

Fighting over Children. Relief, Rehabilitation and Childhood in Lithuania, 1914–1923

Cīņa par bērniem. Palīdzība, rehabilitācija un bērnība
Lietuvā, 1914–1923

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Raksts piedāvā ieskatu Lietuvas kara palīdzības un rehabilitācijas procesos laikā no 1914. gada rudens līdz 1923. gadam. Autors atspoguļo to, kā gan kara laikā, gan agrīnajā pēckara periodā Lietuvas humānisms kļuva par nācijas celtniecības instrumentu, šajā procesā nacionālie un starptautiskie spēlētāji apvienojās, lai palīdzētu veidot jaunu nāciju. Palīdzības un rehabilitācijas mērķi, kā noskaidrots, bija ļoti līdzīgi.

Atslēgvārdi: palīdzība, rehabilitācija, Pirmais pasaules karš, ASV Sarkanais krusts, lēdijas Pedžetas misija, Amerikas Palīdzības administrācija, *Ober Ost*, neatkarīgā Lietuva.

The article provides an insight into the history of Lithuanian war relief and rehabilitation work between the fall of 1914 and 1923. The author reviews how both during wartime and in the early postwar period Lithuanian humanitarianism became an instrument of nation-building, in which national and international actors intertwined the relief work and the goal to create new citizens. Relief and rehabilitation activities came out to be very similar in their purpose.

Keywords: relief, rehabilitation, World War I, American Red Cross, Lady Paget Mission, American Relief Administration, *Ober Ost*, independent Lithuania.

Humanitarianism studies have raised an increasing interest in the academic world over the last decade.¹ In his seminal work *Empire of Humanity*, Michael Barnett overviewed the development of modern humanitarianism according to a three-phase scheme. According to Barnett, ‘imperial humanitarianism’ (1) based on private initiative prevailed on the scene until World War I, when state-supported ‘neo-humanitarianism’ (2) became dominant. Its place was contested only in the new era globalization, with the emergence of the NGO-ruled

'liberal humanitarianism'.² Recent studies have criticized Barnett's model and inferred the multiple character of humanitarianism. In an article published in 2013, Johannes Paulmann pointed out:

*"Describing the history of modern humanitarianism in terms of conjunctures rather than narratives serves, first, to highlight the continuities and interaction of different forces that contribute to the practice and ideas of international humanitarian aid: "The international humanitarian system [...] is not a logical construct. It is the result of many, often competing, processes. Some driven by self-interest or national interest, some by ideology, some by altruism, but all about adaptation; adaptation to changing needs." Among the varying circumstances were the nature of war, international, civil, or asymmetrical; the changing expediency for state policies of giving relief to others; the different forms of aid organizations, national, international, nongovernmental, or governmental; and the role of the media, its technology and commercial interests."*³

Although the scholarly interest in humanitarian relief during the First World War in East-Central Europe has increased since Peter Gatrell's study on wartime displacement in the Russian Empire,⁴ the link between the First World War relief and the early postwar humanitarian actions remains a highly unexplored field. Wartime and postwar humanitarian intervention have been most often viewed as separate domains of investigation. Although the multilevel nature of wartime humanitarianism has been generally recognized, the role of national organizations in early postwar years has often been overshadowed by the growing involvement of international humanitarian actors and their geopolitical/colonial goals.⁵ The conceptual distinction between relief and

rehabilitation has reflected the understanding of war and postwar humanitarian interventions as the outcomes of different actors and strategies. While wartime relief is defined as the sum of mainly short-term goals, postwar rehabilitation is said to aim at the achievement of medium-term results.⁶

In the next pages, I will briefly sketch out the development of Lithuanian wartime and postwar relief from 1914 to 1923 throughout the territories where the Lithuanian nation state arose in 1918. In particular, I will concentrate on child-oriented aid, which represented one of the main foci of humanitarian activities. The beginning of the First World War and the first waves of refugees fleeing from the front-line mobilized humanitarian relief on the western border of the Russian Empire. The Lithuanians unitarily organized their war relief committee in the fall of 1914. While the committee represented the pivot of Lithuanian social life during wartime, the emergence of the Lithuanian nation state saw the rise of two new protagonists in the field of humanitarian aid: the state and international humanitarian organizations. By 1923 the activities of international humanitarian missions to Lithuania came to an end and social care was eventually taken over totally by public and private local actors.

I will analyze the meanings that were enfolded in humanitarian activities and how humanitarianism was conceived as a tool for social modernization. Moreover, I will investigate the ideal and political ground on which national and international humanitarians cooperated, and the extent to which the divergent understandings of humanitarianism led to conflict. While doing that, I will explore whether a substantial difference between wartime relief and postwar rehabilitation existed. My point is that Lithuanian humanitarians

acted both in wartime and early postwar period following a common medium-term modernization goal. Wartime agenda was to a great extent dictated by strict norms introduced by German occupation authorities and a high degree of isolation from the external world. In the aftermath of World War I, when humanitarian intervention was partially taken over by the Lithuanian state's institution, the goals of humanitarian intervention largely met the aims of Lithuanian state's authorities. While providing an overview on the whole period, the present contribution will be much more focused on Lithuanian relief between 1918 and 1923.⁷

Wartime Relief: Children, Hostels and Nation Building

The First World War in the East resulted peculiar for its traditional features as warfare of movement. The repeated advance and withdrawal of the German and Russian armies in 1914–1915 made the frontline on the western border of the Russian Empire a stage of regular casualties from the very beginning of the war. Within its territory, an enormous amount of buildings was destroyed, thus forcing inhabitants to seek a shelter elsewhere. A larger wave of destruction followed the withdrawal of the Russian army in the summer of 1915. On their way eastward, the Russian army adopted a 'scorched earth policy' that aimed to destroy what was left and empty the land of people. According to rough calculations, after the beginning of the war approximately 1 300 000 people, namely, one third of the total pre-war population, had fled their homes in the Lithuanian provinces of the Russian Empire or fallen victim to the war. Among them, roughly 250 000 people – mostly young men – were swept away from their homeland and spent

the wartime in Russia. They were able to return to the newly constituted Lithuanian state from 1918 to 1923.

Vilnius soon became one of the key destinations for the displaced that remained in *Ober Ost*, the new administrative unit created by German occupation authorities. By the end of July 1915, Vilnius was overwhelmed by 22 500 people coming mainly from the provinces of Suwałki and Kaunas.⁸ The Polish Civic Committee estimated that in 1916 the displaced persons living in Vilnius exceeded 50 000 units. Due to the mobilization of young men and displacement to Russia, most of the population which remained in the occupied territory consisted of elderly people, women and children. Moreover, unemployment in towns grew dramatically. In Vilnius it reached about 27 000 units (upon a total population of about 130 000 units) by 1916.⁹ Relief turned out to be necessary for the 75% of the total Vilnius population.¹⁰ Particularly alarming was the situation of children. Archival data reveal that up to 70% of the displaced people were younger than 30 (37% even younger than 15).¹¹ In 1916, Vilnius alone was home to more than 32 000 children.¹² Displacement, poverty, parents' unemployment or death and lack of primary supplies soon transformed children into the main victims of war.

Relief activities grew within quite an unusual atmosphere. At the beginning of the war, the Lithuanian patriotic elite expressed its loyalty to the Russian Empire in the so-called 'Amber Declaration'.¹³ This enthusiasm followed the belief that if Russia were to win the war, elite's loyalty would guarantee the autonomy for the Lithuanian provinces. The call for unity one could find in the Lithuanian public sphere¹⁴ was reflected in the emergence of the Lithuanian War Relief Committee (LWRC), which nationalists and socialists created together in November 1914. Although in

the fall of 1915 the organization split and a large part of the people involved in relief activities carried on their work among the Lithuanian population displaced in Russia, the LWRC played a pivotal role in the social and political life of Lithuanians in *Ober Ost*, as well.

Children's relief constantly remained one of the main foci for LWRC humanitarian intervention. Children's feeding, housing and schooling represented some of the most urgent activities carried out by the committee. Partial aid (distribution of foodstuff and bread cards, creation of soup kitchens, etc.) was the most often practiced form of relief. Nonetheless, the poorest children could profit from much more complex forms of relief. Special hostels for them were created throughout the occupied land. Due to the lack of financial resources, however, just a very little part of the poor displaced children could be given a full support and accommodation in LWRC hostels. According to archival data, less than 10% of children living in Vilnius in 1916 were accommodated in the relief committees' hostels.¹⁵

For members of the LWRC, the feeding, housing, and education of the displaced represented much more than a neutral humanitarian duty. In a context still dominated by low levels of national consciousness, relief activities became a way to strengthen the sense of belonging of the displaced persons to a common moral world. In that regard, hostels played a primary role. During the German occupation, they became veritable laboratories for nationalization. Poor displaced children and orphans entrusted to hostels used to spend their entire day there. Even those whose relatives lived nearby were permitted to meet them for just a couple of hours per week.¹⁶ By isolating them from external influences, the Lithuanian intelligentsia aimed to transform children and young people into the

targets of a complex process of moral education. Their daily life was strictly organized in the microcosm of the hostels. Children and young people would sleep, have breakfast, lunch, supper and attend school within the same place. Children accepted in hostels and day-centres originated both from Polish and Lithuanian-speaking families, although priority was given to the latter. By hosting children from different linguistic environments, the Lithuanian intelligentsia sought to strengthen the children's skills in Lithuanian, as well as their loyalty for their nation, in other words, to "*Lithuanianize children whose parents cannot speak Lithuanian.*"¹⁷ To achieve that, different strategies were adopted. Young people were taught folk songs or patriotic declamations in compulsory classes to be publicly performed during religious festivities. Hostel tutors took care of children to avoid any 'contamination' from the environments in which Lithuanian was not spoken. Patriotic sentiments were also stimulated in illegal periodical journals for internal circulation only, which were prepared by children and their tutors, as well as in illicit associations operating exclusively within the hostels' boundaries.¹⁸ Moreover, performances, lectures, and picture exhibitions dedicated to Lithuanian history and heroes were organized in hostels. Strategies of Lithuanization (at least in the linguistic sense) often turned out to be quite successful. As priest Pranas Bieliauskas noted in his diary in late 1915, though only seven children out of 46 could speak Lithuanian at the moment of their arrival at one of the Lithuanian hostels, within two months almost everyone had become fluent in the new language.¹⁹

The Lithuanians used the new situation and the new norms regulating education affairs in the occupied territory to create their own network of schools.²⁰ In harsh occupation conditions, schools strongly

needed the financial support of pupils' parents. The pupils whose parents did not pay the established education fees were usually denied the possibility to attend lessons.²¹ Nevertheless, the pupils that did not show interest or satisfactory results in learning were also invited to leave school,²² to move to a school of lower level²³ or, if hosted in relief association's dorms, even to leave them.²⁴ Conversely, the LWRC used hostels as a resource to ensure talented pupils with higher education (even for free)²⁵ at gymnasias.

During the German occupation, therefore, children's relief blended traditional nationalizing tools (education) and the proper first-aid support. Children's relief remained, however, highly selective. While profiting from the chance to manage formal and informal education unitarily, the LWRC guaranteed full support in hostels only to the most talented among the displaced children mainly due to the lack of financial resources. Although the relief measures were *generally* used to achieve emergency goals, undoubtedly, socialization and nationalization represented medium- and even long-term goals (the creation of young educated Lithuanians) to be achieved through relief activities and emergency management.

After Relief: the Difficult Path to Rehabilitation

The emergence of the Lithuanian nation state and the conclusion of war marked a meaningful change in the field of children's aid. On the one hand, the crowds of refugees who started to flow back to Lithuania made relief work even more desired and essential.

However, even if the number of needy children increased over time and was estimated in about 60 000 units in 1920,²⁶

the figures of those who were accommodated in hostels remained substantially unchanged. As the main urban centre in the region, Vilnius remained along with the eastern districts of Poland the main goal of the refugees in their way back from Russia. In 1919, Vilnius emergency hostels (mainly the Lithuanian and Polish ones) were home to about 3 042 children.²⁷ As the political changes cut off Vilnius from the body of independent Lithuania, the flow of refugees going back to Lithuania took a separate route. In 1919 state's orphanages and relief hostels in independent Lithuania hosted about 3 628 (1 449 of them in Kaunas). The figure increased up to 4 159 by 1921.²⁸

On the other hand, the humanitarian actors progressively changed. While becoming the new main subjects in the humanitarian field, the state, new national and international non-state organizations undertook new actions designed to have permanent effects on society. True, the presence of the nation state made the reallocation of relief tasks unavoidable. The LWRC progressively handed over its functions to state's offices and ministries: while education and social care became the objects of separate ministries, healthcare remained under management by the Ministry of Interior. The financial burden of supporting healthcare and social care, however, soon turned out to be an unbearable burden for the state's structures which were still just at an early organizational stage. Therefore, as we will see in the next pages, wartime relief and postwar rehabilitation tools differed because the very structures of humanitarian intervention had changed. Nevertheless, the modernization goals of relief and rehabilitation remained rather similar.

Rehabilitation programmes in Lithuania grew out of a set of different factors. During wartime years, the interest in children's

relief had overlapped national boundaries and become a worldwide issue. The engagement of the USA in the conflict had modified not only the course of military events but the mechanisms of international relief, also. In June 1917 the American Red Cross (ARC) had started its work in France by creating two separate Departments of Military and Civil Affairs providing relief, respectively, to soldiers and local non-combatants. The Department of Civil Affairs expended much energy to provide medical assistance to children who became the main focus for the American organization. By March 1919, when the ARC ended its efforts in France, more than 200 000 children and 5 000 children's institutions had benefited from ARC aid. The ARC interest in children's relief just increased between 1919 and 1923, when a new children's aid programme was set up throughout Europe in cooperation with the American Relief Administration (ARA). A quasi-public organization founded in February 1919 by president Woodrow Wilson and chaired by Herbert Hoover, the ARA engaged in the delivering of food supplies to needy European nations in tight connection with U.S. institutions.

While in wartime the improvement children's welfare had been intertwined with the attempt to practically demonstrate the supposed superiority of American pediatricians' ideas,²⁹ the special focus on children taken on by both the ARC and ARA from 1919 quite clearly reflected the new political situation. Though being formally independent, yet working in close contact with American political élite, ARC and ARA interventions served the new foreign political agenda of the United States by fighting political radicalism and fostering peace in Europe. Even if ARA and ARC were instructed to concentrate exclusively on relief work, their activity often intertwined rehabilitation programmes and

state-building. While participating in the decisional process concerning aid within state's structures, through the delivery of food supply and medical assistance, the two organizations – along with the American government – aimed, as Julia Irwin observed, at

“[...] bring[ing] the next generation of European citizens into line with American medical and social ideals. Reforming the health outcomes of European youth, a population considered far more malleable and responsive to environmental influences than their parents, appeared the single most effective way [...] to influence Europe's future course.”³⁰

In the early postwar years child welfare became the main focus also for non-governmental organizations such as the Save the Children International Union (SCIU).

The Lithuanian intelligentsia could nothing but share and support the goals of rehabilitation programmes. Unlike in the period of German occupation, when children's relief was carried out in dramatic conditions, rehabilitation was perceived by the Lithuanian intelligentsia as a work to be carried out *scientifically*. Repatriated professionals in the field of education and, especially, in medical assistance could now engage in state-building and help to work out rehabilitation programmes. Educated mainly in Tsarist universities, Lithuanian physicians shared a social medicine-oriented attitude that could serve the new nation state's structures.³¹ Furthermore, in the early 1920s Lithuanian physicians and statesmen shared a deep pronatalist inclination. After wartime conditions had caused a sudden decrease of birth-rate,³² a demographic increase was considered a basic goal for the improvement of nation's solidity and endurance in time and space. However, physicians – especially

those engaged at the Healthcare Department by the Ministry of Interior – supposed birthrate increase could only take place as a result of a radical change in both popular and state's attitudes towards medicine and hygiene, and the reorganization of state's social and healthcare policy according to scientific criteria. Accordingly, children's welfare had to begin with pregnant women's care and continue with children's medical assistance throughout childhood.³³ Fight with children's mortality represented the other step the newborn state had to take especially in a context in which the rates of orphaned children were constantly increasing.

Postwar Lithuanian reality, anyway, was not encouraging. The newly established state was ailing, supplies still represented a largely unsolved problem and social revolution remained a tangible danger. War with Bolsheviks, Pavel Bermontd-Avalov's forces, and Poland jeopardized the state and made at risk the very existence of it. As in the case of the other east central European states, where the postwar period appeared no easier than wartime, Lithuania could not even try to cope with the challenge of postwar relief alone. International relief networks represented the main support available to alleviate the emergency. Lithuanian diplomatic efforts in Paris between February and April 1919 led to the stipulation of a contract for food supplies with the ARA. The ARA mission to Lithuania lasted until June 1920. Within the same period, a second contract was signed with the ARC. Although the first to address the ARC were the members of the Lithuanian representatives in the USA in 1918, it was the ARC officials themselves that in March 1919 asserted that the ARC support would be necessary in Lithuania and Latvia as a means to fight with Bolshevism. After various temporary interruptions, the ARC mission to Lithuania ended in June 1922.³⁴

Though necessary, international relief did not always turn out to be a source of satisfaction for the Lithuanians. True, the categorization of the food aid recipients (children younger than 15, pregnant and feeding women) perfectly fit the rehabilitation goals of both the Lithuanians and Americans.³⁵ Nevertheless, the quality of food often raised questions and perplexity. The sent supplies frequently were of low quality. Not only was the food often badly kept but also other delivered materials were not characterized by excellent quality.³⁶ Moreover, the introduced bureaucratic norms made it almost impossible to achieve relief goals. In July 1919, some soup kitchens for children in Kaunas experienced an almost total paralysis. According to the ARA distribution norms, foodstuff in soup kitchens could be delivered only after recipients had been recorded and detailed information about the economic situation of their families had been collected.³⁷ Since the investigation turned out to make food distribution considerably slow or even impossible, volunteers soon started to resign and the children remained without food supplies at least for some weeks.³⁸ However, the situation was much more complex. ARA and ARC food supplies were far too short to encounter the Lithuanian children's needs. Even if the organs that managed food distribution avoided to follow the ARA instructions literally and used supplies mainly in urban centres,³⁹ stocks remained insufficient even to feed younger citizens in the main towns.⁴⁰ The Lithuanian soup kitchen network, in its turn, did not excel with efficiency. While children's parents used to bribe cooks in order to obtain plentiful portions,⁴¹ the foodstuff at disposal became a potential source of profit. It was the case, for example, of a cook in Kaunas who was caught selling food supplies of the soup kitchen in which he used to work.⁴² In other cases,

foodstuff was simply taken home by soup kitchens' workers⁴³ or stolen and put on the black market by local scoundrels.⁴⁴

Postwar Rehabilitation and the Nation: the ARC and Lady Paget Mission

If both the ARA and ARC delivered food aid, only the latter focused on medium-term rehabilitation. In its effort to take care of children's health, in 1921 the ARC established 11 pediatric ambulatories and provided them with medical and para-medical personnel, medical and food supplies. Furthermore, central paediatric ambulatories and paediatric hospitals were created in Kaunas and Ukmergė. Within ten months of work, the ambulatory in Kaunas took care of 447 children under 1 year of age.⁴⁵ In its attempt to stimulate medium-term effects, the ARC did not forget the importance of personnel's education. In order to give a full understanding of modern paediatric and gynaecological knowledge and have 'modern ideas' circulate, in 1922, the ARC financed the studies of a couple of nurses at Dorpat (Tartu) University.⁴⁶ Similarly, a 250-pound grant was offered to a Lithuanian nurse to attend one-year-course at the University of London.⁴⁷

The ARC rehabilitation programme met the goals and worries of the Lithuanian institutions. Prevention and the spread of hygienist culture were among the main elements the Lithuanian Red Cross (LRC) pinpointed as the tools to safeguard 'the people's health'. Meaningfully, the recipient of those practices was not identified by the LRC with people in general (lit. žmonės) but with '*liaudis*', a term bond to the lower society's strata only. Rehabilitation was perceived mainly as a matter of education and care of the poor, especially children.⁴⁸

Nonetheless, once more the ARC rehabilitation activity failed to fully satisfy the Lithuanians. On the one hand, the timing of ARC activities and the obedience to the agenda of the American Government frustrated those who looked at it as a source of generous free help. Moreover, ARC business-oriented relief turned out to be disturbing for many. On the other hand, mistrust of the ARC arose because of political reasons. Already in early 1919 the Lithuanian diplomatic mission in the USA in a report to the LRC observed that the ARC actions and views had been deeply influenced by Polish diaspora's propaganda in America.⁴⁹ In the framework of the Lithuanian-Polish conflict, the choice not to open an ARC on the Lithuanian ground and make the Lithuanians 'depend' upon the closest ARC offices in Riga and Warsaw was questioned in a letter sent by the LRC as not permitting to "[...] *feel totally confident in the impartiality of your work in Lithuania*".⁵⁰

It is difficult to agree that an overtly anti-Lithuanian tendency existed within the ARC. Nevertheless, the different strategic importance Lithuania and Poland had for the USA cannot be denied. The eastern borders of Poland had been largely destroyed by war events and needed humanitarian intervention probably the most urgently in East Central Europe. Moreover, with increasing insistence by the American Government and organizations Poland was envisaged as the main bulwark against the spread of the Bolshevik 'virus'. The ARC (and ARA) acted against indigence as a possible breeding ground of social revolution ideas. The 1919 data about the activity of ARA Children's Fund which fed children throughout East Central Europe in cooperation with ARC and other American relief organizations demonstrated that quite clearly. By 1920, 1 300 000 out of 2 877 000 children, to whom food supplies

had been directed, lived in Poland. In that respect, Lithuania remained the smallest recipient of American food aid (40 000 children), even far below Latvia (60 000) and Estonia (70 000), where harsher civil war conditions had brought a much more likely risk of social revolution.⁵¹

The Lithuanian authorities never publicly expressed their doubts and sense of uncertainty about the ARA and, especially, ARC activities. On the contrary, in the public sphere they were depicted using the classic narrative of impartial humanitarian intervention. True, the ARA had at least in part mitigated the harsh postwar conditions, while the ARC created some basic structures for rehabilitation. Other reasons, however, could help explain that choice. On the one hand, international aid continued to be necessary to Lithuania. The extension of ARC mission was sought without producing any positive results.⁵² On the other hand, the American aid was psychologically important. Until Lithuania had not been recognized *de iure* by the US Government in 1922, humanitarianism represented a privileged channel to investigate political positions and an important source of negotiation. Nonetheless, while materially profiting from delivered material aid, rehabilitation – especially children's one – remained morally far too important to let it depend on US policies only.

The search for additional help in the field of children's healthcare and relief did not stop after the ARC arrival. State's organs, as well as recently created charities continued their international quest. The LRC representative in Switzerland Antanas Steponavičius urged the Lithuanians to ask for the support of the SCIU by January 1920.⁵³ Nevertheless, the decision to seek the help of SCIU was taken in the first half of the next year, when no possibility remained to have the ARC mission to Lithuania prolonged. The Lithuanians informally

consulted with the SCIU treasurer to the Baltic States William Andrew MacKenzie in the Summer of 1921. Although the SCIU accepted the task to collect funds for Lithuanian children in the mid-September,⁵⁴ a formal request was delivered just at the III SCIU Congress in Stockholm (22–26 September, 1921) by the official Lithuanian delegate Emilija Prūsienė. The first funds were sent in December by the Save the Children Fund (SCF) in London, which redirected to Lithuania 250 pounds collected in New Zealand.⁵⁵

Regardless of the provided sum of money, the contact with the English SCF was fairly important, since it opened up a new humanitarian channel. In the early 1920s, the SCF had started a fruitful cooperation with Lady Muriel Paget. An experienced English humanitarian, Lady Paget had spent the wartime organizing field hospitals and soup kitchens in Eastern Europe and Russia. After the war, 'Lady Paget Missions' (LPM) worked in close contact with SCF and attempted to deliver emergence relief and, in particular, to set up child welfare centres and nurse training courses throughout East Central Europe and Russia. In 1920, a LPM was appointed to Latvia. The first contacts between LRC and Lady Paget date from the late Summer of 1921, roughly the same period as MacKenzie's trip to the Baltic States. The negotiations led to the establishment of a LPM for Lithuania that began its activities in January 1922 and lasted about 10 months.⁵⁶

The Lithuanians looked at Paget with a full trust. True, the mission's profile had much in common with the ARC agenda and focused exclusively on maternity and child care. In particular, the mission's commitment was to prevention as the real key to health improvement of mothers and children. The mission was developed on two levels. On the one hand, the mission created in Kaunas had a couple

of institutions devoted to prevention and healthcare, which were supposed to serve as models: the Maternity and Child Welfare Centre, and two milk stations. The centre, where women could profit from the presence of a nurse and a physician, was designed to provide preventive control to pregnant women and newborn children, and give psychological support and advice on health and hygiene issues. In their turn, the milk centres had been created to deliver fresh milk for newborn children as the best way to guarantee healthy growth. On the other hand, the mission had a commitment to health and hygiene education. Educational activities were directed to both mothers and nurses. While nurses were instructed in cooperation with the LRC, didactic meetings were organized especially for poor mothers, to whom the importance of prevention was explained in terms of both health improvement and economic convenience. Compared to the ARC, LPM turned out to be relevant for its feverish activism. During 10 month presence in Kaunas, the ambulatory took care of 777 newborn children (almost twice the number of children cared by ARC ambulatory), gave advice regarding medical issues to almost 4 000 people and organized educational meetings for 1 166 women (966 of them between 10 and 15 years of age).⁵⁷

What distinguished the LPM from the ARC mission to Lithuania was the deep sense of cooperation and mutual trust that emerged between Paget, the LRC and the local administrations. While, as discussed earlier, the LPM had been asked to come to the country by the LRC, Kaunas local administration expressed its involvement in the process and a commitment to take over the structure created by the mission in the very near future.⁵⁸ Virtually from the very emergence of the Lithuanian nation state, social care had been largely endorsed by local institutions. Although

management of social care represented a hardly bearable financial burden for many local governments, city councils eventually became the main actors in that very field throughout the interwar period. In order to cope with those obstacles, Kaunas City Council took over LPM institutions in cooperation with the LRC. As early as in January 1923, Kaunas City Council became responsible for the functioning of the Maternity and Child Healthcare Centre (along with the ambulatory for children created by the ARC), while the milk stations were entrusted to an organization established with the participation of representatives from Kaunas City Council, Kaunas' ethnic communities, LRC and even the Lithuanian government.⁵⁹

The creation of specific centres for maternity and child care by the LPM and the ARC represented a ground-breaking experience not only for Kaunas but for all Lithuania. On the one hand, the stress on prevention met the goals of the Lithuanian medical intelligentsia who had been looking at hygiene and prevention as the main tools to give lower society's strata a modern understanding of medicine – namely, modernized the nation through scientific medical knowledge and made scientific medical knowledge a part of the nation's cultural heritage. Moreover, prevention gave a chance to take control of infant mortality and, hopefully, achieve a decrease in children's mortality rates to equal those of advanced European nations. ARC and LPM ambulatories in Kaunas just proved the outputs of prevention in practice. Whereas the overall mortality rate of newborn children in Lithuania reached 16% in 1921, it diminished up to 4% among those who attended the two centres.⁶⁰ On the other hand, LPM and the ARC healthcare centres remained a model for prevention the Lithuanians would spread throughout the country during the interwar period. However,

although statistics once more confirmed the effectiveness of prevention (mortality rates among children receiving care in healthcare centres were by 7% lower if compared to the average),⁶¹ the development of healthcare centres throughout the country took shape very slowly and mainly as the result of private charities' commitment. Due to the scarce financial sources available, only 6 mother and child healthcare centres operated in Lithuania until 1929.⁶²

Conclusions

The history of children's relief and rehabilitation during the First World War and its aftermath in Lithuania opens up new chances to understand the complexity of modernization/nationalization processes in the area and the interconnections between national and international humanitarianism. On the one hand, the German occupation enabled a process of centralization of social life, in which the LCWR became the uncontested master of Lithuanian public life. That very circumstance made the management of displaced children and the nationalization process implementation among them much easier. As repatriation from Russia began, the newborn Lithuanian state was immediately compelled to try

and cope with enormous masses of people lacking almost everything and the state's chronic lack of supplies. While ministries took over the commitments the LCWR had earlier managed unilaterally, the desperate need for international aid forced the Lithuanian state to accept international organizations' agenda, which fundamentally coincided with Lithuanian medical intelligentsia's plan.

On the other hand, the analysis clearly shows the need to reassess the conceptual split between relief and rehabilitation as formulated in scientific literature. Medium-term rehabilitation effects were expected not only after the war, when international organizations uncovered their own rehabilitation plans, but also during the German occupation, when the LCWR carried on its relief activity. The example of Lithuanian war relief, which took place among refugees and had little connection with frontline and trenches, makes clear that goals with a long-term effect share their character with any kind of humanitarian intervention. In the Lithuanian case, the distinction between relief and rehabilitation was marked only by the difference of tools, through which the modernization of the national community was expected to be carried out and the changing degree of involvement (and convergence) between national and international actors.

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KOPSAVILKUMS

Palīdzība bērniem un viņu rehabilitācijas vēsture Lietuvā Pirmā pasaules kara laikā un pēc tā paver jaunas iespējas, kā izprast modernizācijas/nāciju veidošanās procesus šai reģionā un savstarpējo saikni starp nacionālo un starptautisko humānismu. No vienas puses, Vācijas okupācija veicināja sociālās dzīves centralizācijas procesus, kuros Lietuvas Kara palīdzības komiteja kļuva par neapstrīdamu Lietuvas sabiedriskās dzīves noteicēju. Šis apstāklis pats par sevi atviegloja karā pārvietoto bērnu problēmu risināšanu un nacionālās apziņas veidošanas procesu.

Sākoties repatriācijai no Krievijas, jaundzimušī Lietuvas valsts nekavējoties bija spiesta censties pārvarēt jaunas problēmas: Lietuvā ieplūda milzīgas cilvēku masas, kurām nebija gandrīz nekā, un hroniski trūka humānās palīdzības piegāžu. Kamēr ministrijas pārņēma funkcijas, kuras līdz tam bija veikusi tikai Lietuvas Kara palīdzības komiteja, izmisīga nepieciešamība pēc starptautiskas palīdzības spieda Lietuvas valdību pieņemt starptautisko organizāciju noteikto problēmu risināšanas kārtību, kas pamatos sakrita ar Lietuvas medicīnas speciālistu uzskatiem par to.

No otras puses, analīze pierāda, ka ir pamatoti pārvērtēt konceptuālo atšķirību starp palīdzību un rehabilitāciju, kāda līdz šim bijusi formulēta zinātniskajā literatūrā. Vidēja termiņa rehabilitācijas rezultāti tika sagaidīti ne tikai pēc kara beigām, kad starptautiskās organizācijas atklāja savus rehabilitācijas plānus, bet arī Vācijas okupācijas laikā, kad savas palīdzības programmas īstenoja Lietuvas Kara palīdzības komiteja. Lietuva bēgļiem kara laikā sniedza palīdzību, kurai bija maz kopīga ar frontes līniju un ierakumiem, – tas ļauj secināt, ka ilgtermiņa mērķi ir raksturīga iezīme jebkura veida humānajai palīdzībai. Lietuvas gadījumā atšķirība starp palīdzību un rehabilitāciju nozīmēja tikai atšķirīgus līdzekļus, ar kuriem tika modernizēta nacionālā kopiena. Atšķirīga bija arī starptautisko un nacionālo spēlētāju mainīgā iesaistišanās pakāpe un savstarpējās konverģences pakāpe.