a spokesperson for the group, Morgan turned the social connections that accompanied her elite class status and the celebrity power of her name into recognition for the American Committee and personal power over strategic decisions in the group for herself. When Morgan worked to divorce the Civilian Committee from the central AFFW leadership and establish it as the independent American Committee for Devastated France over which she would have decision-making authority in 1918, she did so parallel to existing humanitarian relief organizations, most notably the American Red Cross (ARC). As McCarthy argues of turn-of-the-century women’s philanthropy, their social status empowered monied women such as Morgan to create institutions parallel to existing hierarchies where these women could use their privilege to innovate unconstrained by the structures of existing institutions.

23 McCarthy, Women’s Culture, xiv.
The American Committee as a Site of Personal and Professional Opportunity

In establishing the American Committee as an organization independent of existing structures for the provision of American humanitarian relief, Morgan created a space for other middle- and upper-class American women to serve in capacities largely inaccessible to them in the prewar United States.24 Morgan’s actions to create professional opportunities for other women through service with the ACDF reflected her long-standing belief in the personally fulfilling qualities of productive work for women.25 The American Committee demonstrates that international philanthropy represented a means by which upper-class women such as Morgan took advantage of the war context to create new social roles for themselves. Furthermore, the ACDF suggests that women’s philanthropy contributed to the broader trend of diversifying opportunities for American women in the wartime context that historians have noted. As a new organization, the ACDF gave its female volunteers and trained professionals the opportunity not merely to work in pre-defined roles, but to influence the direction of the Committee’s programs. The opportunity for innovation created by the organizational independence and novelty of the ACDF attests to the power of separate female-led institutions in creating opportunities for other women.

For the women who worked with the American Committee, the novelty of their experiences represented a source of personal excitement and professional fulfillment. The ACDF, much like the numerous other wartime organizations that recruited American women to serve overseas in roles that approximated many of the activities that middle- and upper-class women were already engaged with in the United States, enabled its female members to cultivate a combined feeling of personal and professional authority. For American women serving abroad during the war, excitement lay at once in the novelty of the experience, and in the feeling of independence and

24 Jensen, Mobilizing Minerva, chapter 6.
purpose that such women—often young and college educated—received from service overseas. Volunteer work in the war arena represented an opportunity for such women to feel that they were being useful and to achieve the personal fulfillment to which many educated, middle-class women aspired at the turn of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{26}

Over the six years of its work, 328 Americans served in France with the Committee. Although the majority of recruits called the United States home, the Committee also accepted French and British volunteers, totaling 171 French, and 126 British, recruits over the course of the ACDF’s operations.\textsuperscript{27} While the Committee did not specify how many of these individuals were women, they directed the majority of their appeals for voluntary contributions towards a female audience, making it likely that that women constituted the majority of these figures. The Committee recruited its personnel through its comprehensive publicity strategy conducted in the pages of newspapers and magazines throughout the United States, as well as in the Committee’s own publications, which they distributed through their local American Committees, their donor network, and at public libraries nationally.\textsuperscript{28} Leadership selected candidates for work in France either through interviews, or on the basis of letters of recommendation. In their chosen volunteers, leadership sought those who displayed “character, personality, knowledge of French and record of previous work”; many of those selected had recently graduated from college.\textsuperscript{29} Selection was a competitive process: in the year between April 1919 and April 1920, Committee leaders selected 68 volunteers to serve in France from an applicant pool of 640.\textsuperscript{30} Although the majority of recruits

\textsuperscript{26} Dumenil, \textit{The Second Line of Defense}, 10.

\textsuperscript{27} Summarized Statement of the work of The American Committee for Devastated France Inc., from April 1, 1918 to March 31, 1924, MC026, Box 1, Folder 7, ACDFR.

\textsuperscript{28} Annual Report of the American Committee for Devastated France, Inc., Year Ending March 31, 1919, 1919, MC026, Box 1, Folder 1, ACDFR.

\textsuperscript{29} Annual Report of the American Committee for Devastated France, Year Ending March 31, 1920, 1920, MC026, Box 1, Folder 2, ACDFR.

\textsuperscript{30} Annual Report of the American Committee for Devastated France, Year Ending March 31, 1920, 1920, MC026, Box 1, Folder 2, ACDFR.
served on a voluntary basis, the Committee recognized the need to offer salaries in order to be able to recruit professionally trained women in 1921, given the significant costs of financing an unremunerated voyage to France.31

The correspondence of Morgan and her volunteers demonstrates a sense of personal excitement at their work with the Committee. In letters to her mother, Morgan describes her work as exhilarating, at once exhausting and fulfilling. When overseas during the war, she writes of “getting to feel as if we belonged in it.”32 Indeed, even when burdened with an extensive agenda of responsibilities while supervising the Committee’s administration in New York, Morgan appears to take pleasure in having her skills serve a purpose. Her letters to Dike demonstrate this fulfillment in busyness, seemingly at its greatest in moments of crisis. For example, in a letter written during a moment of financial uncertainty for the Committee in December 1920, Morgan observes, “life these days is strenuous in the extreme. At the moment, we are hanging on the dizzy edge of success or failure in regard to the New York campaign and unless we throw every bit of ourselves into it we are doomed to failure, but I do not think we are going to have a failure.”33 (emphasis in original) Underscoring her determination to achieve the Committee’s fundraising objectives, Morgan suggests that she took the greatest satisfaction from the moments that put her leadership to the test.

Morgan’s evident sense of purpose in her work with the ACDF is mirrored in the letters of one of her volunteers, Marian Bartol, who served in France for a six-month period in 1920. Describing her work as a storekeeper in the village of Blérancourt, Bartol marvels at her autonomy:

31 Annual Report of the American Committee for Devastated France, Inc., Year Ending March 31, 1921, 1921, MC026, Box 1, Folder 3, ACDFR.
32 Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Frances Tracy Morgan, 20 August 1917, ARC 1215, Box 37, Folder 7, ATMP.
33 Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, 1 December, 1920, ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 1, ATMP.
“The store is open from 9 – 12 and from 2 – 4:30, and after that I have to make up the accounts, or I can leave them till the next day, if I want to. I am entirely my own boss and can set my own working hours.”34 She repeatedly assures her family that, although she may be “very busy,” she “loves the work”; this harried lifestyle was one that agreed with her.35 Indeed, apparently not even the hardships of life in a region destroyed by war could dampen Bartol’s excitement. If anything, such discomforts seem only to have added to the novelty of her experience: in describing two weeks spent without hot water for bathing, Bartol marvels that, “we are beginning to know how the men in the army felt.” Despite the lack of familiar comforts, Bartol reported that she had “never felt better in [her] life.”36

Bartol’s depictions of life as an American Committee volunteer blend a sense of professional fulfillment in her work, with indications of the personal excitement she felt at travelling to France on her own. Bartol’s descriptions emphasize a feeling of youthful freedom. For example, in recounting a day-trip to Reims, Bartol paints a vivid scene of a carefree picnic lunch, which presents a sharp contrast to the accounts of the region’s wartime devastation found elsewhere in Bartol’s letters: “We put cushions in the back of the car, rolled up the side curtains, and Anne, Poilu and I, and a large basket of lunch, reclined at ease on the floor. I had bought a duck which our cook roasted for us yesterday, and we had it, with bread, cheese, pâté de fois de grasse [sic], hot coffee, and cherry brandy and grapes, for a picnic lunch.”37 Bartol’s experiences

35 Correspondence from Marian Bartol (recipient unmarked), 16 September 1920, ARC 1567, https://www.themorgan.org/exhibitions/online/annemorgan/a-volunteers-story, accessed 16 April 2019, MBP.
36 Correspondence from Marian Bartol (recipient unmarked), 18 October 1920, ARC 1567, https://www.themorgan.org/exhibitions/online/annemorgan/a-volunteers-story, accessed 16 April 2019, MBP.
37 Correspondence from Marian Bartol (recipient unmarked), 17 October 1920, ARC 1567, https://www.themorgan.org/exhibitions/online/annemorgan/a-volunteers-story, accessed 16 April 2019, MBP.
as an ACDF volunteer appear to have been understood by Bartol herself as a period of significant individual development.

As Morgan’s and Bartol’s reflections on their work with the American Committee suggest, the Committee served as a site for personal and professional fulfillment for its volunteers. Moreover, for the women chosen to work in France, the novelty and organizational autonomy of the ACDF made the professional opportunities that the Committee offered to American women sites of innovation. Service with the American Committee provided trained American women with professional opportunities where they could put their training into practice, and, for those in leadership roles, sites where they could implement innovations according to a program of their own design in a region where such practices were entirely new. For example, the Blérancourt Hospital, established in 1918 in partnership with the American Women’s Hospitals (AWH), represented, according to AWH chairperson, Dr. Esther Pohl Lovejoy, the first entirely female-led medical facility in a European combat zone.\(^{38}\) The American Committee’s vision of a comprehensive network of public libraries with separate services offered to adults and children was similarly novel in postwar France.\(^{39}\) The nurses, librarians, and social workers whom the ACDF recruited to lead their programs in France were not simply occupying, but indeed creating, a professional role for themselves. The ACDF bestowed on them the necessary control of resources and personnel, as well as a significant level of trust in their ability to implement American-style services in war-ravaged agrarian France.

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\(^{38}\) Annual Report of the American Committee for Devastated France, Year Ending March 31, 1920, 1920, MC026, Box 1, Folder 2, ACDFR.; the hospital was closed on 31 October 1922, see Annual Report of the American Committee for Devastated France, Inc., Year Ending March 31, 1922, 1922, MC026, Box 1, Folder 4, ACDFR.; In 1920, the ACDF took over the Blérancourt Hospital from the AWH, see Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, 5 February, 1920, ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 1, ATMP.

\(^{39}\) Library Report by Jessie Carson, 1 October 1920, MC026, Box 1, Folder 2, ACDFR.; “New Nurses’ School in Paris,” \textit{New York Times}, April 1, 1923, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
The ACDF participated in the trend of expanding opportunities for women to occupy novel social roles that historians identify as an outcome of the First World War. In this respect, the American Committee was not alone in providing meaningful experiences for upper- and middle-class women during the war. Indeed, many other women served abroad with the American Red Cross, the military, and other private relief groups where they found similar occasion for personal satisfaction and professional experimentation. However, in the ACDF’s case in particular, Morgan’s efforts to create her own civilian relief organization independent of existing structures, on the basis of her financial independence and social influence, made possible the opportunities that the Committee provided for female volunteers and trained specialists. The story of the American Committee’s founding illustrates how monied women like Morgan used their class privilege to create separate institutions that facilitated their own personal and professional fulfillment, as well as that of other women in the context of the First World War. By creating the ACDF as an independent group, Morgan could determine its program of action, in the course of which she expanded the philanthropic strategies that she had developed in the United States to the international sphere.
Chapter 3: “Sisters of France”: American Committee Philanthropy as a Tool of International Diplomacy

In the summer of 1922, the first cohort of American women elected to embark on an American Committee-sponsored tour of France began their voyage. Following their arrival in the port city of Le Havre, the group of 87 women proceeded to Paris, where they were taken on a tour of the city’s principal sites of interest. After this initial reception, the Committee divided the “Good Will Delegates” into two groups to begin their tour of France. ¹ For the ACDF, the focal point of the tour were the days spent in the counties in which they led their reconstruction programs. At the Committee’s Blérancourt headquarters, ACDF Honorary President André Tardieu welcomed the group and praised their willingness to act as emissaries of mutual friendship between France and the United States. Tardieu extolled the role that these women—“Sisters of France”—would play in rectifying American misperceptions of France, remarking, “When you hear—as is often the case—things said about us which are not true; you will answer—and what you say will be believed.” Indeed, Tardieu hoped that these “Sisters of France” would serve as “harbingers of a future brotherhood that, for the good of mankind, will knit ever closer the historic bonds of our two Democracies.”² In his reception of the “Good Will Delegates,” Tardieu stressed the power of bonds between the civilians of France and the United States to cultivate mutual sympathy between the two nations in order to repair a broken diplomatic relationship. Emphasizing the delegates’ womanhood by repeatedly referring to them as “Sisters of France,” Tardieu leveraged recognizable assumptions that linked femininity with emotion and therefore cast the Good Will Delegates as particularly attuned to react to the suffering of French civilians. Tardieu’s invocation of

² Address by M. André Tardieu, Honorary President of the American Committee for Devastated France, At Blérancourt, 1922, Mss-Col 2036, Box 25, Folder 3, MCFP.
sympathetic “Sisters of France” suggested that these women came to France out of a sense of genuine goodwill, which would render them particularly effective advocates for France upon returning home, as the purity of their intentions would go unquestioned.

The Good Will Delegates that Tardieu welcomed to Blérancout in 1922 inaugurated one of the American Committee’s most ambitious, and most successful campaigns.\(^3\) Blending fundraising with civilian diplomacy, the Good Will Elections present the most visible example of the ACDF’s efforts to advocate for the United States’ continued involvement in France during the postwar period. In the process, the American Committee confronted an environment of animosity between the two nations, as they disagreed over the extent of French obligations to make good on the debts to the United States that they had incurred during the war. During the Harding administration, the United States adopted an unforgiving stance on French debt repayment, in spite of French efforts to emphasize the financial difficulties that Germany’s failure to fulfill its own reparation obligations created for France. The question of war debts acquired an outsized significance for relations between France and the United States in the postwar years, as France perceived the uncompromising terms for debt repayment as an American betrayal of their wartime allies.\(^4\)

The ACDF represented a faction of Americans who believed that the United States, as an icon of democratic peace, should continue to play an engaged role in the international sphere in order to mitigate future tensions and prevent the outbreak of war.\(^5\) The American Committee leveraged the organizational independence and connections with business and political elites in

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\(^3\) Facts About the Good Will Elections, Conducted under the auspices of the American Committee for Devastated France, n.d., Mss-Col 2036, Box 25, Folder 5, MCFP.; Summarized Statement of the work of The American Committee for Devastated France Inc., from April 1, 1918 to March 31, 1924, 1924, MC026, Box 1, Folder 7, ACDFR.


both France and the United States that their leadership’s elite social status helped them to cultivate in order to act as a private diplomatic intermediary between France and the United States. As a nongovernmental, female-led organization, the ACDF presented themselves as a neutral actor, guided solely by their belief in the global importance of preserving Franco-American friendship.

The image of neutrality that the American Committee presented coincided with the foreign policy objectives of the Harding administration, which sought to preserve a positive international image of the United States while scaling back American overseas commitments. Unofficially endorsing organizations like the ACDF enabled Washington to do just that. In similar fashion, French officials expressed support for the Committee’s work and used the women as a means by which to cultivate sympathy for France among Americans and make a case for diplomatic leniency from Washington on the issues of French war debts and disarmament. Drawing on women’s recognized authority in humanitarian work, the ACDF used the tools of philanthropy to engage in postwar diplomatic politics through its use of social programs and propaganda tools to promote American benevolence and encourage American sympathy for France.

**The ACDF as a Diplomatic Intermediary Between France and the United States**

The American Committee positioned itself as a private diplomatic intermediary between France and the United States by cultivating the endorsement of officials on both sides. On the American side, figures in Washington appreciated the potential of allying with the Committee to preserve an image of benevolence in France. At the height of the Committee’s activities in the early 1920s, most other American relief organizations had ceased their activities in France, leaving

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the ACDF in a dominant position. The ACDF capitalized on this collective humanitarian retreat, as well as on the Harding administration’s increased reliance on private voluntary organizations, to maintain a positive image of the United States overseas in an era of waning popular enthusiasm for an American role abroad, and to make itself an influential figure of American diplomacy in France.

In 1920, Warren G. Harding won election to succeed Woodrow Wilson as President. Harding campaigned on a platform promising a “return to normalcy” following the uncertainty of war, which was to be achieved through an “America first” strategy that offered a counterpoint to the Wilsonian internationalism of the war years. In contrast to Wilson’s efforts to develop a framework for international cooperation through the League of Nations, the Harding administration sought a return to a politics of non-interference in European affairs that advocated mutual disarmament, rather than proactive American intervention, as the path to global peace.

As recent historians have noted, the Republicans who aligned with Harding, as opposed to the more staunchly isolationist factions of their party, continued to believe that the United States should play a role in the postwar world. Furthermore, European stability continued to be a major source of concern for the United States during this period of American foreign policy recalibration in the early 1920s, as American officials hoped to prevent either the outbreak of further conflict or the spread of Bolshevism from Russia. A belief in the superiority of American values and concern for European stability represented majority viewpoints among both parties in the early 1920s.

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7 Correspondence from André Tardieu to Anne Murray Dike, 15 February 1921, MC026, Box 1, Folder 3, ACDFR.
8 Rosenberg, Spreading the American Dream, 115.
10 Goldberg, Discontented America, 20.
However, there was little consensus as to how the United States should best perform its position of global superiority.\textsuperscript{12}

In order to address its diplomatic objectives without increasing American commitments overseas, the Harding administration formed partnerships with private organizations. As the historian Emily Rosenberg observes, American voluntary associations in fact expanded their role in the international sphere during the 1920s, conducting a form of private diplomacy recognized by American officials as an informal way of promoting American interests and values abroad.\textsuperscript{13} Herbert Hoover’s American Relief Administration (ARA) was exemplary of the role that private voluntary organizations played in promoting American interests in Europe during the early 1920s. Although the ARA operated during the war as an official arm of the American government, Congress withdrew its support in 1919 and Hoover re-established the group as a private endeavor. The ARA continued its civilian relief work in the postwar years, whereby its workers in Europe implemented American approaches to social welfare and touted the superiority of American technological and scientific development. With its reconstruction programs, Hoover’s ARA sought to build social stability in Europe at the same time as they served as representatives of American benevolence and demonstrated American cultural and technological advancement.\textsuperscript{14} The historian Katharina Rietzler notes likewise that the global influence of major American philanthropic foundations expanded in the early 1920s. Rietzler argues that American foundations benefited in their work overseas from the image of neutrality that they were able to present as nongovernmental

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13 Rosenberg, \textit{Spreading the American Dream}, 115.
14 Costigliola, \textit{Awkward Dominion}, 39-45.
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actors, while at the same time earning an influential status in the United States as representatives of American interests in the international sphere.\(^\text{15}\)

The American Committee positioned itself as an instrument of private diplomacy in the way that Rietzler describes by developing ties in Washington. Most notably, the ACDF’s official President was Myron T. Herrick, who, at the same moment as his name appears listed in the rank of President on official ACDF publications, was serving as American Ambassador to France between 1921 and 1929. Both Herrick and Morgan more-or-less acknowledged his role in the ACDF to be primarily that of a figurehead. In his introduction to the Committee’s 1921 annual report, Herrick downplayed his contributions, remarking that the Committee’s accomplishments were entirely “the work of the patriotic and self-sacrificing women of America.”\(^\text{16}\) He mirrored these sentiments in the subsequent year’s report, stating, “The male members of the Committee played but a minor part.”\(^\text{17}\) Morgan similarly suggested that others played a more significant role than Herrick in setting the Committee’s agenda. In her correspondence with Anne Dike, Morgan had to remind Dike not to refer to her own role as that of “President” in order to avoid confusion among local ACDF members in the United States who knew Herrick to be the group’s President. Morgan’s tone suggested that the matter was a technicality to be observed but which didn’t take away from the day-to-day authority that she and Dike exercised.\(^\text{18}\) While his role may have been primarily symbolic, the choice of the American Ambassador as the organization’s official leader

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\(^{15}\) Rietzler, “Before the Cultural Cold Wars,” 163.

\(^{16}\) Annual Report of the American Committee for Devastated France, Inc., Year Ending March 31, 1921, 1921, MC026, Box 1, Folder 3, ACDFR.

\(^{17}\) Annual Report of the American Committee for Devastated France, Inc., Year Ending March 31, 1922, 1922, MC026, Box 1, Folder 4, ACDFR.

\(^{18}\) Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, 10 December 1919, ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 1, ATMP.; here Morgan remarks, “it would be wiser for you to sign all official letters, (Committee or individual) that come to America, as Commissioner rather than President. It looks more important from the organization end and does not mix up the situation with Mr. Herrick over here, for our places in the small towns are not what you call over-intelligent.”
suggests a desire to demonstrate a close connection between the ACDF’s goals in France and official American diplomatic interests.\textsuperscript{19}

The American Committee also worked to position themselves as a private agent of American diplomacy by seeking the endorsement of the Harding administration.\textsuperscript{20} The Committee indeed received praise on numerous accounts from President Harding, who thanked the organization for demonstrating “the continued affection of the American people for the splendid French nation.”\textsuperscript{21} In his expressions of support for the work of the Committee, Harding recognized the ACDF as a legitimate representative of the United States in France. For the American Committee, ties with American officials enabled them to emphasize the alignment between their objectives and American national interests. At the same time, their status as a private organization allowed them to claim that a commitment to Franco-American friendship that was not motivated by a calculus of American diplomatic interests alone.

To this effect, the Committee also developed close ties with French officials who recognized the potential of conveying their diplomatic objectives through a private intermediary much as Washington did. As well as touting the endorsement of the French army’s Commander-in-Chief Philippe Pétain and claiming Tardieu as their Honorary President, the Committee received numerous awards for their work from the French authorities, including the prestigious Legion of Honor for both Morgan and Dike.\textsuperscript{22} Endorsed by both French and American governments, the American Committee leveraged its status as a private organization to work as a diplomatic intermediary in order to encourage improved relations between the two countries.

\textsuperscript{19} Annual Report of the American Committee for Devastated France, Inc., Year Ending March 31, 1921, 1921, MC026, Box 1, Folder 3, ACDFR,
\textsuperscript{21} “Good Will Delegation Visits White House,” \textit{New York Times}, April 18, 1923, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
Reconstruction as a Symbol of American Benevolence in France

Drawing on the role that they had established for their organization in France during the war and their close ties to officials in Washington, the American Committee used its postwar programming to communicate American values and preserve a positive image of the United States in postwar France. Private organizations operating overseas who maintained close ties with American officials engaged in a form of unofficial diplomacy on behalf of the United States through the programs that they implemented abroad.23 Philanthropic foundations and humanitarian relief groups came equipped with understandings of what constituted effective social welfare practices that were informed by their members’ past experience in the United States.24 By importing American methods, such foundations performed their belief in the superiority of American expertise and promoted an image of American benevolence at the same time as they aimed to preserve global stability through their interventions. As Rietzler argues, foundation leaders often saw the accomplishment of American diplomatic objectives as in the best interests of the international community as a whole.25

In France, the ACDF worked to implement programs grounded in their assumption of the superiority of American approaches to social policy. While the Committee expressed a respect for local tradition and an intention to tailor their interventions to local needs, their programs communicated American values. The ACDF’s rhetoric valorized the French peasant farmer as a figure of “courage,” “tenacity,” and “faith” and portrayed themselves as mere “neighbours” and

24 Rietzler, “Before the Cultural Cold Wars,” 152.
“friends” to local residents who sought to fortify, rather than remake, regional culture. Rather than assert an interventionist stance, the ACDF espoused the intrinsic value of rural French life with which they had no intention of interfering. However, their tone was patently paternalistic, situating residents as lagging in the modernity that the United States represented. Demonstrating to local residents the superior modernity of American methods of social organization was at the base of the Committee’s reconstruction agenda. By using philanthropy to articulate American values, the women of the ACDF hoped to demonstrate the goodwill of the United States to local civilians at a moment of heightened tensions between the two countries. These intentions served the interests of their allies in Washington, who desired to maintain stability in France while at the same time demanding repayment of war debts.

The Committee’s programs targeting French children, whom they framed as the “future of France,” are exemplary of their use of aid to export American values. By implementing programs focussed on children, the ACDF used American theories of child development to address American concerns with ensuring the long-term political and social stability of Europe. Similar ambitions motivated the postwar programs of the American Red Cross and American Relief Administration. The ACDF’s child-focussed initiatives centered on restoring physical health at the same time as they hoped to influence the “moral” development of French children. Through health initiatives, the Committee demonstrated the superior advancement of American medicine, while through programs focussed on children’s recreation, the Committee exported American cultural values. The Committee’s establishment of Boy Scout camps in the devastated regions

26 ACDF pamphlet, “Six Months Among the Ruins with the American Committee for Devastated France, April to October 1921,” 1921, MC026, Box 1, Folder 3, ACDFR.

27 Annual Report of the American Committee for Devastated France, Year Ending March 31, 1920, 1920, MC026, Box 1, Folder 2, ACDFR.

exemplified the synthesis of these goals. Scout camps combined physical rehabilitation with moral training, praised for the “improved physical condition” that they encouraged, as well as for their ability to bring “unity, cooperation, and coordination” to local youth.29

The Committee worked to create a lasting infrastructure that would continue their efforts to import American models of social policy to France after the ACDF’s dissolution. For example, the Committee institutionalized their partnership with the Boy Scouts through the creation of a permanent school to train scout leaders in the Oise Department.30 The Committee’s efforts to establish durable institutions reflected their hopes of creating a lasting legacy of American goodwill in France. To a certain extent, creating a lasting demonstration of American benevolence by importing American social welfare methods entailed efforts to impose American visions of social organization more broadly. In particular, the ACDF’s establishment of training schools for nurses and librarians imported American ideas about the role of women in the workforce.31 As aid workers, the women of the ACDF were well-positioned as advocates for the development of a class of professional working women. Indeed, they saw themselves as representative of the opportunities for professional advancement open to American women which their French counterparts did not share. Through these interventions, the American Committee interjected the social programs that they implemented with their leaders’ own beliefs as upper-class women who came of age as professional opportunities for American women expanded.

29 Correspondence from Anne Murray Dike to Anne Tracy Morgan, 20 October 1920, MC026, Box 1, Folder 2, ACFDR.; The American Committee for Devastated France pamphlet, n.d., MC026, Box 1, Folder 3, ACFDR.; on the Boy Scout Movement in the United States and its role in the promotion of an American empire, see: Mischa Honek, Our Frontier Is the World: The Boy Scouts in the Age of American Ascendancy, (New York: Cornell University Press, 2018); Robert H. MacDonald, Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement, 1830 – 1918, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).
30 Summarized Statement of the work of The American Committee for Devastated France Inc., from April 1, 1918 to March 31, 1924, 1924, MC026, Box 1, Folder 7, ACFDR.
31 Irwin, Making the World Safe, 111.
The ACDF’s leaders were correct in noting that a class of professional women like that in expansion in the United States at the turn-of-the-century was largely nonexistent in France after the First World War. In France as in the United States, the demands of war mobilization accelerated trends towards a greater female workforce participation that had roots in the late nineteenth century. However, debates surrounding women’s role in the workforce took a different shape in France than in the United States. In contrast to the traditional American ideal of distinct gendered spheres where femininity implied domestic authority and removal from the workforce, paid employment was not considered incompatible with ideals of womanhood in the French context. Indeed, the historian Karen Offen argues that there existed widespread recognition in French society in the late nineteenth century that most families simply could not survive on men’s wages alone.

Employed French women primarily belonged to the working-class; in contrast to the United States, France did not experience the same growth in the ranks of women employed as trained professionals, such as nurses and social workers, a trend shaped by the fact that French girls did not have access to the same branch of high school education as did their male counterparts, and accordingly their diplomas did not allow them to gain access to the country’s universities. During the First World War, opportunities for French women’s employment outside the home increased and diversified. Following the armistice, the question of women’s employment was subject to debate. On the one hand were those who argued that the stunning devastation of France’s male population meant that women’s labour was not only necessary, but that women possessed a patriotic obligation to offer their labour in support of rebuilding the French economy and

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33 Offen, *Debating the Woman Question*, 432.
34 Offen, *Debating the Woman Question*, 572.
infrastructure. On the other hand, advocates of a more traditional vision of female domesticity contended that the patriotic duty of French women lay in their maternal contributions to repopulating the nation.  

The American Committee discussed openly the discrepancy between the professional status of French and American women. As Dike remarked of the ACDF’s establishment of training institutions for French nurses and librarians in her 1922 report, “the American Committee not only is forging another bond of friendship between France and America but is at the same time opening up two new professions to cultured French women while affording them from the start the inspiration and professional standards which American women have evolved in these professions.” The Committee recognized that the war’s depletion of France’s male population created a unique opportunity for them to promote women in professional roles. In 1921, Dike wrote to Morgan, “There are so many thousands of them [women] in excess of the male population. That is why physical education, library work, and nursing becomes so important as professions for these girls, if we can use our own strength, time and money now to demonstrate their usefulness, so that when France is financially strong enough she can undertake them.” By creating institutions intended to build a class of French female professionals, the ACDF led a gendered reconstruction agenda that displayed the American cultural superiority that they themselves represented as female professionals. The Committee hoped that their efforts to create a class of professional women as existed in the United States would convince French civilians of the merits of American approaches to nursing and library work and of the United States’ benevolent intentions more broadly. As Dike

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36 Annual Report of the American Committee for Devastated France, Inc., Year Ending March 31, 1922, 1922, MC026, Box 1, Folder 4, ACDFR.
37 Correspondence from Anne Murray Dike to Anne Tracy Morgan, 8 January 1921, ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 3, ATMP.
remarked to Morgan in 1920, training French women in these methods would allow them to “carry on the responsibility of propaganda in France” beyond the duration of the ACDF’s presence. Through these programs in particular, the ACDF’s leaders brought their own priorities to the role that they served as a diplomatic intermediary for American benevolence in France.

The Propaganda Campaign to Build Sympathy for France

The American Committee’s approach to social reconstruction in France suggests that they understood American values to be synonymous with the best interests of the global community as a whole. At the same time as they used their reconstruction work to demonstrate the goodwill of American citizens for France, the ACDF worked to cultivate sympathy for France in the United States. Believing harmonious relations between France and the United States countries to be essential to maintaining international peace, the American Committee used the neutrality of their status as a private organization to represent French diplomatic aims in the United States at the same time as they worked to convey in France the image of American benevolence that they considered lacking in Washington’s official policy. As Dike put it in 1921, the ACDF saw themselves as counteracting “the lack of political support from America” for France following the armistice.

A comprehensive publicity campaign emphasizing the necessity of American support for French reconstruction constituted a central element of the Committee’s work as a private diplomatic intermediary between France and the United States. Morgan and Dike were

38 Correspondence from Anne Murray Dike to Anne Tracy Morgan, 20 October 1920, MC026, Box 1, Folder 2, ACDFR.
39 Correspondence from Anne Murray Dike to Anne Tracy Morgan, 26 February 1921, ARC 1215, Box 23, Folder 2, ATMP.
40 Irwin illustrates that the ARC used similar media strategies, see Irwin, Making the World Safe, 86 – 88.
consciously aware of the importance of a proactive publicity strategy. In a 1921 letter, Dike reminded Morgan that, “The American Committee’s job today is propaganda as much as anything else.”

In addition to forming agreements with American magazines and newspapers to publicize the activities of the Committee, the ACDF produced its own propaganda materials, including the weekly bulletin *Under Two Flags* distributed to Committee members in the United States, and films depicting their work in France, which they screened at fundraising events. The ACDF’s *Under Two Flags* bulletin featured updates on its work in the Aisne, calls for volunteers and donations, as well as information on its fundraising activities in the United States and emotional testimony from Aisne residents describing the ways in which the American Committee had enriched their lives. The bulletins invoked the historical importance of the Franco-American alliance to the United States’ republican origins in order to suggest that Americans had a patriotic obligation to help France. Bulletin articles likewise emphasized the gratitude of French civilians for the Committee’s work. For example, one early issue of the bulletin from September 1918 featured an account of one Aisne resident who dutifully displayed an American flag above her front door, explaining that she simply desired “to show everyone who passes that [she] owe[d] [her] home and almost [her] life to the American people.” In similar fashion, an ACDF volunteer described one encounter with an Aisne resident who hailed the United States as France’s “sister republic” and proclaimed that “France will never forget America.” By including anecdotes of civilian gratitude for the Committee’s work, the bulletin’s editors impressed the patriotic import

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41 Correspondence from Anne Tracy Morgan to Anne Murray Dike, 25 February 1921, MC026, Box 1, Folder 2, ACDFR.
42 Annual Report of the American Committee for Devastated France, Year Ending March 31, 1920, 1920, MC026, Box 1, Folder 2, ACDFR.
43 “Under Two Flags” A Weekly Bulletin of the Work in France and in America, Week Ending 18 September 1918, ARC 1483-84, Pamphlet binder, ATMP.
44 “Under Two Flags” A Weekly Bulletin of the Work in France and in America, Week Ending 26 October 1918, ARC 1483-84, Pamphlet binder, ATMP.
of their work on American audiences. The Committee used these portrayals to suggest that French and American interests were one and the same. Articles in the bulletin at times openly criticized American policies towards France and framed the Committee’s work as counteracting the detrimental effects of official actions. The bulletin’s authors refuted rumors that “France was never as rich as she is today” or that she no longer desired American aid. Through their publicity endeavors the American Committee worked to spread a positive image of France in the United States that tempered the unforgiving stance on French reconstruction represented by the Harding administration’s opposition to relief on French war debts. By using its position in both countries to promote mutually sympathetic relations through its programming, the Committee served as a private intermediary between France and Washington.

The Good Will Tours were by far the most ambitious of the ACDF’s programs to mitigate the diplomatic tension between France and the United States by building civilian ties. In 1922 and 1923, four groups of American “business and professional women” visited France under the sponsorship of the American Committee. The ACDF used an election system that doubled as a fundraising campaign to select delegates for the Tours. The Committee organized elections in 56 cities in coordination with their local committees. Residents could nominate any “business or professional woman more than eighteen years of age; any Gold Star mother or any woman former war worker” by making a donation of ten cents in exchange for one vote in favour of their candidate, to be deposited with the “Good Will Teller” at the local bank sponsoring the elections. The American Committee partnered with newspapers in each city to publicize information

45 “Under Two Flags” A Weekly Bulletin of the Work in France and in America, Week Ending 18 January 1919, ARC 1483-84, Pamphlet binder, ATMP.
“Under Two Flags” A Weekly Bulletin of the Work in France and in America, Week Ending 22 February 1919, ARC 1483-84, Pamphlet binder, ATMP.
concerning the voting process and election candidate profiles. In the first elections of 1922, voters in 28 cities elected 87 women to represent them in France, raising a totally of $593,417 for the ACDF’s work.

Endorsed by both French and American officials, the Good Will Tours epitomized the Committee’s role as a private diplomatic intermediary between France and the United States. By bringing American women to France, the ACDF showed France that Americans cared about its plight. At the same time, visits from American citizens gave French officials the opportunity to emphasize the seriousness of the devastation they had suffered during the war to Americans who these officials hoped would shape public opinion in their favour upon returning home. Demonstrating his understanding of the diplomatic significance of the Good Will Tours for the United States, President Harding praised the program and granted delegates an official audience at the White House in 1923, stating, “This Good-Will Delegation represents the sentiments and motives that have animated American participation in this work from the beginning, and, I am sure their visit will mark a further development of the long-established sentiments uniting the two countries.”

American officials offered similar praise of the Tours upon welcoming the first group of delegates to France in August of 1922; speaking on behalf of Ambassador Herrick, Embassy Counsellor Sheldon Whitehouse thanked the women for acting as “shuttles weaving a bond of friendship between our two countries.”

French officials were equally complimentary, framing Good Will Delegates as responsible for correcting their fellow Americans’ misconceptions about France’s postwar intentions.

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46 Facts About the Good Will Elections, Conducted under the auspices of the American Committee for Devastated France, n.d., Mss-Col 2036, Box 25, Folder 5, MCFP.
47 Report of the First Vice-President of the American Committee for Devastated France, 1922, Mss-Col 2036, Box 25, Folder 1, MCFP.
49 Address by Mr. Sheldon Whitehouse, Counsellor of the U.S. Embassy at the Hotel de Ville, Paris, August 23, 1922, 1922, Mss-Col 2036, Box 25, Folder 3, MCFP.
Addressing the delegates in 1922, French officials made the case for American leniency on the issue of war debts and a limited French disarmament. President Alexandre Millerand offered a rebuttal to American anxieties about France’s reluctance to significantly reduce their military capacities following the war. The President reminded the women that French intentions were peaceful, but pragmatic: “We are a pacific people, but we will not be dupes. We ask only justice, and we are sure to get it, because we are determined to have it, and you will aid us.”

Local Aisne Department officials echoed Millerand; the Secretary of the Department Federation of Cooperatives of Reconstruction entreated the women to “Tell your people in the United States that France is not militaristic, but that France must defend herself.” These French officials who received the first Good Will Delegates in 1922 emphasized the role that delegates could play in telling their fellow Americans “the truth about France today,” and helping to “tighten the bonds that have slackened” between the two countries, as Tardieu put it. Witnessing firsthand conditions in France, delegates could serve as “lady reporters,” tasked with opposing “to the falsehood and calumnies invented by our late common enemy against France, the plain honest truth.” For these French officials, the Good Will Tours presented an opportunity to make their case with the United States by gaining the sympathy of the American women visiting France under the auspices of the American Committee.

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50 “Millerand Greets American Women,” New York Times, August 26, 1922, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.; Address by President Millerand At Rambouillet, August 25, 1922, 1922, Mss-Col 2036, Box 25, Folder 3, MCFP.
51 Address by M. le Comte d'Hennestel, Secretary of the Departmental Federation of Cooperatives of Reconstruction – Representing Senator de Lubersac, at Blerancourt, Aisne, 1922, Mss-Col 2036, Box 25, Folder 3, MCFP.
52 Address by M. André Tardieu, Honorary President of the American Committee for Devastated France, At Blerancourt, 1922, Mss-Col 2036, Box 25, Folder 3, MCFP.
53 Address by M. Fernand-Laurent. Vice-President of the Municipal Council of Paris, at Hotel de Ville, August 23, 1922, 1922, Mss-Col 2036, Box 25, Folder 3, MCFP.
Through their philanthropic work, the American Committee positioned themselves as a diplomatic intermediary between France and the United States, recognized by officials in both countries as a convenient ally in furthering their own objectives. The American Committee drew on the recognized authority of its primarily female membership in humanitarian work in order to use their philanthropy as a tool of diplomatic politics. Indeed, during the 1922 tours French officials praised the “tender care and infinite mercy” of delegates, suggesting that, as wives and mothers, these women felt especially strongly the importance of peace. In this respect, the ACDF’s forays into diplomatic politics through their philanthropic work in France resembled similar trends among other American female social activists during this era who leveraged their authority in the area of benevolent work to create expanded social roles for themselves. However, the American Committee’s work demonstrates the ways in which philanthropy enabled upper-class women to participate in these trends beyond American borders and to contribute to the growing importance of private organizations in the conduct of international diplomacy following the First World War.

54 Address by M. Fernand-Laurent. Vice-President of the Municipal Council of Paris, at Hotel de Ville, August 23, 1922, Mss-Col 2036, Box 25, Folder 3, MCFP.; Address by M. Fernand-Laurent. Vice-President of the Municipal Council of Paris, at Hotel de Ville, August 23, 1922, Mss-Col 2036, Box 25, Folder 3, MCFP.; Address by Monseigneur Lucon, Archbishop of Reims, August 6th, 1922, Mss-Col 2036, Box 25, Folder 3, MCFP.
In July 1924, the American Committee concluded its work in France and turned over its remaining programs to local committees. French and American officials came together to honour the Committee’s work at a ceremony conducted at the ACDF’s Blérancourt headquarters on July 20. American Ambassador and Committee President Myron Herrick sent his praise of the Committee’s work as exemplary of “the very substance of that national friendship of which diplomatic expression is at best a shadow.” For Herrick, the Committee symbolized more than a reconstruction agency; he noted instead that “it ha[d] been a highly successful experiment in international partnership for the solution of an enormous social problem.” In Herrick’s estimation, the American Committee contributed not only to the reconstruction of France’s most devastated regions, but helped to preserve friendly ties between France and the United States during a period of diplomatic tension; it had been “the best ally an Ambassador possibly could have.”

Herrick was careful to note that the efforts he so vehemently praised were principally the work of women, remarking, “Every bit of the credit for the accomplishments of this committee belongs to women. The men participating worked under the guidance and inspiration of the women.” Herrick sought to emphasize that this project was not one of conniving diplomats, but rather one inspired and led by the authentic generosity of American women.

The American Committee for Devastated France presents a case study of elite women employing philanthropy as means of personal advancement and an instrument of civilian diplomacy in the years following the First World War. The Committee originated in a context of expanding opportunities for American women in benevolent and social reform work, and drew upon the recognized authority of women in charitable work in the United States and in

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humanitarian work overseas to articulate its organizational approach and aims. The ACDF’s work in France fit within an established sphere of American women’s civilian relief work, which provided them with the cultural authority to continue similar programs in France following the armistice as other humanitarian organizations such as the Red Cross scaled back or terminated their own work.

As did other humanitarian organizations operating in Europe during, and after, the First World War, the American Committee’s leadership drew upon their past experiences with social reform work in the United States to construct their programs in France. As the Committee’s co-founder and most visible representative, Anne Morgan employed her wealth and social connections to assert the organizational autonomy of the ACDF and to build ties with business and political elites in both France and the United States that enabled the Committee to operate independently. Morgan’s strategic use of her class privilege in service of the ACDF enabled her to cultivate her own authority within the organization, turning latent privilege into power over people and resources. In this regard, Morgan’s work with the ADCF resembles strategies employed by female philanthropists in the United States who leveraged their wealth and influence to further their personal ambitions and to serve a cause larger than themselves. Morgan’s reliance on her class privilege to promote the American Committee allowed her to build an organization wherein other American women—largely college-educated and middle- or upper-class—could achieve personal and professional fulfillment through service overseas in the postwar years.

The organizational independence and institutional connections that Morgan forged positioned the American Committee well to act as a private diplomatic intermediary between France and the United States during the period of Franco-American tensions that followed the armistice. Their status as a private organization provided the Committee with an image of
neutrality that made them a strategically-advantageous ally for both the French and American governments. Through their ties to officials in both the American and French governments, the ACDF used social reconstruction programs and propaganda tools to promote a positive image of each in the other country in order to emphasize the importance of mutual understanding and international cooperation. The ACDF capitalized on the recognized authority of its principally female leadership to advance their position as a diplomatic intermediary. The experience of the American Committee suggests that philanthropy provided upper-class women with an opportunity to play an influential role as diplomatic actors in close cooperation with government officials.

The story of the American Committee for Devastated France represents a point of convergence between narratives of the expansion of opportunities for American women to occupy new social roles accelerated by the First World War, and the importance of private voluntary organizations in diplomatic politics during the 1920s. By suggesting the potential for philanthropy to serve as a means for elite American women to become diplomatic actors, my account of the ACDF prolongs narratives of women’s engagement overseas beyond the period of the war and provides an example of women’s philanthropy at work in the international sphere. In this regard, my research suggests that future analyses of American postwar humanitarian and philanthropic work should consider the ways in which diplomatic relations between Europe and the United States after the war continued to shape the ways that women engaged with issues of international significance.
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