

Lady Muriel Paget's Mission to Daugavpils (Part I)*

Lēdijas Mjūrielas Peidžetas palīdzības misija Daugavpilī (1. daļa)

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In February 1920, Lady Muriel Paget established a children's hospital in Daugavpils. It was the start of a relief Mission which operated until the autumn of 1922, taking the form eventually of infant welfare clinics and feeding kitchens. From the start of 1921, this Mission was broadened to include Riga and, ultimately, Tallinn and Kaunas; but the core of the operation remained Daugavpils. This article explores the centrality of Daugavpils to the work of the Mission, the evolution of Lady Muriel's ambitions, and the often fraught relationship with her chief funder, the Save the Children Fund (SCF).

The article is published in two parts. Part I discusses the origins of the Mission in Lady Muriel's concern to gain access to northern Russia, and the debate about the nature of the Mission – whether to concentrate on a single hospital or to broaden the reach of the Mission through a network of welfare clinics and feeding kitchens, issues finally resolved by Lady Muriel's own dramatic visit to Daugavpils in October 1920. Part Two considers the evolution of the Mission in 1921–22, once the support of the SCF had been obtained for an endeavour focused on the Baltic states rather than Daugavpils alone. It focuses on the difficult relationship between the Mission and its chief supporter, the SCF, and differing understandings of the nature of relief work. The SCF cut funding for the Mission on the grounds that the situation in the Baltic states was no longer an emergency. However, it did agree to some additional funding after the Daugavpils flood of April 1922.

Keywords: Baltic states, history, Daugavpils, philanthropy, child-care.

1920. gada februārī lēdija Mjūriela Peidžeta Daugavpilī nodibināja bērnu slimnīcu. Tas bija sākums palīdzības misijai, kas darbojās līdz 1922. gada rudenim, vēlāk izveidojot zidaiņu aprūpes klinikas un ēdināšanas virtuves. No 1921. gada sākuma šī misija tika paplašināta, iekļaujot arī Rīgu un galu galā Tallinu un Kauņu, taču tās darbības kodols palika Daugavpils. Šajā rakstā aplūkota Daugavpils centrālā loma misijas darbā, lēdijas Mjūrielas ambīciju

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attīstība un bieži vien sarežģītās attiecības ar galveno finansētāju “Fondu “Glābiet bērņus”” (*Save the Children Fund*, SCF).

Šis raksts ir publicēts divās daļās. Pirmajā daļā ir aplūkoti misijas pirmsākumi, kas bija saistīti ar lēdijas Mjūrielas centieniem iegūt piekļuvi Krievijas ziemeļiem, un debates par misijas būtību – vai koncentrēties uz vienu slimnīcu vai paplašināt misijas darbības lauku, izveidojot kliniku un ēdināšanas virtuvju tīklu; šie jautājumi tika atrisināti lēdijas Mjūrielas vizītes laikā Daugavpilī 1920. gada oktobrī. Otrā daļa tiks aplūkota nākamajā žurnāla numurā.

Atslēgvārdi: Baltijas valstis, vēsture, Daugavpils, filantropija, bērnu aprūpe.

Introduction

The topic of the foreign humanitarian aid given to Latvia as it emerged into statehood during the Independence War and immediately thereafter is not entirely new. Ēriks Jēkabsons in his monumental study *Latvijas un Amerikas Savienoto Valstu attiecības, 1918.–1922. gadā*, published by Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds in 2018 discusses both diplomatic and humanitarian relations between the two states, and, in the context of this article, the work in Latvia of the American Red Cross (ARC) and the American Relief Administration (ARA). The work of people like Thomas Orbison, the Chief of the Latvian Mission of the ARA is chronicled, and there are several passing references to the work of other aid organisations, including Lady Muriel’s Mission. Not all the references to the Mission are positive. In February 1920, when Lady Muriel first suggested co-operation with the ARA in bringing aid to Daugavpils, there was some caution on the part of the ARA because joint work in Slovakia the previous year had not gone well, and Lady Muriel herself was rumoured to be in contact

with British Intelligence, a false allegation which dogged her all her life. However, Orbison and Lady Muriel did co-operate in Daugavpils despite these reservations. On a personal level, relations between Lady Muriel and Edward Rayen, Commissioner for the Baltic of the American Red Cross were not good – he was not alone in finding her overpowering personality difficult to work with. Once, when she was in Riga, Rayen spent her whole visit trying to avoid her, although the two organisations continued to co-operate in Daugavpils despite this.¹

A more detailed study of Lady Muriel Paget’s philanthropic work in the Baltic states is provided in the work of Andrea Griffante. His *Children, Poverty and Nationalism in Lithuania, 1900–1940* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature / Palgrave Pivot, 2019) touches on the topic, which is explored in more detail in his *For the Sake of the Children: The Lady Muriel Paget Mission to the Baltic States (1920–1922) in European Review of History: Revue Européenne d’Histoire*, published online in November 2023; Griffante also plans to publish a further article on this topic. The article below differs in several ways to the work done by Griffante. First, it focuses on Daugavpils and argues that the origins of the mission were in Lady Paget’s plans to aid victims of the Russian Civil War and to use Daugavpils as an entry point of aid to Russia, a plan that evolved only gradually into a plan for aid to Latvia and the other Baltic states. Because of this, the operation in Daugavpils began in February 1920 – almost a full year before the broader operation to the Baltic states, and, because of the Daugavpils flood of April 1922, the operation continued longer than elsewhere. Second, as well as exploring this Daugavpils angle and the evolution of Lady Muriel’s ambitions, the article considers the at times fraught relationship between the Mission and its chief

funder, the SCF; it was the decision of the SCF not to renew funding which led to Lady Paget's Mission ceasing operations. At heart, the SCF and the Mission had different understandings of the concept of relief work. Finally, this article touches on some of the personnel involved in the relief operation and the actions of Lady Muriel Paget herself.

The article is published in two parts. Part I covers the period from the origins of the Mission in February 1920 until Lady Paget's dramatic journey to Daugavpils in October 1920. It explores two major themes. Firstly, it considers how the Mission evolved from an attempt to bring aid to "the Polish frontier" of Russia and possibly Russia itself, to a Mission focused on Latvia and the Baltic states. Secondly, it explores the problems faced in establishing and running a hospital, and the gradual realisation that a combination of kitchens and smaller welfare clinics offered a far more effective way of administering aid. Part II focuses on the evolution of the Mission as SCF funding raised the possibility of greater ambition, but ultimately caused a rift over the correct nature of relief work. As the work done by the Mission evolved, it became clear that SCF, as the main funder, felt that its ambitions had moved away from emergency relief and were becoming closer to developmental work. Funding for the Mission was ended just as a series of child welfare initiatives were getting under way. The Daugavpils flood of April 1922, however, pulled the Mission back to its original ambition of emergency relief.

Preamble

Lady Muriel Paget was born into an aristocratic family on 19 August 1876 and educated, as was the custom for young ladies of her class, by a series of governesses at

home. In 1897, she married into another aristocratic family. Her husband, Sir Richard Arthur Surtees Paget, was a barrister, diplomat and scientific engineer whose family had extensive holdings in the Somerset coalfields. Between the years 1898 to 1914, the couple had five children. However, only four of them survived beyond infancy and it was the tragic death of her third child, a son, that first prompted Lady Muriel to engage with philanthropic work. In 1905, she became the honorary secretary of the Southwark Invalid Kitchen, a charity which provided subsidised meals for those convalescing from serious illness in the London Borough of Southwark. Transformed under her leadership into a city-wide organisation, Invalid Kitchens of London was, by 1911, providing 11 000 "one penny" dinners a year for between 500–600 convalescents. During the First World War, however, the focus of her work changed dramatically. In 1915, Bernard Pares, Professor of Russian at the University of Liverpool, who had been appointed an 'official observer' with the Russian Army, returned from a trip to the Eastern Front with tales of such poor medical conditions in Russian hospitals that operations were frequently carried out without anaesthetic. This was the start of Lady Muriel's campaign to help Russia's war wounded. She established the Anglo-Russian Hospital in Petrograd, equipped with X-ray machines and the latest medical technologies, along with three field hospitals on the eastern front in Galician Ukraine, supported by one hundred British-funded ambulances. It was the start of what Lady Muriel later called her love affair "*with this crazy country*"; Russia became for her a "*spiritual home*".²

The Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 took place when Lady Muriel had recently returned to Russia after visiting Romania to help with a typhus epidemic

there. She first moved south to Odessa, where, by the end of November and early December 1917 she was living in the London Hotel.³ The British and French authorities had suggested she undertake relief work in those areas of southern Russia which had not fallen under Bolshevik control, but on receiving reports of the situation in Kyiv, she decided to relocate there, and by January 1918 she had established a temporary kitchen in what was by then the capital of an independent Ukraine, feeding some 6000 displaced persons.⁴ But newly independent Ukraine was already under attack from a Bolshevik army and Kyiv was soon captured by the Bolsheviks. Lady Muriel was then repatriated to Britain: she left for home in February 1918 in the company of Thomas Masaryk, then chair of the Czechoslovak National Council who had been in Kyiv inspecting the Czechoslovak Legion, formed within the Russian Army, which was fighting nearby.⁵ Masaryk and Lady Muriel became firm friends. Travelling via Siberia and the United States, Lady Muriel only reached London on 9 July 1918; she was received by the King a week later. On 14 November 1918, Thomas Masaryk was elected the first president of the newly formed state of Czechoslovakia, and it was not surprising that, in February 1919, Lady Muriel responded favourably to a request from Masaryk's daughter, who had become Chair of the Czechoslovak Red Cross, for help in providing food and clothing to the population of Slovakia where post-war privations were at their worst. Lady Muriel left London for Prague on 18/19 February 1919.⁶ Over the next two years, hospitals would be set up in Turzovka and Bytča and Infant Welfare Clinics in Žilina Caca and Mariková.⁷ As her entry in the British *Dictionary of National Biography* noted, in 1919, "while the male leaders were debating the political frontiers of Europe, Muriel Paget was travelling

indefatigably, telephoning, writing letters and lobbying day and night for Europe's sick, starving children".⁸

Establishing the mission on 'the Polish frontier'

It is clear, however, that at the end of 1919, Lady Muriel began to think about redirecting her efforts away from Czechoslovakia. To administer her work there she had established the Lady Paget Mission to Czechoslovakia, but on 18 December 1919, in response to her enquiry, the London County Council advised her that, under the provisions of the 1916 War Charities Act, if funds were to be used anywhere else than Czechoslovakia then the name of the Mission would have to be changed. Her Mission informed the London County Council that "*in the unlikely event of our operations being extended*" this would be done.⁹ Yet this "unlikely" event very quickly became a reality. Immediately after Christmas 1919, Lady Muriel came to London from her family home of Cranmore in Somerset and in January 1920 held a series of meetings with officials from the War Office, the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Health; she was informed by the latter about "*the extreme destitution that exists in the parts of Russia which are at present within the Polish lines, particularly such areas as Grodno, Minsk and Kovno*", as Kaunas was called in the days of Imperial Russia. According to her biographer, after Lady Muriel's trip to London she "*began to dream of the formation of a chain of hospital units stretching from the Gulf of Finland to the Black Sea*". Thus, on 29 January 1920, she called a meeting of relief agencies and proposed starting such an operation with two hospitals, one in the south, in Novorossiysk on Russia's Black Sea coast, and one in the north, in "Dvinsk"; Lady Muriel, like

many of her contemporaries who had travelled frequently in Imperial Russia, always used the old Russian names for Latvian towns, hence “Dvinsk” for Daugavpils. As she described things in a letter of 4 February 1920, she had received “*urgent appeals from South Russia and the Polish frontier to send immediate medical help for refugee children*” and had “*decided to send out immediately two hospitals, one to Novorossiysk and the other to Dvinsk*”.¹⁰ The Novorossiysk hospital never really got off the ground because of the defeat of the anti-Bolshevik White Army in Russia’s Civil War. The planned hospital was relocated first to Crimea during General Wrangel’s campaign of 1920, and then evacuated at the end of that year along with the remnants of the White Army. The operation in Daugavpils, unaffected by Russia’s Civil War, went from strength to strength.

When the war-time Anglo-Russian Hospital in Petrograd had closed there was still £ 2000 in its account and this money enabled Lady Muriel to get her plans started, but more money would be needed.¹¹ In February 1920, Lady Muriel persuaded the SCF to help fund “*a Dvinsk Hospital*” and sought its support in registering a new bank account for this purpose.¹² As she told the woman originally identified as the hospital’s matron, Miss Molly Walker, the plan was for “*100 beds with a dispensary attached for 500 outpatients*”.¹³ The same month, Lady Muriel wrote to Col. Stephen Tallents, head of the British Political Mission to Latvia, repeating this offer.¹⁴ On 11 February, the Latvian government newspaper *Valdības Vēstnesis* reported that Lady Muriel’s offer had been received and gratefully accepted. A month later, the same newspaper reported that the equipment relating to Lady Muriel’s Mission would be exempt from customs dues.¹⁵ And the funds were soon coming in: on 26 February the SCF sent a cheque for £ 2500 and on 12 March a further cheque for

£ 500.¹⁶ Lady Muriel’s biographer commented that it was not known why Daugavpils had been chosen for the northern hospital, but that is easy enough to explain. Since spring 1919, the British had been actively involved in establishing Latvia as an independent state and that support continued into early 1920. As a result, Latvia offered safe and easy access to what Lady Muriel had described as “*the Polish frontier*”. Poland had been occupying the left, southern bank of the river Daugava since summer 1919. So, Daugavpils was on “*the Polish frontier*”, and its railway connections with Petrograd and Moscow meant it could be a base for a move further east into Russia should that prove possible.

There was no doubt about the need for aid in Daugavpils. A report drawn up by Dale Houghton, who had toured the Latgale region with Latvia’s President Kārlis Ulmanis, and thereafter sent to American Red Cross Commissioner Rayen on 14 February 1920, argued that at least 8000 residents of Daugavpils needed to be fed. The American Red Cross had set to work by establishing two kitchens, which would work beside some ten local kitchens already established to feed roughly 1000 children each. On the southern, left bank of the river Daugava, opposite Daugavpils, the settlement of Grīva was in an even worse condition when considering relative size, with 3000 people requiring daily relief. And the American Red Cross had no doubt as to the cause of this misery: “*Latgalia (Latgale) has, just within the last few weeks, been delivered from the Bolsheviks, having been under the control of Soviet Russia for fourteen months and consequently subject to its well-known policies of confiscation and “nationalisation”*”. Of Daugavpils he noted: “*The Bolos [Bolsheviks in the slang of the day] left nothing*.”¹⁷ The end of Bolshevik rule in Daugavpils had come after an agreement had been signed on 30 December 1919, under which

Polish and Latvian forces would co-operate in driving the Bolsheviks out. This operation took place on 3–5 January 1920 and by the end of the month the surviving remnants of the Bolshevik Latvian Soviet Republic had collapsed. However, although the Poles recognised Daugavpils as being part of Latvia, they still claimed the southern side of the river, notably Grīva, and relations between the Polish and Latvian forces in Daugavpils itself were not always straightforward.

In the middle of March 1920, Lady Muriel's chosen administrator Lawrence Webster, a fluent speaker of Russian and German, set off for Daugavpils, accompanied by Lt. Col. Horace Manders, a former army surgeon. With the help of the Royal Navy, they arrived in Liepāja on 23 March: because of the extensive mining of the Bay of Riga, the Royal Navy had closed Riga port until *"the Bay has been thoroughly swept"* of mines, which was not expected until June; until then, therefore, Lady Muriel's Mission would be dependent on the narrow gauge railway from Liepāja to Riga, before transferring to the wide gauge railway for the onward journey to Daugavpils. Webster and Manders got to Riga on 25 March and immediately contacted Colonel Tallents who *"gave us a hearty welcome"* and promptly introduced him to the Foreign Minister, Zigfrīds Meierovics, Prime Minister Kārlis Ulmanis being away *"on an electioneering campaign"*. Provided with letters of introduction to the Latvian Commandant in Daugavpils and having been assured by the American relief agencies in Riga that, despite them continuing to provide meals for 10 000 people a day in Daugavpils, there was nonetheless an urgent need for further relief, Webster boarded his train. It was not an easy journey. At that time, there was no direct service, and at 4 a.m. Webster and Manders had to wait for six hours at Krustpils for a connection. They arrived on

the morning of 28 March, presented their letters of introduction and found Andrejs Bērziņš, the local Governor, energetic and helpful. By the following day, they had identified a suitable site for the hospital. About a mile from the town centre, next to some barracks destroyed by fighting during the First World War, there were six bungalows, originally built to provide the barracks with a hospital. Mr. Lawrence was offered two of the bungalows, one for the hospital and the other for accommodating the Mission staff. It was planned to use the other four bungalows to house orphans. The wooden structures were on a firm stone base and although new glass was needed, plus a new water and electricity supply, the town council agreed to cover this cost, to supply wood for beds and other furniture, and to complete the necessary works by 30 April. Since the town council had no funds of its own, the finance for this work had to be borrowed from central government.¹⁸

On his arrival, Webster visited the town's four municipal orphanages, each accommodating some 150 children who were soon to be relocated to the bungalows; he noted that they were divided between the four nationalities which made up the local population, *"roughly equal numbers of Russians, Poles, Letts and Jews"*. There was, he felt, *"no particular section of this mixed population any better off than the other"*, but *"notwithstanding the pitiable state to which the people are reduced, the greatest animosity as between nationality and nationality still exists"*. He put the total population of the town at 35 000. American relief work continued to be carried out, feeding 10 000 children with one meal a day, although Webster attributed this to the ARA not the ARC. Local district council politicians had assured him the situation in the surrounding district was even worse; for this reason, he welcomed Lady Muriel's suggestion that the hospital should have

“an ambulance car”. A week later he confirmed the *“urgent need for medical treatment among children”* despite local talk of a good sowing campaign; *“we shall be fortunate indeed if we get through the summer without any big epidemics”*. There was, he felt, *“great relief work to be done in the country round”*.¹⁹ Indeed, as early as 13 April Webster had telegraphed Lady Muriel so say that he had visited Rēzekne, where he found *“food [was] short but [there was] no famine”*. The next day Lady Muriel informed the SCF that her committee had decided *“this afternoon”* to send *“a lady doctor, dispenser and two nurses to Rezhitsa (Rēzekne) near Dvinsk to open a dispensary as suggested by Mr. Webster”*.²⁰

When the Mission to Daugavpils had first been envisioned, it was seen as a Mission to “the Polish frontier”. If in March 1920, there were still both Polish and Latvian troops in Daugavpils, by an agreement reached on 11 April, Polish troops withdrew from Daugavpils, with the exception of a small number which remained garrisoned in the fortress and at a few other strategic points until the beginning of May. On 18 April, the Polish Commandant formally transferred his power to the Latvian authorities. Although Molly Walker picked up rumours in mid-May that the Poles had suddenly changed their mind and had called on Latvian troops to evacuate Daugavpils, nothing of the sort happened. In April 1920, the Polish Army launched an assault on Soviet Russia, and any lingering interest the Polish Government might once have had in retaining territory in southern Latvia was lost. On 5 July, Polish forces withdrew from the south bank of the river Daugava and Latvian forces took control of Grīva. As Webster informed Lady Muriel, this Polish withdrawal took place without warning and produced a sense of panic, possibly engendered by the order given to Latvian Army units to defend Daugavpils *“to the last, until reinforcements arrive”*. Webster was told that

the speed of the withdrawal had prompted a small Red Army force to advance to within fifteen miles of the town, and on 5 July the Latvian Army did indeed engage the Red Army not far from Krāslava. Ten days later, Grīva and its two neighbouring parishes were secure, but there were several more skirmishes with the Bolsheviks before the state territory of Latvia was finally cleared of non-Latvian forces at the beginning of August.²¹ What these developments meant, however, was that by the summer of 1920, the uncertainties of the spring were a thing of the past, the political situation had stabilised, and Daugavpils and the surrounding district would be, unquestionably, part of Latvia and not some fluid “Polish frontier”.

Hospital or welfare

A first contingent of staff for the Lady Paget Mission arrived in Daugavpils towards the end of April, and the second contingent in mid-May 1920. By then, work on the hospital was well underway. Completion had initially been promised for early May, but Dr. Manders had refused to open the hospital *“until the necessary sanitary conditions were in order”*. This had spurred on the local authority *“which had previously suggested that what had been asked for was impossible”*.²² As Dr. Manders noted in his report to Lady Muriel, the problem was that the baths were not ready.²³ One of the British nurses recalled what happened when the hospital opened its doors on 26 May: *“Our first patient was a little cripple girl, whom her mother brought wrapped in a shawl over her back. She was so thin that we could see her bones through her flesh”*. That day, 56 children attended and another fifty the next day. *“It seemed as though they could hardly live more than an hour or two; but they quickly revived.”*²⁴ Dr. Manders confirmed that

the first patients were all “*very dirty and emaciated*”, while another report noted that most of the patients had scabies or other skin conditions which only required treatment for a week or so.²⁵ One early patient was rather different: a young boy had found an unexploded bomb, which ignited when he touched it.²⁶

The first feeding kitchen, close to the hospital, also opened on 26 May for 250 children “*chosen from the poor Russians living in this quarter*” with some advice coming from the local Orthodox priest; when a few days later two orphanages, one for Poles and the other for Russians, were moved into the bungalows another two hundred children joined the numbers being fed twice a day, along with the kitchen taking responsibility for feeding the hospital patients.²⁷ By mid-July the kitchen was feeding 300 Russian Orthodox children, 300 children linked to the hospital, 240 Polish children and 60 Mission employees and dependents, a total of 900.²⁸ Those children needing medical attention were given a card to take to the town dispensary which the Mission had established in Schilderovsky Street.²⁹ The dispensary opened on 1 June, with Dr. Sarah O’Flynn in charge, assisted by a dispenser and nurse.³⁰ Thus, by the end of May, the Mission’s work was already well-established when, on 28 May 1920, it received a further grant of £ 831.16.3: £ 281.16.3 was allocated to railway fares and £ 550 “*transmitted to Dvinsk for the upkeep of the hospital*”. The same report itemised expenditure of food at £ 1802.17.5 and bed linen, clothes and sundries at £ 4775.3.2. In addition £ 535.4.6 had been spent on drugs, £ 301.2.0 on equipment, £ 517.10.0 on an ambulance, £ 911.4.4 on freight charges and £ 7711.9.7 on salaries.³¹

There were other clean and well-equipped hospitals in Daugavpils – in June, a fifty-bed hospital run by Daugavpils

District Council had opened not far from the Mission hospital³² – but these were struggling to meet the needs of children and “*this is where the Paget Mission is finding its most useful work by specialising for the children*”; yet, as Miss Molly Walker acknowledged, in this work more effective than medicine was “*the fresh air and the aroma of pinewood in which the hospital is situated*”.³³ Miss Walker had originally been offered the post of hospital matron, but at Lady Muriel’s request had agreed to take charge instead of relief work such as the kitchens and clinics which Lady Muriel hoped could be established to work alongside the hospital. Arriving in Daugavpils with the first contingent of Mission staff, Miss Walker was relatively upbeat about the overall situation. From her base with Mr. Webster in the Central Hotel she reported on 8 June 1920 about the marvellous co-operation the Mission had received from local politicians. Recording “*one of the great moments in the history of the Paget Mission*”, she informed Lady Muriel that on the afternoon of 8 June “*there took place the long-delayed visit of the Commandant of the District, to whom is due all thanks for the never-failing help and assistance which he has always given us since our arrival, although he had the largest and the most important district in the whole country, he is never too busy to give his advice when a difficulty arises.*” If her report is accurate, the Commandant was impressed both with the general level of cleanliness and the ingenuity with which the Paget Mission staff had “*out of boxes and nails [...] erect[ed] a beautiful and restful summer residence, and at no expense*”. Mr. Webster had informed Lady Muriel on 17 May, just before the hospital opened, that “*several of our packing cases have been turned into beds and one of our galvanised dustbins has been converted into a bathroom boiler*”.³⁴ Miss Walker now expressed the hope that the Commandant would share this high opinion of the Mission’s work with

the Minister of the Interior, whom he was due to meet later in the day.³⁵

Miss Walker continued to be optimistic about the prospects for the Mission. Although there had been a bad outbreak of typhus in the winter and early spring, she noted, this seemed to have peaked and was now under control. Having explored a ten-mile radius around Daugavpils, she felt that the spring sowing seemed to be going well and the work of the ARC and ARA had averted any acute crisis in both the town and the surrounding countryside. Indeed, in early May she could report that the situation was not as bad as she had seen in Slovakia during the previous year, where she had also worked for Lady Muriel. *"We daily see the improvement of conditions and, as the summer progresses, needs will be still less."* At the end of May, during a trip to Rēzekne, she convinced herself that *"things [were] in a very flourishing condition, with a very promising harvest"*. Despite some reports to the contrary, *"typhus is almost non-existent"*.³⁶ Yet Miss Walker's optimistic impressions seemed contradictory and a little confusing. On 15 June 1920, she sent Lady Muriel a short draft press article about "Vladimir", one of the children in the hospital. The story about this *"small mite of four years, very much under-nourished and at the present moment swathed in bandages"* was sent by Lady Muriel to the SCF, which duly had a version of it published in *The Christian Herald*, adding that *"there are something like 13 million little Vladimirs in the famine lands"* extending throughout Russia and Eastern Europe. Yet a week later, Miss Walker could report to Lady Muriel that *"relief is not needed here at present, except clothing"*, adding *"it would be a waste to put more staff into Dvinsk"*.³⁷

Miss Walker's newly negative view of how the work of the Mission was proceeding was highlighted when a row developed about who was responsible for the allocation

of clothing. On 13 June, Miss Walker had requested clothes for the 2700 children now being fed.³⁸ Yet, with the support of Mr. Webster, the hospital matron had opened bales of clothing and used what she found to dress the nursing staff; Miss Walker felt she was in charge of clothing as this was for relief work, not medical work. After angry messages were exchanged with Lady Muriel, things were smoothed over – and even at the height of this petty row, Miss Walker was happy to help out Dr. Manders in the dispensary when staff were short, so the work of the Mission was never disrupted. Miss Walker seems to have been frustrated because, with the hospital being prioritised, broader relief work was only just beginning, and she had time on her hands.³⁹ Yet Mr. Webster too felt that the Mission might be over-staffed, informing Lady Muriel on 17 July that *"if health conditions remain as they are at present there will be no necessity to retain such a large unit as ours here"*.⁴⁰

Early in July, Mr. Webster was approached by Governor Bērziņš about expanding the Mission's work from Daugavpils and its surrounds to the rest of Latgale, in particular to the northeast, centred on Kārsava. Mr. Webster clearly agreed, since the funds were available: the Mission had just received an additional grant of £ 1000.⁴¹ On 7 August 1920, Webster reported that he had arranged for Dr. O'Flynn to work there; *"she will be accompanied by Miss Wagner and a Russian sister who has been working in the hospital"*. It might seem rash to send a young woman to such a remote area, but Dr O'Flynn was tough; she was a Suffragette and had been on hunger-strike when imprisoned for campaigning in London for women to get the vote, and as a part of her first job, with the Colonial Service in Malaya, she had travelled on an elephant to introduce modern methods of infant care to rural villages.⁴² During her time in Latgale,

she was accompanied by her fiancé Captain Campbell Robertson.⁴³ Operations to the south of the river Daugava were also expanding: *“Twice a week, Dr. Manders goes out there in the motor car which the Civil Governor has kindly loaned us for this purpose until our own car comes along”*. With Dr. Manders regularly out of town, *“a Russian Dr. Feodoroff [is] to take over the town dispensary three days a week”*, supported by a Russian dispensing sister.⁴⁴ With the operation expanding in this way, Miss Walker suddenly had more than enough to do. She began to enthuse about the dispensary established by Dr. O’Flynn in distant Kārsava, which she first visited in mid-August. By late August, she had dropped all notions of things looking up in Daugavpils and there being little to do. Instead, she was reporting that *“the crops have not come up to the expectations of the estimated statistics of the spring”*, and that she was having to turn away those referred to her for feeding since her supplies were too limited; she also urged Lady Muriel to send more clothes.⁴⁵ Yet supplies continued to arrive: a report for the period 26 April to 10 October 1920 made clear that supplies to the value of £ 12 140 had been sent to Daugavpils; these included milk, lard, pickles, fruit in syrup, margarine, drugs, sheets and thirty crates of dried milk from the ex-mayor of Birmingham. There were also included 36 overalls, 72 caps, 1000 shirts and 600 blankets.⁴⁶

Early in August, Mr. Webster joined Miss Walker in warning that things in Daugavpils were not as rosy as they had earlier seemed. He informed Lady Muriel that the medical situation was now becoming *“much worse”* and that, since the Americans had effectively ceased their operations, the food situation was *“becoming acute”*; a decision had to be taken now as to whether the Mission would continue into 1921 and the necessary provisions obtained.⁴⁷ Lady Muriel’s response came in a telegram received towards

the end of August in which she explained that, so far, she had only obtained secure funding for a further three months. Webster was alarmed. Daugavpils Town Council was still more or less bankrupt and could not even afford to double glaze the hospital window for the winter let alone run the hospital itself. If, he suggested, there were funds to take over the ARA kitchens *“we could without any difficulty increase the number of children in receipt of one meal a day to 5000, all of them really needy cases”*.⁴⁸ The pleading worked. On 10 September the SCF sent Lady Muriel a further £ 2000.⁴⁹ But how could these funds be best spent if a new crisis was developing?

On 3 September, Miss Walker sent Lady Muriel a detailed report on the evolving situation, drawn up after discussions both with the Mayor of Daugavpils and Dr. Manders. *“There are hospitals enough in the town to deal with the sickness in the town and in all the districts”*, she noted, but the Mayor had argued that feeding and clothing would be the issue for the winter, especially since *“the American Red Cross is not touching this”*. The hospital would treat, wash and scrub children, who, returning home to abject poverty, would soon find themselves returning to hospital; the key therefore, as *“the Mayor begs”*, is that *“more help be given to the feeding of children”*. To achieve this, Miss Walker suggested using the car as a travelling dispensary, covering a radius of 30–40 kms from Daugavpils. The District Hospital was caring for all patients brought in from the countryside, and its chief doctor was *“now working in the [Daugavpils] town dispensary on alternate days with Dr. G. H. Turner [...] a man who can be counted upon to work out any plans for the district assistance”*. Therefore, with some trepidation, Miss Walker raised the possibility of closing the hospital with Dr. Manders, whom she described as an old man with some *“funny ways”*. However, to her surprise he was not averse to the idea

and said that he had come to the same conclusion himself, since without the hospital three times as much could be done with the same limited funds. There would still be plenty of work for the nurse members of the Mission, and less need to recruit ancillary staff; some thirty-three such staff were currently needed by the hospital; the “*astounding amount of food consumed by the hospital*” could also be put to better use.⁵⁰

On 15 September 1920, Lady Muriel wrote to the SCF Chairwoman Eglantyne Jebb asking if the SCF would be ready to support “*the 5000 children in and near Dvinsk, who, according to Mr. Webster, will practically starve unless help is sent to them*”. She added that four of the five ARA kitchens had now closed, and the last one only offered sauerkraut and potatoes, hardly a nourishing diet. The Mission, she said, had to stay on in Daugavpils, but may be not the hospital.⁵¹ A week later, she informed the SCF that feeding 5000 children over the winter months was essential, but “*we are closing down the hospital in Dvinsk as there are no more epidemics at the moment and are going to concentrate on mobile and stationary dispensaries and feeding and clothing centres*”.⁵² She did not inform the SCF that Mr. Webster thought he had convinced Daugavpils Town Council to feed 1000 children between November 1920 and April 1921, if the Mission would commit to feeding a further 1000.⁵³

When raising the issue of the hospital’s closure, Miss Walker also made some rather unpleasant anti-Semitic observations. She asserted that “*the report in the town for a considerable time is that it is not possible for a Christian to obtain admittance to the English hospital [...] so well have the Jews laid their plans of exclusion*” and, she maintained that “*this has been fostered by the Jew doctors who have all the chief posts in the town, with the exception of the [Russian] doctor who is helping Dr. Turner*”. She added that

Dr. Manders had done his best to correct this impression and had “*done his uttermost to stem the tide of those parasites*”; from the end of June, for example, he had put a number of beds at the disposal of the local Orthodox priest.⁵⁴ Whatever level of truth might have lain behind such allegations, in public there was no hint of tension with the Orthodox community when the hospital opened. On 7 June, Father Ioani Odielsky, Superior of the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, sent a letter to Lady Muriel describing his visit to the hospital a few days earlier in the most positive terms.⁵⁵ However, there was a strong undercurrent of anti-Semitism among Lady Muriel’s team, for it was widespread among the British upper classes at this time. Miss Walker’s reports are peppered with anti-Semitic comments. Thus, her report of 9 May 1920 reads:

“Last Thursday we had a quite wonderful display of what the Jews really are and how many there are in the place, they spent the whole day marching in procession through the town with bands and singing because the silly Allies had actually taken Jerusalem for them on that day during the war, we took it, but the Jews as usual do the shouting [...]. The same old story, Jews are out for a double portion of everything, from every side at once [...].”

Writing to Lady Muriel on 24 August 1920, Mr. Webster explained that if the Mission took over the work of the ARA and its kitchens this would be the consequence.

*“We should not be able to get away from Jews. 50% Jews, 25% Poles, 20% Russian, 5% Letts would be the approximate nationality figures. At present, our figures are about 60% Russians, 20% Poles, 15% Jews, 5% Letts i.e. Feeding Kitchen returns. The only Jews receiving meals (the 15% referred to) are those in the hospital.”*⁵⁶

Three weeks later, he wrote again to Lady Muriel to explain the consequences of Dr. Manders's recent decision to leave the Mission. Dr. Turner would take on his role, but that would mean he could no longer work in the dispensary. Dr. Feodoroff would do that for three days a week, and for the other three days he had appointed a lady doctor who was in charge of the Infectious Diseases Hospital. *"The only thing to be said against her is that she is a Jewess. I wish we could have got some confrère of Dr. Feodoroff's [i.e. a Russian] but there was unfortunately no one else available. Dr. Feodoroff has worked a great deal together with her and she is his recommendation."*⁵⁷ Clearly Dr. Feodoroff did not share the anti-Semitic prejudices displayed by the leading figures in Lady Muriel's Mission.

With such important decisions being made about the future of the Mission, Lady Muriel decided in October 1920 that it was time for her to pay a visit to Daugavpils. First, she went to Czechoslovakia, for her work there was still continuing, if on a reduced scale, and from there she travelled to Warsaw. On 21 October 1920, Mr. Webster telegraphed Lady Muriel's office in London to say that he had been informed that Lady Muriel was leaving Warsaw for Daugavpils by car on the 22nd, *"some journey in the present state of things"*, he commented.⁵⁸ He was right. On 10 October 1920, the Polish nationalist General Lucian Zeligowski had seized Vilna (Vilnius), and two days later the town was declared annexed to Poland, although the Polish Government did not immediately agree to recognise this annexation. This was because Lithuanian regular and irregular forces had responded by trying to drive Zeligowski out of Vilnius; serious clashes took place near Pikeliškiai on 20–21 October. Long after the event, Lady Muriel's daughter Sylvia sent Miss Walker an extract from Lady Muriel's diary, describing this first journey to Daugavpils. *"General*

[Adrian Paul Ghislain] Carton de Wiart [second in command of the British-Polish Military Mission] arranged for me to be motored up here from Warsaw, partly to get me here and partly because he wanted me to see the desperate state of practical starvation that exists at present in Poland." The general asked an Intelligence officer to accompany her, who agreed but made clear that *"he could not promise that I should not be shot at crossing the lines"*. From a Polish *"general"* in Vilnius they got a pass *"to cross the insurgent Polish lines"*, and sent telegrams to the British representative with the Lithuanian Army *"to persuade what remained of the Lithuanians not to shoot us when we crossed over to them"*. Despite not having received a response, they set off in an open top Vauxhall car. Suddenly Lady Muriel found herself in the middle of a battle. The Polish Intelligence officer accompanying Lady Muriel suggested that they should display a white flag, so Lady Muriel unpacked a white jersey from her luggage and it was tied to the end of a stick. Lady Muriel wrote in her diary: *"I ventured to remark that this might draw attention to us"*, but they pushed ahead and *"crawled along until we got to the chaussée and then over the hill we saw the joyous sight of a red band on a khaki cap"*. It was Major Pargiter of the British Army, attended by Latvian and Lithuanian Intelligence officers. It became clear that the telegrams sent in advance had got through. When it had been suggested that the Lithuanians open fire on the approaching car, Major Pargiter *"had called out "no, it is the car we are waiting for"*". The Polish officer was left behind, and a Latvian officer took his place and the car proceeded towards Daugavpils. Yet the drama was not over. As the car neared the town, it hit a crater and crashed, tipping out its passengers. With the car wrecked, they were forced to walk the last few miles, crossing the river Daugava on a half-destroyed railway bridge: *"it had*

evidently been blown up in the middle, the only way across was by narrow planks fixed to scaffolding.”⁵⁹

In June 1920, Miss Walker had written of Daugavpils with heavy sarcasm: “it may safely be said that as a specimen of ruins, Dvinsk certainly deserves to be placed as one of the most interesting for the tourist”.⁶⁰ Lady Muriel’s impression was the same.

“Dvinsk is in as bad a situation as any town in Europe today and only those who are absolutely obliged remain in it. There is hardly a roof or a window to any of the principal buildings. Conditions are appalling: no food or clothes in the place and no money to buy them with, for the country is in a state of bankruptcy. The harvest was spoiled this year and most of the people who attend our milk kitchen are on the verge of starvation. There is a plague of rats, and we want quantities of rat poison.”

Lady Muriel also mused about the political situation, suggesting that since Britain had given *de facto* recognition to the Baltic states, “the people must be looked after until some arrangement can be made with Russia”. She went on: “we have approved of these small states, although we have not officially recognised them; we cannot allow them to starve”. As to the future of the Mission, Lady Muriel was now absolutely clear, the hospital should close. Although there were plenty of funds – the mission had received £ 9 746.16.2 from the SCF and £ 5393 from the Treasury – Lady Muriel accepted that the money was being misdirected. Hospitals in Daugavpils were functioning, the separate Paget Hospital for Children with its expensive ambulance was not the best way to help the majority of children, who responded quickly to good food and warm clothes. The way forward was food kitchens and infant welfare clinics.⁶¹ In December 1920, two new kitchens were opened, one

in the centre of town, on the 11th, and another in the suburb near the railway works, on the 19th; it was noted that while the first kitchen established back in May had helped “exclusively Russians and Poles, not intentionally, merely because other nationalities are not living in that quarter of the town”, the second kitchen catered for Jews and Latvians, while the third was targeted at unemployed railway employees.⁶² By the end of 1920, the ARA had ceased all operations in the region and responsibility for the relief effort fell entirely on Lady Muriel’s Mission.⁶³

The mission to the Baltic

On leaving Daugavpils, Lady Muriel travelled straight to Tallinn, in Estonia, bypassing Riga. This might seem strange, but as her reference above to making an “arrangement” with Russia showed, until this point Lady Muriel had still not completely abandoned the notion of a Mission to the north of a democratic “Russia” restored to its pre-revolutionary borders with Daugavpils being just a stepping stone in the journey east. A report by Miss Walker of 29 April 1920 makes clear that she did not expect to stay in Daugavpils long. Then, on 9 May, she referred to the possibility “of moving quickly off to the real site of work”, by implication Russia, since ten days later she reported rumours that the Americans were “expecting a very speedy move into Petrograd” and adding “so we may be having some changes in this front”. When nothing came of this, she asked Lady Muriel in a letter of 22 June “is there any chance of our moving east soon [...]. I should like to go prospecting with Mr. Webster” for new relief work. Also on 22 June, but in London, Lady Muriel had written to the SCF Allocations Board enquiring about funds needed for “North and Southern Russia”, – the term the Baltic states

was not yet in her vocabulary.⁶⁴ In a letter to Eglantyne Jebb of 19 August she referred to her hopes that the Russians would allow Webster to visit Petrograd and undertake work there; she was in touch with the Soviet ambassador to London Leonid Krasin about this.⁶⁵ So, once in Tallinn, she set about getting permission for Webster to cross over into Soviet Russia. It was only when nothing came of this initiative that a disappointed Lady Muriel dropped her hopes for a Russia Mission and decided to expand activities in the Baltic states. From Tallinn she went to Riga. There she met Prime Minister Kārlis Ulmanis and other ministers, as well as Marta Berga, the wife of Arveds Bergs, the Minister of the Interior, who took a great interest in welfare matters. As a result of the success of her work in Daugavpils, she was asked to extend her activities to Riga.⁶⁶

Once back in Britain in December 1920, Lady Muriel refocused her efforts onto the Baltic states, and sent a long report to the SCF on 29 January 1921. That report was summarised by her secretary Miss H. C. Jameson in the following words: *“it is proposed to open four Infant Welfare Clinics in the Baltic Provinces, at Dvinsk, Riga and Reval (Tallinn) as a result the Mission would request £ 1000 to help set things up plus £ 500 per annum per clinic thereafter to run them”*.⁶⁷ The title of this report – “The Baltic Provinces: Preliminary Report on Conditions, Relief Work and Requirements” – showed the new focus clearly, and in it Lady Muriel explained her thinking: *“Latvia is in a worse position than her neighbours. Zeligowski’s adventure has made it imperative to mobilise the army at the time when every rouble is wanted for reconstruction work, and although another Bolshevik invasion is improbable there will probably be internal disturbances in the parts of the country that formerly belonged to the Poles and where the large proportion of*

Polish landlords have been nationalised”, in other words, had their lands expropriated in the Latvian land reform.⁶⁸ At the same time, she received a letter from Latvia’s Foreign Minister Zigfrīds Meierovics, who had been visiting London. He thanked her for the aid provided so far and urged her to provide more. In her response, Lady Muriel outlined her now ambitious plans for the future.

“I have been considering the most direct way of establishing a permanent system of child welfare work in Latvia that would combine the interests and activities of National Government and Voluntary Societies with the assistance of foreign relief agencies. I am convinced that the first step before determining on a programme is the convocation of a conference in Riga, at which would be present the Latvian Health Authorities and representatives of voluntary organisations in Latvia, of the League of Red Cross Societies, of the ARA, of the International Red Cross and of my Mission.”

The three immediate tasks of the conference would be the following: i) to bring together all welfare work and ensure its efficient co-ordination, ii) to act according to the latest international advice, and iii) to decide how best Latvia could be helped. Other important future issues were for the Latvian Red Cross to join the League of Red Cross Societies and for improvements to be made in the training of Latvian nursing staff. If such a conference could be held *“soon after Easter”*, Lady Muriel wrote, she would be *“delighted to come to Riga”*.⁶⁹

These ambitious plans would require further funding and Lady Muriel was clearly aware that the SCF had received a large donation from New Zealand. In her request for additional funding she gave a clear summary of *“work done in Dvinsk and District since April”*. This itemised two

dispensaries which had treated 11 119 people, a motor dispensary which had treated a further 2450, and 27 102 items of clothing which had been distributed; two clinics were now in the process of setting up work. The children's hospital for 100 beds equipped, staffed and maintained from May 25 to September 30 had been closed at the end of the summer and a small local hospital subsidised in order to concentrate available workers and funds in more necessary work in the field. Another version of this report explained to the SCF: "since last April [1920] the Mission has carried on relief work in Dvinsk and neighbourhood by means of a Children's Hospital, 17 local travelling dispensaries, and three feeding and clothing centres, and a clinic just opened. This work has been administered by Mr. Webster with a British staff of doctors, dispenser, nurses and welfare workers. In December 1920 operations were extended to Riga at the request of the Latvian authorities". She then outlined her plans for future expansion, involving expenditure of £ 5000 for Latvia and the same amount for Estonia.⁷⁰

Assuming her request would be granted, Lady Muriel set about practical preparatory work, interviewing nurses for the proposed Daugavpils clinics. Thus, on New Year's Eve, Miss Esther Fry sailed for Liepāja and thence by train to Riga. The onward journey to Daugavpils was memorable, as Esther Fry's recollections make clear. She recalled the "unlit, unventilated, unpadding railway carriage of a train that crawled at 12 miles an hour, whose engine had

perpetually to be refuelled with piles of wood stacked beside the line". On arrival, she went to the Mission, where the hospital had been situated, "a group of large wooden bungalows standing among pine trees near the railway line that ran from Dvinsk to the Bolshevik frontier". The main clinic was to be in Daugavpils centre, and the nurses chose "a spacious but derelict ground floor flat under the post office". Fry described the building: "the window-panes were missing but by means of scraps of broken glass fitted together like a jig-saw puzzle the worst draughts were excluded. The old stoves were coaxed into action, furniture improvised from packing cases and stores and equipment from the dismantled hospital". The clinic opened on 3 February 1921 and was quickly besieged, which was of great concern to the postmaster who on one occasion could not even enter his office and "in vain the interpreter exhorted all but pregnant women and mothers with infants to stay away". At times, there were altercations about clothing, with mothers refusing to allow their children to be treated unless they were provided with clothes to replace their current rags; such incidents wore the nurses down. Miss Fry continued to live in the Mission bungalow and her journey to and from the clinic was sometimes made more difficult by the rough and ready behaviour of the local Latvian police officers, some of whom she suspected of pilfering flour.⁷¹

The SCF discussed Lady Muriel's proposal for her Daugavpils operation to be extended to the Baltic states as a whole early in February 1921.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹ ĒRIKS JĒKABSONS. *Latvijas un Amerikas Savienoto Valstu attiecības 1918.–1922. gadā*. Rīga 2018, pp. 517–518, 695, 701.

² EVE COLPUS. *Female Philanthropy in the Inter-war World: Between Self and Other*. London 2018, pp. 8, 24, 86, 129.; Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Online version) for ambulances and Galicia (hereafter: DNB).

- ³ According to the “Odessa Journal” (accessed online 25.02.2023), while in Odessa Lady Muriel organised a séance attended by the future Finnish political leader General Karl Mannerheim.
- ⁴ DNB.
- ⁵ GEOFFREY SWAIN. *The Origins of the Russian Civil War*. Harlow 1996, pp. 116–119.
- ⁶ See Lady Muriel’s entry in Wikipedia.
- ⁷ COLPUS, *Female Philanthropy*, p. 40.
- ⁸ DNB.
- ⁹ Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham, Birmingham (henceforth – CRL). Papers of the Save the Children Fund, the Eglantyne Jebb papers, 1913–67. These papers are filed as SCF/EJ/4 Baltic States. They are carefully filed in chronological order, but without page numbers. Documents can be found via file number and date; if the date is not in the text of this article it is given in the footnote. This reference is SCF/EJ/4/68, hereafter EJ68; EJ69-77 and 214, 215 will follow. I would like to thank the staff of the Cadbury Research Library for their support during my visits.
- ¹⁰ Leeds Russian Archive, University of Leeds Library Special Collections, Leeds (henceforth – Leeds). This archive mostly contains family materials, including those of her husband. However, there is some material on her philanthropic work and most of the papers relating to Daugavpils are in 1405/4. (LRA/MS 1405/ Box 4). The Daugavpils material is mostly for 1920 but with some material for 1922. Most of the papers are letters and reports by Molly Walker and Lawrence Webster, but there is a random collection of other material, as well. The letters and reports of Molly Walker are given as Leeds Wa, those of Lawrence Webster as Leeds We, and the rest as Leeds followed by a brief description. The file is not chronologically ordered and there are no page numbers. This reference is Leeds Wa 2.2.20. I would like to thank Richard Davies of the Leeds Russian Archive for the great assistance he gave me in accessing this material.
- ¹¹ WILFRID BLUNT. *Lady Muriel, Her Husband, and her Philanthropic Work in Central and Eastern Europe*. London 1962, pp. 175–176.
- ¹² CRL EJ68.
- ¹³ Leeds Wa 4.2.20.
- ¹⁴ BLUNT, *Lady Muriel*, pp. 190–191.
- ¹⁵ Valdības Vēstnesis, 11.02.20., 26.03.20.
- ¹⁶ CRL EJ214.
- ¹⁷ ĒRIKS JĒKABSONS. Stāvoklis Latgalē 1920. gada februārī: Amerikas Sarkanā Krusta ierēdņa Deila Hotona redzējums. In: *Latvijas Universitātes Žurnāls. Vēsture*, No. 2, 2016, pp. 165, 170.
- ¹⁸ Leeds We 24.3.20; 26.3.20, 31.3.20; Leeds Wa 9.5.20. The hospital was located between what is today Jelgavas iela and Slokas iela on the edge of what was then the Nikolaevskii Park. I am grateful to Professor Ēriks Jēkabsons for providing the name of the Governor.
- ¹⁹ Leeds We 31.1.20, 7.4.20.
- ²⁰ CRL EJ214, CRL EJ215.
- ²¹ ĒRIKS JĒKABSONS. Militāri politiskais stāvoklis Latvijā 1919. gada decembrī – 1920. gada rudenī: galvenie apakšposmi un norises. In: *Vēstures Avoti X: Cīņa par brīvību: Latvijas Neatkarības karš (1918–1920) Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīva dokumentos*. 4. daļa; 1919. gada decembra sākums – 1920. gada rudens. Rīga 2023, pp. 45–48. See also Leeds We 4.4.20, 9.7.20; Wa Leeds 19.5.20. I would like to thank Ēriks Jēkabsons for providing the information that the Polish unit left in Daugavpils fortress departed at the beginning of May. Mr Webster was under the impression that it was still there in early July.
- ²² Leeds Wa 19.5.20, 23.5.20.
- ²³ CRL EJ215 1.7.20.

- ²⁴ BLUNT, Lady Muriel, pp. 193–194.
- ²⁵ CRL EJ215 1.7.20, 3.6.20.
- ²⁶ CRL EJ215 6.7.20.
- ²⁷ Leeds Wa 29 May 20.
- ²⁸ CRL EJ215 16.7.20.
- ²⁹ Leeds fragment of appendix to 1921 report.
- ³⁰ CRL EJ215 3.6.20.
- ³¹ CRL EJ69.
- ³² CRL EJ215 4.4.20.
- ³³ Leeds Wa no date, before 13 June.
- ³⁴ CRL EJ215.
- ³⁵ Leeds Wa 8.6.20.
- ³⁶ Leeds Wa 29.4.20, 9.5.20, 29.5.20.
- ³⁷ Leeds Wa 15.6.20, no date, 22.6.20.
- ³⁸ Leeds Wa 3.6.20 – the letter refers to “*mid-June*”, so it was almost certainly written on 13 not 3 June.
- ³⁹ Leeds Wa 7.7.20; 8.7.20; ‘July’ 1920; 7.8.20; 17.8.20.
- ⁴⁰ CRL EJ215.
- ⁴¹ Leeds We 9.7.20.
- ⁴² DNB, entry for Sarah May Josephine Winstedt (née O’Flynn). Born in 1886 in County Clare, Ireland, she attended the University of Edinburgh and graduated as a medical doctor in 1912. In 1916, she volunteered for the Royal Army Medical Corps and on demobilisation at the end of 1919 joined the Lady Paget Mission.
- ⁴³ CRL EJ215 4.4.20.
- ⁴⁴ Leeds We 7.8.20.
- ⁴⁵ Leeds Wa 27.8.20.
- ⁴⁶ CRL EJ69.
- ⁴⁷ Leeds We 9.8.20.
- ⁴⁸ CRL EJ215 24.8.20.
- ⁴⁹ CRL EJ214.
- ⁵⁰ Leeds Wa 3.9.20; for the reference to beds being allocated by the Orthodox priest, see Leeds Wa 22.6.20.
- ⁵¹ CRL EJ214.
- ⁵² CRL EJ214.
- ⁵³ CRL EJ215 17.9.20.
- ⁵⁴ Leeds Wa 3.9.20.
- ⁵⁵ CRL EJ215.
- ⁵⁶ CRL EJ215.
- ⁵⁷ CRL EJ215.
- ⁵⁸ Leeds We 21.10.20.
- ⁵⁹ Leeds Extract from diary, after Walker letters and reports, before Webster letters and reports.
- ⁶⁰ Leeds Wa before 13 June.

⁶¹ BLUNT, Lady Muriel, pp. 198–199; for funding details, see CRL EJ69.

⁶² Leeds Fragment of appendix to 1921 report.

⁶³ CRL EJ73.

⁶⁴ CRL EJ68.

⁶⁵ CRL EJ68. Although the Soviet representatives abroad were referred to as “political representatives”, the British always ignored this and called them “ambassadors”, and this is reflected in British history writing.

⁶⁶ BLUNT, Lady Muriel, p. 200.

⁶⁷ CRL EJ73.

⁶⁸ CRL EJ73.

⁶⁹ CRL EJ214 15.1.21.

⁷⁰ CRL EJ73 for both versions of the report.

⁷¹ BLUNT, Lady Muriel, pp. 201–204. Like other members of the Mission, Miss Fry often made casually anti-Semitic comments. Thus on the distribution of clothes she notes that “*the Jewesses proved particularly troublesome*” in their demands.

KOPSAVILKUMS

1920. gada februārī lēdija Mjūriela Peidžeta Daugavpili nodibināja bērnu slimnīcu. Tas bija sākums palīdzības misijai, kas darbojās līdz 1922. gada rudenim, izveidojot zīdaiņu aprūpes klinikas un ēdināšanas virtuves. No 1921. gada sākuma šī misija tika paplašināta, iekļaujot arī Rīgu un vēlāk arī Tallinu un Kauņu, taču tās darbības kodols palika Daugavpils. Šajā rakstā aplūkots Daugavpils centrālā loma misijas darbā, lēdijas Mjūrielas ambīciju attīstība un bieži vien sarežģītās attiecības ar galveno finansētāju – “Fondu “Glābiet bērnus”” (*Save the Children Fund*, SCF).

Dažu mēnešu laikā pēc misijas ierašanās Daugavpili kļuva skaidras divas lietas: Krievijas pilsoņu karš bija beidzies un slimnīca nebija ekonomiski labākais līdzeklis palīdzības sniegšanai. Misijas mērķa un organizācijas pārvērtēšana sakrita ar lēdijas Mjūrielas pirmo vizīti Daugavpili 1920. gada oktobrī.

Pieņemot jauno realitāti, lēdija Mjūriela ieplānoja daudz plašāku un vērīenīgāku darbību, lai aptvertu Latviju, Igauniju un galu galā arī Lietuvu. Viņa meklēja “*vistiešāko veidu, kā Latvijā izveidot pastāvīgu bērnu aprūpes sistēmu*”, cerot to finansēt no SCF līdzekļiem, kas līdz šim lielā mērā bija finansējis viņas darbu. Lai gan fonds piekrita daļēji atbalstīt misiju, drīz vien tas sāka uzskatīt, ka misijas darbs novirzās no neatliekamās palīdzības sniegšanas un pievēršas attīstības darbam. Neraugoties uz daudzajiem pierādījumiem tam, ka lēdijas Mjūrielas darbs bija šo divu koncepciju hibrīds, apvienojot ārkārtas palīdzību Daugavpili ar attīstības darbu Rīgā, SCF jau pēc viena gada pieņēma lēmumu pārtraukt finansēt misiju Baltijas valstīs.

Plūdi Daugavpili 1922. gada aprīlī mudināja SCF vēlreiz piešķirt finansējumu lēdijai Mjūrielai plūdu seku likvidēšanas organizēšanai. Taču vienlaikus lēdija Mjūriela centās nodrošināt savu Mātes un bērna kliniku tikla turpmāku pastāvēšanu, nododot šīs klinikas Latvijas valsts pārraudzībā. Sarunas ar Latvijas valdību noritēja veiksmīgi, un 1922. gada vasaras beigās viņa bija pārliecināta, ka tās ir drošās rokās un kļūs par daļu no viņas iecerētās “*pastāvīgās bērnu aprūpes sistēmas*”. Iespējams, tieši tāpēc, ka lēdijas Mjūrielas misija

bija ārkārtas un attīstības palīdzības hibrīds, tai bija izšķiroša nozīme Latvijas atveseļošanā no kara postījumiem un virzībā uz modernai valstij piemērotu bērnu labklājības sistēmu.

Sākotnēji izveidota pavisam citam mērķim, misija palīdzēja stabilizēt kara izpostīto Latgali un lika pamatus pastāvīgai bērnu labklājības sistēmai neatkarīgā Latvijā.



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