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**HERBERT HOOVER FOR POLAND  
AND POLISH MANAGERIAL  
ENVIRONMENT**

Thanks to a very precious, yet not widely recognized exhibition titled *American friendship. Herbert Hoover and Poland*, hosted by a few main Polish towns<sup>1</sup> for a year (from 13<sup>th</sup> November 2004 to 13<sup>th</sup> November 2005), the 31<sup>st</sup> President of The United States Herbert Hoover was reminded as a very merited person for Poland. The exhibition showed the man whose strangely sounding name was known, like the names of Paderewski and Piłsudski, by each barefoot and illiterate Polish child in the first years after Poland regained its independence in 1918. It was Hoover, an orphan from Iowa, who prevented some of those children from dying of famine, diseases and coldness or caused that others suffered less of famine, were better protected against coldness or just cured. That carried out on a very wide scale charity campaign, with thousands of volunteers, enabled the people, who tried to arrange their lives on the war-destroyed areas of nearly whole Poland to survive the most difficult years.

The collection, coming mainly from the archives of Hoover Institute at Stanford University and a few other institutions, was for the first time exhibited publicly. Hundreds of pictures showed the dramatic elements of Polish history, for years doomed to be forgotten. Thin bodies, sunken-eyed children's faces, barefoot and poorly dressed people, tens and thousands of hungry human beings from the whole Poland. Including the parade of a few thousands of the hungry and barefoot, yet hoping for help, marching on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1919 through Pola Mokotowskie [*the area in the centre of Warsaw*] in front of an American delegate who came to assess the food situation in Poland. This manifestation of hope was disturbed by a rabbit that suddenly ran through the crowd. The animal was caught by the children and given to Hoover as the symbol of their gratitude. This hard and well-built man was in tears.

## 1. Hoover for Poland

Who was Herbert Hoover (1874-1964) before he visited Poland? The encyclopaedic entry reads: an orphan from his young age, child of a rural blacksmith, geology graduate from Stanford University, organizer of students' events

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<sup>1</sup> The exhibition took place from 13<sup>th</sup> November 2004 until 16<sup>th</sup> January 2005 in Stanisławowska Library in the Royal Castle in Warsaw; from 16<sup>th</sup> February until 13<sup>th</sup> March 2005 in the Municipal Museum of Łódź; from 4<sup>th</sup> until 31<sup>st</sup> May 2005 in the "Castle" Cultural Centre in Poznań; from 4<sup>th</sup> July until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2005 in Collegiums Maius of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow and from 12<sup>th</sup> October until 13<sup>th</sup> November in the Historical Museum of Katowice. The result of this last exhibition was adopting on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006 Herbert Hoover as the patron by the Complex of Secondary and Post-gymnasium Schools in Ruda Śląska. (P. Jedlicki: Amerykański prezydent w rudzkiej szkole [American President in a school of Ruda Śląska]. In: „Gazeta Wyborcza – Katowice”, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2006).

(then he got to know the piano *maestro* J.I. Paderewski; acquaintance with the artist transformed into life friendship), expert in deposit exploitation and transport working in different countries until 1914 (Australia, China, Russia), independent businessman, organiser of evacuation of thousands of Americans from Belgium at the outbreak of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War. Only then he realized that the country, having experienced the march of troops and run of the front line, faced the disaster. As a consequence, he founded the Belgium Aid Committee. Soon it turned out that the situation in East Europe was much worse. The aid campaign needed to be extended and surely continued. There were no special funds, yet there was will to help. When the USA entered into the war in 1917, the President Woodrow Wilson nominated Hoover the Food Administrator, the head of the office to make an inventory and better manage American food resources. The office soon indicated food surplus, in some sense wasted so far, that could be used to help Europe, starving in the result of war destructions. There was created the American Aid Administration headed by Herbert Hoover in 1918-1923. The main aid direction was Poland, whose tragic location, big famine on its east areas and hard fate of thousand of orphans deeply moved the head of the aid administration agency.

Hoover “entered Poland with his army” welcomed with arms spread wide-open by both the authorities and poor beneficiaries, people receiving help irrespective of their ethnic origins: Poles, Russians, Jews and Lithuanians. Hoover’s weapons were thousands of tons of food, millions of meters of cotton, drugs, raw materials and means of transport, as well as specialized teams, like for example priceless Grey Samaritans or American Red Cross, all supported with a very efficient distribution system. This was a huge *non-profit* project, smartly, skilfully and devotedly managed. It started with raising funds to purchase food, clothes and drugs and finished with reaching the addressee in need, an inhabitant of the country lacking appropriate infrastructure. In addition, the harbour in Gdansk, the only possible place of cargo handling was not friendly towards the events. Let the examples speak.

On 17<sup>th</sup> February 1919, the first three ships reached Gdansk. Until harvest time 300 thousand tons of food, mainly flour, and clothes were delivered to Poland. 16 thousand carriages and 550 barges were used to distribute the goods throughout the country. The operational headquarters headed by H. Gibson were installed in Warsaw to provide distribution to the furthest areas. This marked the beginning of aid gained in many different ways under Hoover’s leadership. Hoover himself, who claimed that „only then Poland would become free, when it would be strong enough to rise from poverty brought to the country by occu-

pants and conquerors”<sup>2</sup>, was invincible in raising funds. The first aid action was financed by both the Crop Corporation and War Department. The fact that the Congress adopted the 100 million-dollar-benefit for starving Europeans rescued the situation in 1919. At the same time, the resources of American troops located in France were delivered. Hoover initiated the campaign against food wasting in each American family. The food surplus collected, willingly handed over not only by the three-million-Polonia, constituted a substantial part of the aid shipped. He also organized charity events. When at the turn of 1920/1921 Hoover received a dramatic letter from the Prime Minister Wincenty Witos on the need to continue the aid campaign (according to estimations about half a million children were likely not to have survived winter), his reaction was immediate. An enormous amount of \$20 m. was needed. Hoover began with giving a banquet in a hotel in New York. The admittance fee was \$1 thousand per person. As the Warsaw “Robotnik”<sup>3</sup> reported: dinner was served on wooden tables, metal plates and without any napkins. It consisted of potatoes, rice and a cup of cocoa. A tall chair for an absent child was placed in the middle of the huge table. There was a candle on the chair, which, as a symbol of a child’s fate coming to an end, cast light on women’s evening dresses and men’s white shirts. That night Hoover collected \$1 m., and soon the whole sum. Starting in May 1920 the feeding action covered about 300 thousand children from the poorest families and most neglected regions. There were more than 10 thousand delivery points to which trucks supplied food. In the main headquarters there was a map of Poland showing more and more such points, in particular in the central and east part of the country. There were also baby care stations. The Warsaw station followed the statement of gratitude said by Maria Feliksa Drzewiecka<sup>4</sup>, the Warsaw President’s wife: „when these babies grow up, their mothers will tell them what America and its great representative Hoover did for them” (a fragment of the exhibition). The country was provided with steam locomotive, cooking utensils and medical equipment. Upon the consent of victorious Entente the American warship called at the harbour in Gdansk to prevent obstacles and facilitate cargo handling.

Medical help was particularly a humanitarian act. When in 1919 a typhus epidemic, killing more people than the war, spread from the east, a group of 500 American specialists, equipped in 5 thousand portable baths, 1 thousand steam

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<sup>2</sup> Z.L. Stańczyk: Zapomniany przyjaciel naszego kraju [A Forgotten Friend of Our Country]. „Rzeczpospolita”, 23-24 November 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Piotr Drzewiecki’s wife, the president of Warsaw at that time, strong supporter of scientific management methods.

disinfecting stations and 8 hundred trucks, came to rescue. The action planned for a few months was extended up to 2 years and many volunteers died while performing their duties. To sum it up, a three-year-operation of the American Aid Administration cost \$200 m. (2 billion according to the present conversion factor). In our country there remained hundreds of cars and trucks, locomotives, equipment and utensils, and first of all physically and mentally strengthened citizens. Hoover claimed that a permanent condition of efficient foreign aid was releasing Poland from debts and loans burdens<sup>5</sup>. That is why the Polish nation has always spontaneously believed in friendship with America, with the belief never disturbed despite of tens of years of lies and sneering, as well as wiping out all traces of the greatest aid projects in the history of the world. However, Poland, like a boomerang, kept returning to Hoover. After the invasion in 1939 he created the Polish Aid Commission, and once the II World War ended, he was again assigned by the President H. Truman with the organization of aid for starving nations of Europe. Making a reconnaissance in destroyed countries in March/April 1946 he again visited Poland. He was shocked at the situation, the extent of destruction and ruins of Warsaw. The visit was kept in secret, although it helped thousands people to survive and millions to live better thanks to packets delivered by UNRRA and CARE resources. Only individuals knew that the operation was led by the same American benefactor. That time he also did not forget children, orphans in particular, so dear to his heart. That was thanks to his effort that UNICEF, a UN agency to help poor children of the world, was founded.

## 2. Hoover for Polish managerial environment

While organizing aid, Hoover did not supply only fish but also a fishing rod. Since he was a great manager who worked in different industries in the world, he knew the value of enterprising economic activities. The American Aid Administration aimed at causing economic recoveries in the countries receiving aid. In its structure there was an Inter-Ally Coal Commission headed by lieutenant A.C. Goodyear. While staying in Poland he sent many reports to Washington and other members of Entente in which he demanded the mining region of Silesia to be as quickly as possible included into the borders of Poland. He forced Germany to transfer railway rolling stock to transport Silesian coal to Poland.

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<sup>5</sup> L. Pastusiak reports that in 1919 Poland purchased food for over \$50 m., when aid from the army worth almost \$60 m. was paid in 1/3 (Prezydenci amerykańscy wobec spraw polskich [American Presidents vs. Polish Issues]. Warszawa, p. 75).

Horrified by low wages of Silesian miners, he suggested that they would become easy victims of German propaganda. Weavers in Łódź were in a similar situation. A collapse of ready markets, exportation of machinery and decline of banking system resulted in huge unemployment. Having received the report, Hoover decided to send 25 thousand cotton bales, which enabled 250 thousand workers to come back to workshops<sup>6</sup>. The town slowly started moving.

Polish-American friendship was continued in other areas, not paid attention to at the exhibition but worth reminding. In the industrial and scientific management environment Hoover was present as a cooperation leader. In 1921-1929 as the federal Minister of Trade in the cabinets of W.G. Harding's and C. Coolidge's, he gathered outstanding individuals of scientific management. He was particularly sensitive to all symptoms of waste. The experience gained in collecting food likely-to-have-been-wasted Hoover used in economy. That was of his initiative that an industrial waste report titled *Waste in Industry* was developed in 1921, a collective work of the Federated American Engineering Societies written by 80 engineers and scientific managers (including L.P. Alford, G. Babcock, M.L. Cooke, H. Emerson, C.E. Knoeppel, L.W. Wallace). They analysed industrial factors and operations likely to cause waste; that was a basis to create a test questionnaire that enabled to collect information and quantity data; initial research was carried out in one enterprise in selected industries; results were compared; corrections in the questionnaire were made and the research in six typical industries started: construction (S.E. Thompson), men's clothes (M.L. Cooke), shoes manufacturing (S.E. Thompson), printing industry (J.H. Williams), metal industry (F.J. Miller assisted by B. Ferguson) and weaving industry (W.R. Basset). The research results were additionally presented in sectional aspects, tables and charts, which enabled waste to be divided into three groups<sup>7</sup>: (i) connected with human factor organization, (ii) connected with technical knowledge of physical factors, (iii) connected with workmanship.

*Waste in industry* reached Polish readers as early as at the beginning of 1926. However, it came into existence a lot before. During the 1<sup>st</sup> Polish Congress of Scientific Management held on 6-8 December in Warsaw eng. K. Kincel summarized the work to other engineers present<sup>8</sup>. Karol Adamiecki in his presentation considered an American report on waste to be „one of the most brilliant engineering works recently published” and perceived it as an impulse to develop

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<sup>6</sup> Z.L. Stańczyk: Op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> „Przegląd Organizacji” 1926, 1, p. 31.

<sup>8</sup> K. Kincel: Marnotrawstwo w przemyśle podług badań amerykańskich [Waste in Industry According to American Research]. In: Naukowa Organizacja pracy. Pierwszy Zjazd Polski 1924 [Scientific Management of Work. 1<sup>st</sup> Polish Congress in 1924]. Warszawa 1925, p. 11-26.

a new scientific field. He particularly appreciated „indicating factors conditioning elimination of waste with their relation of significance. The statement that elimination of losses in almost three fourths depends on administration and management constitutes some kind of sensational discovery, particularly for those who concentrate on technology and routine only and do not value these factors at all”<sup>9</sup>. Speaking generally he claimed that big waste resulted from failing to observe the principle of seeking the greatest useful result at the lowest cost.

In the introduction to the Polish issue Karol Adamiecki wrote: „this is a diagnosis of the most important diseases of industry”<sup>10</sup>. It was H. Hoover who, as a chairman of the American Engineers Council, engaged himself in having this model of empirical industrial research translated in Polish. He wrote a special letter in which he expressed his satisfaction that these research results on waste in industry would do as much good in Poland as they did in America. That gesture was appreciated by a Polish publisher. „Kindness manifested by engineer Herbert Hoover, whose name will be always recognized by each Pole for his help brought to war victims, is a great encouragement and honour for us”<sup>11</sup> – that is how K. Adamiecki ended the introduction.

It is not commonly known that the publishing event had its continuation. In issues nos 4-5 and 6 of „Przegląd Organizacji” [“Organizational Review”] of 1926 there was published an article on consequences of the American report in the Ministry of Trade titled *Elimination of Waste. Simplified Practice (Normalization)*. The introduction to the paper was written by Piotr Drzewiecki (who claimed that normalization conditioned proper scientific management), Henry Le Chatelier (reprint of his introduction from *Revue de Metalurgie* to the French edition of the article) and Herbert Hoover himself. Hoover’s introduction contained very distinct economic directions followed by the author during his later presidency. “The first obligation of an organized society is to facilitate life of an individual and increase their welfare”<sup>12</sup> – the first sentence reads. These are production and wealth distribution that increase welfare, improve human relations and enhance civilization progress. Since waste disturbs these processes, it should be lowered or eliminated. Also systematic actions may bring more good than great inventions. In this way Hoover defined the areas of the phenomenon to be fought: „Waste exists everywhere where workers are moved away when production volume is lower; where one speculates and excessively increases production

<sup>9</sup> K. Adamiecki: Stanowisko inżyniera jako kierownika zakładów wytwórczych [An Engineer as a Manager of a Manufacturing Enterprise]. In: *Naukowa Organizacja pracy...*, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>10</sup> *Marnotrawstwo w przemyśle*. Warsaw 1926, p. III.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. IV.

<sup>12</sup> „Przegląd Organizacji” 1926, 4-5, p. 126.

in time favourable for invertors; where there are difficulties or conflicts with workers; where transport of raw materials, food and machinery fuel malfunctions; where seasonal work prevails; where everyday use objects are characterized by lack of simplicity and over-sophistication of forms; where there is production loss and too much waste”<sup>13</sup>. This was a wide meaning. As if that enumerative definition of waste constituted an economic programme, not only organizational improvement, particularly when all the symptoms appeared together.

In a special letter to the Institute of Scientific Management in Warsaw Hoover wrote that „an initiative and cooperation of managers are the only healthy and efficient method to remove waste from industry”<sup>14</sup>. However, the author of the letter also emphasized that waste in industry was not the problem to be dealt with by the government, there was adopted a strategy of institutional changes in the federal Ministry of Trade to promote and implement two methodological elements: normalization of products and simplified practice. Those two factors were claimed to be the most efficient in eliminating waste. A separate Department of Simplified Practice was created to cooperate closely with the existing Department of Fabrication and non-governmental Office of Standards (Normalization). The work and instructions of the above said units were reported in the publication mentioned<sup>15</sup>, followed by the article *Six Ways to Eliminate Waste* by Ray M. Hudson, the director of the Department of Simplified Practice in the American Ministry of Trade. It may be remained that he saw a success of the campaign in<sup>16</sup>: (i) direct decrease of waste, (ii) waste management and better use of side products, (iii) better use of the existing machinery, (iv) introducing technological improvements, (v) simplifying manufacturing methods and normalization (standards), (vi) better management of manufacturing resources. Additionally, he claimed rational control methods to be indispensable.

It is not very common that a narrow professional environment in an unknown and far away country was so much supported by the governmental and social spheres of a power-gaining state. In case of Poland it was possible thanks to a very favourable attitude and kindness of a well-known person of the American scene, leader of technical associations, head of a significant ministry eng. Herbert Hoover, soon to become the president of the difficult term (1929-1933). The Polish side was fully aware of this fact. The scientific management envi-

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> A letter of Herbert Hoover. In: *Marnotrawstwo w przemyśle*. Warsaw 1926.

<sup>15</sup> „Przegląd Organizacji” 1926, 4, 5, p. 126-131; 1926, 6, p. 179-189 (reprint of the brochure *Elimination of Waste. Simplified Practice, what it is and what it offers*. Washington 1924).

<sup>16</sup> R.M. Hudson: *Sześć sposobów usuwania marnotrawstwa [Six Ways to Eliminate Waste]*. In: „Przegląd Organizacji” 1926, 6, p. 199-204.



ronment expressed this awareness by dedicating the issue no 7 of „Przegląd Organizacji” [“Organizational Review”] of 1926 to America. The chief editor Karol Adamiński in his editorial titled *Pomoc z Ameryki [Help from America]* made, – in both solemn and matter-of-fact words, – an inventory of the American assistance<sup>17</sup>, a very significant phenomenon for creating grounds for a new area of knowledge and practice in Poland. He thanked Leo Wallace, the chairman of the Council of American Engineers, for helping Polish technicians and engineers to study and practice in American enterprises; Morris L. Cook, the chairman of the *Taylor Society* – for a library of American works on scientific management to be a gift for the Institute of Scientific Management<sup>18</sup>; authors such as R. Kent, J.W. Roe, J.P. Jordan, S.E. Thompson, H.S. Person, L.M. Gilbreth for sending a great number of precious information on American publications and for their consent to have their papers translated free of charge; H. Emerson for handing over a set of his lectures; and finally W. Clark for handing over his own works (including *Wykresy Gantta jako środek organizacji – Gantt’s charts as scientific management instrument*) as well as a set of publications by the Committee for Simplified Practice together with a promise of further cooperation made by also H. Hoover. However, Adamiński would not be Adamiński if he did not look critically – even at the moment like that one – at the situation described. He did not forget to notice that the Czech and Germans received more<sup>19</sup>, and their organizations cooperated better. He encouraged to seek improvement. The Czech solution served him as an example – nominating an engineer *attaché* who made direct relations with the American industry and economic organizations<sup>20</sup>. Adamiński regretted that social organization in Poland were still more bounded to material help rather than to studies on technological and economic progress, whose prospects were more solid. He was worried about the American guests to become appalled by Polish disorder<sup>21</sup>. Gratitude was balanced with further expectations; it should still be remembered that the requests formulated aimed at stabilizing grounds for rational economy in the reborn state. It is necessary to seek and take advantage of all chances, whereas „not all, also in Poland, benefit from possibilities provided by selflessness of the Americans in assisting and supporting others”<sup>22</sup>. This was not the end, since

<sup>17</sup> K.A. [Karol Adamiński]: *Pomoc z Ameryki [Help from America]*. In: „Przegląd Organizacji” 1926, 7, p. 214-215.

<sup>18</sup> A list of 91 titles of American works with a letter by M.L. Cooke in: “Przegląd Organizacji” 1927, 4, 145-146.

<sup>19</sup> See also *Stosunki z Ameryką [Relations with America]*. In: “Przegląd Organizacji” 1927, 4, p. 143.

<sup>20</sup> Eng. S. Špaček, well-known Czech scientific manager cooperating with INO, was one of them.

<sup>21</sup> K.A. [Karol Adamiński]: *Op. cit.*, p. 216.

<sup>22</sup> *Stosunki z Ameryką...*, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

combating waste transferred slowly into an informal credo of the Polish environment, continued and was still reflected in the mirror of American events.

In November 1926 H. Hoover officially summarised the project in „Przegląd Organizacji” [“Organizational Review”] (1927, nos 3 and 4) in his article *Amerykańskie postępy w dziedzinie usuwania marnotrawstwa* [*American progress in eliminating waste*], whereas already mentioned R.M. Hudson indicated in the closing article that everybody in an enterprise should be responsible for eliminating waste, from the president of the board to the youngest officer, each within their competences; moreover in practice this *should* becomes *must*, the duty not to be released from even in the most intense course of everyday activities. Even the tiniest saving matters, particularly during market prosperity. „Since a man tends not to pay attention to details, particularly when in a hurry, the process of eliminating waste should start during the time of increased production”<sup>23</sup>. Let us not be confused by a difference of the today’s approach. In those days that was a real programme, lively responded to. It was adopted in practice both in private American business<sup>24</sup> and national economies of other countries, including Poland<sup>25</sup>, as proved by a series of articles by eng. Jan Śmigielski.

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<sup>23</sup> R.M. Hudson: *Usuwanie marnotrawstwa* [Eliminating Waste]. In: „Przegląd Organizacji” 1927, 6, p. 243.

<sup>24</sup> See.: *O wyśledzeniu owych przeciętnych 28% strat* [On finding average 28% of waste]. In: „Przegląd Organizacji” 1927, 1, 2, showing an approving attitude towards Hoover’s report of C.U. Carpenter, a typical businessman, whose own experience confirmed that it was possible to save 28% – as the report suggested – at each stage of production. „Read this book by Hoover! If you have not done it yet – buy «Waste in Industry» and let it become your production bible” – he recommended enthusiastically (Ibid., „Przegląd Organizacji” 1927, 1, p. 21).

<sup>25</sup> J. Śmigielski: *Źródła strat w przemyśle* [Sources of waste in industry]. In: „Przegląd Organizacji” 1927, 6, 8, 9, 10 and in further perspective (1928) creating (like in other countries) the Survey Commission for Examining Costs and Production Conditions, headed by Aleksander Rothert. The report contained 17 volumes (1930).