

A further question that arose in the discussion on the scope of UNRRA's activities was that of defining the areas within which the Administration shall operate. These fall broadly into three types (1) a liberated area in which a Government or recognized national authority does not yet exercise administrative authority; (2) a liberated area in which a Government or recognized national authority exercises administrative authority; and (3) an enemy or ex-enemy area. The inclusion of this third category provoked some varying views. Should relief be confined exclusively to United Nations territories? Might not any allusion to relief for ex-enemies be misunderstood by the oppressed peoples still under the invader? In contrast with these well-understandable queries are the hopes held out, the solemn promises indeed, as in the Atlantic Charter, for equality of treatment "to victor and vanquished alike," an undertaking in line with the promise made on behalf of the United Kingdom Government when Mr. Winston Churchill declared,*

"We can and we will arrange in advance for the speedy entry of food into any part of the enslaved area, when this part has been wholly cleared of German forces, and has genuinely regained its freedom. We shall do our best to encourage the building-up of reserves of food all over the world, so that there will always be held up before the eyes of the peoples of Europe including—I say it deliberately—the German and Austrian peoples, the certainty that the shattering of the Nazi power will bring to them all immediate food, freedom, and peace."

Further, is it not the part of wisdom to recognize that medical and other relief in ex-enemy territories may be imperative to prevent and check epidemics that would assuredly pay no respect to national frontiers? It was in line with these considerations that the Council rejected one suggested form of words that would have prohibited UNRRA's operating in ex-enemy territories except to the extent that its operations would be in the interests of the United Nations. It was, however, agreed that UNRRA should operate in ex-enemy territories "only from such a time and for such purposes as may be agreed upon between the military command . . . and the Administration . . . and subject to such control as the military command . . . may find necessary"; with the added provisos that "the Council approve the scale and nature of the operations it is proposed to undertake and the standard of provision, and that all expenses connected with such possible operations in an enemy or ex-enemy area should be carried by the enemy or ex-enemy country concerned." The words as quoted leave it unstated whether "should be carried" means that payment is an imperative pre-condition of relief or simply an expression of hope. The discussions, however, clearly favoured this latter interpretation; it was sensibly recognized, even by those who favoured perhaps harsher words than were agreed, that in fact UNRRA should function if necessary in ex-enemy territory without being first concerned with expenses. The proceedings were thus in no way inconsistent with the belief that the United Nations are "wise enough to understand that they must extend their healing mercies to the peoples of the vanquished States not less than to those of the victors."† No conflict, in short, is to be reported between the promises of the Atlantic Charter and the decisions taken at Atlantic City.

As to the relevance of UNRRA to the tragic famine raging in India at the time of the Atlantic City Conference, two views were possible: One that it might be regarded as competent for UNRRA to assist there by virtue of Article I (2) (a), which states that the functions of the Administration shall be to provide "for the relief of victims of war in any area under the control of any of the United Nations" (and the wartime loss of Burma's rice crop, also the influx of refugees, have admittedly intensified the famine). An alternative interpretation, following the words in the preamble, might be that the agreement applies only to areas liberated "by the armed forces of the United Nations." Between these views the Council did not decide, and, indeed, the issue was not brought directly before it by the delegation concerned.

PROCUREMENT OF SUPPLIES

The relationship of UNRRA to existing Combined Board machinery with respect to the procurement and allocation of relief supplies gave rise to what was probably the most important issue discussed as well as the issue on which opinions were perhaps most divided at Atlantic City. Since these Boards were already exercising effective control over the bulk of essential war supplies available to the United Nations, including food, raw materials, production facilities and resources, and shipping services, the question immediately arose as to whether the same procedure should not apply in the case of supplies and services required by UNRRA. It was clear that any attempt on the part of UNRRA itself, or of the individual Governments represented on its Council to indulge in wildly competitive buying, particularly in the immediate post-war period of acute scarcity, would almost certainly lead to serious confusion and dislocation. It would result, too, in a most inequitable distribution of the limited supplies likely to be available as between "rich" and "poor" countries. The necessity was readily accepted of ensuring that purchase for relief purposes, either during or after the war, are properly co-ordinated and supplies fairly distributed. The question at issue was how and by whom should this function be exercised. At first considerable concern was shown, in view of the restricted membership of the Combined Boards, in the suggestion that final responsibility should rest with these allocating agencies. On the other hand, it was agreed from the outset that the activities of UNRRA should be "so conducted that they do not impede the effective prosecution of the war" and that they should be carried out in the fullest collaboration with the military authorities in any given area. It was obvious, moreover, that UNRRA would have to secure the bulk of its supplies from areas under the direct or indirect control (from a procurement point of

* House of Commons, Official Report, 20th August, 1940, Vol. 364, col. 1162. † "When Hostilities Cease" (Chapter by H. J. Laski), p. 31.