

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

Lēdijas Mjūrielas Peidžetas palīdzības misija Daugavpili (2. 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, eventually, 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 covered the period from the origins of the Mission in February 1920 until Lady Paget's dramatic journey to Daugavpils in October 1920. It explored two major themes. First, it considered 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. Second, it explored 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 of the article 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.

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

1920. gada februārī lēdija Mjūriela Peidžeta Daugavpili nodibināja bērnu slimnicu. Tas bija sākums palīdzības misijai, kas darbojās līdz 1922. gada rudenim, vēlāk izveidojot zidaiņu aprūpes klinikas un ēdināšanas virtuves.

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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 attīstība un bieži vien sarežģītās attiecības ar galveno finansētāju – “Fondu “Glābiet bērnus”” (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 klīniku un ēdināšanas virtuvju tīklu; šie jautājumi tika atrisināti lēdijas Mjūrielas vizītes laikā Daugavpilī 1920. gada oktobrī. Otrajā daļā aplūkota misijas attīstība 1921.–1922. gadā, kad bija iegūts SCF atbalsts plašākai darbībai, ne tikai Baltijas valstu centieniem, ne tikai uz Daugavpili vērstiem centieniem. Otrā daļa pievēršas sarežģītajām attiecībām starp misiju un tās galveno atbalstītāju – SCF, kā arī atšķirīgajai izpratnei par palīdzības darba būtību. SCF samazināja finansējumu misijai, pamatojoties uz to, ka situācija Baltijas valstīs vairs nav ārkārtas situācija. Tomēr tā piekrita piešķirt papildu finansējumu pēc 1922. gada aprīļa plūdiem Daugavpilī.

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

Lady Muriel Paget's Mission to Daugavpils had originally been funded by a series of one-off grants from the SCF. In February 1921, she put forward a proposal for a much larger-scale operation, extending to Riga, Tallinn and ultimately Kaunas as well. This Mission to the Baltic states would, she hoped, be funded by part of the large grant which the SCF had received from the government of New Zealand. Although the SCF decided to support Lady Muriel's proposal, the tenor of the discussions within the SCF suggested a degree of tension between the SCF and the Paget Mission on financial and other matters. There were evident concerns about the timeframe for any grant and the oversight of expenditure on administration. Under the heading “Dvinsk: A letter from Lady Muriel Paget's Mission” the SCF was asked to make a preliminary grant of £1,000 for the purchase of medical and other supplies for the four clinics it was proposed to open in Daugavpils, Riga and Tallinn, plus a grant for the administration and running expenses of these clinics. The roughly estimated cost of each clinic for

a year was £534, but these figures would be subject to revision on the receipt of more detailed reports from Mr Webster. The SCF quickly agreed that if a grant were to be given to Lady Muriel “*the money should come out of the New Zealand gift*”. As the discussion progressed, Eglantyne Jebb asked the committee “*whether it thought it better to give Lady Muriel a grant for the clinics on the understanding that the money should last up to a given date and that she should then hand them over to native [local] organisations, or whether Lady Muriel should be given no money for administration only grants in kind on the advice of the International Commissioner*”. Another member of the SCF ruling executive, Mr Alden, pointed out that “*Lady Muriel had definitely stated that she was willing to work under the International Commissioner and to call her work the New Zealand Mission; he did not consider she would be able to run the clinics if she only received goods in kind*”. Mr Alden made clear “*that he considered that Lady Muriel's work should be confined to Child Welfare Clinics*”.

These concerns were reflected in the resolution which was eventually adopted; the SCF Commissioner should oversee the Paget Mission to the Baltic states, the Child Welfare Clinics should be operated “in the name of New Zealand”, that each clinic be “*separately estimated for and grants made accordingly*”, that “*this money shall only be spent on the subject for which it is given*” and that “*native workers*” should be trained to continue the work once funding ceased in May 1922.¹ The SCF clearly did not want all the New Zealand money to be spent by Lady Muriel. On 18 March 1921, Eglantyne Jebb wrote a memorandum to the International Red Cross in Geneva giving her impressions of the situation in the Baltic states. She clearly had reservations about committing too much. The ARA and the American Red Cross were involved in feeding work, and “*extensive medical work*”. So, the money recently received from New Zealand should “*consist chiefly in special activities [...] with a view to supplementing the extensive emergency work undertaken by the Americans and to placing the permanent institutions for dealing with child distress on a secure footing*”. Therefore “the bulk of the money from New Zealand [would] be retained till next winter”. Rather confusingly, Eglantyne Jebb added that SCF policy was “*not fully formulated*”, and the provision of “*immediate emergency work*” would continue, if “[it] is not being undertaken by anyone else”.² And, of course, American aid had ceased to be available in Daugavpils.

Relations with the Save the Children Fund

The implication of these discussions about how much of the New Zealand money to allocate to Lady Muriel’s Mission seems to be that she had been rather lax about accounting in the past, and guilty of spending

money on materials outside the original brief. There is plenty of other evidence to suggest tension between the two organisations on financial matters. Lady Muriel’s funds were at least in part dependent on what were termed “*earmarked*” subscriptions. After a fund-raising event in Edinburgh, Miss Jameson wrote to the SCF chief administrator, Mr L. B. Golden, on 18 March 1920 explaining that the £74.2.0 raised at the event had been “*earmarked*” for Lady Muriel and needed to be transferred to her account. Then, on 22 June 1920, Lady Muriel herself wrote to Miss A. W. Cook, of the SCF Finance and Allocations Board, asking for a “*statement about SCF subscribers whose money has been allocated to my various Missions*” since “*we cannot get the Government grant for March, April and May [...] without this and we want it badly*”. Government funds were matched pound for pound those funds raised by the public. Later, on 27 September 1920, Miss Jameson was again chasing “*earmarked subscriptions*” after Lady Muriel had spoken at a series of fund-raising events. A month later she was again enquiring about “*earmarked*” monies, this time specifically about £1,000 raised for work in Daugavpils.³ SCF correspondence shows that “*sums earmarked by the donors for the relief of children in Dvinsk*” were sent to Lady Muriel, but clearly not as regularly as her Mission expected.⁴

“*Earmarked*” donations to one side, the SCF was by far the biggest contributor to Lady Muriel’s activities and most of that money went to Daugavpils. In mid-November 1920, the SCF had given £2,600 for the Mission to Eastern Europe, as the Daugavpils operation was then still known; there was also £500 for work in Czechoslovakia and £600 for Crimea. A further £1,560 was allocated in December 1920. The operations in Czechoslovakia and Crimea were now entirely separate

from the work in Daugavpils, as Miss Jameson made clear on 24 January 1921 when she asked for an SCF cheque made out to the Mission for Czechoslovakia to be re-issued, since the funds were destined to be used in Daugavpils.⁵ As these figures show, in 1920 the Daugavpils Mission had been the largest of Lady Muriel's various projects. Twice as much SCF money was being spent on the operation in Daugavpils as on the Czechoslovakia and Crimea operations combined, roughly two-thirds of her expenditure. In 1920, the Medical Unit in Daugavpils cost £6,010.1.3 and associated salaries a further £3,200.3.10; food relief cost £3,608.1.6 and equipment and clothing £2,697.6.2.⁶ Therefore, the SCF money was essential for the work in Daugavpils to continue. Approximately two thirds of the income for Lady Muriel's Missions came from the SCF. Accounts for the period 22 February 1920 to 28 February 1921 showed a total income to the Lady Muriel Missions of £22,757.10.0. This was made up of grants from the SCF totalling £14,967.9.7, with the Treasury adding £5,393 and a further large donation from the Co-Operative Society Ltd of £1,314.9.0; there was also £1,000 transferred from the Anglo-Russian Hospital Fund and miscellaneous gifts totalling £72.4.3 plus bank interest of £10.⁷

With her difficult relationship with the SCF in mind, and perhaps sensing that much of the New Zealand money was being held back, Lady Muriel was underwhelmed by the SCF funding offered for her Baltic operation. On 9 February 1921, she wrote to Mr Golden saying that she had been informed that the SCF could possibly offer £5,000 per annum to administer Latvia but commented that this was "*moderate considering the funds at your disposal*". And from the very start there was confusion about what was actually being supported by the SCF. There was more than one version of Lady Muriel's proposal in circulation, and,

although all of them had made clear that she wanted to expand her work to Tallinn, only one made clear that she envisioned a grant of £5,000 for Latvia and a further £5,000 for Estonia. The SCF was offering a total of £5,000 and for Latvia alone. At first, Lady Muriel challenged this. She wrote to Mr Golden again on 9 February to complain that Webster, on arriving in Tallinn, had been told that the SCF was only supporting work in Latvia, not Estonia: "*I need clarification*," she demanded. The misunderstanding continued. On 8 March 1921 Mr Golden wrote to Lt-Col. Crossfield, Lady Muriel's Treasurer, to explain that the money allocated had been £5,000 for a year, or two allocations of £2,500 for six months, but no more. On 12 March 1921, Lt-Col. Crossfield then wrote a personal letter to Lord Weardale, a prominent member of the SCF, pointing out that £5,000 had been allocated per country with "*no period whatsoever being stipulated*"; financial commitments had been made for £7,000 of the total £10,000 allocated to the Baltic states. By 22 March 1921, when Lt.-Col. Crossfield wrote to Eglantyne Jebb, he accepted that there had been a misunderstanding and that £5,000 had been allocated for the whole Baltic area for a period of twelve months, and that, as a result, some scaling back would be necessary. When Eglantyne Jebb responded to Crossfield the following day, she tried to smooth things over. She was "*sure*" that the SCF Allocations Board would be flexible and "*leave you a wide latitude*". There was also, therefore, "*no objection to part of the funds being diverted to the Dvinsk Mission*". It seems that Daugavpils would largely escape and that the cuts would take place elsewhere.⁸

However, alongside this financial misunderstanding, very quickly there was some concern within the SCF about the nature of the work Lady Muriel was undertaking. At first, all seemed well. On 2 March,

Miss Jameson informed the SCF that in Daugavpils and Riga the Mission was feeding 4,000 children per day.⁹ Perhaps in response to this, Eglantyne Jebb then wrote to Miss Jameson that: “In view of the excellent work that Mr Webster has done in Latvia”, could he draft a memorandum on the subject for the future guidance of the SCF. On 16 March, Webster, then in Daugavpils, sent a 17-page memorandum to Eglantyne Jebb as requested. The surviving copy of this memorandum is very faint, but the message was clear: children were suffering from “under-feeding, lack of clothing and cleanliness”; while there was some role for medicine, these three basic requirements food, clothing and cleanliness were the key. The Daugavpils Mission had now been operating in its revised form for two months and the main lesson was the need to provide nourishing food. A little later, Lady Muriel wrote a summary of Webster’s report, which unfortunately has also survived in poor condition. It is clear from it that the Mission was learning from experience. It had been decided to end the “Motor Dispensary” and concentrate on “Welfare Clinics”. Webster had clearly praised the work of the Town Dispensary, evaluating its work as “extremely high”. Mr Webster was also “quite delighted with Miss Fry”. The Daugavpils operation was going well, and its premises were “pleasant”. Getting supplies to Daugavpils was now easier since the railway between nearby Kalkūni and Warsaw had been restored.¹⁰

Yet, despite its positive tone, and the fact that it had been requested by Eglantyne Jebb, Mr Webster’s memorandum was then used as a basis for criticising Lady Muriel’s work. Towards the end of March 1921, at the height of the financial confusion about how much money the SCF had actually allocated, Lt-Col Crossfield commented in his letter to Eglantyne Jebb that “Lady Muriel has just returned and I have reported

*the result of our conversation to her. She very deeply regrets and is much disappointed at your decision not to support Mr Webster’s general work in Dvinsk. I told her what you said about the clinics being intensive relief work; Lady Muriel points out that the clinic work goes to the root of the whole mischief, and is widespread in its effects, and is, in fact, the best means of preserving child relief.”*¹¹ Clearly, Mr Webster’s memorandum to Eglantyne Jebb had caused concern of some kind, apparently that the work of Lady Muriel’s clinics was straying beyond emergency relief work; her response, that hers was “intensive” relief work, not relief work pure and simple, was felt to be unsatisfactory. On 13 April 1921, Lady Muriel wrote some “Notes on Mr Webster’s letter to Miss Jebb”. These made clear that “when Mr Webster wrote this letter to Miss Jebb he was not familiar with the general organisation of child welfare centres”. She went on: “all business questions and general administration cannot be in better hands than Mr Webster’s, but technical questions can only be decided by a medical director with special knowledge of all questions relating to child welfare.” Far from caving in to the criticism that the welfare centres were moving beyond immediate emergency relief, these notes suggested that, for Lady Muriel “the most vital work to be done at present in the Baltics is education of local personnel”. It was planned to close the general kitchen on 1 June, while Miss Dorothy G. Nicholls would soon arrive as “Nurse Superintendent in the Baltic Provinces”.¹²

When was relief work something other than relief work? In her letter to the International Red Cross of March 1921 Eglantyne Jebb had suggested that the bulk of the New Zealand money should be used for emergency work, but had added, a little confusingly, that this could include “placing permanent institutions for dealing with child distress on a secure footing”. This is

precisely what Lady Muriel claimed she was doing. In her correspondence with Meierovics a couple of months earlier she had expressed her hopes for establishing in Latvia “a permanent system of child welfare work”. The borderline between providing emergency relief and establishing something more long-lasting was clearly open to interpretation, but as 1921 progressed the SCF and Lady Muriel’s Mission had very different views on the matter.

The SCF was beginning to believe that the situation in Daugavpils no longer represented an emergency and this became clear in a curious incident involving a SCF supporter, Mrs Emma B. Harper of “Rodwell”, Wilpshire just north of Blackburn in the north of England. She had received a letter from the SCF suggesting that the situation in Daugavpils was no longer critical and that SCF money would be moving “to more needy places”. This letter contradicted her own experience of the situation in Daugavpils. In November 1920 Lady Muriel’s Mission in Daugavpils had identified one thousand local children who would be “adopted” or sponsored by well-wishers in Britain. Mrs Harper had “adopted” one such Daugavpils child and had sent him a letter and some pictures. In response, she had received a letter from one of Lady Muriel’s nurses in Daugavpils saying that it would have been more appropriate to send money than pictures, since the boy was in rags and his mother could find no work. At the insistence of the SCF, Mr Webster was reprimanded for allowing correspondence to be sent directly to a sympathiser, rather than being mediated through the Mission office in London; but the incident highlighted differing perceptions of the level of need in Daugavpils and the nature of Lady Muriel’s work there.¹³

The gradual and apparently controversial evolution of Lady Muriel’s Mission from emergency relief to systematic child welfare

is best illustrated by focusing briefly on developments in Riga. At the end of January 1921, Mr Webster had outlined arrangements for the two planned children’s kitchens to be established in the capital which were to feed initially 500 children each. The city would provide the buildings and equipment, and Lady Muriel would provide the core staff. The kitchens would be open to all, no matter what religion they professed or whether they were Latvian citizens or refugees. Access to the kitchens would be by card, issued usually by the local authority but in emergency by the Mission itself.¹⁴ This was clearly emergency relief. However, by the time Lady Muriel arrived in Riga on 12 May for the talks about the future of her Mission, as outlined in her January correspondence with Meierovics, the focus of these talks was the need for Mother and Baby Clinics. The first of these had been established in Riga’s Red Cross Hospital on 9 May, and the announcement of its launch had made clear that its focus was more like routine health care than emergency relief. Women were encouraged to visit the clinics to seek help on questions like “why am I so tired”, “why has my baby not put on weight”, and “why does my baby not sleep”?¹⁵ On 13 May, Lady Muriel, accompanied by Mr Webster and Miss Nicholls, held detailed talks with the Head of the Latvian Health Department, the Head of the Latvian Red Cross, the President of the Council of the Congress of Latvia’s Devastated Regions and Marta Berga. The clear thrust of these talks were plans for the future development of the Mother and Baby Clinics across the country, under the auspices of the Latvian Red Cross.¹⁶ A six monthly review by the Latvian Red Cross of the Mother and Baby Clinic established within its Riga hospital reinforced the picture of routine healthcare work: over 18,000 mothers had sought help, but only a third of them had gone on to have

medical consultations and only 448 of their babies had been given medical treatment. This was good preventative health care but not emergency relief.¹⁷

Axed at the peak of its operations

Ironically, as the SCF began to have doubts about the future of Lady Muriel's Mission to the Baltic states, the activities of the Mission were reaching their zenith. The money was coming in and being spent straight away. On 11 June, a Mission report recorded that £4,931.12.11 had been spent of the SCF grant of £5,000; it had received £1,000 in December 1920 and a further thousand in January 1921, with a final payment of £3,920. It added that salaries to staff abroad from January to May totalled £939.17.0. Miss Jameson noted: "*we have now no balance to account for General Funds*".¹⁸ She added a few days later that the "*balance in hand*" for the Mission to Eastern Europe was £1,394.18.1.¹⁹ Lady Muriel was on hand to monitor the expenditure. She visited Daugavpils again in early summer. Reporting to Mr Golden on 10 July 1921 about her recent visit, she described how she had joined the Travelling Clinic and set off to nearby Ilūkste, where to her horror people were still living in "*dug-outs*".²⁰ The Mission had also taken over a ward in one of the Daugavpils hospitals for, what Miss Fry called, "*sick babies belonging to our clinic*". Her workload was thus doubled, since she had to equip the ward and then visit it daily. "*We had ten beds and two local nurses [...] [whose] ideas of cleanliness were not ours,*" she recalled.²¹

The Daugavpils operation continued to be extensive. A report dated 18 July 1921 described the work of the Daugavpils Travelling Clinic and the Daugavpils Infant Welfare Clinic, while a series of reports reflected the work of the Daugavpils Mission

at its height in summer 1921. An analysis of weekly supplies showed 30 weeks on hand of cocoa and milk, 15 weeks of peas, 12 weeks of sugar and 8 weeks of gruel and rice; potatoes and sauerkraut were the only items in serious short supply, since 1,000 pounds were needed weekly and only 100 of each were in hand. There was rye flour for bread for only three and a half weeks, but these supplies were being supplemented by the action of local committees. A report headed "*Dvinsk Kitchen*" itemised the calorific value of the food issued in a typical week at the Gajok Kitchen, feeding about 350 per day, and the Judovka Kitchen, feeding about 150 per day: Gajok was a poor suburb of Daugavpils, and Judovka a village on the other side of the river. The meals were basic, sauerkraut, bread, rice, milk, potatoes and gruel with "*meat*" three days a week. The average total calory per person was 2,142.4 and the average cost per meal was 11.7 Latvian Roubles, or thruppence halfpenny. The most expensive item on the menu was fat (lard), twice as much as "*meat*", which was in turn twice as much as rice; potatoes were the cheapest item, costing just 1 Latvian Rouble per pound.

A further report covered the Daugavpils Town Dispensary and the Daugavpils Infant Welfare Clinic and recorded salaries for April and May 1921, and then salaries after May. For the Daugavpils Town Dispensary these remained constant: Dr Feodoroff received 6,250 Latvian Roubles, and Feldsher Safchenko 1,500; the Secretary Kamenskaja received 2,500 and Sister Kirpotenka 1,000. However, at the Infant Welfare Clinic the salaries decreased after May: Dr Katalinoff's pay fell from 5,000 to 3,000, while Dr Pines's fell from 3,750 to 3,000; the Lady Almoner Lutzkovich and Midwife Blumberg continued to be paid 2,500 and Maid Roberts continued to receive 500; Interpreter Konstantinova's post

of translator was abolished. These seem to have been the only economies made in Daugavpils as a result of the misunderstanding of the extent of the SCF grant. At the Feeding Depot in April and May, 14,000 Latvian Roubles had been spent to purchase 3,000 pints of milk, and 56,000 Latvian Roubles on 2,800 pounds of white flour, plus 3,000 Latvian Roubles on yeast and 1,200 on fat (lard). Total expenditure for April and May was 128,200 Latvian roubles.²² The food kitchens were clearly still involved in emergency relief, and the welfare clinics had yet to evolve into the Mother and Baby Clinics seen in Riga.

Yet the SCF did not seem impressed. Ominously, and rather disingenuously, Eglantyne Jebb wrote the following to Lady Muriel on 7 July 1921.

*Dear Lady Muriel, In view of the many difficult questions which have arisen, it has been decided that we should send Dr Armstrong Smith, who, as you know, is our chief continental organiser, to inspect all the work subsidised by us in the Baltic States [...]. He is looking forward very much to visiting your Welfare Centres. We are sorry to give you such short notice, but his journey has been unexpectedly hastened [...]. With love, yours affectionately, Eglantyne Jebb.*²³

When the SCF Allocations Board met on 19 July 1921 it passed a resolution which was confirmed by the Executive Committee on 22 July:

That in view of the urgency of emergency relief particularly amongst refugee children in the Balkans and elsewhere, the SCF feel that it must for the present devote its funds to relief of this type rather than to constructive work such as is undertaken under the auspices of the League of Red Cross Societies and more particularly by the Paget

Mission. While, therefore, gratefully appreciating Lady Muriel Paget's services in the past, the SCF regrets that it can make no further grants to her Mission but will be prepared to consider within the limits of the small resources at its command, any application made to them for constructive work by the League of Red Cross Societies through the medium of the International Union of the SCF.

On 23 July 1921, the SCF Treasurer wrote to Lady Muriel explaining the decision by referring to the need to limit funds to emergencies. Lady Muriel was visiting Czechoslovakia at the time that this devastating decision was taken, and it was from there that she wrote caustically to Mr Golden on 30 August: "So you have dropped us again after all – after promising me firmly in London that you would not: I think you might have given me a hint."²⁴

As we have seen, the SCF was no longer convinced that there was still emergency work to do in the Baltic states, and Lady Muriel's clinics were increasingly moving towards preventative care. However, there were other possible reasons for the SCF decision. One of these was that Lady Muriel overspent her allocation by some ten per cent. According to someone who worked with her closely in later life, "Lady Muriel was quite unable to understand a balance sheet" and would "spend right and left for herself and for the association and forget to keep account".²⁵ This might explain the decision, given the niggling disagreements about money which had plagued relations between the SCF and Lady Muriel's Missions. At the end of February 1922, the SCF informed its accountant that between 1 March 1921 and 28 February 1922 £5,530.10.0 had been allocated to the Mission, not the £5,000 agreed.²⁶ The historian Katherine Storr has suggested that it was not just money which

led to the breakdown in relations. She suggests that the SCF felt Lady Muriel was too “political”, and it was clearly the case that she “actively embraced opportunities for the political extension of the philanthropic realm far beyond the practises of fundraising and the immediate marshalling of support for a cause; she was not self-effacing in the process”.²⁷ The SCF was extremely sensitive to suggestions of political bias. In October 1919, when Lady Muriel had briefly considered raising money to help “the babies of Petrograd”, the SCF informed her that it was “very anxious that any relief work that we are connected with should not have even an appearance of political bias”, and that, therefore, she should co-operate with an organisation called the Russian Babies Relief Fund which already donated money to the SCF.²⁸ No co-operation with the Russian Babies Relief Fund ever materialised. In this context it should also be noted that Molly Walker was a personal friend of the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, a newspaper known for its radical stance.²⁹

Mr Golden left it until 6 October 1921 to write Lady Muriel what he thought would be a placatory letter.

*I am only so sorry to gather that you feel we might have given you further funds, but we have often tried to explain to you that under existing circumstances we do not think we should be justified in diverting these from other branches of our work. [...] We are now very glad indeed to hear that you have been promised £4,500 from the Imperial War Relief Fund [...] we have also just allocated £400 to the League of Red Cross Societies for special infants' food, for sick children attending your clinics.*³⁰

Lady Muriel received Mr Golden's letter while she was in Riga's Rome Hotel. She was there for an inspection of developments

in the Latvian capital, which to all intents and purposes were continuing to go well. Two new nurses had arrived not long before, and one of them was involved in a needlework class run through the clinics. Discussions were also underway with the Armistead Hospital in Riga about establishing a branch clinic there.³¹ By now, Lady Muriel was a celebrity among Riga's elite, something else the SCF may have felt uncomfortable with. Her biographer noted that on this visit “she was especially pleased at having cajoled the Latvian Government into allowing her to fly everywhere and to land at normally forbidden aerodromes”.³²

There was some truth to the SCF case that the immediate crisis in Latvia had passed. A report from Daugavpils written by Sister Josephine White was upbeat. Like many similar reports it followed a formula. It noted that in October 1921 the clinic had been attended by 2,518 people, and the sewing classes by 630; 2,562 pints of milk had been distributed; reviewing the period from 1 February to 31 October 1921, 15,401 had attended the clinics, or 1,711 on average per month; however, the report also made clear that this investment had led to improvements. White commented that the health of the babies was “much improved”, noting also that “we are very fortunate in having comfortable rooms for the clinic”. Yet, if things were better, there was nevertheless still a high level of need. Sister White's report for November 1921 noted that there had been “3,102 attendees, increasing the milk provision to 1,269 quarts, plus 20 pints of cod liver oil”. And this same level of activity continued. At the end of December 1921 Sister White reported that the clinic had been attended in December by 3,224 people, making the total from February to December 21,727. She referred to the Town Hospital as well as the District Hospital with its “ward supported by our Mission”. At Christmas, a tree had been

erected and on 23 December 300 mothers and children attended a celebratory tea. In January 1922, 3,071 attended the clinic and 2,600 pints of milk were distributed. In February 1922, there were 3,480 attendees and 2,924 pints of milk were distributed along with 20 pints of cod liver oil. Sister White also recorded four deaths of babies from flu and pneumonia and noted in passing that the “roads [were] almost impassable”.³³

In Daugavpils, then, the picture was of stabilisation rather than dramatic improvement, and even in Riga relief as well as developmental work was still felt to be on the agenda. On 2 November 1921, a Conference of Relief Organisations was held in the capital. Called by Latvia’s Health Department, it was attended by representatives of Lady Muriel’s Mission, the ARA, the ARC, the International Red Cross and various Latvian women’s relief organisations. Its primary purpose was to prevent the overlapping of provision and to address any omissions in that provision. The conference concluded that an information bureau needed to be established to co-ordinate activities and that this bureau needed to be run by a representative of the Latvian Government. This all sounded “developmental”, however, those who attended were taken aback when Mr Webster commented that Latvia’s children would soon no longer need the provision of relief. This, the other delegates felt, was a clear exaggeration.³⁴

For good or ill, the activity of the Mission would cease when the funds ran out in May 1922; its prospective demise became public when it was reported in the Latvian press on 3 February 1922.³⁵ The historian Andrea Griffante has commented on the level of co-operation between the local authorities and Lady Paget’s Mission and in both in Daugavpils and Riga excellent relations were established with the local hospitals.³⁶

It is not surprising, then, that both local and national politicians urged Lady Muriel not to wind up her operations as the SCF cut-off date of May 1922 approached. On 28 March, the Mayor of Daugavpils wrote to Lady Muriel:

*Honoured Lady Muriel Paget, The population of the town of Dvinsk after the difficulties of a recent war and in spite of the fact that actual hostilities ceased about two years ago is still practically in a state of destitution. The guardians although willing to help find it impossible owing to lack of funds. Even if medicament and food for the children were available it would be impossible to expect even small payment from such poverty-stricken people. The town therefore approaches you, Lady Paget, with a great request to keep in future the establishments now existing in your name. The Ambulatoria and Baby Clinic should these establishments be closed it could only mean more difficulty for our poor. Once more I would impress on you how impossible it is for a town in the condition that Dvinsk is to carry on to any extent the work that you are now doing. We earnestly hope that you will grant our wish.*³⁷

On 6 April 1922, the acting Prime Minister of Latvia, B Samuel [the anglicised spelling of Voldemārs Zāmuels], wrote to Lady Muriel:

Madam, It is with the utmost regret that the Government of Latvia are aware of the proposed withdrawal of your Mission from our country [...]. The revenues of the state being entirely absorbed by the most imperative requirements of the actual period of reconstruction, there is no local organisation having sufficient means to successfully carry on your Mission’s work. Therefore, in the name of

*the Government of Latvia I have the honour to address you and your Mission our sincerest request not to withdraw your beneficial assistance as yet. I avail myself of this opportunity to renew the expression of the Latvian Government's heartiest gratitude for your Mission's generous and most efficient relief work which has alleviated very much suffering. Highly appreciating the personal interest you take in the welfare of our country, again and again visiting it to see the progress of your Mission's work, we trust you will grant this request your kind consideration. I have the honour to be, Madam, faithfully yours.*³⁸

Lady Muriel could not promise any extra funds, but she could and did work closely with the Latvian Government in transferring the Mission's work to its Latvian collaborators. Indeed, the *Manchester Guardian* reported on 22 April 1922 that the Latvian Government had agreed to continue her work. By then her Mission had an "Office to the Baltic states" on Kungu iela 28 in Riga, and she was now personally close to some key politicians. In particular, her contacts with Marta Berga had evolved into friendship, as she took up the cause of Latvia's children and the Mother and Baby movement. As Marta Berga informed Lady Muriel in a letter of 27 April 1922, she was planning for the end of May an initiative called "Baby Week", a week of events and an exhibition which would educate Latvian women about the latest views on childbirth and mothering. She hoped Lady Muriel would take part, since the Paget clinics had played such a pivotal role in this field. The event would involve all the great and the good of Latvian society. It would be the subject of a documentary film and was to be opened by the Latvian President Jānis Čakste, whose wife would also be involved, as would the wife of Foreign Minister Zigfrīds Meierovics. Schools would be

closed on the opening day, and it was hoped Lady Muriel would join the President and Prime Minister in the opening procession.³⁹ This she did, as did President Čakste, and the Latvian press covered the event in some detail.⁴⁰ Lady Muriel was keen to develop the concept of "Baby Weeks" because she had used it a year earlier in Czechoslovakia and felt it had been an important step in developing a nationwide movement, "a living monument to the spread of the British conception of child-welfare work".⁴¹

Lady Muriel returned to Riga on 26 July to finalise arrangements for the transfer of her operations to the Latvian Government. The report she wrote on that visit made clear that although she had brief discussions about whether to expand activities in Kaunas, the focus of the visit was otherwise entirely on Latvia. One, rather pleasant issue was arranging for a Latvian nurse to be funded to attend a training course in London, another was the need to organise a "Baby Week" in Daugavpils in early September, but the main issue was the future of the clinics. After what she described as a misunderstanding on her part, it had become clear to her "that there was never any question that the Government would not make the necessary grant for the maintenance of the clinics", indeed the Government had offered more than had been asked for. The issue was what organisation would administer the funds and whether they would continue child welfare work "on lines already agreed on". The government no longer favoured handing the clinics to the Women's League, preferring to work with the Child Welfare Section of the Latvian Red Cross, and Lady Muriel agreed that it was essential that control of the clinics remained in the hands of people like Mrs Berga and Mrs Meierovics "who have a right conception of preventive work, otherwise there is always a danger that the clinics might become dispensaries". Involving the Red Cross

would ensure periodical inspection by its League of Child Welfare, “almost essential if the work is to be developed on the right lines”. She was relieved that the Latvian Government had agreed to all her proposals concerning the transfer of the clinics. Closing her report, she noted: “I very much appreciate the extreme friendliness, courtesy and assistance that we have received from members of the Government and others in this country. It has been a great stimulus [and] encouragement to do everything that is possible to assist the local people to build up efficient child welfare organisations.”⁴²

The flood disaster

Even as her Mission to the Baltic states was being wound up, Lady Muriel’s commitment to Daugavpils continued. On the night of Friday 7–Saturday 8 April 1922, the river Daugava burst its banks and caused extensive and destructive flooding. The news reached Riga by mid-day on Saturday, but it was only picked up by Reuters on 11 April, being reported by *The Times* on the 12th.⁴³ A letter to Lady Muriel described the situation as of 21 April, complete with a hand-drawn map of the worst affected area. “The cause of the trouble was the rapid thaw and a block on the [river] Dvina (Daugava) near [the village of] Nicgale. The ice piled up on some timber construction at a bend in the river between [the village of] Liksna and Nicgale and the river rose higher and higher behind that site bearing the breaking ice on its breast.” The “chaussée” embankment, a flood defence, protected the town centre and “Dvinsk itself suffered little except from temporary flood; the chausée acts as a dam [...]. Far different was the effect on the left bank at [the settlement of] Grīva and on the Dunaberg Side [a suburb of Daugavpils] above the chausée. On the left bank also runs a chausée which protects

the lowland from flood. At Grīva, however, the flood at its height found a low stretch of chaussée which it breached and carrying the wooden [Daugavpils road] bridge from just above the village, carrying the houses and inmates with it. Parts of the bridge are wedged in the streets of the village”, although the metal railway bridge remained intact.⁴⁴ In all, the 3,000 inhabitants of Grīva suffered terrible losses: 29 houses and 52 buildings were carried away by the river, 140 houses and 32 farms seriously damaged and 76 cows, 18 horses and much livestock drowned.⁴⁵ The present condition of the surrounding countryside more generally was that an area on each bank of the Daugava, extending from Krāslava down river for about 200 versts [1 verst equals 1.1 kilometre] was “deep under water, on the left bank to some 15–20 versts of varying extent, 5–15 versts on the right bank”. The flood reached to the railway at Kalkūni. “Some 10,000 people are homeless and in receipt of immediate food relief which is organised by the military with a system of food kitchens. Perhaps 200 houses altogether are washed away or ruined: horses, cows, pigs, poultry are lost, grain for seed is under water, sprouting and ruined; clothing is lost...” The ice block at Nicgale “was ultimately relieved by aeroplane bombing... [but] the melted Russian snows are now arriving”.⁴⁶ On 27 April, Lady Muriel wrote to Mr. Golden at the SCF asking, given the floods, for renewed support. She promised to give more details “as soon as I get to Dvinsk in about a week’s time”.⁴⁷ Lady Muriel had only just returned to London from Daugavpils when the flooding occurred.⁴⁸

Lady Muriel “tore back to the scene of the tragedy”, and, according to *The Times* correspondent in Riga, her Mission “rendered great assistance, collecting as many of the scattered families together as it could, feeding and clothing them as far as its means would allow”.⁴⁹ On 29 April, Lady

Muriel was again writing to the SCF. She had received an oral report that the SCF would be awarding £1,000 for flood relief in Daugavpils, and could she rely on this?⁵⁰ This, after all, was clearly an emergency and as such the SCF should fund it. In a detailed report to the SCF headed “*Latvia*”, Lady Muriel linked the flood crisis with the need to gradually wind down her operations in the country without prompting a crisis. Her report made reference to the letters she had received from the Mayor of Daugavpils and Zāmuels and stressed the need for continuing support “*for the next two months after which time the Government have guaranteed to find 30,000 Latvian Roubles a month to carry on a Clinic and Milk Kitchen in Riga and 40,000 for Dvinsk*”. Even these funds meant that “*the committee will not be able to continue the provision of bread as well as milk at Dvinsk*”. In addition, “*the housing problem has been rendered very acute through the floods; when I was in Dvinsk two weeks ago most of the people who attended our Milk Kitchen were on the verge of starvation*.” Lady Muriel concluded by asserting that “*conditions should be substantially improved in the summer when the Government hopes to start some railway works*”.⁵¹ From Lady Muriel’s perspective, the SCF was slow to respond. On 4 May, Miss Jameson asked just what information about the situation in Daugavpils was needed before a decision on emergency aid for flood relief could be made; it was only of 5 May that Miss Jameson was finally informed that Lady Muriel could spend the requested £1,000 and draw down half of it at once.⁵²

So, Lady Muriel’s Mission in Daugavpils continued its work as the flood crisis gradually abated. An undated tabular report, clearly written after the flood, refers to the continuing work of “*Dvinsk kitchens*” in “*Gajok and Judovka*”. Work in Judovka had been the more complicated since refugees from the village of Lisovka, that was entirely

destroyed in the flood, had also arrived and needed to be fed. In the immediate aftermath of the flood, the Mission made use of equipment supplied by the Latvian Army. There were also two Milk Kitchens, the one in Daugavpils for 200 “*children and nursing mothers*” and the other in Grīva for 100. “*These kitchens are attached to the Dvinsk Child Welfare Centre and Grīva Dispensary*.” The Grīva clinic was attended by a military doctor. The report ended: “*Cows – about 120 are urgently required in order to supply milk for the villages on the opposite bank of the Dvina (Daugava) to Dvinsk where most of the cattle were drowned*.”⁵³ The issue of cows was a serious one. *The Times* reported that “*an enormous number of cattle had been lost*” and, according to her biographer, Lady Muriel travelled to Lithuania where she bought one hundred cows at £5 per cow. The financial record refers to “*cows purchased for the relief of victims of the flood, Dvinsk, £120*”, so either the cows cost less than £5 or fewer than 100 were purchased.⁵⁴ Visiting Daugavpils at the end of July, Lady Muriel noted that the situation was much improved. The remaining kitchens would close on 1 September, she wrote, but a “*Baby Week*” would take place there, to start on 12 September; this was planned to include a welfare exhibition which Zigfrids and Mrs Meierovics had promised to open.⁵⁵ However, by autumn 1922 the Mission’s operation was effectively winding down even in Daugavpils. On 6 November, Lady Muriel informed the SCF that the Latvian Government would now pay £1,200 per year “*to continue the work of child welfare centres and milk kitchens in Riga and Dvinsk*”.⁵⁶ Lady Muriel’s work in Daugavpils was done. If in Riga her Mission had begun to move towards the provision of modern child-care, the level of wartime devastation in Daugavpils, along with the subsequent impact of the flood, meant that there her Mission was only edging away from emergency relief when

the funds stopped. Her work did not go unrecognised: in November 1926 she was awarded Latvia's Order of the Three Stars.

Epilogue

Lady Muriel returned to philanthropic work in London until, at the end of the 1920s and into the 1930s, especially once Britain had restored diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in 1929, she began a new project in Soviet Russia. This was to care for the many British governesses, once employed by the Russian imperial aristocracy but then trapped in Soviet Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution; having lost all contact with their native land and often unable to find regular work, these women were living on the margins of the Soviet society. It was to the cause of helping these unfortunate women – known to the British Foreign Office as “*Distressed British Subjects*” – that she dedicated the last decade of her life, establishing a “*dacha*” for them in Leningrad where they could socialise and rest. Because she travelled to Soviet Russia so frequently, it was perhaps inevitable that during Stalin's purge trials she was again accused of being a spy. She died on 19 June 1938 after suffering from cancer for many years.

Conclusion

Lady Muriel rather stumbled upon Daugavpils. Her Mission came to Daugavpils to provide a hospital for those fighting in Russia's Civil War, an ambition based on the tacit assumption of White victory. Within months two things were clear: Russia's Civil War was over, and the hospital was not a cost-effective means of bringing relief. Despite all the efforts devoted to getting it off the ground, the hospital

was expensive, supposedly under “*Jewish*” control and was drawing resources away from the successful welfare clinics being established in Daugavpils and other parts of Latgale. This reassessment of the Mission's purpose and organisation coincided with Lady Muriel's first dramatic visit to Daugavpils in October 1920.

Accepting the new reality presented by the formation of the Baltic states, Lady Muriel changed tack dramatically. She planned a much broader and more ambitious operation to cover Latvia, Estonia and ultimately Lithuania, as well. The purpose of this Mission to the Baltic states she outlined in a letter to Meierovics in January 1921. She was looking for “*the most direct way of establishing a permanent system of child welfare in Latvia*”. To fund this, she looked to the SCF, which had largely funded her thus far. She hoped to gain access to some of the large grant given to the SCF by the government of New Zealand. This, however, was not to be. The SCF wanted to preserve this grant for emergency relief, and although it agreed to back Lady Muriel's Mission in part, it soon began to feel that her work was drifting away from emergency relief and towards developmental work: the Mother and Baby Clinics being established in Riga's hospitals were a far cry from the food kitchens still at the heart of the Daugavpils operation.

This was not a crystal-clear dividing line. The SCF did accept that it was legitimate to spend funds on “*placing the permanent institutions for dealing with child distress on a secure footing*”, as the SCF leader Eglantyne Jebb told the International Red Cross in a letter of March 1921, but ultimately, and despite much evidence that Lady Muriel's work was a hybrid of these two concepts combining emergency relief in Daugavpils with developmental work in Riga, the SCF took the decision to cease funding Lady Muriel's Mission to the Baltic

states after just one year. Her case was not helped by the surprising comment of Mr Webster in November 1921 to a conference in Riga that Latvia's children would soon not need the provision of relief.

Floods, of course, are by definition an emergency, and the terrible flood in Daugavpils in April 1922 prompted the SCF, if rather reluctantly, to make a further grant to Lady Muriel to organise flood relief; the feeding kitchens in Gajok and Judovka were soon working at full stretch. At the same time, however, Lady Muriel was seeking to assure the continued existence of her network of Mother and Baby Clinics once they came under Latvian administration. Negotiations with the Latvian Government went well, and by the end of summer 1922 she was confident that those clinics were in safe hands and would become part of the "*permanent system of child welfare*" she had mentioned to Meierovics in January 1921. How effectively that transfer took place is beyond the scope of this article.

Perhaps because Lady Muriel's Mission was a hybrid between emergency and developmental relief, it played a crucial role in the recovery of Latvia from the devastation of war and its move towards a system of child welfare fit for a modern state. It depended not only on the extraordinary drive of Lady Muriel herself, but on the gritty determination of the men and women, doctors, nurses and administrators, who agreed to leave the comfort of Britain

for the dislocation and chaos of war-torn Latgale and the wider Baltic states. These were people of incredible commitment and ability: the former Suffragette Dr. Sarah O'Flynn went on to become Head of Paediatrics at Singapore General Hospital and then Assistant Director of the Marie Curie Hospital in Hampstead, London. And, as Andrea Griffante has pointed out, one of the great successes of the Paget Mission was that it was able to work closely with those on the ground, both local and national politicians. The Mission did not just arrive, distribute food and medicine and leave, as the SCF seemed to want. It was for this very reason that the Mission found itself drifting beyond the remit of the SCF. To use a term from Britain's imperial past, the Mission "*went native*", identifying too much with the people it was seeking to relieve. From the start, the Mission worked closely with Latgale Governor Bērziņš and that set the pattern for the future, arguably culminating in Lady Muriel's personal friendship with Marta Berga.

Originally set up for an entirely different purpose, the Paget Mission helped to stabilise war-torn Latgale and laid the foundations for "*a permanent system of child welfare*" for independent Latvia. Neither of these two objectives were in Lady Muriel's mind when she visited London in January 1920, but, despite the disjuncture between aims and achievements, her Mission was an extraordinary success.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- ¹ Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham, Birmingham (henceforth – CRL) EJ73.
- ² CRL EJ76.
- ³ CRL EJ68.
- ⁴ CRL EJ214 20.3.20.
- ⁵ CRL EJ68; the December allocation is in CRL EJ69.
- ⁶ CRL EJ71.

- ⁷ CRL EJ71.
- ⁸ CRL EJ73.
- ⁹ CRL EJ68.
- ¹⁰ CRL EJ73.
- ¹¹ CRL EJ73.
- ¹² CRL EJ73.
- ¹³ CRL EJ68. For the one thousand names of those to be “adopted”, see CRL EJ214 11.11.20.
- ¹⁴ Valdības Vēstnesis 29.01.21.
- ¹⁵ Latvijas Sargs 10.05.21.
- ¹⁶ Latvijas Sargs 14.05.21., Zemgaliētis 21.05.21.
- ¹⁷ Latvijas Sarkanā Krusta Žurnāls 15.12.21.
- ¹⁸ CRL EJ69.
- ¹⁹ CRL EJ68.
- ²⁰ CRL EJ73.
- ²¹ BLUNT, Lady Muriel, p. 204.
- ²² CRL EJ71. The exchange rate was 1,100 Latvian Roubles for one Pound Sterling.
- ²³ CRL EJ68.
- ²⁴ CRL EJ68.
- ²⁵ READER BULLARD. *Inside Stalin’s Russia: The Diaries of Reader Bullard, 1930–1934*. Oxford 2000, pp. 25, 224.
- ²⁶ CRL EJ69.
- ²⁷ COLPUS, *Female Philanthropy*, p. 177. Colpus in turn cites KATHERINE STORR. Excluded from the Record: *Women, Refugees and Relief, 1914–1922*. Oxford, 2010, p. 237.
- ²⁸ CRL EJ214 13.10.19.
- ²⁹ Leeds Wa 10.05.20.
- ³⁰ CRL EJ68.
- ³¹ CRL EJ72.
- ³² BLUNT, Lady Muriel, p. 205.
- ³³ CRL EJ72.
- ³⁴ CRL EJ77.
- ³⁵ Latvijas Sargs, Latvis, 03.02.22.
- ³⁶ ANDREA GRIFFANTE. *Children, Poverty and Nationalism in Lithuania, 1900–1940*. Cham, Switzerland, 2019, p. 94. Andrea Griffante explores the work of Lady Muriel’s Mission in more detail in his article: ANDREA GRIFFANTE. *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 on line 20.11.23.
- ³⁷ CRL EJ70.
- ³⁸ CRL EJ70.
- ³⁹ Leeds Letter from Marta Berga 27.04.22. The planned event is referred to by Mrs Berga in her letter as “Baby Days”, translating literally from the Latvian. However, “Baby Days” sounds odd in English, and since the event was to last for a week, “Baby Week” seems a better term.
- ⁴⁰ See, for example, Latvijas Vēstnesis, 30.05.22.
- ⁴¹ *The Record Of The Save The Children Fund*, vol. iii, No. 1, November 1922.
- ⁴² Leeds “Report on visit to the Baltics, July 1922”, 31.07.22.

⁴³ Sociāldemokrāts, 09.02.22, 10.04.22; The Times 12.04.22.

⁴⁴ CRL EJ70.

⁴⁵ Leeds Undated letter of Dr. Alfred Klaus.

⁴⁶ CRL EJ70. The sketch map makes clear that the then wooden road bridge of 1922 was significantly up-river from today's road bridge, beyond the Gajok suburb of Daugavpils (today at the junction of Bruģa iela and Dzelzceļa iela) and crossing the river Daugava closer to the village of Judovka.

⁴⁷ CRL EJ70.

⁴⁸ Manchester Guardian 22.04.22.

⁴⁹ BLUNT, Lady Muriel, p. 206.

⁵⁰ CRL EJ70.

⁵¹ CRL EJ70.

⁵² CRL EJ70.

⁵³ CRL EJ70.

⁵⁴ BLUNT, Lady Muriel, p. 206; The Times 15.04.22; EJ69.

⁵⁵ Leeds "Report of visit to Baltic States, July 1922", 31.09.22.

⁵⁶ CRL EJ70.

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 aplūkota Daugavpils centrālā loma misijas darbā, lēdijas Mjūrielas ambīciju attīstība un bieži vien sarežģītās attiecības ar galveno finansētāju – "Fondu "Glābiet bērnus"" (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 vērīnīgāku 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 aprīli 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 tās Latvijas valsts pārraudzībā. Sarunas ar Latvijas valdību noritēja veiksmīgi, un 1922. gada vasaras beigās viņa bija pārliecināta, ka šīs klinikas 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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