



European
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DEPARTMENT
OF HISTORY
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Who Is a "Ukrainian" Child?

UNRRA/IRO Welfare Workers And the Politics of
Unaccompanied Children of Presumed Ukrainian
Origin In the Aftermath of WWII (1945-1952)

Olga Gnydiuk

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of History and Civilization
of the European University Institute

Florence, 22 June 2018

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Abstract

The care and rehabilitation of displaced, orphaned or lost children after World War II became a significant challenge for the international humanitarian organizations, as well as for the military governments in the occupied territories. This dissertation explores the policies and practices that the welfare authorities and officers of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and International Refugee Organization (IRO), as well as American military officers in the US zone of Germany, formulated regarding the relief and resettlement of unaccompanied displaced children of Ukrainian origin between 1945 and 1952. From the autumn of 1945 onwards, the humanitarian officers with the approval of American officials in the US zone of Germany started to withhold Ukrainian children who originally came from the eastern Polish territories that were annexed by the Soviet Union from repatriation. The US military authorities declared that they did not recognize these children as Soviet citizens and instructed the welfare officers to consider them as nationals without governmental representation. As a result, the conflict over these children with the Soviet authorities, who were eager to repatriate them was inevitable. This dissertation explores how this geopolitical dispute shaped the policies of resettlement, care and welfare provision related to displaced children. By analyzing how the welfare officers and US military officials debated the national belonging and future destiny of these children, this study demonstrates how their decisions and activities in relation to Ukrainian children were founded on a humanitarian and political setting, which was formed by a pre-Cold War discourse. The examination of the IRO welfare officers' work with these children on the ground showed that repatriation to the Soviet Union was no longer considered to be in the best interests of Polish-Ukrainian children, while emigration and settlement in Germany was. This led the study to make a striking observation on how the IRO's welfare workers began to reconsider the future plans for the unaccompanied children who were living in German foster families. Namely, that from 1948, not long after the war had ended, welfare officers began to consider that allowing children to be adopted into German families would be in their best interests. Such opinions were voiced in spite of the Nazi's Germanization program still being fresh in peoples' memories, as well as more general fears that German society would hold a negative attitude towards foreign children. Finally, this case study provides a closer look at the complex relationships between the military and welfare authorities and officers that ranged from the disagreements about approaches to a child's resettlement to their joint work in the issues related to Ukrainian children.

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Introduction

This thesis explores the relief and rehabilitation programs in the aftermath of World War II that dealt with displaced unaccompanied children of Ukrainian or supposed Ukrainian origin. This analysis brings together the policies and practices that were developed and enacted by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), the International Refugee Organization (IRO), and the Anglo-American occupying authorities for such children between 1945 and 1952; the debates between the American and Soviet authorities on the future of Ukrainian or presumably Ukrainian children; on ground welfare officers' work with unaccompanied children in German foster families; the exchange of views regarding child welfare between the military and welfare officers.

After the end of the Second World War, national governments, the Allied powers and the United Nations' international humanitarian organizations launched the long and complex process of the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Europe. Their work responded to the urgent need for habitable housing conditions and reliable food supplies, to rethink inter-war politics and the economy, to develop welfare systems and to reach arrangements for a new balance of power in the world.¹ The international community had to find ways to reassemble communities, revise and adjust ethnic and geographical boundaries in Europe, and to restore the damaged biological fabric of society after the massive population losses. In order to achieve the latter goal, state authorities focused on pronatalist policies, as well as the repatriation and resettlement of displaced people. The international relief agencies' workers in their turn were preoccupied with the provision of emergency aid to those who had been uprooted as a result of the war and assisting them in their resettlement.

The war (re)discovered children yet again. Children, childcare and their upbringing emerged at the top of national and international politics. Policymakers, social workers and psychologists working at the national and international levels discussed how they could help children recover from their wartime traumas, and how to recreate an environment where children could have a "normal" childhood and family life. They also tried to find solutions for the growing number of orphans, lost, abandoned, displaced, homeless and street children. The repatriation of children became a major concern for national governments, volunteer

¹ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (London: William Heinemann, 2005), 63–99.

organizations and the international agencies' relief workers. Each country claimed the right to have its children repatriated and used this claim as a lens through which to focus its social policies. The national governments and the personnel of the international humanitarian organizations agreed that an underlying principle of the repatriation agreements would oblige displaced persons to return to their home countries. This was considered to be the best solution for people as well as for the national states. UNRRA and later its successor the IRO in collaboration with the occupying military authorities administered the repatriation process and were supposed to resolve any conflicts of interest regarding resettlement that occurred between different states as well as between individuals and states. From 1945, the relief agencies' social workers became responsible for registering and taking care of displaced persons (DPs). They ran displaced persons' camps and children's centers, helped DPs to recover after the war until they were either repatriated or resettled. The International Tracing Service (ITS), first as a branch of the UNRRA, then the IRO, and later as an independent office, tracked missing people, clarified people's fates and provided information about the DPs' family members.

The UNRRA's and IRO's welfare officers who worked at the Child Branch were specifically responsible for displaced children. They fed them, looked for their parents or relatives and arranged their repatriation to their home country. For some children returning home was a mere matter of logistical and administrative arrangements, for others, however, it turned out to be a much more complicated issue, shaded with the political controversies. This study focuses on one such contested group, namely children who were defined by the UNRRA's and IRO's welfare workers as being unaccompanied children of Ukrainian origin. Having been one of the central concerns of postwar relief and rehabilitation these children were caught in a growing geopolitical conflict between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies after the end of the war.

In fact, the post-war map of Europe did not recognize Ukraine as a country. There was only the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic that from 1922 became a part of the Soviet Union. After World War II, according to the Yalta agreement, the Soviet Union absorbed the eastern Polish territories and enlarged the Ukrainian SSR at their expense. After the borders changed, the Soviet authorities claimed that all the people living at one time or another in the post-1945 territory of Ukraine acquired Soviet citizenship. On the basis of this newly defined citizenship, they required that all uprooted adults and children from these lands had to be

repatriated. It would seem that after the war when the memory of the Nazi biopolitical crimes were still fresh, everyone agreed that uprooted children needed to return to home to their native lands.

The striking paradox, however, is evident when researching the UNRRA's and the IRO's work and analyzing the policies of the military occupying authorities in regards to the children from the former Polish territories. The welfare officers identified these children as being of Polish-Ukrainian or Ukrainian origin, but not as Soviet, and, following the military governments' instructions in the American and British zones, from the autumn of 1945, they began withholding these children from repatriation to Soviet Union. This occurred despite the fact that repatriation was continuously articulated as the underpinning principle of the UNRRA's and IRO's work and it remained the primary solution for the post-war resettlement of uprooted children, while the reunion of families was its final aim. By analyzing the UNRRA's and the IRO's care of unaccompanied children, this thesis examines the policies and practices that were structured around unaccompanied Ukrainian children after the humanitarian workers and Anglo-American military had decided to withhold them from repatriation to the Soviet Union. By scrutinizing these issues, this study cuts across the notions of citizenship, nationality and belonging, the child's best interests, home and family, as they were discussed by humanitarian workers, Anglo-American occupational governments, and the Soviet authorities in relation to particular cases of unaccompanied Ukrainian children. It focuses predominantly on the US zone of Germany with some references to the British zone of Germany and its policies.

In summer 1945, the British and American authorities stated that they refused to recognize the seizure of the eastern Polish territories and the annexation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union. In autumn 1945, after forced repatriations started to cease, many Ukrainian DPs chose not to go back to the Soviet Union. At the same time, the Anglo-American military authorities and humanitarian officers started to withhold unaccompanied children who were from the former Polish territories from repatriation to the Soviet Union. Certainly, the Soviet authorities fiercely disagreed with such a development in the relief and repatriation operation in Europe. Analyzing the plans for the rehabilitation and future settlement of these children, this study narrates the pre-history of the Cold War that unfolded around unaccompanied children and appeared in the policy documents of the US military, UNRRA and the IRO from early 1946. The conflict between the former Allies over these children, it seems, was

inevitable, but its analysis revealed many interesting details about the daily work of the welfare officers with unaccompanied children, especially as regards how policies of child care and repatriation were formulated in these particular cases.

Despite the fact that the UNRRA and the IRO followed a state-oriented principle when defining citizenship and nationality, the files of children from the post-1945 territory of Ukraine were often categorized as Ukrainian, Polish-Ukrainian, Ukrainian SSR, Russian-Ukrainian, and Soviet-Ukrainians. Therefore, the first question that guided this research project was why did the western military authorities and welfare officers identify the children from the former eastern Polish territories as being non-Soviets. Having touched on the field of nationality and identity, this inquiry does not intend to understand whether the welfare workers were right or accurate in calling these children Ukrainian nor does it aim to reconstruct the identity of these children or to examine their self-perception. Displaced adults and older children could often change their nationality for pragmatic reasons, and choose a nationality that would be more convenient or useful at a particular moment. Rather this analysis brings into focus the general tendency of the UNRRA's and the IRO's welfare officers to name these children not as Soviet citizens and to examine the relation between naming them as Ukrainian (or Polish-Ukrainian) and establishing a plan for their resettlement or repatriation. The welfare officers experienced constant concerns and confusions when defining the nationality and citizenship of these children. What were the general guidelines for determining their nationality? Who held the right to speak for unaccompanied children of presumably Ukrainian origin, and who could be appointed as their legal representative? By exploring the debates that were held between the welfare workers and the US military authorities regarding such uncertainties, this study examines how such formalities were interpreted in cases when repatriation was not considered to be in the child's "best interests", such as with the Polish-Ukrainian children.

The contradicting views on the repatriation of Polish-Ukrainian children between the former Allies pushed this study to question how, in practice, welfare officers and the US military officials managed to organize their communication with the Soviet representatives regarding Ukrainian or Polish-Ukrainian children. How they managed to adhere to the post-war international treaties and principles of child relief and rehabilitation while writing negative responses to the Soviet's claims over these children? How did welfare workers search for the relatives who may have been living in the territories controlled by the Soviet officials? The

verbal debates over the repatriation of Polish-Ukrainian children that the humanitarians and US military authorities, at times, transformed into particular actions, such as having unwarranted custody of particular children. By analyzing such instances this dissertation illustrates the nuances of emergency welfare work when it became the point of convergence for pre-Cold-War politics and child welfare.

The decision to withhold unaccompanied Ukrainian children from repatriation to the Soviet Union left two options for their future settlement: they could emigrate or lay down roots in Germany. Some children, especially older ones, preferred to emigrate to the US, Canada, Australia or other countries. The IRO supported them in this endeavor and helped to arrange their emigration via resettlement schemes that were proposed by the state or voluntary societies. Investigating the destinies of the Polish-Ukrainian children brought this study to the very intriguing examination of the child resettlement program's problematic second option, that is, their settlement in Germany. It appears that the welfare workers and military officers also considered that children who were fostered out to German families during or shortly after the war should be allowed to stay with their current foster parents. This study explores how this option became available for unaccompanied children shortly after the war's end, in spite of the fact that anti-Nazi feelings were still strong, there were fears that these children would be Germanized, and it was generally believed that such children belonged to their nation. Before arriving at the final conclusion, though, the IRO's caseworkers completed a social investigation of the family's conditions that could, in fact, take several years. By researching the process of casework on the ground, this study seeks to establish the main arguments and aspects of the case investigation that the welfare officers pushed to approve the adoption of Allied children by German foster parents. The result of this quest brings together the debates on the concept of the child's best interests, the role of mothers and family members in a child's development and analyzes their practical application by the welfare workers in their daily work with Ukrainian unaccompanied children. Without a doubt, Ukrainian children were not the only category of children left in Germany, unaccompanied children of other nationalities also ended up staying with their German foster parents.

Remarkably, the relief and rehabilitation of unaccompanied Ukrainian children provided an opportunity to shed some light on the relations between the UNRRA's and IRO's welfare officers and the US military government's officers. These "frères - et soeurs - enemies" combined their efforts to solve the problem of the displaced populations but their partnership

was complicated by power relations and hierarchal structures in the occupied territory, belief in the power of professional expertise, matters of supply and the number of personnel. Having started to explore this issue by inquiring about the role of the army's civil affairs officers and the military government in the emergency aid effort, I moved on to analyze how they discussed the problem of unaccompanied children who were living in German foster families with the welfare officers. These debates demonstrated the different views on the problem that the army and humanitarian officers had. At the same time, the case of unaccompanied Ukrainian children showed that the military and welfare officers found a common ground and both supported the arguments related to the non-repatriation of these children.

The Displacement of Children

The displacement of people is an inevitable part of war. Armies advance, retreat, maneuver, cross borders, rivers or mountains. Soldiers transport prisoners of war forced laborers and evacuate adults and children. Civilians flee from advancing armies and the approaching frontline. Fearing a possible occupation they move with advancing or retreating battalions. Cities empty out and roads become full of people walking on foot.² The distinct photographs of war, as well as post-war time, depict people on the move, carrying their children and pushing wooden carts that were filled with their belongings and valuables. Where the roads were destroyed, they traversed their way across land. When the Second World War was over in Europe, the crowds of people set in motion again in order to return to their old villages, towns and cities or to try find a new place to live where they could escape the postwar persecutions or hardships. The military commanders, national governments and international humanitarian and volunteer organizations arranged repatriation, resettlement and re-evacuation measures for uprooted populations. Some of these relocations were voluntary, others were forced. Inevitably, at the time of these chaotic movements, families were separated, and children were the most vulnerable to becoming lost and separated from their parent and relatives.

World War II provided plenty of occasions and reasons for children to be separated from their parents and family, and to be displaced from their homes. Often adults left the children behind

² For instance, Hanna Diamond has vividly and masterly described an "exodus" of people from Paris before Hitler's army occupied it: Hanna Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler: France 1940* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

in order to increase their chances of survival, but sometimes they had more selfish reasons and after the war looked for an opportunity to start a new life without their children. Sometimes enemy governments would purposefully separate children, usually of other nations, from their families and use them in biopolitical projects or as a labor force, but such action was viewed and treated as a war crime against the injured nation. A “home government” could organize the evacuation of children and then the children would depart from their families for an undefined period of time. Mass mobilization, battles, air raids, and executions, all these events could cause children to become lost or orphaned. Parents often disappeared and the reasons why could never be determined. Equally, children decided to part from parents and escape from their homes.

The UNRRA registered approximately 153,000 unaccompanied non-German children under its care in July 1945.³ The IRO’s constitution and the documents issued to regulate the agency’s work with unaccompanied children described the circumstances that allowed welfare officers to define children as unaccompanied. The strict bureaucratic language of the document stated that unaccompanied children were,

“Orphans or children whose parents have disappeared or who have been abandoned, or whose parents are unattainable;

Not provided with a legal guardian, or children whose guardian has disappeared or abandoned them, or who is unattainable;

Not accompanied by a close relative (adult brother, sister, uncle, aunt, or grandparents).”⁴

While this definition sets the frame for defining a child as unaccompanied, each individual child’s case provided a unique story that illustrated how children were found far away from their parents, relatives and homes.

Yaroslav Turczynowycz, Michael Tatarkowski, Wolodymer Shtoyko, Galina Popravko, the Randowa sisters, Ivan Lecedim, Alex Melnizkis, Pawlo Kudela, Dora Bereshnaja, and Lena Zacharczuk were all deported to Germany between 1941 and 1943, but the circumstance that separated them from the families were different. Their stories illustrate that even children who were deported to Germany or Austria during the war together with their parents or relatives

³ Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe’s Families after World War II* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011), 8.

⁴ “Provisional Order No 33. Unaccompanied Children. PCIRO, Headquarters Geneva,” November 18, 1947, AJ/43/604, Archives Nationales (AN), Paris.

could become lost on the way or after they arrived in a foreign country. Also, some children survived the war with their parents only to be separated at its end. Dora and Galina were taken to Germany together with their mothers, while Alex was boarded on a deportation train with his stepparents. The members of Randowa family were all transported in one train, but when the train reached Auschwitz, children were immediately separated from their parents, and never saw them again. Dora's mother disappeared in 1945 after the Allies bombed the factory where she had worked. The IRO's investigation concluded that she had probably died, although they could find no death certificate, nor her burial place. Galina and Alex stayed close to their relatives for some years after the liberation. Then, however, Galina's mother emigrated to the US and Alex's stepparents went to Australia leaving the children behind.⁵ The UNRRA's and IRO's welfare workers registered many instances when parents abandoned their children on the threshold of emigration. The humanitarian officers were alarmed by this problem and tried to persuade parents not to desert their children. In contrast, emigration schemes were often unfriendly towards families with small, sick, or handicapped children as well as for the single-mothers.⁶

The Nazi's plan to bring people from occupied Central and Eastern Europe aimed to deport children and adolescent boys and girls along with adults.⁷ Yaroslaw was twelve years old when German officers took his two elder brothers from their home in Ukraine and sent them to Germany. The next year, in 1943, he himself became a forced laborer and was transported to work for a German farmer. The IRO's report stated that since then he had never heard from his family, "In summer 1943, when he was taken to Germany, was the last time he saw his parents and relatives. From the place where he worked he tried to write letters home, but not

⁵ "Supplemented Information on the Unaccompanied Child Turczynowycz Yaroslaw," 1946, 6.3.2.1/84546925, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen; "Supplementary Record-Face Sheet. Tatarkowski Michael," 1946, 6.3.2.1/84532927, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen; "Wolodymer Shtoyko," n.d., 6.3.2.1/84487335, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen; "Case Files of Galina Popravko," 1951 1947, 6.3.2.1/84506734-84506738, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen; "Case Files of Randowa Rosena," 1949 1946, 6.3.2.1/84449748-84449787, ITS Digital Archive; "Case Files of Randowa Hajna," 1949 1947, 6.3.2.1/84449722-84449744, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen; "Case Files of Ivan Lecedim," 1950 1946, 6.3.2.1/84356081-84356088, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen; "Case Files of Alex Melnikis," 1950 1946, 6.3.2.1/84386336-84386341, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen; "Case Files of Pawlo Kudela," 1949 1945, 6.3.2.1/84341756-84341768, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen; Edward Francel W., "Report on Bereshnaja Doris.," September 15, 1947, 6.3.2.1/84161384, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen; "Case Files of Lena Zacharczuk," 1950 1945, 6.3.2.1/84583535-111074322, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

⁶ Ruth Balint, "Children Left Behind: Family, Refugees and Immigration in Postwar Europe," *History Workshop Journal*, no. 82 (2016): 151-72.

⁷ *Deportation und Zwangsarbeit. Polnische und sowjetische Kinder im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland und im besetzten Osteuropa 1939-1945*, Essen: Klartext Verlag 2013.

one letter reached his parents because all the letters were returned back.”⁸ Michael Tartakowski was eleven years old, Wolodymyr Shtoyko and Pawlo Kudela were fifteen, Lena Zaharczuk was fifteen or sixteen and Ivan Licedim was about seven years old when the German occupation army sent them to Germany to work in private households or in factories. Children, who were defined as racially valuable for the German nation, were uprooted from orphanages or their families and brought to Germany, as part of the Lebensborn policy, to be raised by the state’s child institutions or German families so that they would absorb the German identity as they grew up.

Andjrej Fesch’s parents were also deported although their deportation was organized by the Soviet authorities after 1943 when they took control of the territories in Central and Eastern Europe. Soviet forced resettlement policies that were enacted during the interwar and post-war periods also became a reason why many children were orphaned or separated from their parents. Andjrej managed to escape from Soviet Ukraine to Slovakia with his brother. In 1949, they fled to Germany where the IRO registered them. Children like these boys became part of a mounting group of so-called infiltrates, people who had fled to Germany from the Soviet-occupied territories after the war.⁹ Nikolay Litvinow became an orphan in 1931 when the Soviet authorities deported his parents from Odessa in southern Ukraine to Siberia.¹⁰ Both of Walentin Schahow’s parents were sent away from the east of Ukraine, to the Russian Far East, while he stayed at home alone until the German occupation administration took him to Germany as a *Volksdeutscher*.¹¹ Certainly, there was a possibility that teenagers intentionally told the UNRRA’s or the IRO’s welfare workers that their parents were sentenced to death or resettlement by the Soviet authorities, so to strengthen their statements about their fear of repatriation. In the context of a growing anti-Soviet attitude among the relief workers and western occupying authorities, this strategy might have helped them to avoid repatriation to the Soviet Union. Having said that, in any case the policy of mass forced deportations in the Soviet Union did tear parents away from their children.¹²

Although the international community and social workers eagerly wished to send displaced children back to their homelands, or in other words back to their place of “true” origin, in fact,

⁸ “Supplemented Information on the Unaccompanied Child Turczynowycz Yaroslaw.”

⁹ “Case Files of Andjrej Fesch,” 1951 1949, 6.3.2.1/84222893-84222928, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

¹⁰ “Case Files of Nikolay Litvinow,” 1949 1947, 6.3.2.1/84366176-84366203, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

¹¹ “Case Files of Walentin Schahow,” 1946, 6.3.2.1/84474347-84474352, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

¹² Cathy A. Frierson and Semen Samuilovich Vilenskii, eds., *Children of the Gulag*, Annals of Communism (New Haven, Conn. ; London: Yale University Press, 2010).

many lost children were born to forced laborers in Germany and then were separated from them or abandoned by their mothers. After Maria was born, her mother fostered her out to a German family. She paid the foster family some money for the first three months, however, after a while she decided to desert her child. She signed the relinquish papers and agreed that the child could be adopted by another family. Anna-Rosalina provides a very similar story, the girl born in 1944 to a Ukrainian woman in Germany. The mother gave the child to a German foster family and then disappeared to an unknown destination. Luba Sharapowa's mother left her newborn daughter in a hospital when the time came for her to return to the forced laborers camp where she lived. The IRO's search for her after the war indicated that she had been killed in one of the air raids.¹³

Many stories of uprooted people showed that for various reasons civilians from the occupied territories decided to go to Germany with the retreating German army. There again various circumstances led to children becoming unaccompanied. A German soldier took Jurgen's (Babunjko) mother with him to his family home in Germany, "In 1943 during the German occupation [of Ukraine] she worked in a German army kitchen in Winniza, a town in the SSR Ukraine.¹⁴ In October 1943 Rudi Schmehl, a German army driver brought Anna to Langendiebach with him."¹⁵ Jurgen was born there in 1944, but already by May 1945, he had been admitted to an orphanage. The IRO's report during the initial investigation of the case indicated that "the child's mother took [him] to the orphanage at Langensbold shortly before her departure to her native country". The same report cited the testimony of Jurgen's father who stated that his mother abandoned the child and ran away with another man, "her Polish lover".¹⁶ It is interesting to note that upon further investigation the welfare officers were unable to confirm his story and instead concluded that the mother had disappeared or could have been repatriated to the Soviet Union and, perhaps, was not allowed to take the child with her. As a consequence, the father put the child up for adoption. Tanja Schremko departed for Germany with her stepsister, who used to be an assistant at the German occupation administration and had joined the German units when they withdrew from Ukrainian territory in 1943. Somewhere close to the German border the sisters lost each other in the disarray caused by the rapid Soviet advance. Searching for Tanja's family the IRO's welfare workers

¹³ "Case Files of Luba Sharapowa," 1950 1946, 6.3.2.1/84475978-84476079, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

¹⁴ Ukrainian SSR that is the territory that was a part of the Soviet Union before 1939.

¹⁵ "Supplementary Record - Face Sheet. Babunjka Jurgen," 1947, 6.3.2.1/84149097-84149098, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

¹⁶ "Supplementary Record - Face Sheet. Babunjka Jurgen."

could not find any traces of her stepsister. Her mother died in 1942 and her father had most likely been deported to Siberia.¹⁷

Repatriation back to their home country, paradoxically, could also be the reason why parents and children no longer lived together. Forced female laborers often abandoned their illegitimate children because they were intimidated by the public shame or because they wished to start their life afresh at home. When repatriation meant returning to the Soviet Union mothers also tried to give their children a chance to escape it by placing them into foster care or into children's institutions. Waldemar Schimpf's mother took her son and left Ukrainian territory with the German garrisons as they were pushed back to the west by the Soviet military detachments. The boy stayed with his mother until she was repatriated back to the Soviet Union in 1946 and she decided to leave him behind because he had tuberculosis. During the summer of 1945, in the early stages of repatriation to the Soviet Union, soldiers often rapidly gathered people and boarded them on to trains, leaving no time for parents to fetch their children. Later many men and women searched for their children who were lost because of such abrupt repatriation measures.¹⁸

The fear of forced repatriation to the Soviet Union also pushed parents to send their children alone to the West. Olga Vasakowa's family emigrated to Czechoslovakia during the interwar period so when the Soviet troops took the country in autumn 1944 they were treated as "Russian refugees" and could have been obliged to go back to Soviet Ukraine. The family viewed this as a forced resettlement and wishing to escape it decided to flee to the West. However, Olga explained that her mother and younger sister were ill, so her father "agreed that the two oldest daughters should leave".¹⁹ In July 1949 they crossed the border into Germany and the following month they were placed under the IRO's care. After having unsuccessfully searched for the girls' family, the welfare workers decided that the girls would be emigrated rather than repatriated.

Like in peace time, during the war domestic conflicts and violence add to the reasons that pushed adults to abandon their children or send them to the orphanages until the onset of the better times. Being unable to take care of their children during or after the war, parents left

¹⁷ "Case Files of Tanja Schremko," 1949, 6.3.2.1/84487978-84487979, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

¹⁸ "Case Files of Waldemar Schimpf," 1951 1947, 6.3.2.1/84480349-84480473.

¹⁹ "Social History. Olga Vasakowa," 1950, 6.3.2.1/84557457, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

them in the hospitals, near police stations, in city markets and other public places. Many adults considered this as a temporary measure until they could re-establish themselves and provide for their children. And yet, the course of time and events often distanced them from each other forever. Parents could be deported to Germany, resettled after the Soviet army came, or even could be found dead or missing. Children were often simply lost on the way, in crowds at the train stations, at intermediate stops, or in the chaos of air raids. Lastly, children could at times just decide to run away. Hanz Atamanczyk, for instance, left the DP camp, where he and his family stayed after the war, without saying a word to his parents and never came back.²⁰

Frontiers of Childhood

Regardless of the reasons why unaccompanied children were separated from their parents, they were one of the key concerns for the UNRRA's and IRO's welfare workers, army officers and the national countries' representatives. But who counted as a child? When did a child stop being a child and become an adult? As childhood is a social construct, the frontier that divides a minor from an adult is elusive, porous and sometimes even transparent. Children have never been an easily definable group as epoch, gender, ethnicity, class, society and culture give meaning to children and childhood. The concept of childhood depends on where, who, and when it is applied; what one socio-cultural environment considers as intrinsic youthful or adolescent traits could be regarded as purely adult qualities or actions in another. Various social and natural calamities also caused the frontier of childhood to shift in one or another direction. War was one such damaging and distressing event that distorted the appearance of children, perceptions of childhood and forced children to mature faster.

Establishing technical lifecycle definitions was a perplexing problem for the welfare and military authorities. The upper age of childhood that was indicated in the instructions and program documents of the international humanitarian and military governments reflected an understanding of childhood that had been common across Europe since the beginning of the twentieth century. And yet, it became the matter of a short debate about the exact age when child ceased to be a child. The draft of provisional order No 33, which regulated the functions of the IRO in relation to unaccompanied children, defined in November 1947 that the IRO's

²⁰ "Case Files of Hanz Atamanczyk," 1950 1946, 6.3.2.1/84147670-84147725, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

Child Branch cared for individuals under 16 years old.²¹ Having read it, the IRO's officers decided that this was a misinterpretation of the wording "16 years of age or under" that was present in the IRO's constitution which in their opinion meant "under 17". In fact, welfare workers had been using a person's seventeenth birthday as the upper limit of childhood before the provisional order was issued. The humanitarian headquarters in Geneva at first, in January 1948, informed the welfare officers that they should consider all individuals under 16 years old, not 17. This age policy did not last long, though, and by March 1948 another directive from Geneva informed its officers that the upper age limit of a "child" had been changed from 16 to 17, confirming in this way the previous assumption made by the IRO's officers. The following month the Provisional order No 33.1 was implemented bearing an amendment that set seventeen as the upper age limit of childhood.²² The regulations stated that those aged between 17 and 21 were to be considered as youths, which equated them with adults in terms of their rights and obligations.

Demarcated by the humanitarian officers, this formal frontier of childhood differed from the one that the military authorities set up. The US military government's regulations stated that the term "children" referred to individuals who had yet not reached their eighteenth birthday. Comparing this to the IRO's definition, the frontier of childhood was shifted on year forward.²³ This mismatch of interpretations implied that the EUCOM's policy documents considered certain individuals to be children, while the UNRRA or the IRO did not. Such a divergence could create numerous confusions between the two agencies as they were banded together in their work with refugees. In order to harmonize the definition, EUCOM decided "by verbal agreement" to "lower the age to the 17th birthday".²⁴

For the UNRRA's and IRO's welfare officers, it was important to define the frontiers of childhood, for example, because the care, repatriation and resettlement programs were designed according to national principles and followed the age proportions. The humanitarian organizations' and military government's documents provide a technical definition which indicated the upper age limit of childhood, while its application in daily life with actual displaced children showed a lack of certainty that children in care were still children. Welfare

²¹ "Provisional Order No 33. Unaccompanied Children. PCIRO, Headquarters Geneva."

²² "Cumulative Narrative Report, IRO," 1949, AJ/43/941, AN, Paris.

²³ "Military Government Regulations. Title 20. DPs, Dislodged Germans and Expellees." (Berlin, 1947), 6.1.1/82522107, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

²⁴ "Cumulative Narrative Report, IRO."

officers working in the field relied on the assumptions of childhood that they had learnt from their previous experience and from various Anglo-American social, anthropological and educational theories that had been produced since the beginning of the twentieth century.²⁵ This construct of childhood in sum characterized childhood as a time of innocence, time for games, education, psychological development, leisure, and assumed that children were objects for care.

When this perception of childhood combined with the age boundaries, indicated in the UNRRA's and IRO's documents, collided with the everyday reality, many mismatches became evident. The welfare officers experienced the elusive nature of the frontier of childhood and the impact of war on it. They had to search for the frontier of childhood again and again because the children and youths whom they observed in the field caused them arrive at the conclusion that the war atrocities could speed up and slow down a person's childhood. As a result, in many cases, social workers found themselves caring for already "adult-children" or the so-called "overaged children". In the eyes of welfare workers "adult-children" were mature beyond their age and behaved more like grown-ups, while infantile youths were seen as "overaged children".

While the newspapers' headlines called for the rescue of the innocent children of war, the social workers reported from the field about "adult children" in their ward and were concerned with their behavior. These were older children and adolescents, who were aged between approximately thirteen and seventeen years, who according to the UNRRA's and IRO's formal definition were considered to be children, but who, probably, did not think or act like they were children. In fact, this age group was similar to the typical juvenile delinquent age and corresponded with the age of partial responsibility. The majority of unaccompanied children in the UNRRA's and IRO's care were adolescents either by age²⁶ or by experience. Children who lived through the war often came out of it mature beyond their years and the war experience helped them to be sure about their adulthood. They were used to working in farms and factories, surviving in wartime societies, travelling for long distances, often on their own, as well as taking care of themselves, or looking after their younger siblings, or even parents. They could look physically older or younger than their real age, and

²⁵ Jessica Reinisch, "'Auntie UNRRA' at the Crossroads," *Past & Present* 218, no. suppl_8 (January 1, 2013): 77–79.

²⁶ Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 8.

they learned to lie about their age in order to survive or attain better conditions. Many of them could not read or write, but their sense of identity and actions reminded the welfare workers more of adults than children. The complaints and concerns raised by the welfare workers in regards to this problem demonstrated how the assumed vision of childhood and children mismatched with the real-life experiences with such children.

Older children were eager to take an active part in deciding their future, refusing at times to acknowledge the authority of the welfare workers. Being considered as children, they were perceived as objects of relief, care and rehabilitation, passive recipients of assistance. Such detail of care were also enshrined in law: as individuals below the legal age of majority, in this case under the age of seventeen, could not speak for themselves or choose the path of their future resettlement. Nevertheless, the welfare officers reported on many occasions that youngsters of 14-17 years old protested against or refused to follow the IRO's decisions regarding their future. In the same way, their rejection of adult authority, early romantic and sexual behavior did not fit the constructed images of children. Adolescents' romantic and sexual behavior upset the welfare officers even more than their rebellion against adult authority. Young boys and girls fell in love and wished to start a family, got pregnant and gave birth to children during or after the war. Like adults, they planned their future and dreamed about finding a good place of work.

In contrast, the field workers also reported that they met many "overaged children". Technically these were adolescents who had reached their seventeenth birthday but the welfare workers insisted that their behavior and mental development suggested that they should still be cared for as children. One of the field workers commented on his experience with adolescents who were former forced laborers in Germany, "They remain in the same state of education as it was on their deportation into Germany, or even in a worse one because of nothing but the hard work they were compelled to do. [...] The "overaged" boys and girls are helpless to such an extent that they should be led and treated rather like small children."²⁷ The mismatch of the technical age of children and actual children that welfare officers met was evident. Cornelia Heise, the chief of the ITS child search branch, pointed out in her letter

²⁷ "Unaccompanied Youth, Who Are the Concern of PCIRO, Who Live in German Institutions and German Families," August 26, 1948, 6.1.2/82486743, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

to the IRO authorities stated that the rigid age frames, which were indicated in the formal definition of childhood, were often an obstacle in their work with children and youths.²⁸

For the welfare officers, the life stage of childhood for these children was suspended, or even lost, because of the war, and as a result, the traditional understanding of a link between age and a mature mental state could not be applied effectively. In practice it meant that older children and youths between fifteen and nineteen years old were often too young for the adult programs of assistance and resettlement and too old for the children's schemes offered by the state or voluntary organizations, “[...] they are too old, in experience as well as in years to fit easily into resettlement schemes for children. They would not fit easily into foster families or children’s institutions, yet they are in need of care and supervision”, an IRO representative said in 1950 in front of the International Union of Child Welfare, “They are also in need of education and occupational training. These young people have missed valuable years of their lives during the war when it was not possible for them to attend school nor to receive the type of care they would receive in their own families.”²⁹

In contrast, at times social workers, the military authorities and the representatives of different national states, took advantage of the assumption that some of the children were mature beyond their years. Despite the formal instructions, an unofficial rule suggested that the UNRRA’s and IRO’s welfare officers listened to the preferences of children older than twelve.³⁰ Even the children’s DP registration cards indicated where they would like to go. Social workers also often understood that this should be done and following this recommendation, took the children’s wishes into consideration during their interviews with them. Later on, they used the children's declarations to support the repatriation or resettlement plan for a particular child before the national repatriation authorities or the occupying powers.

At the same time, the representatives of the national countries could use the fact that “adult children”, despite their maturity, were technically under the age of majority, to insist that these children had no power to decide about their future. Soviet officials, for instance, required that the Anglo-American authorities should repatriate, by force, if necessary, all

²⁸ “Unaccompanied Youth, Who Are the Concern of PCIRO, Who Live in German Institutions and German Families.”

²⁹ “Draft Paper on Unaccompanied Refugee Children for International Union of Child Welfare,” 1950, AJ/43/602, AN, Paris.

³⁰ “Child Care Conference,” October 4, 1949, AJ/43/947, AN, Paris.

unaccompanied Soviet children under seventeen years old, because the state authorities were in empowered to decide for them. After these children had arrived in the Soviet Union, however, the frontier of their childhood shifted again and unaccompanied youngsters who were older than 14 years old were treated like young adults. Unlike younger children, they had to be registered at the NKVD (the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) filtration camps together with adults and had to join the country's labor force. The administrative division of the Soviet government that was responsible for children and youths also reflected on ideas about childhood and even on the level of formalities, which conveyed the impression that childhood was a time for education and health, while work remained outside of its frontiers. The Ministry of Labor Reserves was responsible for youngsters who were over fourteen years old³¹ so from the assembly-transit centers these children were sent to the educational institutions of the Ministry of Labor Reserves, such as professional technical schools, vocational schools, factory, trade and railroad schools. These schools and colleges trained young people for work in industry and transport infrastructure. At the same time, the Ministry of Health was responsible for orphaned and lost children up until four years old, and the Ministry of Education³² was in charge of children between four and fourteen years old.

Sources and Methods

This study is based on the archival collections of the International Refugee Organization that are preserved at the Archives Nationales in Paris (France), the International Tracing Service (ITS) archive in Bad Arolsen (Germany) and the Central State Archives of the Supreme Bodies of Power and Government of Ukraine (*Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Vyshchyh Organiv Vlady*) in Kyiv (Ukraine). The sources analyzed in this thesis include the correspondence that was maintained between the different offices and departments of the UNRRA and the IRO as well as between the humanitarian administration and the military occupying authorities; written communication that the Western humanitarian and military officers exchanged with the Soviet authorities and representatives; exchanges of letters between the humanitarian officers and voluntary agencies that assisted the UNRRA and the IRO; memorandums, that were written statements or prepared speeches on particular topics; administrative and field orders that instructed relief workers on the policies and procedures

³¹ Before May 1946 it was known as the Main Administration of Labor Reserves.

³² Before May 1946 these were the People's Commissariat for Health and the People's Commissariat for Education respectively.

that they needed to follow in their work; monthly and annual reports written by the welfare officers about their work in the field or at the office. Drawing on these types of sources this study examined the UNRRA's and IRO's policies and lengthy discussions that centered on the repatriation and resettlement of unaccompanied children.

The nature of these sources, however, does not always allow the researcher to pinpoint the starting point of a given discussion or the full series of questions and answers related to a particular problem. The UNRRA and the IRO administration built a highly bureaucratic and entangled system of relations between their offices. Letters relating to a particular issue were sent in several copies to various departments, divisions and teams, numerous requests and enquiries were forwarded to different offices before being answered, and decisions were coordinated between workers on different levels before being finalized. Although the IRO and ITS archives are well organized, the countless problems and questions that humanitarian workers had to solve remain tangled together in a tight knot of paperwork. The communication that these agencies maintained with the military government contributed to the growing pile of documentation and increased number of hours, days, months and years spent on discussions and decision-making. Conversely, the continuous circulation of letters concerning the same issues between the different offices tells us that a particular problem had not been solved or that the proposed solution was not satisfactory in practice with DPs in the field.

In addition to the administrative documentation, the archive of the International Tracing Service provides an exceptional collection of the displaced unaccompanied children's individual files and registration cards, which were accumulated as a result of the work performed by the Child Tracing Section (after 1948 the Child Search Branch, CSB), in the aftermath of the war. Analyzing the individual children's cases alongside the welfare officers' written communication with the military authorities, voluntary societies, national committees and international partners, such as the Red Cross, allows me to shed some light on the welfare and search work that happened on the ground, and to spotlight the often intricate details of the casework and inspection of German foster families. An exploration of the children's personal files also demonstrates the variety of experiences that children underwent during and after the war. Up until this day, the ITS still receives requests sent by former DPs who are looking for the details about their past or searching for their long-lost relatives. In such cases this correspondence adds to the archival collection and, at times, researchers have an opportunity

to identify final pieces of the puzzle that links the post-war story of a child with the present story of an adult.³³

The drawback of the ITS archive is that not all of the entries made over the course of the UNRRA's and the IRO's work were preserved. Many children's files, for instance, only contain a registration card with basic information such as their name, date of birth, date of registration at UNRRA or the IRO. The child search and welfare offices' practice of maintaining paperwork could partly explain the composition of the archival collection. After having finalized the children's case, that is reuniting them with their family or arranging their resettlement, or repatriation, the casework files were supposed to be sent to the people or organization that would take on responsibility for the child. If the receiving side did not wish to have these files, the documents were to be destroyed.³⁴ Even though this practice was not consistent, judging from the available materials, it did determine the form of the present archival collection.

The main difficulty that I faced when starting to explore the ITS archive was finding the children of presumably Ukrainian origin in their extend electronic database. The ITS database is equipped with a profound search engine, which has various instruments that help researchers to find a particular person even if they only know a few details about him or her. In my arsenal I only had the year of birth, that is not earlier than 1929, and a vague definition of nationality. The work of the humanitarian organizations in post-war Europe was based on national criteria, yet the uncertainty over the nationality and citizenship status of unaccompanied children coming from the post-1945 territory of Ukraine caused confusion in the records. As a result, to identify this group, researchers have to look through all the records of the children who were registered as Ukrainian, Russian, Soviet, stateless and children of undetermined nationality. I managed to overcome this difficulty with the kind help of the archival assistant, who gave me the exceptionally helpful advice of typing the name of a Ukrainian city into the search box in order to limit the search results to children who were indicated as originally being from that territory. This was a lifebuoy of my research mission with allowed me to collect and later analyze 45 cases of unaccompanied children from the territory of post-1945 Ukraine. Obviously, searching for unaccompanied children of Ukrainian origin according to their city of origin is less suitable for gathering complete

³³ Researchers may consult the correspondence older than 25 years.

³⁴ "Disposal of Child Welfare/Child Search Individual Case Files," January 3, 1951, AJ/43/301, AN, Paris.

statistics on Ukrainian displaced children, and this method has many drawbacks. To name a few, it excludes children whose place of birth was unknown and makes it impractical to check all the cities, towns and villages that were present on the map of post-1945 Ukraine.

At the same time, this method clearly showed that the nationality and citizenship of Ukrainian children were often changed over the course of the investigation into each individual case. The same child could have been identified in various ways, such as Ukrainian, Polish-Ukrainian, Russian or Soviet at a different period of time. This depended on the information that the welfare officers collected about his or her past and relatives, on the circumstances of the investigation, the position of the welfare officers and on the occupying authorities' change in policy. For instance, during the investigation of Jurgen Babunjka's case, which started in 1946, the UNRRA and IRO welfare, care and search specialists defined him as Russian, Ukrainian, again Russian, Ukrainian SSR, as of unknown nationality, and then again as Russian and Ukrainian SSR. Finally, in 1950 the IRO child care division closed his case and in the last record stated that he was "Ukrainian", while the card completed by the child tracing division in 1951 identified him as "Russian".³⁵

The complications and confusion over the nationality of displaced Ukrainian children that are present in the sources impacted how I use the markers of nationality in this study. I chose to follow the definitions that the welfare workers, military and humanitarian officials decided to use. According to the UNRRA's regulations, that reflected geopolitical changes, displaced children from the former Polish territories were to be called Polish-Ukrainian, whereas children from the pre-1945 territory of Ukrainian Socialist Republic were to be identified as Soviet-Ukrainian (or USSR-Ukrainian). Nevertheless, the UNRRA's and IRO's documents have demonstrated that welfare officer and officials did not stick to this rule on the ground. The policy documents and regulations typically draw a distinct line between the two cases while in the inter-office communications and the children's files this line often became transparent. The frequent modifications to the child's nationality in the records, as we have seen above, implied that when the actors involved in child relief and rehabilitation talked about these children they often used different terms, which depended on the context, and meant that they substituted one definition with another, or changed it with no explicit reason. Regardless of the exact use of words, what mattered to the welfare and military officers was

³⁵ "Case Files of Jurgen Babunjka," 1950 1947, 6.3.2.1/84149078-84149182, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

the need to underline the fact that children of a Ukrainian background were not supposed to be repatriated as Soviet children. As a result, in this study, I refer to “Polish-Ukrainian” children when the sources specifically used this term. When the welfare officers were not explicit about it or identified them as “Ukrainian”, I used the term “Ukrainian”, at times alongside “Polish-Ukrainian” when they implicitly meant it, to describe the group of children that were not handed over to the Soviet authorities.

The UNRRA’s and IRO’s archives provide a detailed insight into the post-war rehabilitation of children who were displaced from the former eastern Polish territories that became a part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1945. Much less information can be extracted on the unaccompanied children that came from other parts of pre-1945 Soviet Ukraine. The search for children in the ITS database using the place of origin illustrated that children from pre-war Soviet Ukraine were not always repatriated and in many instances were identified as Ukrainian and even Polish-Ukrainian. The ITS children's files shed some light on these cases and suggest that they, like Polish-Ukrainian children, could have been resettled in Germany or other countries instead of being sent back to the Soviet Union. This became especially noticeable during the IRO’s mandate in Europe that is, between 1947 and 1952. Nevertheless, to investigate this hypothesis in-depth and to draw any general conclusions a larger sample of unaccompanied children’s cases has to be examined in the future.

The nature of all these sources means that this study regards unaccompanied displaced children through the eyes of the adults who worked directly with them, such as field child care and child search officers; adults who were involved in the relief and rehabilitation of children but often were distanced from them, such as welfare authorities, administrative personnel, military officers and authorities. The individual children's cases provide scant to no opportunity to hear the children’s voices in the story of postwar relief and rehabilitation. Adults, social workers or secretaries, wrote down stories and testimonies of children and made transcriptions or summaries of the interviews conducted with them. As a result, we now only have their interpretations of the children's words. Occasionally, a letter written by an older child can be found but little else has been saved.

In addition to the UNRRA, IRO and ITS archives this study investigated selected materials from the Central State Archives of the Supreme Bodies of Power and Government of Ukraine (*Tsentral’nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Vyshchyyh Organiv Vlady*). In particular, reports from the

Soviet repatriation commission and from the local authorities in addition, the published literature on this topic helped me to examine the possible trajectories of unaccompanied children who were eventually repatriated to Soviet Ukraine.

Statistics

The general picture of the relief, rehabilitation and resettlement of unaccompanied Ukrainian children would be more precise with some hard data. How many children of Ukrainian origin were under the UNRRA's and IRO's care? How many children emigrated to third countries and how many children were repatriated to the Soviet Union? How many children were able to find a home in Germany? These are only a few intriguing questions, but at least at this stage of research, with the materials preserved at the IRO or ITS archives, the actual numbers are hard to assess. Keeping a clear count of displaced adults and children in the conditions of the postwar whirlwind of moving people was not an easy task for the UNRRA and the IRO administration, although the welfare workers spent a considerable amount of time trying to do just that. Perhaps precisely because they had to frequently report such numbers to various offices the task of keeping a clear count was not always easy. The sources showed that the welfare officers complained about the number of statistical reports that they had to submit each month. The administrative authorities acknowledged the fact that the statistical data was complicated and made several attempts to change the system in order to make it less confusing and repetitive.³⁶

The UNRRA's officers calculated that at the beginning of their operation, in July 1945, they cared for 153,000 non-German children under 14 years old. Over the next two years, they assisted 12,843 unaccompanied children aged below sixteen years.³⁷ According to the IRO's cumulative narrative report for 1st July 1947 – 30th June 1949, its child care division in July 1947 had approximately 2,340 open unaccompanied children cases. Thirteen children's centers accommodated 1,792 unaccompanied children and in the so-called assembly centers³⁸ there were around 1,022 unaccompanied children and over 60,000 accompanied. These figures included children up to eighteen years old and more than half of them were Jewish. At

³⁶ For instance see: "Statistical Reports," n.d., AJ/43/943, AN, Paris; "Statistical Reports," n.d., AJ/43/944, AN, Paris; "Statistical Reports," n.d., AJ/43/945, AN, Paris.

³⁷ Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011), 8.

³⁸ After 1945 "assembly centers", the camps where DPs lived, called the DP camps.

the same time, the report acknowledged that many unaccompanied children at the assembly centers, DP camps or in the Germany community still remained outside their statistics. The welfare and child care offices had a constant turnover in unaccompanied children each month. On the one hand, the child search program and screening of the DPs at the camps uncovered new cases of undocumented children. On the other, displaced parents emigrating without children, or abandoning them for other reasons, and the influx of infiltrates added new cases of unaccompanied children to the grand total each month. German families and healthcare or childcare institutions also reported foreign children to the occupying authorities. At the same time, each month welfare officers closed cases of children that were approved for settlement in Germany, emigration or repatriation.

There were probably several thousand unaccompanied children of Ukrainian origin under the UNRRA's and IRO's care after the summer of 1945. It is uncertain because of the complications that were embedded in the nature of the IRO's work and the unclear citizenship status of these children. Welfare officers collected and composed statistical data according to the nationality principle, while in fact, DPs nationality was often an uncertain and complex characteristic. As long as there was no clear and well-defined policy for determining the nationality and status of unaccompanied children, like of Ukrainian children, welfare and administrative officers made decisions based on their own judgement and then changed it in view of new information. In addition several times between 1945 and 1952 the titles of reported nationalities from Eastern Europe changed. Therefore, children coming from or being born to parents from the post-war Ukrainian territories could be included in the totals of Ukrainian, Polish, Polish-Ukrainian, Russian, Russian-Ukrainian, USSR or stateless unaccompanied children or in the numbers of children with undetermined nationality. As a child's case progressed, the UNRRA's, IRO's or tracing service's officers could change the nationality of the child, which, consequently, added to the total number of children for one national category while subtracting the same from another.³⁹

According to the IRO's report, from the 1st July 1947 until the 31st December 1950, 1,845 children of various nationalities were repatriated and 3,450 were resettled.⁴⁰ It is important to remember, however, that these numbers only included children who were registered under

³⁹ See for example: "Cocko Dmytro, Born 6.11.1929," n.d., 6.3.2.1., ITS Digital Archive, Paris; "Kutiak Maria," n.d., 6.3.2.1., ITS Digital Archive, Paris; "List of Children for Repatriation," n.d., AJ/43/952, AN, Paris.

⁴⁰ "Background on Unaccompanied Refugee Children at Present under the IRO Care," February 16, 1951, AJ/43/169, AN, Paris.

specific national categories. The child search branch report that was submitted in October 1946 noted that the figures of repatriated children, other than Polish ones, were incomplete because at the beginning of the office's mandate, the children were repatriated directly from the assembly centers and no adequate statistical reports or checks were made. In addition, emigration to the US was subject to quotas that were allocated by the American government for each nation. When the relief and resettlement programs were first launched, there was no separate quota for Ukrainians, so, these people emigrated under the Polish or Russian quotas.⁴¹ Consequently, such nationals were not reflected in the statistical calculations that relied on national criteria.

Another practical problem occurs when attempting to examine the records of repatriated and resettled children of presumably Ukrainian nationality, as the UNRRA's and IRO's records did not always reflect the precise state of affairs. This was because children whose names appeared on the list for repatriation to the Soviet Union were not always repatriated. An interrogation of the individual child's files highlights that the process of finalizing decisions regarding the child's future often took several years. For instance, a child that was enlisted for repatriation in 1946 could ultimately emigrate in 1949. During this time, their settlement plan could have changed several times because of the various details and circumstances of their case. A similar story happened to Cocko Dmytro, who was authorized for repatriation to the Soviet Union in October 1947 by the EUCOM. However, half a year later he left the IRO children's center on a ship carrying DPs to the US.⁴² In such situations the names of the same children appear on the lists with different headlines, making them unreliable sources for calculating the grand totals for the repatriation or resettlement of children. To compose statistics for a particular national group, in this case, unaccompanied Ukrainian children, the rolls, which list the people's nationality have to be reviewed with each other and, ideally, against the individual children's cases. Needless to say, the archive for these type of documents are also far from exhaustive.

The literature on the repatriation of Soviet citizens has dedicated some space to analysing the statistics that the Soviet authorities produced to discover the numbers of children that crossed

⁴¹ Cornelia Heise, "Monthly Report. Child Search Branch. October 1946," October 1946, 6.1.2/82487324-82487329, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

⁴² "Cocko Dmytro, Born 6.11.1929"; "List of Children for Repatriation."

the Soviet border from the West.⁴³ According to the data available, 45,852 children were repatriated to Soviet Ukraine between March 1945 and February 1947.⁴⁴ More than half of these children arrived in the period between September and December of 1945. These figures were based on the data obtained from the Repatriation Department of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR that represented the repatriation authorities on the republican level. Meanwhile, the information provided by the local authorities allows us to see how many children returned to their homes or were actually settled in new places after their journey within the Soviet Union. For instance, the Repatriation Office of the Kyiv district reported that 1,797 children returned from occupied Germany and Austria between April 1945 and July 1947. In March 1945 the Ministry of Education reported that 245 children, aged between four and fifteen years, arrived in Kyiv. The next month 64 children arrived in Kyiv, but four did not survive the journey from the assembly center that was established on the western Soviet border.⁴⁵

These figures are only illustrative and should be viewed with a critical eye. In the first place, they only demonstrate the number of registered cases and say nothing of the older children who were able to escape on the way or the children who were not registered at all during the initial stages of repatriation. This data does not indicate the zone of occupied Germany or Austria that these children came from or their nationality. Unlike the UNRRA or IRO, the Soviet's statistical sheets often did not make any distinction between children of different nationalities. In other words, the figures on repatriated children could include all ethnic nationalities that were present in the Soviet Union, which makes the calculation of Ukrainian children a nearly impossible task. In addition, children brought from Poland or Romania after the territorial changes in the region could be added to the general total of children that were repatriated from the West. Despite all these pitfalls, the reports do provide at least some idea on the numbers of children that returned to Soviet Ukraine.

⁴³ See for example: Tetiana Pastushenko, "*V'izd Repatriantiv Do Kyeva Zaboroneno...*": *Povoenne Jytta Kolyshnih Ostarbaiteriv Ta Viis'kovopolonenyh v Ukraini* (Kyiv, 2011); Tetiana Pastushenko, *Ostarbeitery z Kyivschyny: Verbuvannia, Prymusova Pratsia, Repatriatsiia (1942-1953)* (Kyiv, 2009); Pavel Polian, *Zhertvy Dvukh Diktatur: Ostarbaitery i Voennoplennye v Tretem Reikhe i Ikh Repatriatsiia* (Moskva: Vash vybor TSIRZ, 1996).

⁴⁴ Pastushenko, *Ostarbeitery z Kyivschyny: Verbuvannia, Prymusova Pratsia, Repatriatsiia (1942-1953)*, 273–74.

⁴⁵ "Correspondance," n.d., Ark. 21, 45, 50, F. 20, Op. 12, Spr. 335, Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Vyschchyh Organiv Vlady.

I started this project with the intention of writing about children and their experience of childhood after World War II in Ukraine. When I went to the archives I was very excited to start my archival research - to open old dusty documents, read forgotten childhood stories or lost thoughts, and to find the real treasure that I could sculpt on the paper into a story of children after the war. I spent several weeks in the cold reading rooms of two archives in Kyiv, reading standardized Soviet reports and repetitive complaints sent by officials to the higher authorities. Even the dust on the documents was not so thick, in fact, there was no dust at all, as these files had been read quite frequently by other researchers.

On my return to Florence, I wrote a paper that should have become a draft of my first chapter. I had a detailed outline of the dissertation project and thought that I had finally decided in which direction my thesis should move as well as what to do next. At that moment I knew that my next chapters would be about displaced children in Germany and their way back home to Soviet Ukraine. I was looking for the sources and archives that would help me to write such stories. Professor Laura Downs advised me to talk to Professor Tara Zahra who at that moment was at the EUI. We met one afternoon on a sunny balcony overlooking the Tuscan hills in Villa Schifanoia and we spoke for about an hour. That hour was enough to completely tailor my project. During the next few months, my project underwent a 180-degree change because one of her recommendations was to go and check the archive of the UN humanitarian organizations that were working with displaced after the war people in Germany and Austria.

A month later I went to the suburbs of Paris to consult material at the Archive Nationales. When I opened the first box and started looking through the files, my eyes caught several documents in which people discussed children of Polish-Ukrainian origin, or to be precise children of a Baltic or Polish Ukrainian. I ordered one box after another and more of the letters and notes appeared that told me about these children. I was surprised how often the combination of words “Polish-Ukrainian children” popped-up on the pages of various sources. As a consequence, what was supposed to be one chapter became a study. The perspective of my research significantly changed. Its main stage became occupied Germany and it only occasionally refers to Soviet Ukraine. It brought into the focus the children who

were born in the territories that would become part of Ukraine after 1945, or to their parents who came from these territories but were uprooted after the war.

It is extraordinary how various details and interpretations of events that are almost completely unattainable in the one context are brightly distinguished in another. Seen through the Ukrainian archives, children's nationality was almost invisible, despite the fact that each Soviet citizen had a line in their passport identifying his or her nationality. The sources provided some information about the conflict between the Soviet and Anglo-American authorities but indicated that the problem was with the Soviet children. Children from Ukraine were drowned in the well-constructed discourse of the single political nationality of the vast Soviet Union that was used in the official documents and in the files that were referred to the international scene. At the same time, when we pose the same problem but use archives that were composed in another country, outside of the former Soviet Union, and by people who supported an opposite point of view, the problem emerges in a different light. For this study, such a view from the outside demonstrated that the difference between nationality and citizenship was one of the far-reaching factors in determining children's destinies. What is more, it showed that the group of displaced children who originally came from the post-1945 territory of Soviet Ukraine were far from homogenous in terms of their national identity.

Having discovered new sources, I rewrote the dissertation, which was still very different from what it became in the end. Retrospectively, I can now see that each new portion of archival sources and the developments that occurred in each chapter guided me into a new one and showed me a new keyhole to look through. For this reason, for example, the role of the US military government in the child welfare provision in its German zone is mentioned at the very end of the thesis. From the perspective of humanitarian workers, post-war child relief and welfare history did not envisage army officers and authorities as active participants in welfare provision. The UNRRA's and IRO's archival files were mostly silent about this point, except when there were conflicts between the army and humanitarian personnel about policy, rules and responsibilities. Therefore, based predominantly on secondary sources, this study contains only a preliminary examination of the debates between the humanitarians and army's civil affairs division officers concerning unaccompanied children's relief and resettlement. In the first place, its aim was to demonstrate that the occupying government, via its civil affairs division, participated in displaced adults' and children's relief and discussed the approach to children's welfare with the UNRRA's and IRO's officers. As a result, despite the fact that this

part of the study includes fewer details than I would like, it gives rise to further questions that can be examined in a future project. Meanwhile, Lynn Taylor's freshly published book (November 2017) on unaccompanied children complements this gap by proposing a deeper study of the military government's participation in settling plans for the children's resettlement or repatriation.⁴⁶

After all the thematic turns and careful choices on what to include and exclude from the thesis were finally done, it became clear that the thesis would consist of four chapters. Each chapter explores, in turn, different actors and dimensions of the child relief and rehabilitation process as it related to unaccompanied children of presumably Ukrainian origin. This helped me to structure a narrative that was not easy to unfold in a linear timeline because each aspect of the problem involved various actors, agencies and offices that acted according to their own visions and policies regarding relief and rehabilitation and simultaneously communicated with each other. Inevitably, all the chapters refer to each other on several occasions in order to unify the complex and multifaceted nature of unaccompanied children. As a result, the structure of this study also reflects the fact that in the issue of unaccompanied children as well as ideas on their belonging, nationality and citizenship, overlapped with national and international politics, as well as ideas about welfare work.

Chapters two, three and four examine the period from 1945 – 1952 when the UNRRA and the IRO operated in Europe. In the last chapter, the narrative takes us back in time to 1943 when the UNRRA was first established and the civil affairs officers of the Allied army started to work with the displaced populations in Europe. I configured this thesis so that it centers on the Anglo-American authorities and the UNRRA's and IRO's welfare workers as well as on the debates and decisions relating to the question of unaccompanied Ukrainian children. This study presents the position of the Soviet authorities but it aims to develop how the humanitarian personnel and Anglo-American occupation authorities interacted or planned to interact with them, rather than demonstrates the internal debates in the circles of the Soviet officials.

The first chapter situates this study within the existing literature and sets the stage for the following analysis. It introduces the UNRRA, the IRO and the key issues and theories that

⁴⁶ Lynne Taylor, *In the Children's Best Interests : Unaccompanied Children in American-Occupied Germany, 1945-1952* (University of Toronto Press, 2017).

were centered on the rehabilitation of displaced children after the war. The concepts and ideas that were significant for post-war debates, such as those on displaced people, the post-war recovery of populations, emergency relief, welfare provision, humanitarianism after the war, children's relief and rehabilitation, their reintegration into society, and the child's "best interests" are all set forth. Throughout the following chapters, I return to these ideas in order to highlight the nuances related to the topic of the chapters and the whole dissertation.

Chapter two begins by putting forward the problem of Polish-Ukrainian unaccompanied children as it was seen and experienced by the welfare workers from the autumn of 1945 onwards. It examines how the UNRRA's and the IRO's headquarters, welfare workers and the Anglo-American occupation government discussed the question of the citizenship, nationality and legal guardianship of children from the eastern Polish territories, which were added to the Soviet Union in 1945. The welfare officers working in the field pleaded for a policy that could indicate who was responsible for these children, the Polish or Soviet representatives, and whether these children should be repatriated to the Soviet Union or not. The chapter explores some practical approaches that the welfare workers tried to implement in order to find a way out of this situation, to identify these children and to decide on their future. Finally, the last part of this chapter examines the policy that the US military authorities formulated regarding the identification and repatriation of these children by the end of the IRO's mandate in Europe.

Chapter three turns away from the internal debates on children's repatriation that occurred between the UNRRA's and IRO's welfare officers and the military authorities in the US zone, to the discussions on the inter-Allied level, with the Soviet authorities in particular. The key object of analysis here is the way in which welfare officers and the US military authorities developed their negotiations and interactions with the Soviet representatives in regards to unaccompanied children of Ukrainian origin. Looking at their dialogues and communications with the Soviet representatives it becomes evident that the mutual distrust and suspicion that was present from the autumn-winter of 1945 onwards resulted in the suspension of collaboration between the former Allies regarding the return and repatriation of displaced persons. The Soviet authorities argued that Polish-Ukrainian children held Soviet citizenship and demanded that the Anglo-American officials repatriate them. Examining the period between 1945 and 1949, this analysis explores how the welfare workers and military authorities in the US zone of occupation moved from settling a policy on the identification

and repatriation of these children to finding a way to work with the Soviet authorities. The last part of the chapter explores an individual case in order to provide insights into the kinds of conflicts that arose between the Soviet and American officials around the repatriation of a child. This case vividly exemplifies the actions and decisions of the IRO's welfare officers and US military authorities in similar situations.

In chapter four, the UNRRA's and IRO's welfare workers become the main actors in the narrative. Drawing on selected cases of unaccompanied Ukrainian children who were living with German foster families the chapter explores various aspects of the work that the UNRRA's and IRO's child welfare officers did on the ground. It examines how the welfare officers reached solutions for children who could not return to their home countries, such as the Ukrainians, for whom settlement in Germany could be a solution as it satisfied the concept of the child's best interests, in contrast to repatriation. In particular, the IRO welfare officers' compromise between the theory of child welfare, their personal beliefs, official policies, the position of the US military authorities and the practical challenges are the main focuses of this chapter's analysis. The final part of the chapter brings the officers of the civil affairs divisions of the Allied army into the history of child relief and rehabilitation. It provides an initial investigation into how the concept of the child's best interests was debated between welfare workers and the officers of the US military government in the US zone of occupation.

Timeline

To place this study within the historical narrative of the post-war period, it is important to make note of several time markers. The heads of the British, American and Soviet governments, the Big Three, met to discuss the post-war settlement in Europe at a peace conference in Yalta, which was held from 4th to 11th February 1945. The agreement that President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Premier Joseph Stalin signed during the conference indicated two important points in the context of this research. First, it was decided that all displaced Soviet civilians and prisoners of war would be repatriated to the Soviet Union. Second, it was agreed that the eastern Polish territories would be annexed by the Soviet Union. In the summer of 1945, the US and UK occupation authorities declared that they did not recognize the right of the Soviet Union to absorb the

Baltic States and the former eastern Polish territories. From the autumn of the same year, the practice of the forced repatriation of DPs to the Soviet Union gradually started to come to an end. At the same time, during the summer-autumn of 1945, the UNRRA convincingly began to head the relief and rehabilitation program in Europe and administered emergency welfare provision to adults and children. From this point onwards, children from the Baltic States and the former eastern Polish territories were not directly referred to the Soviet repatriation officers.

On 12th February 1946, the UN signed a resolution that outlawed forced repatriations and introduced the notion of refugees. From this moment onward, the Soviet authorities strongly disagreed with the non-repatriation policy that was adopted in the British and American zones of occupation. The summer of 1946 was marked by a considerable de-escalation in the exchange of populations between the Soviet and Western zones of occupation and an almost complete shutdown of cooperation in the search and tracing of missing people. The Soviet zone became almost inaccessible for the UNRRA and later IRO workers. In September 1946 humanitarian workers in cooperation with the occupying governments in the British and American zones launched the Child Search program which aimed to look for foreign children lost and 'hidden' in German and Austrian societies so that they could be returned to their birth parents and native family. The following month humanitarian officers announced that only relief workers and military officers were entitled to the search for children in the US and UK zones of occupation; no representatives of the national governments were authorized to do such work on their own. At the same time, a regulation issued by the US military limited the Soviet representatives' access to all the DP camps in their zone. In December 1946, the IRO was founded by the UN member-states, however, the Soviet Union refused to support it, to sign its constitution or to become a member-state.

The year of 1947 was marked by the Truman Doctrine in the history of the Cold War. Announced on 12th March, it declared that American foreign policy would need to counter Soviet geopolitical ambitions and support other nations who were threatened by Soviet communism. In July 1947, the IRO fully took over responsibility for the repatriation and resettlement of displaced people in occupied Germany and Austria. Several months later, in October 1947, the US occupation authorities agreed with the IRO headquarters and welfare officers that they should follow the same policy regarding Baltic and Polish-Ukrainian children that is, these children would neither be referred to the Soviet representatives nor sent

back to the Soviet Union. In 1948, the British, American and French occupying authorities agreed that children from the Baltic States and former eastern Polish territories had no national government to represent them. In February 1948, the IRO's welfare officers and the US military authorities met to discuss why EUCOM did not authorize the removal of unaccompanied children from their German foster families. In the spring of the same year, the IRO's child search and welfare officers started a thorough investigation of the cases in which displaced children had been fostered out to German families. In June, the Soviet Union blocked the supply routes into West Berlin, initiating one of the first crises in relations between the former Allies. The Berlin Blockade would last until 12th May 1949. The same month, American, British and French zones of occupation formed the Federal Republic of Germany, while in October 1949 the German Democratic Republic was established in the Soviet Zone.

Chapter 1

Recovering After The War: Rebirth. Re-Establishment. Rehabilitation.

The next two hundred pages or so will tell the story about unaccompanied children in the aftermath of the war, this will include fewer details about their everyday lives, and focus more on their future perspectives. Beyond that, this study uses its focus the figure of a child as a point of entry to analyze the UNRRA's and IRO's work, unfolding Cold War politics, and the relationships between different actors of the post-war relief effort. The figure of a child holds references to various aspects of the post-war settlement, such as welfare and healthcare provision, parent-child relationships, emergency relief and the psychological rehabilitation of minors, politics and biopolitics, as well as education and self-reflection. By maintaining a focus on children, it becomes possible to see how multifaceted all these spheres were, which makes this perspective useful for the research but at the same time implies that many different fields of historical study and historiographies overlap in one story. This became evident to me when with each new chapter a new pile of books on one or several fields of history appeared on my desk. As a result, situating the study within the literature becomes an intricate task that requires me to select topics that seem to be the most relevant for the context, such as children's rehabilitation after the war, the problem of DPs, international humanitarian activities, and the problem of unaccompanied children.

This chapter sets the background that will help us to reflect on the problems raised in the following chapters as well as to situate the study on displaced Ukrainian children within the context of the existing historiography. It presents a short overview of the main ideas related to children of war that emerged, reemerged, and was developed and transformed in the post-war period. It discusses the problems that were related to the post-war reconstruction of order, the "normalization" of life and rehabilitation of children showing the core images that represented children after the war underlining their traumatic experience and post-war hardships. The chapter also outlines the main problems of child rehabilitation that the national and international authorities faced in the aftermath of the war. The last part of the chapter introduces the main actors of the international relief and rehabilitation agencies after World War II, that is, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and

the International Refugee Organization (IRO) and their principles and ideas of relief work with displaced children.

On The Road to Recovery: Children After The War

Restoring The “Good Childhood”

“In all wars children are victims”, wrote the historian Nicholas Stargardt in the introduction to his book on German children's experiences of war. This assumption, as he points out further, does not mean that we should think of children only as of innocent victims, because such narrow understanding makes them mere objects of history. Rather we have to put the perception of children's experience of war in the historical perspective. The Second World War was believed to have caused an unprecedented amount of suffering and misfortune for adults and children.⁴⁷ The wartime distress, hardships and horrors inevitably push people to think of children as innocent victims of war who lost their childhood. The assumption underpinning this idea was that the war and post-war period had ruined the normal experience of childhood on a physical, psychological and emotional level. This happened because of the dangerous conditions of everyday life, the proximity of death, ever-present malnourishment, constant struggle to survive and risk of families vanishing, which had surrounded children since their birth. Wars leave traumatized, separated or lost children but more importantly, they break up families that constitute a proper environment for the children's growth and development.⁴⁸ As a result, the major concern in Europe after World War II was to understand how to help children to recover from their traumas, to reconnect them with their families, to improve their childhood experience, and to rehome lost, displaced and orphaned children.⁴⁹

Tara Zahra in her seminal study on how the international humanitarian authorities and social theorists administered the task of caring for unaccompanied children showed that the psychological rehabilitation of uprooted adults and children became a distinctive feature of post-World War II reconstruction and rehabilitation. The child rehabilitation activities in the aftermath of the war were inspired and underpinned by an amalgam of social, psychological,

⁴⁷ Nicholas Stargardt, *Witnesses of War: Children's Lives under the Nazis* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005), 7, 10, 17.

⁴⁸ Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 4-5.

⁴⁹ As Hugh Cunningham has shown, the idea about innocent child and a child who has to be shaped to become a proper adult roots in the enlightenment thinking and emerges in the nineteenth century: Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (Longman, 1998).

psychoanalytical and educational theories that were developed in Europe and the US from the beginning of the 20th century. American and European psychologists, psychoanalysts and educational specialists argued that addressing the psychological and emotional damages that the war inflicted on children was a critical issue. They shaped the conviction that the wounds inflicted on the souls of the war survivors had to be regarded as seriously as their physical wounds.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, their efforts have become the subject of historical research which has demonstrated that the theorists and social workers of that time thought that having grown-up during a hostile period with a shattered routine of life, damaged morality, undermined principles of social order and behavior, children did not know what a “normal life” or “normal childhood” consisted of, that is, a childhood with favorable conditions for their identity development.⁵¹ The central concern, especially from the Anglo-American social workers’ point of view, was that the war broke down families. Psychologists argued that having mainly grown up under their mother’s care, or even without any parental control at all, these children were deprived of their fathers’ instructions, authority and discipline, and also lacked their mother's care and affection.⁵² As a result, the specialist supposed that without a special approach to the psychological and physical rehabilitation of the youngest victims of war, in the future such children would not develop ability to become “proper” members of society, start families and, consequently, would not fulfill their social, or biopolitical, role, as the state governments viewed it.

These theories gave rise to an ambivalent view on the minors who lived through the war. They were seen as the ultimate victims of the war but also as a spoil of war, or savage children, who could potentially threaten the harmonious and peaceful development of society because the war had damaged their identities. Regarding the latter, it was believed that the wartime childhood experience had made these children incapable of adequately socializing under peaceful conditions and that they would not be able to reintegrate into a peaceful society as children, youths or future adults. The policies, strategies and practical actions that the national governments and social services developed regarding “savage” children have

⁵⁰ Zahra, *The Lost Children*; Tara Zahra, “‘The Psychological Marshall Plan’: Displacement, Gender, and Human Rights after World War II,” *Central European History* 44, no. 01 (2011): 37–62.

⁵¹ James Alan Marten, “Children and War,” in *The Routledge History of Childhood in the Western World*, ed. Paula S. Fass, Routledge Histories (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2012), 142–57; Zahra, “‘The Psychological Marshall Plan,’” 39–40, 50.

⁵² Sarah Fishman, *The Battle for Children: World War II, Youth Crime, and Juvenile Justice in Twentieth-Century France* (Cambridge, Mass. [u.a.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2002), 1–3.

been studied in studies on homeless and street children as well as in the examination of problems related to post-war juvenile delinquency and young law offenders.⁵³

The need to return to ‘normality’ after experiencing a broken everyday life became a central concern of the post-war understanding of childhood.⁵⁴ For children were valuable to nations and the future restoration of society, the national governments paid considerable attention to the problem and attempted to substitute the familial or male parental role in controlling and supervising children. As a result, social and childhood policies in many European countries were built in accordance with the model of ‘good childhood’.⁵⁵ This model became dominant in industrial societies at the beginning of the twentieth century and was based on the gradual development of theories on proper upbringing and education. According to them, adults must take care of and protect children so that their childhood would be a positive experience over the course of their individual life. Childhood was seen as a period of mental, emotional and physical development, the time of education, joyful games and a happy life surrounded by loving and caring parents and toys.⁵⁶ From the perspective of the conception of having a “good childhood” armed conflict, such as World War II, had distorted and deteriorate all the necessary conditions for a happy childhood, and had denied children the possibility of having a “normal” experience, as such the war children needed extra protection and “normalization” in their lives. In other words, theorists, psychologists and planners of the peace believed that their task was to restore the war children’s lost childhood. And yet, the children of war may not have believed that their childhood had been lost. Ruth Kluger asserted in her memoirs about the war that her childhood, significant parts of which had passed in Thieresenstadt and Auschwitz, was very different from what people usually think makes for a “real” childhood and was not a type of experience that the one could call happy. Nonetheless, for her it was not a lost childhood, “[t]his, too, was childhood”⁵⁷, she wrote in her autobiography.

⁵³ For instance: Fishman, *The Battle for Children*; Olga Kucherenko, *Soviet Street Children and the Second World War: Welfare and Social Control under Stalin* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016); Mariia R. Zezina, “Without a Family: Orphans of the Postwar Period,” *Russian Studies in History* 48, no. 4 (2010): 59–73.

⁵⁴ For adults’ return to normalcy see for instance: Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton University Press, 2007).

⁵⁵ Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 9, 18–19; Tara Zahra, “Lost Children: Displacement, Family, and Nation in Postwar Europe,” *The Journal of Modern History* 81, no. 1 (March 2009): 45–86.

⁵⁶ Marta Gutman and Ning De Coninck-Smith, “Introduction. Good to Think with-History, Space and Modern Childhood,” in *Designing Modern Childhoods: History, Space, and the Material Culture of Children*, ed. Marta Gutman and Ning De Coninck-Smith (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 2.

⁵⁷ Ruth Klüger, *Landscapes of Memory: A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), 145.

Tara Zahra has analyzed the discussions that were held within the national and international humanitarian organizations and their decisions on the problems that broken families and displaced and separated children faced, as well as the improvement made to childcare. Examining the debates on the psychological damage and trauma that was inflicted on children during the war and the lack of stability during the post-war period, she has argued that international humanitarian workers grounded their experience with displaced children on the belief that the separation of family members traumatized children and distorted their “normal” development as much as the war atrocities. As a result, the reunion of a family was assumed to be in line with the so-called concept of the child’s best interests and a way for them to return to “normality”. It was believed that by doing so children would rapidly recover from their psychological and emotional traumas, and would grow in a healthy and natural social environment, which was necessary for their healthy development. This focus on family upbringing was contrasted by the collectivist ideas that were linked to the fascists’ and Communists’ popular beliefs and their intentions to dismantle the private sphere of an individual’s life. From this perspective, the regeneration of the institution of family, according to Zahra, was a founding element for the political reconstruction of the society, the nation and democracy.⁵⁸

Similar issues were discussed by national governments in many countries, which gave birth to various programs, policies and studies on the reintegration of children and youth who had experienced war and on educating them to become citizens.⁵⁹ The studies on national contexts also demonstrated that the views and reactions to the problem of children who had been separated from their families could be different. Having investigated the evacuation experience in France and Great Britain, Laura Downs showed that there were contrasting ideas on the separation of working-class children from their families. These differences grew from an opposing understanding of the optimum balance between the public and the private within family-child-state interactions, and from traditional ideas on the proper upbringing of children. The British experience of evacuating children to the countryside remained a negative one in popular memory that led to considerable psychological damage. According to popular and scientific belief in Britain, a child’s biological and emotional link with its parents

⁵⁸ Zahra, “Lost Children,” 48, 54–56; Zahra, ““The Psychological Marshall Plan.””

⁵⁹ For instance: Machteld Venken and Maren Röger, “Growing up in the Shadow of the Second World War: European Perspectives,” *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d’histoire* 22, no. 2 (March 4, 2015): 199–220 See also other articles of this special issue.

and foremost with its mother was extremely significant for its development.⁶⁰ Consequently, it was believed that the plan to tear children from their mothers and fathers, even for a short period of time, such as during the evacuation could cause psychological harm to children. Likewise, when evaluating the evacuation of British children to the countryside, Mathew Thompson showed how concern over the traumatic consequences of separating children from their families increased in the debates among psychologists and psychoanalysts.⁶¹

Nonetheless, in a broader European context, the familial environment was not preferred to the collective one for the children's development. In France, unlike in Britain, the wartime evacuation left no negative traces in the people's memories, nor were these tendencies evident in post-war discussions around the children's psychological traumas.⁶² The Finnish experience of evacuation represents a combination of France's and Britain's considerations about the close link between mothers and their children. In Finland, evacuation was initially presented as something that should be done in the wake of war to save the children. People were reassured that separating children from their families would not cause them any negative consequences in terms of their development and mental health. However, after a while, Finnish psychologists began to declare the opposite that separating children from their families was disadvantageous.⁶³ The followers of nationalist and socialist ideas in the Soviet Union, Central and Eastern Europe as well as some theorists in the United States, in fact, advocated for collectivistic rehabilitation and education in contrast to a family-centered child placement.⁶⁴ The literature on the UN agencies' work has shown that the project on children's villages, which was developed to re-educate "war handicapped" children and to save them from the negative consequences of war, also proposed elements of collective child rehabilitation.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Laura Lee Downs, "Au Revoir Les Enfants: Wartime Evacuation and the Politics of Childhood in France and Britain, 1939–45," *History Workshop Journal* 82, no. 1 (November 18, 2016): 121–50.

⁶¹ Mathew Thomson, *Lost Freedom: The Landscape of the Child and the British Post-War Settlement* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 53–79.

⁶² Downs, "Au Revoir Les Enfants."

⁶³ Nelly Laitinen and Pia Lindholm, eds., *Krigets Barn: I Finland - till Sverige* (Stockholm: Atlantis: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 2014) Thank you to Kirsi Tuohela and Laika Katriina for directing my attention to this case study and helping with translation.

⁶⁴ Zahra, "Lost Children," 60–70.

⁶⁵ For instance see: Samuel BouSSION, Mathias Gardet, and Martine Ruchat, "Bringing Everyone to Trogen: UNESCO and the Promotion of an International Model of Children's Communities after World War II," in *A History of UNESCO: Global Actions and Impacts*, ed. Poul Duedahl (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 99–115.

Educational theories and practices were specifically developed for children who were born during or shortly after the war, which also shared the common goal to normalize the lives of these children and to reshape their worldview. Special attention was paid to the childhood experiences of German children that had grown up in the Third Reich as well as those who were born in Germany shortly after the war. In his study of the generation of children who were born shortly before or during the war, Nicholas Stargardt argued that German children struggled to make sense of the war, especially when combining their visions of the world that they lived in and the post-war discourse of Germany's responsibility for the conflict and death of millions of people. It was believed that this generation did not have any other vision of a world order or their place in it except the one that had been transmitted by Nazi propaganda. As a result, German children had difficulties adjusting to the post-war world in which Germany was a defeated country.⁶⁶ Pedagogues were sought to decrease the influence of the Nazi's education and propaganda, instilling new morals and reshaping the child's understanding of the self, and their self-identification with the new German nation and imposing new worldview.⁶⁷ Such approaches were firmly grounded on theories that saw childhood as a time for individual psychological development and a period when the identity of a person established itself. At the same time, the re-education projects in the Eastern and Western zones of occupied Germany, the future German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany each took its own approach.⁶⁸

As for the non-German children who were found in German homes after the war, from the outset, the policy of the Allied military government's welfare workers was to withdraw all of the foreign children and to return them to their countries of origin where they could be reunited with their parents or relatives. However, in 1946-1947, the authorities were already discussing the advantages and disadvantages of this plan for the children.⁶⁹ Alongside this, it was proposed that German families and parents need to be re-educated so that they changed their approach to child rearing.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Stargardt, *Witnesses of War*, 3.

⁶⁷ Sara Fieldston, *Raising the World: Child Welfare in the American Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015), 11–31.

⁶⁸ For GDR reeducation see: Benita Blessing, "The Antifascistic Narrative: Memory Lessons in the Schools of the Soviet Occupation Zone, 1945-1949," in *Children and War: A Historical Anthology*, ed. James Alan Marten (NYU Press, 2002), 172–83; Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, "Innocent Victims and Heroic Defenders: Children and Siege of Leningrad," in *Children and War: A Historical Anthology*, ed. James Alan Marten (NYU Press, 2002), 279–90.

⁶⁹ See for example: "Memorandum of Child Search," June 13, 1947, AJ/43/663, AN, Paris.

⁷⁰ Fieldston, *Raising the World*, 11–31.

To summarize, the post-war ideas and theories on children's recovery, development, education and welfare laid the theoretical groundwork for the policies and strategies that were developed by the national governments to deal with children after the war. Such attention to children and their welfare demonstrated that biopolitics became a prerogative of the reconstruction process in many countries. Although it was commonly supposed in different European countries that the children who had survived the war required additional care and protection, in the national contexts, this issue was interpreted according to a country's political orientations and traditional views on the children's upbringing and socialization. Such a variety in interpretation was not a problem until it had to deal with children who resided within the borders of a single country. However, many children, as well as adults, found themselves outside their country of origin at the war's end. Their relief and rehabilitation effort required national governments to cooperate and work out a policy that would fulfil the interests of all the actors who were involved in the process. This was the point at which the mainstream theories on children's recovery and the different national visions came together.

The issues described above do not exhaust the histories that are interested in children or many other issues of everyday life, or the social, economic and political developments related to them. In the literature, there are numerous narratives about war and its aftermath that center on children and childhood or touch on it tangentially. To name a few, the literature on children at war has examined how children participated in the war,⁷¹ as soldiers,⁷² or slave laborers.⁷³ Nicholas Stargardt in his distinctive book on children's experience of war draws on the documents that were produced by children and has put the children's viewpoint at the center of his analysis to show how they saw the war and experienced it.⁷⁴ Much work has been

⁷¹ Simone Gigliotti et al., *The Young Victims of the Nazi Regime : Migration, the Holocaust, and Postwar Displacement* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2016).

⁷² Olga Kucherenko, *Little Soldiers: How Soviet Children Went to War, 1941-1945* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁷³ Johannes-Dieter Steinert, "Polish and Soviet Child Forced Labourers in National Socialist Germany and German Occupied Eastern Europe, 1939-45," in *The Young Victims of the Nazi Regime : Migration, the Holocaust, and Postwar Displacement*, ed. Simone Gigliotti and Monica Tempian (Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 135–52.

⁷⁴ Stargardt, *Witnesses of War*.

carried out on different groups of children living in Germany during and after the war,⁷⁵ children who were fathered by the Allied soldiers.⁷⁶

The UNRRA and The IRO: “The Problem of Human Refugee”

The capitulation of Germany brought the horrors of the wartime experience to an end for Europeans but their everyday hardships were ever present. Ruined homes, industries, infrastructure, transportation, and a scarcity of food were the reality within which people continued to live. Many people lost the roofs over their heads, but there were also those who lost their homelands, that is, found themselves outside of their country of citizenship or usual place of residence. Others started their journey on their own, escaping battlefronts, fleeing together with the Axis armies, escaping the Red Army or the post-war expansion of the Soviet Union, as was often the case for eastern Europeans. The Second World War ended with an unprecedented number of willingly and unwillingly displaced people. As soon as the war started Franklin D. Roosevelt envisioned “the problem of the human refugee” saying that ten or twenty million “men, women and children belonging to different races” would leave their permanent countries of residence.⁷⁷ In 1943, the British and American political authorities started to think about the relief and reconstruction that would need to take place after the war. Roosevelt was right in his prediction about the pressing issue of refugees, but he was wrong about the numbers: during the eight-year period, between 1939 and 1947, approximately 55 to 60 million people moved within continental Europe.⁷⁸ Among them, liberated concentration camps survivors, forced laborers, the prisoners of war (POWs), refugees from different countries, and post-war infiltrates constituted the group of displaced people or DPs.

The history about the planning and implementation of the DPs relief and rehabilitation operation in post-war Europe has often focused on the UNRRA and the IRO and has often

⁷⁵ For Jewish children see: Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*; For German children see: Michelle Mouton, “Missing, Lost, and Displaced Children in Postwar Germany: The Great Struggle to Provide for the War’s Youngest Victims,” *Central European History* 48, no. 1 (March 2015): 53–78; For encounters between German, Jewish and Polish children see: Stargardt, *Witnesses of War*.

⁷⁶ Heide Fehrenbach, *Race after Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America*, 2007; Sabine Lee, “A Forgotten Legacy of the Second World War: GI Children in Post-War Britain and Germany,” *Contemporary European History* 20 (2011): 157–82.

⁷⁷ Cited from: Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War’s Wake: Europe’s Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 4.

⁷⁸ Anna Marta Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany*, *Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 3; Peter Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 4.

been framed with the idea of humanitarian internationalism and the professionalization of the welfare effort. Behind internationalism usually stands research on cooperation between the countries and people of various nations in the sphere of emergency welfare as compared to the initiatives of the previous periods, the collaboration of the Big Three, emergency welfare development, and the search for the common values that triumphed in the UN resolution on human rights.⁷⁹ When talking about professionalization the literature focuses on the qualification and education of welfare workers, planning of the welfare provision, and investigates the scientific approach in humanitarianism, often comparing it with the interwar period.⁸⁰ The international humanitarian organizations also wrote historical narratives of the challenges and experiences that they faced in post-war Europe. In the 1950s, the UNRRA and the IRO commissioned the publication of two books on their activities with DPs and refugees.⁸¹ In the 1980s the US Army published a book on the role and accomplishments of the Civil Affairs Division in Europe during and after the war.⁸² All these narratives provide various details about the administrative and humanitarian tasks that they succeeded in, but inevitably each of them tells a success story of their particular organization.

Resolving the problem of people who had been uprooted during the war was as important as the re-evacuation, restoring the food supplies, health care, hygiene and the renovation of cities. The first relief and rehabilitation organizations started to solve the “problem of human refugees” long before the war ended. Already from 1942 the Allies' planners and policymakers were engaged in discussions about the peacetime relief programs that would attempt to avoid the mistakes that had been made in the planning of the aftermath of the First World War. In their opinion, one of the main problems of that time was the insufficient

⁷⁹ Jessica Reinisch, “Internationalism in Relief: The Birth (and Death) of UNRRA,” *Past & Present* 210, no. suppl 6 (January 1, 2011): 258–89; Ben Shephard, *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011); For involvement of Canada in rehabilitation problem see: Susan Armstrong-Reid and David R Murray, *Armies of Peace: Canada and the UNRRA Years* (University of Toronto Press, 2008).

⁸⁰ Silvia Salvatici, “Professionals of Humanitarianism: UNRRA Relief Officers in Post-War Europe,” in *Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Johannes Paulmann (Oxford University Press, 2016), 235–59; Silvia Salvatici, “‘Help the People to Help Themselves’: UNRRA Relief Workers and European Displaced Persons,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 25, no. 3 (September 1, 2012): 428–51; Sharif Gemie, Fiona Reid, and Laure Humbert, *Outcast Europe: Refugees and Relief Workers in an Era of Total War, 1936-48* (London; New York: Continuum, 2012).

⁸¹ George Woodbrige, *UNRRA. The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950); Louise Wilhelmine Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization, a Specialized Agency of the United Nations: Its History and Work, 1946-1952* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1956).

⁸² Harry Lewis Coles and Albert Katz Weinberg, *Civil Affairs: Soldiers Become Governors* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army: [For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O.], 1986).

coordination between the welfare societies and the lack of international agreements between the countries of the League of Nations. Therefore, this time it was decided that the relief work had to become an international and collective responsibility because the war's turmoil had affected the whole population of Europe. Moreover, combined actions in this sphere were supposed to lay the ground for future international collaboration and economic reconstruction that would lead to a successful internationalist project aimed at common security and peace.⁸³

As a result, in 1941 the Inter-Allied Committee on Post-War Requirements, established by the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, became a playground where Great Britain, eight European Allies, and the Free French and British Dominions had to collaborate and work out the plans for relief work and aid supply in soon to be liberated countries. Over the course of the following year the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation was established in the US under the supervision of the State Department to facilitate America's participation in the relief programs in Europe. In Britain different voluntary relief organizations were united under the Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad, which coordinated their work. At the same time, the Army command in the US and UK included emergency relief activities in the planning of war operations. The Civil Affairs Divisions, which were established in 1943, followed combative troops in Europe and in addition to other tasks took care of civilians in the liberated territories, including displaced persons. The work of the civil affairs officers was coordinated via the Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander (COSSAC) and after 1944, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF).⁸⁴

International cooperation was a crucial element in reconstructing countries and repairing societies after the war, organizations of relief activities and securing the future peace. This principle formed a foundation for an agreement to establish the UNRRA, which was signed by 44 countries in November 1943. As scholars have argued, the UNRRA's establishment marked a shift from "passive" welfare that had characteristics of a privately operated charity

⁸³ Reinisch, "Internationalism in Relief," 261–63; Jessica Reinisch, "Introduction: Relief in the Aftermath of War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 43, no. 3 (July 1, 2008): 379–81; Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee*, 2013.

⁸⁴ Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, *Soldiers and Civil Power: Supporting or Substituting Civil Authorities in Modern Peace Operations* (Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 26–27, 31; Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 68.

to the “active” relief and welfare programs, which were developed by the state.⁸⁵ The UNRRA cared for displaced people in Europe and was subordinate to the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF), the high command of the Allied army in Europe. In relation to displaced people, it held a mandate for welfare provision, to fulfill the basic needs of the people, and their repatriation. From the onset of the UNRRA’s work in 1943, the agency aimed at providing aid and logistics for displaced people, which was supposed to facilitate their return to their home countries. However, soon after they started work the agency faced the problem of combining their humanitarian goals with the political moods of the international arena and the position of the Allied government, particularly the US government. This side of the DPs problem has received considerable attention among scholars who have researched it from the point of view of international politics, the organization of DP camps, activities of the different national groups, the repatriation and emigration policies and programs, the development of the refugee notions and, finally, the first stages of disaccord between the Soviet Union and the Western allies which soon developed into the Cold War.⁸⁶

The UNRRA’s relief activities did not include emigration as an option for DPs. Due to this fact, during its work in Europe, the agency encountered difficulties in working with non-repatriable people, that is, those who could not or did not want to return home for various reasons.⁸⁷ The problem of non-repatriates became a pressing issue during the autumn of 1945, after the mass repatriation flow and forced repatriation from the British and American zones of Germany to the Soviet Union stopped. By then the DP camps were inhabited by people who refused to go home, such as eastern Europeans, or who were recognized by the military administration as rejected from repatriation. In autumn 1945, there were around one million people registered in the UNNRA’s care and living in the DP camps or as free settlers in German cities. This number included foreign workers, slave laborers, prisoners of war, and liberated concentration camp inmates as well as people who had escaped from their home countries shortly after the war. These people became known as the “last million” and the

⁸⁵ Reinisch, “Internationalism in Relief,” 262–64; Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism*, 42–43; For development of social policies and welfare state see: Pat Thane, *Foundations of the Welfare State*, 2nd edition (Longman, 1996).

⁸⁶ Cohen, *In War’s Wake: Europe’s Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*; Shephard, *The Long Road Home*; Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism*; Silvia Salvatici, *Senza Casa e Senza Paese: Profughi Europei Nel Secondo Dopoguerra* (Il mulino, 2008); Marta Dyczok, *The Grand Alliance and Ukrainian Refugees* (Houndmills, Basingstoke; New York: MacMillan Press; St. Martin’s Press in association with St. Antony’s College, Oxford, 2000); Polian, *Zhertvy Dvukh Diktatur*; Mark Wyman, *DPs: Europe’s Displaced Persons, 1945-1951* (Ithaca, N.Y.; London: Cornell University Press, 1998).

⁸⁷ Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism*, 43.

majority of them originally came from Eastern Europe and did not wish to return to the Soviet Union or its satellite countries.⁸⁸

By this time, the US authorities had admitted that neither the UNRRA nor the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, which had been established in 1938 on the initiative of the American officials, could solve the problem of non-repatriates. Therefore, in December 1946, the UN General Assembly brought the International Relief Organization into being, and in July 1947, it fully replaced the UNRRA in the field providing relief and rehabilitation to displaced people in Europe. Unlike the UNRRA, administratively the IRO was not subordinate to the Allied military authorities. Nevertheless, in the course of its operation, for instance, in the US zone, their work was closely linked with the US military government's policy. According to the IRO's primary objectives, as it was declared, the organization had to prepare refugees not only for repatriation but also for resettlement.⁸⁹ The "last million DPs became the primary matter of the IRO's concern, and a target group for its aid, repatriation and resettlement programs."⁹⁰

The SHAEF's Handbook on civil affairs, issued in 1944 instructed its agents on how to treat those who had been displaced as a result of the war, it defined displaced persons as civilians found "outside the national boundaries of their country by reasons of war: (i) who are desirous but unable to return, or to find homes without assistance; or (ii) who are to be returned to enemy or ex-enemy territory."⁹¹ Civilians who stayed in their country but because of the war were away from their home were called refugees. Following the initial objectives of the relief program in post-war Europe, these two definitions implied that the status of a DP or refugee was temporary, that is, until the person returned home.

As the IRO's mission progressed, however, the understanding of displacement evolved in terms of the notion of refugees and even political refugees. On 12th February 1946, when the General Assembly of the United Nations convened, they adopted a resolution on the problem of refugees, and ceased forced repatriation, displaced people in practice became refugees, as they were namely people who could not return to their homelands because of "valid

⁸⁸ Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 199; Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*.

⁸⁹ "International Refugee Organization," *International Organization* 1, no. 3 (September 1, 1947): 527.

⁹⁰ Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 9–12, 17–18; Zahra, "Lost Children," 7–8.

⁹¹ Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 847–48.

objections”. As indicated in the IRO’s constitution such objections could be “persecution, or fear, based on reasonable grounds of persecution because of race, religion, nationality or political opinions.”⁹² The majority of displaced people who were under the care of the IRO did not wish to return home and many of them claimed that they were scared to do so. The IRO’s constitution, meanwhile, officially defined refugees as “victims of the Nazi or fascist regimes or of regimes which took part on their side in the Second World War [...]; Spanish Republicans and other victims of the Falangist regime in Spain [...]; persons who were considered refugees before the outbreak of the Second World War, for reasons of race, religion, nationality or political opinion.”⁹³ Analyzing this evolution of concepts, Daniel Cohen has stated, that the problem of the so-called “last million” DPs, who stayed in Germany and Austria after repatriation had ceased, became a political issue that eventually led to the creation of political dissidents or a category of political refugees.⁹⁴

Remarkably, the IRO constitution included unaccompanied children into the category of refugees, “the term “refugee” also applies to unaccompanied children who are war orphans or whose parents have disappeared, and who are outside their countries of origin”.⁹⁵ At the same time, the IRO’s provisional order No 33 on unaccompanied children issued in November 1947 indicated that children could also fear returning home, which would become “valid reason” for their resettlement.⁹⁶ These definitions became noticeably important in the cases of Ukrainian unaccompanied children who were not sent back to the Soviet Union. The fact that children could be afraid of returning to the country of their origin, for example, because of anticipated persecution, was enough reason to challenge the assertion that repatriation was the optimal solution for the future of displaced minors.

Not all those who were uprooted during the war and its aftermath were counted as displaced persons and were entitled to the material and political benefits provided by the UNRRA and the IRO. Already in the early stages, the term “displaced persons” excluded Germans and other ex-enemy nationals. Although many of them were uprooted after the war ended, they were denied access to the Allied relief programs and the international humanitarian

⁹² Charles I. Bevans, ed., “International Refugee Organization Constitution, with Annexes,” in *Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States of America, 1776-1949. Multilateral 1946-1949*, vol. 4 (Washington: Dept. of State publications 8521, 1970), 299.

⁹³ Bevans, 297.

⁹⁴ Cohen, *In War’s Wake: Europe’s Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 34–35.

⁹⁵ Bevans, “International Refugee Organization Constitution, with Annexes,” 298.

⁹⁶ “Provisional Order No 33. Unaccompanied Children. PCIRO, Headquarters Geneva.”

organizations were not entitled to take care of these people.⁹⁷ The peace planners decided that the burden of the welfare provision for the ex-enemy nationals would lie on their governments' shoulders. At the same time, however, the military governments provided food, economic support, and civilian welfare to the German population in the occupied territories. Jessica Reinisch, for instance, has shown how the four military governments invested in the public health provision in the occupied territories in Germany,⁹⁸ while Anita Grossman has discussed the politics of food rationing in relation to different population groups, including Germans.⁹⁹

The studies on Ukrainian DPs are of particular interest for this dissertation as the issues with the nationality of unaccompanied children from the former Polish territories reflected the larger problems that adult DPs faced and as such provides a background issue.¹⁰⁰ Interestingly, children repatriated to the Soviet Union or Ukrainian children left in the DP camps in the Western occupation zones of Germany, have not typically been the central focus of investigation in current Ukrainian historiography. It rather maintains its focus on the adults who went back to Soviet Ukraine forced by either the desire to return home or by the military's order; on the Soviet screening of returnees, their reintegration into Soviet society and, at the same time, their marginalized position in it.¹⁰¹ The oral histories of *Ostarbeiter*, have received considerable attention from scholars, particularly in regards to their experience during the war and their homecoming.¹⁰² The lack of archival sources, a familiar problem to many historians, partially explains why displaced children have been left out of on the wider studies on DPs. The sources kept in the Ukrainian archives disclose little information about displaced children. Children who returned with their families were seen as being part of a family and left few traces apart from statistical ones. As soon as unaccompanied children

⁹⁷ Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 8.

⁹⁸ See for example: Jessica Reinisch, *The Perils of Peace the Public Health Crisis in Occupied Germany* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁹⁹ Atina Grossmann, "Grams, Calories, and Food: Languages of Victimization, Entitlement, and Human Rights in Occupied Germany, 1945–1949," *Central European History* 44, no. 1 (2011): 118–48.

¹⁰⁰ On Ukrainian DPs see: Olesya Khromeychuk, "Undetermined" Ukrainians Post-War Narratives of the *Waffen SS "Galicia" Division* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013); Dyczok, *The Grand Alliance and Ukrainian Refugees*; Machteld Venken, "'You Are Still Live Far from the Motherland, but You Are Her Son, Her Daughter.' War Memory and Soviet Mental Space (1945-2011)," in *History, Memory and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe: Memory Games*, ed. Georges Mink and Laure Neumayer (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 54–67.

¹⁰¹ Pastushenko, *V'izd Repatriantiv Do Kyeva Zaboroneno...; Pastushenko, Ostarbeitery z Kyivschiyny: Verbuвання, Prymusova Pratsia, Repatriatsiia (1942-1953)*. more

¹⁰² Gelinada Grinchenko, "'And Now Imagine Her or Him as a Slave, a Pitiful Slave with No Rights': Child Forced Labourers in the Culture of Remembrance of the USSR and Post-Soviet Ukraine," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 22, no. 2 (March 4, 2015): 389–410.

crossed the Soviet border they were immediately perceived as orphans and merged with others to become a part of the history of post-war orphanhood. At the same time, the history of orphaned children or orphanages in Ukraine mainly provides insights into how these institutions functioned in Soviet Ukraine and underlines their general poor condition.¹⁰³

The tendency to marginalize displaced children is also present in the current public history. One of the recent exhibitions opened in January 2018 at the National History Museum in Kyiv was dedicated to the forced laborers who were deported from the Ukrainian territories to Germany during the Second World War.¹⁰⁴ It was a story of adults. Some photographs, letters, personal items and documents were arranged in glass showcases to tell the story about deportation, work and life in Germany, their treatment by the population and the *Ostarbeiter's* life after they had returned back to Soviet Ukraine. A part of the exhibition offered visitors a brief glimpse on the private life of the deportees, such as their love affairs and marriages. However, the topics related to children, who were either deported, born to the forced laborers in Germany, repatriated, or left behind were silent in this exhibition, even in the part dedicated to private life. Children as participants of the process appeared only on two occasions. There was one photograph depicting a man with a child, but with no reference to the child. Also, the curator of the exhibition, told us, the visitors, that some of the deported people were as young as 14 years old. The exhibition pronounced the history of displaced populations as a result of the war, but for some reason, children are almost entirely excluded from it.

Displaced Unaccompanied Children and Their 'Best Interests'

Along with adults, the UNNRA and the IRO were responsible for uprooted children. In July 1945, the UNRRA reported that it took care of 153,000 children under the age of fourteen.¹⁰⁵ Among the children who received aid from the UNRRA and the IRO in the aftermath of the war, a group of unaccompanied or lost children attracted special attention of the relief officers, occupying authorities and the national governments. According to the constitution of

¹⁰³ Hryhorii Holysh, *U Vyri Viiny. Stanovysche Nepovnoletnih Hromadian Ukrainy v 1941-1945* (Cherkasy, 2005). For the Soviet Union see: Olga Kucherenko, *Soviet Street Children and the Second World War*; Kelly, Catriona. *Children's World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890-1991*. Yale University Press, 2007.

¹⁰⁴ "Museum of National History of Ukraine - Exhibition and Educational Project '(Not) Narrated History,'" February 18, 2018, <https://nmiu.com.ua/anonsy-museum/576-z-18-sichnia-po-20-liutoho-diiatyme-vystavkovo-osvitnii-proekt-pro-ostarbaiteriv-nerozkazani-istorii>.

¹⁰⁵ Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 8.

the IRO, unaccompanied children were defined as girls and boys under seventeen years old, who were found outside of their country of origin or were born to the uprooted parents.¹⁰⁶ These were orphans, lost or abandoned children or children whose parents had disappeared, or were impossible to reach.

In the recent years there has been growing interest among scholars in examining the various issues of child welfare “in war and peace” and related international actions that took place during the interwar period¹⁰⁷ and in the aftermath of the Second World War children.¹⁰⁸ The rise of research topics related to the international welfare officers' work with displaced unaccompanied children was marked by Tara Zahra's seminal book “The Lost Children”.¹⁰⁹ In particular, as it was mentioned above, she introduced the narrative that demonstrated how a project on children's physical and psychological rehabilitation after the war could become the emblem of the reconstruction of families and democratization of European countries. Each part of this study has its own focus, examining more general processes linked to child rehabilitation, to investigating specific cases.¹¹⁰ These studies complement each other as they piece together the picture of policies and practices, which were developed by the international humanitarian agents, national governments or military authorities around the issue of unaccompanied children.

When they started their work in Europe, the UNRRA's and later the IRO's authorities and officers became responsible for unaccompanied children, their search, care and repatriation. They had to establish the nationalities of non-German children, exhaust all possible avenues

¹⁰⁶ “Unaccompanied Children. Amendment to Operational Manual,” n.d., AJ/43/496, AN, Paris; “Provisional Order No 33. Unaccompanied Children. PCIRO, Headquarters Geneva.”

¹⁰⁷ Dominique Marshall, “The Rise of Coordinated Action for Children in War and Peace: Experts at the League of Nations, 1924–1945,” in *Shaping the Transnational Sphere Experts, Networks, and Issues from the 1840s to the 1930s*, ed. Davide Rodogno, Jakob Vogel, and Bernhard Struck (Berghahn Books, 2015), 82–107; Dominique Marshall, “Humanitarian Sympathy for Children in Times of War and the History of Children's Rights 1919–1959,” in *Children and War: A Historical Anthology*, ed. James Alan Marten (NYU Press, 2002), 184–201; Keith David Watenpaugh, “The League of Nations' Rescue of Armenian Genocide Survivors and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism, 1920–1927,” *The American Historical Review* 115, no. 5 (2010): 1315–39; Elizabeth White, “Relief, Reconstruction and the Rights of the Child: The Case of Russian Displaced Children in Constantinople, 1920–22,” *Displaced Children in Russia and Eastern Europe, 1915–1953*, April 18, 2017, 70–96.

¹⁰⁸ Taylor, *In the Children's Best Interests*; Balint, “Children Left Behind”; Nick Baron, *Displaced Children in Russia and Eastern Europe, 1915–1953 Ideologies, Identities, Experiences* (Brill, 2016); Henning Borggräfe et al., eds., *Freilegungen. Rebuilding Lives – Child Survivors and DP Children in the Aftermath of the Holocaust and Forced Labor*, Wallstein Verlag, vol. Bd. 6, Jahrbuch Des International Tracing Service, 2017.

¹⁰⁹ Zahra, “Lost Children.”

¹¹⁰ Lynne Taylor, *Polish Orphans of Tengeru: The Dramatic Story of Their Long Journey to Canada, 1941–1949* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2009).

to find their parents or relatives and to arrange their repatriation. Following this plan, the welfare workers aimed at reuniting families who had been separated during the war, and returning children to their home countries. When parents or relatives could not be found the UNRRA's directives advised welfare officers to repatriate children in any case. It was believed that in their home country, children would recover more speedily from the traumas that they suffered during the war, while the national government would take care for its own orphans.

This scheme thus recognized repatriation as the best solution for displaced children. As Tara Zahra has demonstrated, the (re)nationalization of children after the war was one of the main principles that the welfare officers applied in their work with children.¹¹¹ The instructions indicated that repatriation was supposed to be done on a national basis according to all circumstances, legal frames and the interests of the children.¹¹² The welfare officers in the field understood that the children who had survived the war were often mature beyond their years, and therefore could ask older children and adolescents about their wishes for the future. They stressed that such children lacked education and proper care, but the hardships that they had endured during the war made them more mature than their peers, who had grown up during peacetime. However, from a legal point of view, minors below the age of majority could only express their wishes, but could not make any final decisions about their future. Therefore the relief officers only acknowledged the children's choices and included their views in the reports, while the humanitarian authorities, in agreement with the military officers, and in collaboration with the national representatives made the final decision.

The IRO's official principles of work included resettlement as a second option for cases when children could not return home. Initially, it implied that in such cases minors would be stateless, or of undefined nationality. Children whose families had emigrated also had a chance to join their parents abroad. At the same time, the Nazi's Germanization and forced labor programs were still fresh in people's memories, which caused international authorities to avoid advertising their child migration program. Alternatively, if a parent or relative was not found unaccompanied, children could be placed with a German foster family or childcare institution. This possibility, however, had few advocates at the beginning of the UNRRA's

¹¹¹ Tara Zahra, "Lost Children: Displaced Children between Nationalism and Internationalism after the Second World War," in *Displaced Children in Russia and Eastern Europe, 1915-1953 Ideologies, Identities, Experiences*, ed. Nick Baron (Brill, 2016), 187-217.

¹¹² "Provisional Order No 33. Unaccompanied Children. PCIRO, Headquarters Geneva."

operation in Europe, and it officially remained the last option for solving the displaced children's problem during the IRO's mandate, from 1947 until 1952.¹¹³

In practice, as it would appear, that one way or another, the international welfare workers utilized all three possibilities in order to arrange the future of the displaced children. For instance, debates were running between the relief officers, military governments and national representatives about the objective to remove all non-German children from their German foster families. The UNNRA's and IRO's social workers evaluated the psychological and emotional factors of the children's resettlement as opposed to a life with their foster families. The main question that they tried to answer was whether withdrawing children from their foster families, who they had lived with since their infancy, would benefit their psychological health and future development as compared to repatriation.

After the normal course of life had been significantly shattered by the war, children acted as the means with which the national states could invest in their future. Children were seen as a guarantee for the rebirth of the nation. At the same time, post-war reconstruction in many countries required its state authorities to ensure a fast population growth so as to refill the sources provide a future labor force and to secure positive demographic dynamics for society. Many countries actively developed various pronatalist policies and introduced a package of measures, which were aimed at controlling and improving population rates. The central tenant of these measures was to encourage women to bear children, by offering them various levels of support from the welfare services, as well as economic and institutional support from the government. In the context of the repatriation of displaced children, the authorities of different countries used a nationalistic discourse in order to demand the return of "their" children from occupied Germany and Austria. In the aftermath of the war, nationalistic ideas were once again blossoming and the national governments emphasized the fact that children were "national property". Such a vision of children and in relation to it, their claims over the children's personal and national identity were not new. They constituted an integral part of nationalist activism from the beginning of the century. The welfare workers and child care specialists did not deny the governments' right to have "their" children returned to them. And yet, they suspected that the national governments would use displaced children in biopolitical

¹¹³ "Provisional Order No 33. Unaccompanied Children. PCIRO, Headquarters Geneva."

projects, as a source for the improvement of their demographic situation and fulfilment of their political goals.¹¹⁴

These fears did not prevent some of the welfare officers from believing that children had to be repatriated and (re)nationalized. They bore this principle in mind, when they worked with the children, and it rested on a particular understanding of the children's needs as well as on the UN's principles of justice and rights of the individual. The choices and decisions made by the members of the UNNRA and the IRO had to comply with what they believed was in the child's "best interest". This concept was central to the humanitarian officers' work, as Tara Zahra has demonstrated and explicated, it embraced a wide range of ideas about a child's psychological and physical rehabilitation, wellbeing and education, and suggested that children had to return to their home countries. The theory that armed conflicts made children particularly vulnerable and deprived them of a normal childhood pushed experts in the different fields to focus on the figure of a child and to try to improve children's lives. Many social workers believed that one of the most important ways of enabling children to recover from the suffering of war was to return them to their families and national states. Relief workers aligned repatriation with the post-war aim of reconstructing the family and society and placed it within a broader context that demanded that ideas about childhood, family, democracy and human rights be reconsidered. Built on these principles, the policy of repatriation aimed to satisfy national demands, but also to guard ideas about child protection, democratic justice and rightful (re)nationalization.¹¹⁵

Presented above are the general principles, ideas and discourses that for almost ten years were central to the UNRRA's and IRO's work in Europe. A closer study of the welfare workers' everyday challenges showed that putting these theories into practice was more complicated and varied according to the specific national group, individual case and political views of the actors involved. Taking advantage of the previous historiographical contributions, this dissertation examines a specific case study of unaccompanied children from the former Polish territories, the so-called Polish-Ukrainians. It investigates how the general principles of child relief and rehabilitation, as sketched above, were applied in the context of repatriating Polish-Ukrainian unaccompanied children. This particular case study allows this thesis to investigate

¹¹⁴ Zahra, "Lost Children: Displaced Children between Nationalism and Internationalism"; "Memorandum of Child Search."

¹¹⁵ Tara Zahra has developed this argument in several of her works, for instance: Zahra, "Lost Children"; Zahra, *The Lost Children*; Zahra, "Lost Children: Displaced Children between Nationalism and Internationalism."

how the work of the welfare officers developed with contested groups of unaccompanied children at the dawn of the Cold War.

From the autumn of 1945, unaccompanied children's repatriation became one of the most controversial issues and obtained political coloring when it concerned children from Eastern European countries. Differences in attitude towards the geopolitical changes in Eastern Europe, particularly the annexation of the Baltic countries and Eastern Polish territories by the Soviet Union, led to conflict between the Soviet representatives and the Western officials over the citizenship status of children who came from these territories. From autumn 1945 onwards, in the US zone of occupation, the welfare workers together with the military officials decided on the custody of the Baltic and Polish-Ukrainian children and their future repatriation or resettlement. At first sight, their viewpoints were not always in line with each other, these "frères - et soeurs - enemies" of child rehabilitation, eventually came to the conclusion that children from these contested territories were not Soviet citizens and, therefore, would not be repatriated to the Soviet Union. This resolution was based on political, humanitarian and welfare principles and evoked ideas of national belonging and the concept of the child's best interests. The theoretical foundation of the relief program, outlined above, was flexible enough to make these necessary adjustments. The views and policies on the return of unaccompanied Ukrainian children to their home country and families was discussed in the cabinets of the military and humanitarian authorities, as well as by the welfare workers' who examined the children's lives in situ and reflected on what would be in their "best interests", both these issues signaled "their" first steps towards Cold War confrontations. Placing the figures of displaced Ukrainian children at the center of my research, this dissertation contributes to the literature on post-war international politics, humanitarianism and emergency welfare, the problem of displaced children and child care on the eve of the Cold War.

Chapter 2

Nationality and citizenship: Ideas on identity and belonging in the post-war order

The war led to the willing and forced migration of approximately 60 million¹¹⁶ people from their native regions, cities, villages and houses to various countries in Europe and beyond. This humanitarian and population crisis did not go unnoticed. Long before the war was over the authorities and intellectuals of the Allied countries entered discussions on the uprooted and displaced victims of the war, and started making plans of their future settlement.¹¹⁷ Over the course of these debates, it became clear that in order to return to a normal and peaceful life, the flow of migration had to be reversed taking the uprooted migrants back to own regions, preferably to nationally homogeneous ones. In other words, the architects of peace agreed on the idea that the displaced populations had to be returned to their home countries. They also believed that the uprooted people would support this project and would be happy to return home.

The post-1945 plans reflected the memory of the Great War and interwar calamities. The interwar experience had taught the peace planners that the presence of national minorities or contested territories could cause serious and violent disturbances. They believed that the war was partly the result of an intolerance towards minorities, disputes over borderland regions and the inability of the League of Nations' mechanisms to resolve problems. For these reasons, the planners of peace were conscious to decrease the presence of minorities, and it became an overarching principle of the post-war settlement. The political and intellectual authorities believed that it would be possible to establish a long-term peace if the presence of aliens, such as national minorities or foreign populations, within the national borders of a country was limited to a minimum. This notion also concurred with the theories of modern nation-state building, which stressed that ethnical homogeneity was an attractive condition for

¹¹⁶ Estimated for continental Europe. Peter Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 4; Matthew Frank and Jessica Reinisch, "Refugees and the Nation-State in Europe, 1919–59," *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, no. 3 (July 1, 2014): 477.

¹¹⁷ See more on this: Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

national self-determination. As a result, European countries were to become as ethnically homogenous as possible.¹¹⁸

The idea of an ethnically homogenous nation-state was similar to the one articulated in the aftermath of the Great War, but mechanisms and routes that were used to achieve it were at completely opposite poles.¹¹⁹ During the interwar period, the geographical borders of the states were redrawn in order to fit ethnic frontiers. The League of Nations and its system were supposed to protect the ethnic minorities that were left within these borders. However, the outbreak of a new war in Europe had demonstrated, among other things, that this plan was neither helpful nor reliable. Therefore, when planning the post-1945 settlement, the policymakers decided that population transfer would be a better way to achieve ethnic uniformity. Certainly, World War II and finalizing its peace treaties also shifted borders with regard to geopolitical interests of different countries, especially in Eastern Europe. However, the idea that nationality resided in people and not in the territories that they occupied made the peace planners believe that resettling ethnic minorities could help to resolve ethnic conflicts and prevent the future ones. Following this logic, international law also changed its focus, and instead of safeguarding collective or minority rights it focused on protecting individual human rights. All these changes were supposed to prevent future instabilities in the contested borderland regions and future wars in Europe.¹²⁰ It took the Allied authorities almost ten years to achieve their resettlement plans. These years witnessed voluntary and forced population transfers, many controversial and unpopular decisions, long-term care for and training of displaced people, the development of migration schemes and migration policies, and the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Allied authorities plans for the settlement of displaced people rested on these pacifying ideas, as well as economic and bio-political reasons. After the bloodshed of war, national governments were desperate to recover the population. Considering that many cities had been destroyed in the fighting they needed people to restore infrastructure and economy. The high military and civilian death tolls in different countries formed a fertile ground for welcoming back children and adults of working and reproductive age. These were several reasons why

¹¹⁸ Mazower, 105–6, 109, 142–43; Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent : Europe's Twentieth Century*, First Vintage books edition. (Vintage Books, 2000), 214–19; Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (London: Vintage, 2010), 35.

¹¹⁹ Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee*, 2013, 4–5.

¹²⁰ Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 198, 214–21; Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, 124, 133.

repatriation became such an important condition in post-war treaties and agreements from the point of view of national governments.¹²¹

As a result of all these ideas, the post-war rehabilitation of DPs was grounded on the European-wide idea of returning people home. The relief officers from the United National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, and later, from the International Refugee Organization believed that their principle objective was to return displaced children to their home countries. From a psychological perspective, they considered that this would be in the children's "best interests", as after experiencing the violence of wartime, it would help to ensure their speedy recover from the war. The UNRRA and the IRO authorities and welfare officers also believed that "native" environment would help the children to "rediscover" their true identity after all the confusion brought about by the war as well as by the Nazi's denationalization projects. As such returning to their home countries was believed to be in the "best interest" of displaced children and it was the primary solution for their displacement.¹²²

At a first glance, the general plan for returning children home seemed to be simple and explicit, just a matter organizing the appropriate logistical and administrative arrangements. Humanitarian workers searched occupied Germany and Austria for non-German children, identified them (that is, established their citizenship), and issued them with the necessary documents for their repatriation.¹²³ The welfare officers sought to find their parent or relatives so as to reunite broken families and to allow them to be repatriated together. Such efforts were initially thought to have been paper- and time-consuming tasks, but not very challenging ones. However, in practice it proved to be quite the opposite, as was the case for unaccompanied minors of Ukrainian origin. Identifying and repatriating them became a complicated issue, shaded with the pre-Cold-War controversies.

In 1947 the UNRRA's closer report on the United Nations' progress with repatriating unaccompanied children in Germany included a paragraph on Ukrainian children. It summarized issues that were of great concern to the welfare workers, who were working throughout in Europe and highlighted the need for some solutions,

¹²¹ Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism*, 35–36; Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999* (New Haven ; London: Yale University Press, 2003), 182; Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 36.

¹²² Zahra, "Lost Children," 50, 79–80.

¹²³ "The Registration and Identification of Displaced Unaccompanied Children in Enemy Territory," 1946, 6.1.1/82502600-82502604, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

“The political uncertainty which existed for many months with regard to Ukrainians has, of course, affected children. In some instances the difficulty in determining geographical boundaries, makes determination of nationality, (or more accurately in this instance, citizenship) a problem. The decision whether to repatriate child to Poland or to Soviet Union is not a simple one. In one instance, the Soviet and Polish Liaison officers together visited a Children’s centre to review a group of doubtful cases, and decide which were Polish which were Soviet citizens. Even in cases where a decision can be arrived at, some of the older children of Polish origin who may now be declared to have Soviet citizenship are still desirous of returning to Poland. These children are not, of course, being forced to be repatriated, but eventually some solutions will have to be found for this group.”¹²⁴

This chapter investigates how UNRRA and IRO welfare officers and the Anglo-American military authorities tried to formulate and align their policy regarding the identification and resettlement of unaccompanied children from Soviet Ukraine from late 1945 till 1952. The issue with Polish-Ukrainian unaccompanied minors sprouted from the unclear status and nationality of children that came from the Eastern Polish lands which were annexed by the Soviet Union and in 1939 incorporated into Soviet Ukraine. In February 1945, during the meeting of the Big Three in Yalta, signing the Declaration of Liberated Europe with Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill and Franklin Delano Roosevelt agreed to award new territories to the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe and to repatriate all Soviet citizens. And yet, already in the summer of 1945, British and American officials declared that they did not recognize the acquisition of the Baltic States and the former eastern Polish territories by the Soviet Union.¹²⁵ The Anglo-American military and welfare authorities’ position led to many arguments between the Soviet and Western authorities. It also had a significant impact on displaced people and, particularly, on unaccompanied minors. The political uncertainty mentioned in the UNRRA’s closer report in fact referred to an emerging conflict between the former Allies that over time developed into the Cold War.

In this light of changing politics between the former Allies, the UNRRA and IRO welfare and child search officers who worked in the field began to raise many questions about the

¹²⁴ “UNRRA Closure Report on United Nations Unaccompanied Children in Germany,” June 1947, AJ/43/596-597, AN, Paris.

¹²⁵ On detailed study on Yalta conference see for instance: Serhii Plokyh, *Yalta: The Price of Peace* (Penguin, 2010); Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism*, 45.

citizenship and nationality of adults and children coming from post-1945 Soviet Ukraine. They became confused about the policies and procedures that they had to follow in order to register such children. Each new step raised numerous practical, administrative and political difficulties, a large part of which was how to identify Ukrainian unaccompanied minors at a time when no Ukrainian state existed. They were eager to establish whether the Soviet authorities held the rights to these children, or whether the children who came from territories that had been absorbed by the Soviet Union in 1945 were of Soviet citizenship, so-called Polish-Ukrainian children. This ultimately led to an important question on whether it was right to repatriate Polish-Ukrainian children to the Soviet Union. Welfare officers bombarded the zonal occupation authorities with such questions, so as to align their vision on the administrative and practical care for Polish-Ukrainian unaccompanied minors with the policies of the military command. When these issues were discussed and debated between humanitarians and the Anglo-American military authorities, they agreed that the registration and settlement of unaccompanied minors had to be set in line with domestic and international laws, as well as the policies that were enacted in the British and American occupation zones, while being in accordance with welfare theories and the children's wishes. The emerging political conflict with the Soviet authorities also helped to shape this policy.

The immediate question that one might ask is why the IRO, or the Western occupation authorities, sought to prevent the repatriation of Polish-Ukrainian children to the Soviet Union. After all, according to the international agreements that were signed between the Allies, all adults and children that came from a post-1945 territory of the Soviet Union were to be returned there. Nevertheless, after extensive debates the welfare officers and military authorities in American zone of occupation came to the conclusion that unaccompanied minors from the Baltic States and the former eastern Polish territories had no government to represent them and, therefore, the US zonal military command (EUCOM) would assume a legal responsibility for them. In other words, it meant that unaccompanied Baltic and Polish-Ukrainian minors were not recognized as Soviet citizens, and were thus not to be handed over to Soviet representatives for identification and repatriation. These conclusions made it clear that US military officials, with the support of the British, would not insist on the repatriation of Polish-Ukrainian minors to the Soviet Union. Furthermore, it was suggested that resettlement rather than repatriation would best serve the interests of these children. However, until the IRO's mandate ended welfare officers had no definite instructions that clearly state these children were not to be repatriated.

The discussion over unaccompanied Baltic and Polish-Ukrainian children and the question of whether to repatriate or resettle them was as much a political decision as it was a logistical and humanitarian one. The long and complex story of how the welfare officers and authorities in the American zone of occupation attempted to establish a single policy for attributing nationality to DPs from Eastern Europe, overlaps with the story on how the relations between the four occupying powers changed. The fact that unaccompanied Ukrainian minors were not sent back to the Soviet Union revealed that UNRRA, the IRO and Anglo-American military authorities entered the dawn of the Cold War.

Changing the Borders and Transferring Populations between The Soviet Union and Poland

During World War II and the post-war agreements, the geographical borders of Eastern Europe were redrawn, which changed the power dynamics within these territories. In 1940 Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were occupied by the Soviet Union and became the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republics, or the Baltic States, but from 1941 until late 1944 the German army invaded these lands. After the war, the Soviet Army re-invaded and re-annexed these countries. In the summer of 1944, Joseph Stalin supported the Polish Committee of National Liberation, also known as the Lublin Committee, which later became the major power in the country. This development meant that Poland was more heavily influenced by the Soviet Union. During the decade following the war, with support from Moscow, the communist parties in Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Yugoslavia acquired ruling majorities. Consequently, the countries became known as the USSR's satellite states. As a result, the Soviet Union established almost complete control over Eastern Europe, although, friendly relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia broke down in 1948.¹²⁶

The western border of the Soviet Union and the so-called Polish question were the most disputed issues raised during the conferences that were held between the Allies in 1943-1945. The Soviets had been trying to incorporate the eastern Polish territory since the end of the Great War, and in 1939, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between Nazi Germany and the Soviet

¹²⁶ Judt, *Postwar*, 2010, 129-45; Anne Applebaum, *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe, 1944-1956*, Reprint edition (Anchor, 2013); Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 250-85.

Union had awarded the Soviet control over this territory. The new border stretched almost along the Curzon Line that was introduced after World War I marking the eastern frontier of the Second Polish Republic. It meant that the former eastern Polish territories with their mixed ethnic population of the Poles, Ukrainians, Belarusians and Jews fell under the control of the Soviet Union. Having entered the war against Nazi Germany, Stalin also joined the Allies in the negotiations on the post-war order in Europe and its geography. His aim was to restore the Polish-Soviet border as of 1939-1941, or as close to the Curzon Line (Figure 1) as could be achieved.

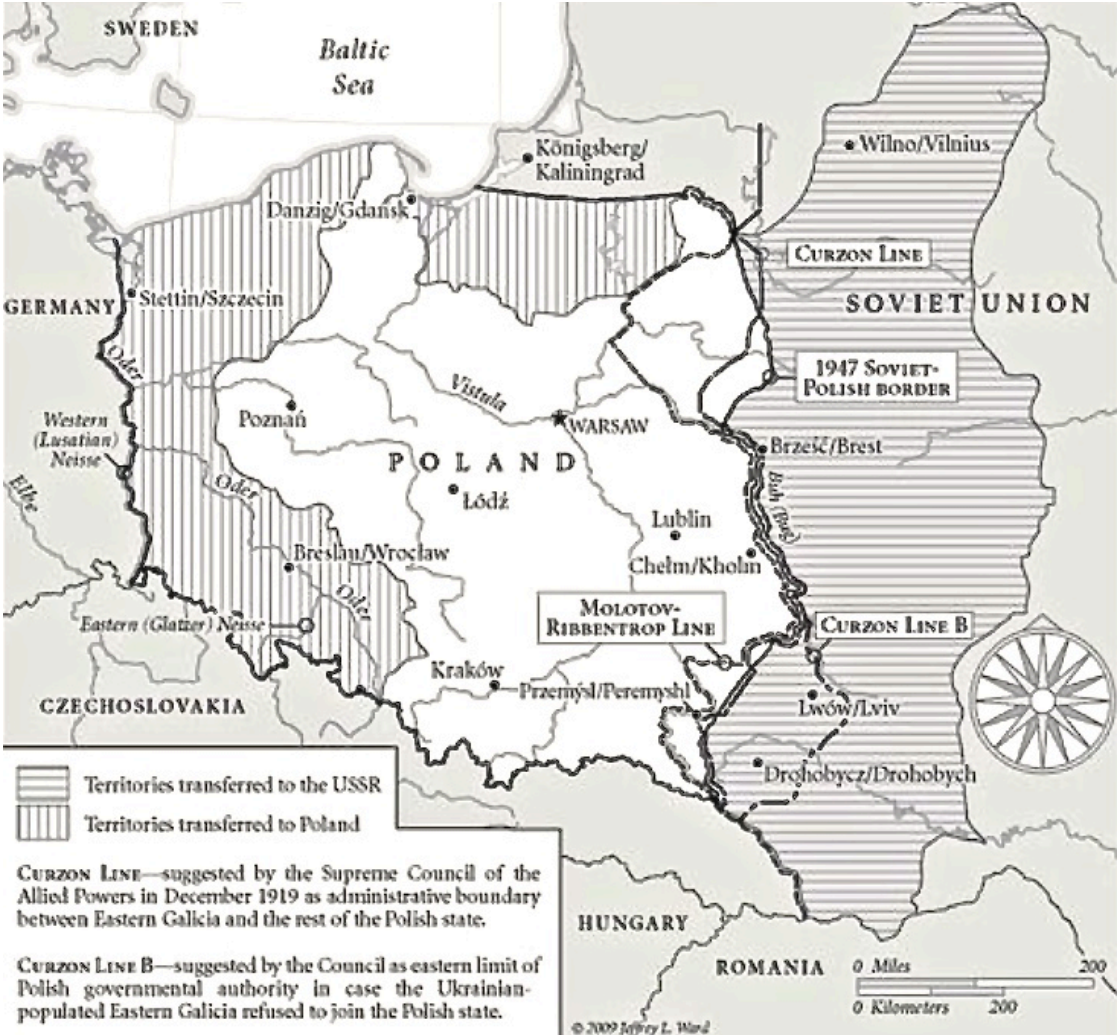


Figure 1. New boundaries of Poland. Source: Serhii Plokyh, *Yalta: The Price of Peace* (Penguin, 2010).

During the Teheran Conference in 1943, the Allies had provisionally approved the implementation of Soviet-friendly borders, although some controversies remained. In particular, the future of the city of Lviv (Lwów - in Polish, Lemberg - in German) had yet to be decided. The Polish government-in-exile, residing in London, disagreed with the new Polish-Soviet border and even more rigorously opposed the decision to give Lviv to the Soviets. However, they did not officially participate in the negotiations; neither did the Lublin Committee. Moreover, when the Red Army marched through Poland to the west Stalin strengthened his hold on the Polish territories.¹²⁷

During the Yalta conference in February 1945, the Allies once again discussed the Polish question at length. Roosevelt and Churchill tried again to persuade Stalin to accept some changes that, for instance, would keep Lviv and its surrounding areas on the Polish side. Nevertheless, the agreement signed in Yalta only reaffirmed that the Soviet Union was able to retain the territories that the Red Army had occupied in Eastern Europe after September 1939. The scholarship on this issue has indicated that during this point in the negotiations, Stalin had the upper hand on Churchill, Roosevelt and later Truman, and as such was able to secure more favorable terms for the Soviet Union.¹²⁸ This meant that the new border between Poland and the USSR was set up so that the Eastern Polish territories became a part of Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Belarus, allowing for a new vast Soviet republic that stretched across Eastern Europe; the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. What had been Polish Volhynia and Galicia became Western Ukraine. In addition, Stalin seized Bessarabia and Bukovina from Romania and Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia from Czechoslovakia and added them to the Soviet Ukrainian Republic¹²⁹ (Figure 2). In Yalta, the Big Three also agreed to change the western border of the Polish state as a 'compensation' for the lost territories in the east. This formed a part of the Potsdam agreement in the summer of 1945. It concluded that the German territories to the east from the Oder and Neisse rivers would subsequently belong to Poland (Figure 1).

¹²⁷ Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations*, 183; Plokhy, *Yalta*.

¹²⁸ See chapter "The Bastard of Versailles" in Michael S. Neiberg, *Potsdam: The End of World War II and the Remaking of Europe* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).

¹²⁹ Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism*, 35–36; Judt, *Postwar*, 2010, 101.



Figure 2 Soviet Ukraine. Source: Serhii Plokhyy, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine* (London: Allen Lane, 2015).

The newly acquired regions were initially, the sites of large resettlement projects. The movement of borders was followed by the movement of people, in order to homogenize the territories within the recently redrawn borders. The new western Polish border led to the emergence of a significant German ethnic minority in the country. In the east of Poland, a Ukrainian ethnic minority was left separated from the rest of Ukrainians who now lived on the Soviet side. By 1944, as the literature has indicated, in contrast to their interwar disagreements, the Right-wing and Left-wing Polish politicians came to the conclusion that the Polish State had the best chance for development if they could unify around the idea that ‘Poland is for Poles’, and as such, the ethnic minorities were to be expelled from Poland. The Potsdam agreement satisfied this expectation and in accordance with it, all Germans were to be resettled in Germany. While Germans fled or were deported from Western Poland, in the southeast of the country the same outcome was expected for the Ukrainian minority. In conformity with the agreement between the Soviet Union and Poland on exchanging their populations, the Ukrainian minority was transferred to the freshly designed Soviet Ukraine.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Catherine Gousseff, “Evacuation versus Repatriation: The Polish–Ukrainian Population Exchange, 1944–1946,” in *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-War Europe, 1944-1949*, ed. Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 91–114; Catherine Gousseff, *Échanger Les Peuples : Le Déplacement Des Minorités Aux Confins Polono-Soviétiques : 1944-1947* (Fayard, 2015).

On the other side of the Polish-Ukrainian border, the Soviet authorities turned back to the policy of internal population transfers, deportations and ethnic cleansings that they were familiar with from the interwar period. The mixed population of what used to be eastern Poland and became Western Ukraine consisted of three major ethnic groups, namely Poles, Ukrainians and the Jews that had survived the war. Signed in September 1944, the Soviet Ukrainian-Polish “evacuation” agreement marked the beginning of ethnic cleansing and deportations in the region. The aim of the agreements was to resettle Poles and Polish-Jews from Western Ukraine to Poland, and Ukrainians from Poland to the Western Ukraine so that an “ethnographic frontier” could be established.¹³¹ The exchange of populations between Poland and Soviet Ukraine mirrored the post-war vision that looked upon population transfers with favor.¹³²

As we have seen, establishing the geographical border between the Soviet Union and Poland was a matter of lengthy and tense discussions between the political authorities. It was an equally difficult task to organize the movement of people across the border on the basis of their ethnicity. During the war, many people living on both sides of the new border changed their nationality, destroyed or forged their identification documents for practical and surviving purposes. On top of that, as the Soviets established power in the region and in anticipation of population transfers, some Ukrainians claimed to be Poles. Nevertheless, neither the Polish nor the Soviet authorities took these entangled identities into consideration during the deportations and did not spend much time in establishing the details of the people's origins. Administrators from the Soviet side often determined nationality based on the information from the passports that were issued by the Soviets between 1938 and 1941. The Polish authorities, in their turn, often relied on the German wartime identity documents that categorized persons under the abbreviation “P”, standing for Polish, or “U” standing for Ukrainian. When that was not possible, the person’s religion was used as a deciding factor. The resettlement authorities were convinced that while Ukrainians would be of the Greek-Catholic or Orthodox faiths, Poles most likely would practice Catholicism. They also tended to consider those who did not have any identification documents to be Ukrainians. The local activist, nationalists and communists from both sides of the border were engaged in the

¹³¹ Gousseff, “Evacuation versus Repatriation,” 93–94.

¹³² Philipp Ther, *The Dark Side of Nation-States: Ethnic Cleansing in Modern Europe*, War and Genocide, volume 19 (New York: Berghahn, 2014), 143–80.

operations alongside the Soviet army and police. Being in line with post-war European trends, the Polish-Ukrainian exchange of populations became the practical method to reduce the alien presence, matching national population with national territories.¹³³ As a result, Stalin gained complete control over the Ukrainians within the borders of Soviet Ukraine.

The next step that the Soviet authorities attempted was to create a uniform group of Soviet citizens who would have shared a single political nationality and who would have been loyal to one political party, that is, the Communist party. Unlike political nationality, individual social nationality could vary because it was expressed via ethnicity and rooted in a particular territory. The Soviet ideology did not forbid the expression of an ethnic nationality so long as its performance fitted within strictly defined dimensions and was overseen by the state. Ethnic nationality was not supposed to expand into a political manifestation or to flourish into political activities or be exhibited on an international level.¹³⁴ For instance, people were encouraged to sing ethnic songs, perform ethnic dances and to read national literature but only those approved by the censors and the supreme authorities.

Seen from this perspective, the Soviet Union was growing into a multi-national state that neighbored other European countries, who were strongly motivated to become nation-states with as low a number of ethnic minorities as possible. Such attitudes towards citizenship and ethnicity brought the Soviet Union closer to acting as an imperial power towards its citizens than to the post-war ideas of a nation-state. Politically all people within the Soviet Union were Soviet citizens. However, as Soviet citizens, they could hold different ethnic nationalities and be connected to various ethnic groups and territories within the vast Soviet Union. When the Allied military and humanitarian authorities discussed repatriation of the DPs and POW, the Soviets' definition of citizenship became a major issue. Having absorbed new territories in the West, the Soviet Union argued that the people in those territories had automatically acquired Soviet citizenship. According to Soviet law, everyone who had resided in what became Western Ukraine was naturalized regardless of their wish and displacement during the war.¹³⁵ In other words, the Soviet authorities considered that the DPs from former Eastern Poland, ethnic Ukrainians or Belarusians, as well as nationals of the Baltic States,

¹³³ Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations*, 181–86, 189, 192.

¹³⁴ Snyder, 185–87.

¹³⁵ Eric Lohr, *Russian Citizenship: From Empire to Soviet Union* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012), 154–56, 181–82.

were Soviet citizens. Consequently, according to the Yalta agreement, all these groups were to be repatriated, either voluntarily or by force.

Repatriation to the Soviet Union

The repatriation of Soviet citizens from Western Europe was another important objective for the Soviet authorities after the war. They declared that all their citizens, adults and children alike, had to be repatriated. The Soviet Union was experiencing a distinct shortage in its population, and it shared the same philosophy as other European governments that a numerous population was meant a strong nation. This belief encouraged them to argue forcefully for the return of accompanied and unaccompanied Soviet children. When in February 1945, the American, British and Soviet authorities met in Yalta, they also agreed to exchange the liberated civilians and POWs indicating that the Soviet nationals should be repatriated voluntarily or by force. Following that, during 1945 the majority of European countries signed bilateral agreements with the Soviet Union for repatriation. On the whole, between the spring and fall of 1945, the allied armies repatriated up to seven million people. Among them, around 2,272,000 were Eastern Europeans, who were willingly or unwillingly moved to the Soviet Union mainly during the summer of 1945. By 1953 this number grew to five and a half million.¹³⁶ During this wave of forced repatriation children went back to the East with their families. However, others were separated from the families before repatriation, or they hid from the repatriation authorities and remained in the West.¹³⁷

Those who were repatriated to the east often went through a so-called filtration shortly after their arrival in the Soviet Union. This was organized by the NKVD at the “Verification-Filtration Camps”, which were established along the western border of the country. The outcome of the filtration process indicated whether a person would be returned to their home region or resettled to another place within the Soviet Union. Alternatively, returnees could be arrested, convicted and then sent to the GULAG, Siberian exile, labor battalions, or sentenced to death. In fact, 6,2 percent of those repatriated to the Soviet Union after the war were sent to the GULAG, while many others joined labor battalions that worked on reconstruction of the country. Still, even those who were cleared by the filtration process were restricted in their

¹³⁶ Judt, *Postwar*, 2010, 30.

¹³⁷ Polian, *Zherty Dvukh Diktatur*.

mobility. For instance, some of the returnees were not allowed to settle closer than 100 km to certain big cities, even if their homes had originally been located there. Repatriated children either shared their parents' fate, or they were separated from them in the verification-filtration camps and were sent to live with their relatives. Unaccompanied children whose parents and relatives were unknown and orphans were given to specialized orphanages for the repatriated children or joined other children in the ordinary orphanages around the country.¹³⁸

If repatriation had indeed been regarded as a happy and long-anticipated event in spring-summer 1945, by 1946 less and less of people wanted to return to their home countries due to political, economic and psychological reasons.¹³⁹ The Soviet propaganda strived to persuade DPs in Europe to return home to the Soviet Union as soon as possible. It even took advantage of letters and radio interviews with returnees where they described their return to the Motherland using attractive and inviting words.¹⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the news of arrests and difficulties after arrival spread quickly among those who stayed in the DP camps. This fueled protests against repatriation among the DPs, intensified the search for ways to escape forced repatriation, and pushed people to discuss their DP status and rights.¹⁴¹

In the summer of 1945, the American and British authorities made the initial moves to revise their policy on forced repatriation to the Soviet Union and on repatriation in general. At this moment, the (re)population issue, notably, echoed the first rumblings of the Cold War. The Anglo-American officials declared that they did not recognize the absorption of the Baltic countries and former Eastern Polish territories by the USSR in 1939. In July 1945, the headquarters of the Commander of the Allied forces issued a directive defining Soviet citizens as the people living within the territory of the Soviet Union before the war but excluded those living in the newly annexed territories, including Western Ukraine.¹⁴² From autumn 1945, forced repatriation was gradually brought to an end, and from early 1946 only those expressing a free will to return to the Soviet Union were given assistance.

¹³⁸ Dyczok, *The Grand Alliance and Ukrainian Refugees*, 56–62; Frierson and Vilenskii, *Children of the Gulag*, 331–33.

¹³⁹ Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 5–6; Lieselotte Luyckx, "Soviet DPs for the Belgian Mining Industry (1944-1960): The Daily Struggle against Yalta of a Forgotten Minority?" (European University Institute, 2012).

¹⁴⁰ See for instance: F. 2, Op. 12, Spr. 1313, Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Vyschchih Organiv Vlady.

¹⁴¹ Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism*, 81–149.

¹⁴² "Comments on the Guardianship Problem of Unaccompanied Children," 1948, AJ/43/79, AN, Paris.

By 1947, displaced persons left in the DP camps and in German private homes became the so-called “last million”. According to the statistics, this group included 100,000 to 150,000 ethnic Ukrainians that consisted of Western Ukrainians who had lived under Polish rule until September 1939 and Eastern Ukrainians who had held Soviet citizenship before the war. All of them refused to accept repatriation to the Soviet Union and during the next decade either emigrated or settled in Germany.¹⁴³

The Nationality of Displaced Children

In order to help DPs to return home, the humanitarian agencies’ workers and the army personnel had to know where the DPs originally came from and to which country they now belonged. In other words, it was necessary to establish the person’s identity, nationality and citizenship. Two main obstacles that lay in their quest for children’s nationality: geography and politics. In the whirlwind of border changes, population movements and fluid national identities in Eastern Europe during the first half of the twentieth century, the most difficult task was to identify citizenship and to locate the home country of a person coming from that territory. Geography merged with the politics of belonging, geopolitics and the ideas about post-war population that were debated between the participants of the post-war peace planning.

Territorial changes in Eastern Europe, particularly the fact that Eastern Poland was annexed by the Soviet Union, raised a series of questions among the welfare workers. Investigating the cases of children from the former Polish territories, the relief officers were puzzled about the belonging of these people to a particular government and country because of the recent border changes and population transfers in the region. The result was that International law, Soviet law (as the law of the country annexing the territory), and the thinking of the Anglo-American military authorities had to comply in order to establish a system for awarding citizenship to people living in recently transferred territories. Humanitarians sought to understand how citizenship of people who resided on the newly annexed territory had changed, did they automatically lost their previous citizenship and were granted with a new one or did they had a right to choose? Would the same law apply to the displaced people in that moment? These complications also pushed the welfare officers to distinguish between nationality and

¹⁴³ Cohen, *In War’s Wake: Europe’s Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 7–8.

citizenship. They debated whether a person could have a citizenship that would not correspond with any existing country or government? These were the burning questions for all the participants who provided post-war relief because the answers predetermined the future of each displaced individual. For many Eastern-European unaccompanied minors the answers forecasted their return to the Soviet Union or their resettlement elsewhere.

From the beginning of their operation in Europe, the UNRRA and the IRO used nationality as the main organizing principle of their work with DPs. Nationality determined a person's eligibility for relief care and assistance and framed the plan for his or her future repatriation or resettlement. According to initial planning, the Allied military authorities and the UNRRA's officers agreed that displaced people would be separated into two groups, that is German and United Nations nationals. In other words, the German population was separated from non-German or non-enemy nationals, and as such was excluded from the UNRRA's and IRO's care and relief programs. These humanitarian organizations provided aid and assistance to the non-enemy group of refugees only, and helped them in making their way back to their home country. In April 1945, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) in Europe issued an administrative memorandum that clarified the categories that welfare workers should use to report people. The DPs and POWs who had been assaulted by Nazi Germany and were from a European nation were to be included into the group of United Nations nationals. This group was contrasted against the enemy and ex-enemy nationals, that is, the people from Germany, Austria, Japan, Italy, Finland, Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary. The memorandum also affirmed that the nationality of displaced persons had to be understood as a state citizenship.¹⁴⁴

The procedure that the UNRRA's and IRO's officers followed when registering and identifying children was straightforward at first. The agencies' provisional and administrative orders outlined and regulated a series of steps that the administrative and field officers had to follow with every unaccompanied minor. According to the plan for the registration and resettlement of children, field officers, first, had to fill in forms that indicated the child's presumed nationality. The place of origin and the last place of residence before the war were typically used as indications of the child's nationality, unless other information was known.

¹⁴⁴ Lynne Taylor, "Please Report Only True Nationalities': The Classification of Displaced Persons in Post WWII Germany and Its Implications", in *Survivors of Nazi Persecution in Europe after the Second World War*, ed. David Cesarani et al., Landscapes after Battle 1 (Edgware: Vallentine Mitchell, 2010), 35–37; Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism*, 44.

Welfare officers then investigated the child's background in order to uncover more details, so as to make sure that the claimed nationality was correct. For this purpose the child search and welfare officers searched for the birth certificates, and information about where children and their parents came from as well as collected all available details from people who had any knowledge about the child and his or her family.¹⁴⁵ Following their enquiry, the welfare officers used the accumulated information to draw a final conclusion on the child's nationality.

Having established the child's nationality, relief workers then passed the documents on to the national representatives of the child's country of origin who would forward the case to the authorities in their countries. At this stage it was possible for the national liaison officers to see and interview the child and, possibly, to assist them in finding their parents or relatives. Then, the national government or its representatives decided whether to accept or reject the child's repatriation. The liaison officers of different countries were also interested in having as much substantial evidence as possible, so that they did not mistakenly repatriate foreign or German children.¹⁴⁶ Even so the post-war atmosphere was charged with pro-children thinking and aimed to increase population rates.¹⁴⁷ Yet, there were cases when governmental representatives refused repatriate children due to doubts over their nationality. The final step of the procedure was to obtain a so-called exit permit or release from the occupying government, this document approved either the repatriation or resettlement plan for the child and authorized each step of the child's transfer from one place to another within the zone of occupation or outside it.¹⁴⁸

Remarkably, the way in which the welfare officers examined children's nationality indicated that the issue of belonging for unaccompanied minors was politicized from the very beginning of the relief operation in Europe. Child's identification was designed to hinder the possible bio-political wishes of the national governments. The UNRRA and IRO respected the rights of national governments over 'their' children. However, at the same time, the representatives

¹⁴⁵ "Procedure for Tracing of Unaccompanied Children. CTB," October 1945, 6.1.1/82502598, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen; "The Registration and Identification of Displaced Unaccompanied Children in Enemy Territory."

¹⁴⁶ Cornelia Heise, "Monthly Report. Child Welfare Branch. June 1946," 1946, 6.1.2/82487289-82487291, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

¹⁴⁷ See for example: Zahra, "The Psychological Marshall Plan"; Zahra, *The Lost Children*.

¹⁴⁸ George Herbert F., "USFET Directive (Draft). Identification, Protection and Disposition of United Nations Displaced Children Residing in German Homes and Institutions," October 11, 1946, AJ/43/792, AN, Paris.

of various countries did not hold the power to decide on the nationality of unaccompanied minors. This approach to the child's relief and rehabilitation became common after the summer of 1945, when the repatriation of uprooted people became more organized and controlled by the UNRRA staff. The welfare officers suspected that the national representatives would not conduct an unbiased investigation in regards to nationality and might use unaccompanied minors to simply increase the population rates of their countries. It was thus assumed that the welfare officers were more impartial in establishing the child's "original" identity. Therefore, their task was to conduct an in-depth investigation on the child's background prior to their interview with the national liaison officers. In the US zone the military command was entrusted with the final word over the accuracy of a child's identity. Even having established a child's nationality, humanitarians working in the German and Austrian American zone had to obtain a so-called exit permit from the military government, as specified by the directive issued in 1946.¹⁴⁹ With this document the US occupying authorities either approved or refused the plan for resettlement or repatriation of the children. To make a decision on repatriation the US military government asked for the "every possible evidence of nationality" and a guarantee for the future care of a child in his or her home country.¹⁵⁰ When they were not sure that the evidence before them confirmed the child's nationality, they returned the case to the child welfare officers for additional examination.

From late 1945 the UNRRA's child welfare officers acknowledged that in many cases determining the nationality and citizenship of unaccompanied children became more complicated on the ground.¹⁵¹ Establishing the citizenship and organizing repatriation of some children from Western Europe rarely caused additional problems. In many cases the citizenship of, for instance, Norwegian, French or Belgian unaccompanied minors, was hardly ever disputable and was quite easy to determine by enquiries with the existing states and their governments. As a result, in these cases few questions emerged when a welfare worker decided to refer these children to a particular national liaison office. However, identifying children from the countries that were seized by the Soviet Union, such as, Ukrainian children

¹⁴⁹ Herbert F.

¹⁵⁰ "Matters Discussed at Child Welfare Conference on February 2nd and 3rd, for Which Further Action Is Recommended," February 10, 1950, AJ/43/604, AN, Paris.

¹⁵¹ Cornelia Heise, "Monthly Report. Child Welfare Branch. February 1946," 1946, 6.1.2/82487248-82487253, ITS Digital Archive, Paris; Cornelia Heise, "Monthly Report. Child Welfare Branch. May 1946," 1946, 6.1.2/82487282-82487285, ITS Digital Archive, Paris; Cornelia Heise, "Monthly Report. Child Welfare Branch. March/April 1946," 1946, 6.1.2/82487272-82487276, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

from the former Polish territories became difficult. The problems began at the moment of establishing the child's nationality, due to the recently changed borders, such complications only grew when it was the time to contact the particular national representative and then they magnified when the final decision on children's repatriation was made. The UNRRA and then IRO welfare officers often wondered how to register these children, as Ukrainians, Polish-Ukrainians, Soviet-Ukrainians, Soviet nationals or Polish; should they be sent to the Soviet or Polish representatives; should they be repatriated to Poland or the Soviet Union.¹⁵² In all these aspects they needed to comply with the geopolitical considerations and nuances that were related to the policies of occupation governments and inter-Allied politics.

After forced repatriations to the Soviet Union had ceased at the end of 1945, the DPs from Eastern Europe held the right to declare that they were not Soviet citizens and that they refused to go back to the Soviet Union. However, establishing children's nationality and citizenship, remained a pivotal task for the welfare and military authorities. As stated by the European-wide legal practice, children, unlike adults, could not decide for or against repatriation or make any other decisions about their future settlement. Therefore, the UNRRA's and IRO's welfare officers had to think carefully when deciding what to write in the children's files in the section on nationality and citizenship. According to the establish scheme of child registration, the child's supposed nationality predetermined which national representatives would be responsible for them. Therefore, children who were determined to be Soviet citizens, or Russian nationals, were supposed to be referred to the Soviet liaison officers, while children who were considered to be Polish were referred to Polish representatives.

The UNRRA's and IRO's Child Branch spent a significant amount of their time researching children's backgrounds. The child welfare and search officers tried to make use of all sources of information on the children. They took extensive individual interviews with children and looked through the German wartime registration lists, which could contain details on their names, origins and dates of birth.¹⁵³ Special manuals on how to uncover repressed "true nationality" or Germanized foreign children advised welfare officers to pay attention to small

¹⁵² Cornelia Heise, "Child Welfare Field Report on Eastern Military District. November 28, 1945 to December 9, 1945," 1945, 6.1.2/82486985-82486989, ITS Digital Archive, Paris; Cornelia Heise, "Monthly Report. Child Welfare Branch. April 1947," 1947, 6.1.2/82487356-82487358, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

¹⁵³ Cornelia Heise, "Monthly Report. Child Welfare Branch. July 1946," 1946, 6.1.2/82487297-82487303, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

details in the children's stories, fragments of memory, use of occasional words and names. The hope was that something insignificant could point to their native language or culture.¹⁵⁴ In-depth individual interviews with children, nevertheless, could be a very slow and time-consuming venture often with dubious results. It was difficult to evoke memories from a small child, and older children could lie about their origin and their past.¹⁵⁵ Registration documents issued by the Nazi administration were generally believed to be a good additional source of information, though, they also had their downsides. The Nazi administration could change the names of children brought for the *Lebensborn* program, which made the search for blood relatives or place of the previous residence more complicated and sometimes impossible to establish.¹⁵⁶ The search for information on parents or relatives could sometimes help the welfare officers to ascertain the child's nationality even when they could not reunite the parents with their children. This was because the humanitarians and occupation authorities worked on the principle that children normally succeed to their father's nationality, or to their mother's nationality, when the father was unknown.¹⁵⁷

Interestingly, the UNRRA's and IRO's child search officers even considered the unusual methods for proving child-parent biological relations. One suggestion was made by an expert, who proposed to compare the fingerprints of parents and children. His theory explained that children "to some degree inherit certain characteristics in the finger contour lines of the parents."¹⁵⁸ As claimed by the expert, even this method did not provide definite results, it might help welfare officers to identify parents. As far as the archival documents have demonstrated, the welfare officers did not adopt this method, but the fact that it was considered underlines that there was a serious problem in identifying children and the welfare officers used every opportunity to improve their methods.

Despite the welfare officers' best efforts to discover the children's background and to trace their relatives, many unaccompanied children remained of undetermined or doubtful nationality. The welfare and search workers acknowledged the fact that there were children

¹⁵⁴ W.C. Huyssoon, "Who Is This Child? Sample of an Interview with an Unaccompanied Child," May 1946, See for instance:, 6.1.2/82485962-82485973, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

¹⁵⁵ Heise, "Monthly Report. Child Welfare Branch. February 1946"; Marie Meylen, "Monthly Report. UNRRA. September 1946," 1946, 6.1.2/82487315-82487320, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

¹⁵⁶ "ITS Brochure," n.d., AJ/43/140, AN, Paris.

¹⁵⁷ "Provisional Order No 33. Unaccompanied Children. PCIRO, Headquarters Geneva."

¹⁵⁸ "Memo from Mr. Renald," October 1948, 6.1.2/82486212, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

whose “true nationality” would be impossible to establish.¹⁵⁹ At the same time, the UNRRA and IRO regulations advised welfare officers to avoid labeling children as being of ‘undetermined’ nationality or citizenship and in any case try to identify them. Thus, the “Undetermined” classification was to be used only as a last resort when every effort had been exhausted.¹⁶⁰ It is not entirely clear why the UNRRA and then the IRO headquarters did not welcome such a category. Perhaps it had a negative impact on the statistic reports, as it would demonstrate poor results of the agencies’ search and tracing work. Yet, the children of undetermined nationality could not be repatriated to any country, which meant that the welfare officers had to find another solution for their future care. The UNRRA was not prepared to accomplish this task as its main goal was to assist DPs and refugees to reach their homes. The IRO, in turn, handled the resettlement of DPs, but children with undetermined nationality would only add to the overcrowded lists of people waiting for emigration. Regardless of the instruction that discouraged welfare officers from using the category of “undetermined” children, it was still present in the UNRRA’s and IRO’ reports.

The most intriguing part of the story with Polish-Ukrainian children was that the relief officers actually preferred to conduct a long and complicated search for a child’s definite, or ‘true’, national identity within the newly established Soviet territories rather than just assigning them Soviet citizenship. The state-oriented principle for determining nationality that the welfare and military authorities used meant that unaccompanied Polish-Ukrainian children should have been categorized as Soviet citizens, as at the time the Western Allied authorities did not recognize Ukraine as a separate country. Nevertheless, from 1946, the reports, working correspondence, children's files and statistical charts frequently used such categories as Ukrainian or Polish-Ukrainian children.¹⁶¹ The principle of state-oriented citizenship often did not correspond to what the welfare officers experienced in their daily work with DPs, especially when working with uprooted people from Eastern Europe. This was because it did not take into account stateless people or nationals who defined themselves according to ethnic and religion grounds. Between the fall of 1945 and the spring of 1946, the American and British military and humanitarian authorities instructed the field officers several times to not register people under ethnic categories. The authorities required caseworkers to connect the

¹⁵⁹ “ITS Brochure.”

¹⁶⁰ “Administrative Order No 127,” August 7, 1946, 6.1.2/82491591, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

¹⁶¹ “Statistical Reports for 1947, 1948, 1949.,” n.d., AJ/43/892, AN, Paris.

DPs to a citizenship with a specific country and governmental representation.¹⁶² In light of this policy, welfare workers, for instance, were not allowed to categorize people as “Ukrainians” in their statistical sheets, as there was no such a country on the map of Europe. On a political level this policy went in line with the repatriation agreement that had been established between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union and lasted until late 1945.

After the summer of 1945, following the wave of forced repatriations to the Soviet Union, the policy of the Western Allies toward Eastern European DPs and the Soviet Union shifted considerably. The military officials no longer forced DPs to return to the Soviet countries. Instead the authorities introduced a special category for the refugees who had explicitly confirmed their Soviet citizenship. At the same time, the US military authorities issued a directive stating that the Baltic States (which US officials also did not consider as Soviet territories), were enlisted as political entities, “not quite [a] nation[s], but some other undefined ‘thing[s]’.”¹⁶³ As for Ukrainians, the directive required welfare officers to determine them as being either Soviet citizens, the nationals of the other countries or stateless.¹⁶⁴ In August 1946, the UNRRA’s zonal director cited an administrative order that allowed the social workers to use an ethnic principle in determining nationality in the population reports, “it is possible and encouraged to report doubtful or special cases both by citizenship and ethnic extraction, for example: “Polish-Ukrainian”, “Romanian-Banat”, “Turkish-Armenian”.”¹⁶⁵ Citizenship, though, remained an important component, as it was not advisable to only use a person’s ethnic background.

Meanwhile, the UNRRA’s and later the IRO’s welfare workers often used ethnic definitions when describing the identity, nationality or citizenship of unaccompanied children. In the statistical sheets as well as in individual cases, children from post-1939 Soviet Ukraine were listed as Polish-Ukrainian, Soviet Ukrainian, USSR Ukrainian, Ukrainian or Ukrainian Undetermined. Welfare workers usually used the first classification “Polish-Ukrainian” when it was known, or assumed, that the children came from the former Polish territories (likewise Ukrainian-Czech and Ukrainian-Romanian was used for identifying children from the Czechoslovakian and Romanian territories that has been absorbed by the Soviet Union). Children who originated from other parts of Ukraine were identified as being either Soviet

¹⁶² Taylor, “Please Report Only True Nationalities’,” 43.

¹⁶³ Quoted from: Taylor, 43.

¹⁶⁴ Taylor, 41–42.

¹⁶⁵ “Administrative Order No 127.”

Ukrainian or USSR Ukrainian. This practice was not isolated for children. Lynn Taylor has shown that adult DPs from Ukraine were listed under eleven different classifications: Polish-Ukrainian, Ukrainian Undetermined, Ukrainian, Russian Ukrainian, Ukrainian Stateless, Ukrainian Czech, Ukrainian Romanian, Ukrainian French, Ukrainian Yugoslavian, Ukrainian USA and Ukrainian Iranian.¹⁶⁶

Behind this multiplicity of categories stood various reasons that were linked to self-identification and people's political positions. Adults, adolescents and older children from the territory that in 1945 became Western Ukraine as well as from inhabitants from other parts of Soviet Ukraine often fiercely protested against being called Soviet citizens and instead demanded that their ethnic nationality be recognized. Some of them stubbornly called themselves Ukrainians, or Poles, but not Soviets. Others instrumentalized their ethnic nationality to protest against the geopolitical changes in the region, to escape forced repatriation to the Soviet Union, or to enhance their chances for emigration. The group of refugees from former Eastern Poland could also be rather puzzled by the recent population and territorial transfers. Many of them were not entirely sure to which political state they belonged at the given moment, as they had left their homes many years ago. Many also perceived their ethnic identity as being superior to their political citizenship and, therefore, replied that they were Ukrainians and not Soviets.

In spring 1949, a legal advisor at the IRO headquarters in Geneva explained the nationality status of people who originated from the Eastern Polish territories that were ceded to the Soviet Union. His summary outlined the principles that the American occupying authorities applied in their policies towards the Baltic and Polish-Ukrainian DPs. He also referred to the agreements between the Soviet Union and the Polish government, such as the border agreement between Poland and the USSR that was established 16 August 1945. This document specified how the Polish-Soviet border had changed and detailed the conditions concerning the mutual exchange of the certain ethnic groups. In light of the fact that there were no other ways to determine the nationality of people from that territory, the legal advisor suggested that the international law could be applied. According to which DPs had the right to choose between becoming citizens of the ceded or acquired states: the "inhabitants of a ceded territory acquire nationality of the acquiring state", however, this excluded those who resided

¹⁶⁶ Taylor, "Please Report Only True Nationalities", 48.

outside the transferred territory.¹⁶⁷ For them, to become the citizens of the new state they had to express their intention by registering at the Consulate of the acquiring state or by expressing their wish in any other way. Consequently, displaced persons from the territory annexed by the Soviet Union were to be considered stateless, unless they acquired a different nationality or expressed an intention to become Soviet citizens. Such a vision, he summarized was recognized and preferred by the authorities on international law; although this point was not indisputable.¹⁶⁸

Nevertheless, the principle of international law that the legal advisor described was of little help to the welfare officers working with unaccompanied minors, because as individuals under the age of majority, they could not exercise the right to choose their own citizenship. Welfare officers consulted maps of Poland and Soviet Ukraine looking for the particular city or village of a child's origin to make a distinction between the children who came from pre-1945 or post-1945 territories in Soviet Ukraine. Even so, the problem was not just a question of geography, as even when the UNRRA's and IRO's welfare officers were able to establish that the children came from the former Polish territories, they still found it difficult to ascertain their current home country, e.g. Poland or Soviet Union. Due to this more importantly, they were unable to assign children with the national representative who would become responsible for their repatriation.

The lack of a clear policy implied that social workers went without clear instructions on what to do with Polish-Ukrainian children. They continuously asked the IRO headquarters and military authorities for definite their policies on how to identify these children and with which national representatives they should consult about their cases. In the end of 1945, Cornelia Heise called for guidance in helping to establish "nationality of the group of children called Ukrainian", in order to know which national representative was responsible for them.¹⁶⁹ Fourteen months later, however, she again emphasized in her report that the "policy and legal problems involving children from Baltic countries and children of Ukrainian descent who lived within the 1939 boundaries of Poland require clarification."¹⁷⁰ From 1945-1952, the administrative and field welfare workers repeated similar appeals for clarification on this

¹⁶⁷ "Nationality Status of Persons of Non-Polish and Non-Jews Ethnic Origin Presently Residing in the US Zone of Germany Who before 1939 Were Citizens of Polish Republic from Territories Ceded to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic," n.d., AJ/43/858, AN, Paris.

¹⁶⁸ "Nationality Status of Persons..."

¹⁶⁹ Heise, "Child Welfare Field Report on Eastern Military District. November 28, 1945 to December 9, 1945."

¹⁷⁰ Heise, "Monthly Report. Child Welfare Branch. April 1947."

policy numerous times. However, there is no evidence they ever received any clear directives. Moreover, throughout the whole period of the UNRRA's and IRO's work (1943-1951) the humanitarian and military headquarters never issued an explicit statement saying that unaccompanied minors of Polish-Ukrainian origin would not be repatriated to the Soviet Union. Having received only received vague promises but no concrete answers, the welfare officer often used their practical day to day experience as guidance.

The Joint Certification of Children's Nationality

The UNRRA's and IRO's field workers did not simply hope that the military zonal authorities would provide them with instructions on how to categorize a child's nationality, nor did they blindly trust the testimonies of the refugees. In the majority of cases, they also used their own personal opinions, experiences and standpoints when assessing a child. For instance, in May 1947, the IRO's chief repatriation and care officer suggested that the welfare authorities could adopt the Austrian office's practices when difficulties arose in identifying an unaccompanied child's nationality and arranging a repatriation plan for them.

“The child search workers have reported difficulties in referring unaccompanied children of Ukrainian origin to the appropriate liaison officers for determine of nationality, and acceptance for repatriation. We realize that there are many complications and difficulties involved in relation to the determination of nationality of all unaccompanied children. However, when documentation has been completed, and probable nationality indicated, it may be necessary to refer the case for joint decision by more than one liaison officer. You may be interested to know of the method of determination of nationality of unaccompanied children in Austria, which has proved effective. [...] and you perhaps will find it possible to develop a similar procedure [...]”¹⁷¹

This method and a suggestion to disseminate it exemplified a practical approach that the UNRRA's and IRO's welfare officers tried to implement in order to find a way to identify Ukrainian children and to build a program for their future. In September 1947, Charles S. Miller, acting chief of the IRO in Austria, wrote a letter to the IRO headquarters, in which he described the method that the welfare officers in his zone used to ascertain the Baltic and

¹⁷¹ Riah Radin, “Determination of Nationality,” May 3, 1947, AJ/43/604, AN, Paris.

Polish-Ukrainian children's nationality. He informed the IRO headquarters that his office had dealt with many children whose families had lived in the former Polish territories. During May and June of 1945, many of the mothers from these families were forcibly repatriated to the Soviet Union in accordance with the Yalta agreement. Being confused as to whether the children should be sent to the Soviet Union or to Poland, Colonel Miller reported that his office had established a procedure which helped the welfare workers to ascertain a child's nationality. In such cases, they would send the child's dossier to both the Polish and Soviet senior liaison officers in the zone. After both representatives had examined the files and visited the children, it was their task to reach an agreement on the child's nationality, and then for one of them to take responsibility for the child and to make the necessary arrangements for his or her repatriation. This method, the acting chief of the IRO in Austria assured, was developed in cooperation with the liaison officers of both countries. The head of the IRO care and repatriation division in Austria believed that such approach had "proved effective" and could be advised as a working template for other offices.¹⁷²

The UNRRA's and the IRO's working routine demonstrated that some of the welfare workers used the method described by the Austrian office for identifying the nationality of children who came from the former Eastern Polish territories and the Baltic States. The children's files were sometimes sent to the Soviet or Polish liaison officers so that they could review the child's nationality and confirm the settlement plan. The representative of the US Committee for the Care of European Children also "informally informed" the European Command that the UNRRA's officers had previously consulted the Soviet representatives prior to forwarding the children's files to EUCOM. The fact that the UNRRA had submitted relatively few requests to release the Baltic and Polish-Ukrainian children for emigration also attracted the US military authorities' attention. They presumed that the lack of requests indicated that the Soviet representatives were able to see and repatriate the children before the welfare officers had accomplished the final plan for the children's future.¹⁷³

Although such a method provided an opportunity for the Polish and Soviet liaison officers to forge an agreement, it is possible to assume that the Soviet representatives were more likely to claim their rights over any Ukrainian children from the former Polish territories and to insist on their repatriation to the Soviet Union. This argument was in line with the Soviet

¹⁷² Charles S. Miller, "To Miss Deborah B. Pentz," September 10, 1947, AJ/43/596-597, AN, Paris.

¹⁷³ "To HQ Department of the Army for Civil Affairs Division," October 1947, AJ/43/596-597, AN, Paris.

declaration that after the transfer of the territories these children had acquired Soviet citizenship. The Polish representatives, it seems, could not or would not protest against this even though they were extremely enthusiastic about having children that were deported during the war returned home.¹⁷⁴ This hypothesis is based on the debates that circulated about adult DPs from the former Polish territories. The Anglo-American authorities stated that Polish-Ukrainian children were not of Soviet citizenship in summer of 1945. The Soviet authorities, in turn, maintained a firm standpoint that Polish-Ukrainian children were of Soviet citizenship. As a result, having received these children's files they most likely confirmed their nationality as Soviet and accepted them for repatriation to the Soviet Union. Between 1946 and 1948, the UNRRA's and IRO's offices corresponded with the Polish repatriation office in order to establish the Polish government's position regarding the DPs from the territories that had been annexed by the Soviet Union from Poland. The UNRRA's and IRO's offices were particularly interested to know whether the Polish government would accept those who were identified as Polish-Ukrainians or Soviet Ukrainians for repatriation to Poland. In the Polish authorities' response, they indicated that they would not welcome Ukrainian nationals because it would contradict the Polish-Soviet agreement on population transfer that had been signed in 1944.¹⁷⁵ Therefore the Polish representative stated that all Ukrainian nationals automatically lost their Polish citizenship, while all the Poles who resided in the Ukrainian territories acquired Polish citizenship. Furthermore, the Polish authorities were convinced that few Ukrainians decided to stay in Poland after the borders were changed, "Ukrainians living within the present boundaries of Poland are gradually transferred, without compulsion, into the Ukrainian Republic. They have the right of option, but few decided to retain Polish citizenship."¹⁷⁶ In spite of this declaration, from the fall of 1945 onwards, the Polish government accepted Polish-Ukrainian children for repatriation to Poland providing that their parents or close relatives were already living there and were recognized as Polish citizens. However, in other cases, Polish liaison officers could reject the repatriation of Ukrainian children in the Soviet officers' favor.

¹⁷⁴ Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 126–27.

¹⁷⁵ Formally, this was not a Soviet-Polish agreement. The separate almost identical agreements on resettlement of populations were signed on the republican level, that is between the Ukrainian, Belorussian and Lithuanian Socialist Republics on the one side and Poland on the other: Gousseff, "Evacuation versus Repatriation: The Polish-Ukrainian Population Exchange, 1944–1946," 94.

¹⁷⁶ John S. Widdicombe, "Resettlement of Polish Ukrainians in Recovered Territories," September 30, 1947, AJ/43/1074, AN, Paris.

Meanwhile, the members of the Ukrainian voluntary organizations abroad also put pressure on the UNRRA and IRO authorities and the Anglo-American zonal officials in regards to the question of Ukrainian DPs and their repatriation.¹⁷⁷ The Ukrainian émigré communities' viewpoint was not unpredictable, as it corresponded with the general anti-Soviet mood and political activity of the Ukrainians in exile as well as with those in the DP camps. They argued against repatriation to the Soviet Union, for the recognition of their nationality and for the emigration of displaced Ukrainians.¹⁷⁸ From 1947 onwards, the United Ukrainian American Relief Committee (UUARC - a joint committee that was created in an agreement between the Ukrainian American Relief Committee and the Ukrainian Canadian Relief Fund) debated with the IRO authorities over the complications with Ukrainian DPs, they complained that only very small number of their emigration cases were being completed and that emigration opportunities, in their opinion, were unequal for the DPs.¹⁷⁹ While they rarely particularized such issues with unaccompanied children, their statements probably added to the general environment in which the identification and resettlement of children were discussed. The Ukrainian voluntary societies argued against the participation of Soviet officers in matters that related to Ukrainian adults and children and offered their services, which were often very limited, in taking care of such refugees. For instance, in 1948 the UUARC proposed to provide the IRO welfare help and assistance when Ukrainian DPs living in and outside the DP camps in Germany and Austria were preparing to emigrated. They intended to provide food and clothing, help with documents and transport for emigration, assist DPs in education, vocational training, and to search for their family members. The UUARC offered the IRO's welfare workers their personnel who could work with displaced Ukrainians, manage their life in the DP camps and, most importantly, consult with the IRO's officers in entangled and controversial matters regarding their nationality, language and culture.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Lubomyr Y. Luciuk, *Searching for Place: Ukrainian Displaced Persons, Canada, and the Migration of Memory* (University of Toronto Press, 2000), 75–78.

¹⁷⁸ Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism*; Anna Marta Holian, "Anticommunism in the Streets: Refugee Politics in Cold War Germany," *Journal of Contemporary History* 45, no. 1 (January 1, 2010): 134–61; Dyczok, *The Grand Alliance and Ukrainian Refugees*.

¹⁷⁹ Berta Hohermuth, "Letter to Miss Marjorie Bradford, Voluntary Society Division," November 1, 1948, AJ/43/389, AN, Paris; "Memo on Discussion with Mr. R. Smook," April 20, 1948, AJ/43/389, AN, Paris.

¹⁸⁰ Roman I. Smook, "United Ukrainian American Relief Committee, Inc.," October 6, 1947, AJ/43/389, AN, Paris.

In September 1947 the director of the Central Ukrainian Relief Bureau based in London, Bohdan Panchuk also offered the IRO headquarters, the assistance of his Bureau.¹⁸¹ This voluntary organization devoted its time to arguing for the separation of Ukrainian nationals from Polish or Russian DPs. In 1948, Bohdan Panchuk forwarded a memorandum to the IRO authorities that explained in detail and insisted, although “humbly and respectfully”, that the DPs from the post-1945 territory should be identified as being of Ukrainian nationality (but not citizenship), “A Ukrainian is a Ukrainian and nothing else. This is true culturally, historically, philologically, religiously and various other ways. To a Ukrainian, and to every other average European, “Nationality” means race or language and culture.” Interestingly, as with the UUARTC, they also recommended that the IRO have a trustworthy Ukrainian émigré, or “an official adviser or consultant on Ukrainians and Ukrainian affairs”, someone with a Ukrainian background or closely connected with this community in attendance to consult the welfare officers on matters relating to Ukrainian nationality.¹⁸²

Father Edward G. Killion the delegate of the Holy See to the IRO and a field representative of the Vatican Migration Bureau in Geneva wrote a remarkable plea for the non-repatriation of Polish-Ukrainian children. Father Killion, called attention to how the US occupying authorities and the IRO’s workers arranged for the resettlement and repatriation of unaccompanied children from Eastern Europe. In the memorandum to the IRO, he drew attention to the files of seventeen Polish-Ukrainian children that had been submitted to the US military authorities for release and repatriation to the Soviet Union. Father Edward Killion argued that welfare workers should not consult with the Soviet representatives on issues concerning Polish-Ukrainian children because this method often ended with the repatriation of these children to the Soviet Union. These children, in his words, had to enjoy “freedom of movement”, not be compelled to go to the Soviet Union, and the Soviet authorities should not be given the liberty to decide their future,

“UNRRA’s right to dispose of [the Baltic and Polish-Ukrainian] children through repatriation must be challenged. To give the liaison officers from Soviets, control over the movement of these children, who are in our care in the United States Zone is an inadmissible abrogation of sovereignty and a betrayal of our American principles. American liaison officers have never had any such liberty of movement

¹⁸¹ Bohdan Panchuk, “Memorandum. Ukrainian Refugees and Displaced Persons, Relief, Social Welfare, Immigration and Resettlement,” September 12, 1947, AJ/43/389, AN, Paris.

¹⁸² Bohdan Panchuk, “Memorandum on Ukrainians and Ukrainian Nationality,” August 10, 1948, AJ/43/572, AN, Paris.

in the eastern zone in Germany, nor have they been allowed contact with American citizens, held in camps of Soviet dominated countries”.¹⁸³

Father Killion’s appeal is noteworthy because, it seems that, it represented the concerns of Bishop Ivan (John) Buchko, Apostolic visitor for Ukrainians in Western Europe, who was in contact with Father Killion. Bishop Buchko was the founder of the Ukrainian Relief Committee in Rome, and actively opposed the repatriation of Ukrainians to the Soviet Union and assisted in their emigration. In this letter, Father Killion, and the Vatican Migration Bureau that he represented in Geneva, offered emigration opportunities for children coming from the Baltic States and former Eastern Poland. At the same time, Farther Killion highlighted the Catholic See’s worry, that the majority of displaced children who were sent to the US were Jewish. Regardless of the purpose of this message, Farther Killion accurately communicated the concerns and questions that the IRO faced and had to deal when it came to Polish-Ukrainian unaccompanied children. In particular, he criticized the procedure that allowed the Soviet representatives to take a role in verifying the children’s nationality and questioned whether repatriation was the best solution for them.

The US military authorities, in general, were not opposed to appeals written by people like Father Killion or Bishop Buchko. For them, the joint certification of nationality as a method to handle the problem of identification and repatriation of the unaccompanied minors from the Baltic States and the former Eastern Polish territories was not quite acceptable. It undermined the policy of determining the children’s nationality that followed the Anglo-American decision not to recognize the transfer of the Baltic States and former Eastern Polish territories to the Soviet Union. The fact that the Soviet representatives interviewed the children before the humanitarian officers and occupying authorities reached an agreement on their nationality went against the principles that were established in the US zone. As Farther Killion pointed out, it suggested that the Soviet repatriation representatives would decide on the future of displaced children in the US zone of occupation. The American occupying authorities who controlled the repatriation and resettlement of DPs could not agree with such perspective. All these factors pushed the EUCOM officials to explore the practice of registration and resettlement that the IRO’s officers used for unaccompanied Polish-Ukrainian children and children from the Baltic States.

¹⁸³ Father Edward G. Killion, “Memorandum,” n.d., AJ/43/596-597, AN, Paris.

In 1947, EUCOM initiated an inspection of the IRO's policy and enquired whether it conflicted with the US government's viewpoint. Throughout the UNRRA's and IRO's work in Europe in the different zones of occupation, relief officers used their own initiative along with general policy and sometimes in the individual child's case acted according to their own views. In some zones, like in the example from Austria cited above, caseworkers acknowledged that they had used joint certification to decide a child's nationality. Others reported that no child was withheld from the emigration course due to pending conclusions from the Soviet or Polish liaison officers. The welfare officers stated that they only asked for clearance from EUCOM headquarters and then if a child was accepted for emigration, they sent the documents to the US Committee and the US Consulate to obtain a visa. Regardless of the various adopted and reported practices, in October 1947, the IRO headquarters reassured the US military government that the IRO's policy was in line with the US military command's views. That is, children from the Baltic and former Eastern Polish territories were not sent for repatriation to the Soviet authorities. Moreover, they promised to repeat these instructions once more to their zonal personnel, stressing the requirement not to ask for clearances for Polish-Ukrainian children from the Soviet or Polish national offices.¹⁸⁴

EUCOM set the revision of policy regarding the children's repatriation to work in accordance with the changing political relations between the US and Soviet authorities. The anti-Soviet attitudes and eventually the suspension of cooperation between the Soviet and Anglo-American officials after 1946, pushed the military and welfare authorities to reject repatriation plans for Baltic and Polish-Ukrainian unaccompanied minors and to initiate resettlement or local instalment plans for them. Already from 1946, in many instances, the military and welfare authorities disapproved of any plans to send Polish-Ukrainian children back to the Soviet Union, although their position was not always consistent or explicit enough. The US military government did not forward the directives that would have directly prohibited repatriation, and yet EUCOM withheld the exit permits of children that were to be sent to the Soviet representatives. In fact, Colonel Miller, the acting chief of the IRO in Austria, wrote to the military authorities because it was not clear to him why the US military

¹⁸⁴ "Cumulative Narrative Report, IRO."

government refused to grant exit permits for the repatriation of unaccompanied Polish-Ukrainian children that had been certified by the Soviet liaison officers.¹⁸⁵

Colonel Miller was not alone in asking for clarification on the military government's policy. Throughout 1946-1952, many letters were circulated between the different humanitarian offices and divisions as well as between the UNRRA, the IRO and the military governments with the aim of synchronizing the policy on the child's registration, identification and future settlement. These letters reflected an attempt to work out a single coherent policy in relation to the Baltic and Polish-Ukrainian children that would work in line with the IRO's principles and the Western Allied policies. The reply to Father Killion's letters indicated that the legal status of the children who were under the IRO's care was under consideration and "as soon as a decision has been reached, a statement of policy [would] be directed to the field."¹⁸⁶ In particular, the welfare and military authorities had to decide how to identify the nationality and citizenship of Polish-Ukrainian children and who would be responsible for them if not the Polish or Soviet representatives.

In 1947 the IRO headquarters ordered welfare officers to stop consultations with the Soviet liaison officers until the policy was worked out. The welfare officers were asked to only consult the Soviet representatives in regards to children who had already been identified as Russians or Soviet citizens. In the practice consultations with the Soviet officers in regards to unaccompanied minors became more irregular. It would seem that the joint certification of the Polish-Ukrainian children did not become a rule in the US zone of occupation, as it contradicted the attitude of the military authorities towards the former Polish territories. The US and UK officials did not recognize the annexation of the Baltic States and the Eastern Polish territories by the Soviet Union, and therefore, did not consider that children from these territories acquired Soviet citizenship.¹⁸⁷ After the war, such issues were indicative of the growing hostilities between the East and the West, and as relations broke down, such issues were asserted loudly and with greater frequency by the US military authorities. Even though decision to exclude the Soviet representatives from the process of establishing nationality of the Polish-Ukrainian children was an important one, the military and welfare officers were

¹⁸⁵ Miller, "To Miss Deborah B. Pentz."

¹⁸⁶ G.G. Kullmann, n.d., AJ/43/596-597, AN, Paris.

¹⁸⁷ Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism*, 45.

still unclear as to how to determine their status, and who would represent such children if not the parents or the national government.

Children Without Governmental Representation

When in 1949, Eleanor Ellis, an IRO child care officer, wrote to the Women's Voluntary Services in Canada to provide them with an overview of the types of problems that the IRO had with children, she told a story about a Ukrainian boy, who was in her care. Describing his situation she observed that he was Ukrainian but that his nationality meant nothing to others, "Dmitrij or Dmitro, age 16, one of the most appealing youngsters [he is] alert, helpful, polite, and cheerful. Dmitro is 'Ukrainian' which is to say, he has no nationality at all."¹⁸⁸ Her comment reflected how the welfare workers perceived the problem of children like Dmitro, who were from the Ukrainian territories. The set of circumstances around them suggested that they had lost their family home as well as their national home - two main domains to which they belonged and which complemented each other when creating an appropriate atmosphere for child rearing but were at the same time structurally and functionally different. The boy's nationality was not clear because from the nation-state's perspective there was no country that he could return to, nor were there any national representatives who could be responsible for him. At the same time, even though these children were the nationals of a state that did not exist, they were not strictly stateless. As a result, there was a need to create a working definition that could reflect the complicated nature of Polish Ukrainian and Baltic children, who also appeared to be in the similar situation. This definition had to distinguish them from other children, specifically Soviet or Russian, but also to underline that these children had their own national roots.

In spring 1948, the members of the IRO and the representatives from the US, Britain and France informally met in Geneva to solve the numerous problematic issues connected to the child care policy that existed between the welfare agencies and the military occupying authorities. This meeting gave shape to a policy regarding Polish-Ukrainian children that from that moment forward became more consistent. One topic of discussion touched on the nationality of Polish-Ukrainian unaccompanied children and their status as displaced persons. The representatives of the three occupying powers agreed that since their governments did not

¹⁸⁸ Eleanor Ellis, "Your Request for Stories Illustrating the IRO Child Care," May 4, 1949, AJ/43/939, AN, Paris.

recognize the USSR's annexation of the Baltic countries and Eastern Polish territories in 1939, children from these lands were to be considered as nationals without the protection of a national government or a national liaison representation.¹⁸⁹

This definition indicated that children belonged to a particular nation, even though this nation had no independent state recognized de jure. The declaration that Polish-Ukrainian children were not represented by any national government was supposed to clarify the procedure for their repatriation and resettlement, which the field and administrative officers had been asking for, for some time. In practical terms, it implied that the welfare officers had to cease asking the Soviet liaison offices to certify the future plans for Polish-Ukrainian children. Such a definition made it clear that Polish-Ukrainian children were not Soviet subjects, which gave the military and welfare authorities the formal grounds to dismiss the Soviet representatives from the process of deciding the future plans for these children and speaking for them. The relief officers were supposed to deal with these children as if they were of undetermined nationality or stateless. As a result, in the US zone, only military officials could certify these children for resettlement or repatriation.

It is interesting that in this situation the relief workers and the Western occupation authorities were reluctant to call the Baltic and Polish Ukrainian children stateless, even though their formal status was very much the same. Instead, they searched for some other definitions and only occasionally wrote referred to them in the forms as "Ukrainian-Stateless" children. There are several reasons that could explain their reluctance. The literature refers to Hanna Arendt's observation that the UNRRA's strategic policy was to refer to as few stateless people as possible because its main task was to return people home. Statelessness and unrepatiability, as a result, were undesirable categories, as they left people dangling in the DP camps for a long time with little hope of being able to return home.¹⁹⁰ However, this does not explain why the IRO's relief workers, who also held a mandate to resettle DPs, did not use the term stateless as often as they could have done. A likely explanation is that the underlying idea of the relief and rehabilitation program was that children had to have and know their national roots, making statelessness an unwelcome category for them as well.

¹⁸⁹ Cornelia Heise, "Certification of Nationality of Unaccompanied Children.," March 16, 1948, AJ/43/926, AN, Paris.

¹⁹⁰ Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism*, 43.

Securing a Legal Framework

Legal Representatives for Unaccompanied Polish-Ukrainian Children

The formal status of Polish-Ukrainian children as nationals without government representatives indicated that the IRO's welfare workers were not to seek advice from the Soviet officials and that the Soviet representatives were not entitled to represent them. In such circumstances an independent legal guardian was supposed to be appointed. Typically a legal guardian was nominated for unaccompanied, orphaned or lost children to "act for them in all matters in their interests".¹⁹¹ This person or organization was nominated on the basis of the child's nationality, and held the authority to speak for the child and took all decisions regarding his or her repatriation, emigration or adoption. The legal responsibility for unaccompanied children was rooted in their nationality and citizenship. At the same time, nomination of a guardian of particular nationality strengthened the claims for a citizenship of children. For the welfare workers, as it would seem, the nation was a kind of fictive family that could substitute for parents when they were missing.¹⁹² They were eager to restore unaccompanied children to their homeland so having a legal guardian of the same nationality was a logical choice that was often the first step towards this goal. The state powers then could take responsibility for the children and provide for them through childcare institutions.

As the debates about displaced children and their identities were immersed in political and bio-political rhetoric, scheme for appointing such children with a guardian was supposed to help humanitarian workers to comply with the national interests of the different countries. It also corresponded with the idea that children belonged to the nation of their origin and respected the concern of many countries who wanted "their" children back. The humanitarian relief administration and military authorities hoped to avoid being drawn into ongoing disputes over children with the representatives and authorities of different states. They had every intention of protecting themselves against accusations that they were attempting to assimilate, denationalize children or develop a cosmopolitan approach to the children's relief and rehabilitation.¹⁹³ For all these reasons even when it was not possible to hand children over

¹⁹¹ "Provisional Order No 33. Unaccompanied Children. PCIRO, Headquarters Geneva."

¹⁹² Zahra, "Lost Children."

¹⁹³ Zahra, 72; "Comments on the Guardianship Problem of Unaccompanied Children," 1948, AJ/43/79, AN, Paris.

to their national representatives, a guardian of the same nationality was still appointed to the child.

Nominating guardians for the children protected the international humanitarian agencies and the Anglo-American governments from the Soviet claims and accusations in withholding the children from repatriation. In practical terms, while children did not have a legal voice to “express their intention to change citizenship”, their guardian could do that for them.¹⁹⁴ This particular nuance became especially important for children with contested citizenship. Needless to say that the provisions regarding Polish-Ukrainian children, which were agreed between the three Western authorities, did not stop the Soviet authorities from trying to claim their rights over the Polish-Ukrainian children. Moreover, in convenient moments, they could take such children into their custody without asking the IRO or zonal military authorities.

So who could represent and was supposed to be responsible for children when their parents were missing? According to the principles of international law, normally, parents held an inalienable right to decide on their children’s future. Whereas, for unaccompanied children or children whose parents could not be reached, a legally appointed guardian took their place. Within the borders of the child's native state the national government and its representatives, such as social and welfare workers, could be recognized as the children’s guardians. However, when children were found outside of their native country, the authorities of the children's home country and those from the country where they were displaced had to reach an agreement about legal guardianship. Respecting these principles, the American, British and French occupying authorities came to an agreement that the national government would stand “in loco parentis” for displaced unaccompanied children. Therefore, normally, the national representatives commissioned to occupied Germany or Austria acted as the children’s guardians and held a right to decide their future, including the right to approve repatriation, resettlement or adoption.¹⁹⁵ To put this in other words, displaced children of a particular country typically were the legal responsibility of the authorities from the same country.

The task to nominate a guardian for the children of uncertain or undetermined nationality and stateless children was more complicated. Because their nationality was not determined,

¹⁹⁴ “Provisional Order No 33. Unaccompanied Children. PCIRO, Headquarters Geneva.”

¹⁹⁵ “Narrative Report, PCIRO Bad Kissingen,” May 1948, AJ/43/785, AN, Paris; “Comments on the Guardianship Problem of Unaccompanied Children”; Zahra, “Lost Children,” 72.

officials could not appoint any national representative as their guardian and none of the governments or their representatives could assume protection of these children. In such cases, the regulations issued by the US military government in 1947 indicated that such children were to be placed under the care and legal protection of the occupying officials, USFET (The United States Forces, European Theater) before 1947 and EUCOM after that.¹⁹⁶ This meant that EUCOM had a legal right to name a guardian and to determine the child's future. Moreover, it was decided that within their zones, the three occupying authorities would also nominate the guardians for Polish-Ukrainian and Baltic children, even though these groups of children were not classified as stateless or as of undetermined nationality. In order to explain this amendment of the general rule, the military authorities underlined that they accepted the fact that these children had no government or national liaison officer to represent and protect them.

The officials in the British and American zones of Germany anticipated that such a position would be met with objections from the Soviet side. The Soviet authorities claimed that all people from the Polish territories had obtained Soviet citizenship, regardless of their place of residence at the moment when the borders were changed.¹⁹⁷ Interestingly, in this context citizenship was interpreted as an obligation of naturalization and not a right, as it was normally regarded. Consequently, as might be expected, the Soviet officials also believed that they held an undeniable right to represent Polish-Ukrainian unaccompanied children. The British and American governments, as we have seen above, dismissed such claims and statements from the Soviet officials on the grounds that they did not recognize the incorporation of Eastern Poland into the Soviet Union. As a result, allowing the Soviets to take responsibility for the Polish-Ukrainian children was not the right solution either.

Moreover, the IRO's legal advisors questioned the legitimacy of the claims made by the Soviet officials that the child's parents, if they even existed at all, had requested that their children be returned to them. Typically, the Soviet officials stated they were only transmitting the will of the children's parents. The IRO legal advisor countered this assertion by arguing that freedom of action in the Soviet Union was improbable. Discussing the problem of guardianship of unaccompanied children from the Eastern Polish territories, the IRO's legal advisor initially addressed the fundamental views on the relation between the state and the

¹⁹⁶ "Military Government Regulations. Title 20. DPs, Dislodged Germans and Expellees."

¹⁹⁷ Lohr, *Russian Citizenship*, 182.

parents regarding their primary right over the children. He stated that the legal authorities in Europe shared a clear-cut viewpoint which asserted that living parents had the “native and inalienable” right on their children, although they could transmit this right to the state authorities, national governments, occupation powers or international organizations. However, the legal adviser stressed, this would be a valid action if parents were “free to make decisions regarding the future of their children”. In other words, the government or the state should not pressure the parents into specific decisions. The legal advisor particularly stated that in the Soviet Union, its satellite states, in Spain and former Nazi-Germany parents maintained no real freedom of choice. He assumed that in the Soviet people were most probably obliged to follow the instructions of the Party and the government.¹⁹⁸ Such an explanation permitted the legal adviser to suggest that there was no way to ascertain that the parents had actually delegated their rights over children to the state authorities.

Remarkably, however, that despite of the social workers’ eagerness to restore displaced children’s national roots, no apparent indications could be found that the Ukrainian national organizations were ever asked to represent children of a Ukrainian background. However, the practical solutions that were found in the field suggested that families of a Ukrainian background could become the guardians of unaccompanied children, like any other foster or adoptive family, when they adopted or fostered them.

By the end of the 1940s, the Anglo-American military authorities together with the IRO’s welfare workers established a relatively consistent policy regarding identification and resettlement of Polish-Ukrainian children. The EUCOM in the American zone recognized that such minors held a Ukrainian nationality and took a stand against the Soviet government’s claim over them. Following these policy guidance in 1948, Nina Dawidowa, like many other Polish-Ukrainian children, was not repatriated to Soviet Ukraine. As her case has shown, in 1948, the IRO’s workers did not refer these children to the Soviet authorities and in the majority of cases did not send them back to Soviet Ukraine. By this time the humanitarian and military officers came to the conclusion that Ukrainian children should be resettled in third countries rather than being sent back to the Soviet territories. In their opinion resettlement was in the “best interests” of these children. The IRO’s welfare workers did not consult the Soviet representatives any longer regarding the future plans for these children. And yet, the

¹⁹⁸ “Comments on the Guardianship Problem of Unaccompanied Children.”

Soviet authorities still used any and all opportunities that allowed them to take Ukrainian children back to the Soviet Union. The incident that happened with Nina in 1950 shortly after the IRO resettled her to Belgium was revealing on the several levels but in particular it shows that the settlement of Polish-Ukrainian children in the third country could be impeded by the actions of the Soviet officials and therefore required the welfare officers to be careful with formalities.

After the war's end, Nina, like many other displaced children found herself far from her birthplace and her parents were either dead or missing. During the war, she had been taken in by a foster family, and in 1948, she was registered as an unaccompanied child at an IRO children's centre. In 1950, after the IRO's mandate came to an end, Le Secours International de Caritas Catholica in Belgium became responsible for her welfare. Soon after that, the Belgian Caritas Catholica found a family that agreed to adopt her.¹⁹⁹ The IRO's welfare workers thought that their child care mission was over in this case because the girl's future had been established with her "best interests" in mind. Nina found a new home and parents who would take care of her, so the IRO closed her case. However, no paperwork was done to secure her status as a child in foster care before the process of adoption was completed. By coincidence, Nina appeared at the Soviet embassy in Belgium and using this opportunity the Soviet officials claimed custody of Nina, considering her to be a Soviet child. Before Nina came to Belgium, no legal guardian had been appointed for her by the IRO in the British zone or the Belgian authorities, and consequently, she had no legal protection in the country. Therefore, the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had no valid juridical objections to the Soviet's claim over her. From a legal point of view, when Nina came to Belgium she once again became a 'lost' unaccompanied child, as she had been prior to the IRO's mediation.

Nina's case and situations like hers highlighted the problem of the legal protection of children who were released from the IRO's responsibility and designated for resettlement to the foreign countries. Legal protection was especially important for children of contested nationality but it also had far-reaching implications for general adoption procedures. The incident with Nina, in particular, added to general concerns about the legal establishment of children in their "adoptive" countries and pushed the IRO to elaborate on its adoption plan.

¹⁹⁹ "Dawidowa Nina. 16.11.1938.," 1950, AJ/43/301, AN, Paris.

The main goal was to exclude the national governments from repeatedly claiming their rights over unaccompanied children after they had been adopted or resettled by the humanitarian agency such as the IRO. The details of Nina's case vividly demonstrated how such issues became a matter of concern for the welfare workers.

In 1950, on the eve of the St. Nicolas Day, Nina and her foster mother were heading to the city center on the tram to look at the festival decorations. When her foster mother exited the tram, Nina stayed on by accident. The other passengers noticed that the lost child was speaking Russian and handed her to the Soviet embassy in the city. According to the IRO's information, Nina had been born to a family from Ukraine. Her father had been deported as a forced laborer in 1942 and had not been heard from since. Her mother had disappeared from one of the trains conveying deportees to Germany in 1943. Since then Nina had been living with a foster family. In 1949, however, the foster family had emigrated to Australia and left the girl in Germany due to her health problems. As Nina had been diagnosed with epilepsy, the Australian Emigration Mission had not approved her for emigration, the report indicated that "[...] she could not meet medical standards to be included in the family group so was transferred to a DP children's home [...]"²⁰⁰ Having investigated her case in 1950, the IRO's Child Welfare Board in the British zone, which made decisions about the settlement plans for unaccompanied children, recommended that she be resettled to a third country via one of the schemes for sick children: "the girl to be permitted to be considered for any special scheme of placement and resettlement which may eventuate."²⁰¹

The Control Commission of Germany (British Element), the military zonal authorities, approved this recommendation. Until this moment Nina's case was similar to other Ukrainian children's cases. Given that she was identified as being of Ukrainian origin, the IRO's officers did not contact the Soviet representatives at any stage of the case's investigation and did not plan for her repatriation. Instead, they decided that the best plan for her future would be to resettle her in another country, where she could find a new caring family. Two months after the IRO Child Welfare Board's decision, the Belgian Caritas Catholica took the girl under its care and initiated arrangements for her adoption to the Belgian family.²⁰² However, when the girl was lost and taken to the Soviet embassy, her story reached a critical point

²⁰⁰ "Unaccompanied Child Dawidowa Nina. Outgoing Telegram," 1950, AJ/43/604, AN, Paris; "Dawidowa Nina. 16.11.1938."

²⁰¹ "Dawidowa Nina. 16.11.1938."

²⁰² "Dawidowa Nina. 16.11.1938."; "Unaccompanied Child Dawidowa Nina. Outgoing Telegram."

because the Soviet authorities used this opportunity to keep the child and to repatriate her. This was what the IRO's welfare officers had tried to avoid by all means but could do little to prevent it after the Soviet officials took the girl.

When Nina's new Belgian foster mother realized that the girl had been taken from the tram to the Soviet embassy, she, together with police officers, went there. However, the Soviet officials refused to give her the girl. They stated that Nina was 'Russian', meaning Soviet and that the woman had no right to claim custody of her. They said that Nina would be repatriated to the USSR, and claimed that her relatives were already waiting for her. Moreover, in order to strengthen their position, the Soviet authorities declared that the girl had clearly expressed a wish to go back to her home country, that is Soviet Union.²⁰³ By this time, the Soviet officials had clearly understood that the Anglo-American authorities and the IRO were refusing to repatriate Ukrainian children. They continued to criticize and challenge such policies but only had rare chances to actually capture these children. However, in the event that they did, the IRO had little chance to "rescue" them from the Soviet officials. In order to be prepared for such situations, the IRO's workers took all precautionary measures to make sure that a child belonged to his or her new home outside the Soviet Union. A child's guardian was supposed to assure the children's legal position and to protect his or her best interests in their new family and home country. Whether these formalities would have allowed them to request that the child be returned to them from the Soviet officials is difficult to say. Nina's case instead illustrated that the welfare and military authorities could do little when a child who had no legal guardian was taken by Soviet officers.

Nina's situation was difficult and concerning for the IRO administration and for the Belgian authorities as both were responsible for the girl. Both the chief of the IRO mission in Belgium and the Belgian Ministry of Foreign affairs engaged in negotiations with the Soviet authorities. The Belgian authorities ordered the police to prevent the child from leaving the country. Despite every effort, the Soviet representatives refused to return the child. The author of the report written for the IRO also had strong doubts that it would be possible to resolve the problem and secure the child's return. The Soviet Embassy submitted a request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brussels for an exit visa for the girl. Based on the fact that Nina had no legal representative, the Ministry had no valid grounds with which to object to the

²⁰³ "Dawidowa Nina. 16.11.1938."

Soviet's claim over the child and, therefore, had no other choice except granting her the exit visa.²⁰⁴

Nina's case brought to light that the IRO's needed to pay considerable attention to the fact that all unaccompanied children had to have a legal guardian from the moment when they were registered with the IRO until their formal adoption or reunification with parents. Several months after Nina's story had occurred, in December 1950, the IRO's field and administrative officers and the acting director of the IRO's Protection Office discussed the incident and its implications. Those who attended the meeting decided that a legal guardian should be appointed to a child before they were sent to the prospective adoptive parents, foster homes or orphanages for the future settlement. The children's cases were also to be closed only after "a legal solution has been found",²⁰⁵ that is to say, a legal representative for the children had been appointed. The IRO's Acting Director of the Protection Office pointed out, "The mere "referral" of an unaccompanied child by IRO to another agency will leave a child just as much unaccompanied at the end of our operation as it was at the beginning".²⁰⁶

Establishing the relationship between unaccompanied children and their foster or adoptive family into the frame of the law refined the procedure of international adoption the IRO used. It reflected the welfare workers' concern about child protection after the IRO's mandate ceased in Europe. At the end of 1950, the IRO's dissolution was fast approaching so it was a high time to raise this problem. The agency would only work for another year in Europe and during this time the welfare officers had to finalize all cases of uprooted children so that they could find families and grow roots in their new home countries. The latter also implied that children gained equal social and citizenship rights, including the right to be protected by their home state's government. For children of a Ukrainian background, this meant that they lost their status as minors "without governmental representation" and became protected by the government of their new home country. And then, if the Soviet authorities claimed them, this government would have to mediate the dispute.

²⁰⁴ "Inter-Office Memorandum. Unaccompanied Children," December 11, 1950, AJ/43/604, AN, Paris; "Local Settlement of Unaccompanied Children," December 6, 1950, AJ/43/604, AN, Paris; "Notes on Meeting Held in Mr. Grigg's Office, 14 December 1950," December 18, 1950, AJ/43/604, AN, Paris.

²⁰⁵ "Local Settlement of Unaccompanied Children."

²⁰⁶ "Local Settlement of Unaccompanied Children."

The occupying authorities and the IRO believed that such procedural changes could better safeguard children from the repeated claims of their birth countries' representatives especially after the IRO had dissolved. In contrast, it protected the IRO from possible conflicts with national governments due to resettled children. The acting director of the IRO's Protection Office argued, "The appointment of a legal representative not only protects the interests of the child against the interference of the authorities of the country of origin but also protects the position of the IRO in its handling of these children."²⁰⁷ The issue of appointing a legal guardian was also discussed by the IRO's welfare workers in relation to the adoption of DP children by German families. In this context, they argued that formal adoption and the nomination of foster parents as the legal guardians of children were necessary to ensure that foreign children would enjoy the same rights in the community as German children did.

While all these explanations elaborated on the adoption and settlement of minors in foreign countries, it seems to me that such mandates would still have little effect in persuading the Soviet officials to give the children back to the IRO. No arguments could persuade the Soviet authorities who were determined to return all children who they considered Soviet back to the USSR and believed that the Western officials had unlawfully kept them. Most likely the IRO's officers understood this as well. In this light, it is remarkable that the IRO and Anglo-American authorities scrupulously went through all the formalities to establish the children's status and rights in society and to underline their belonging to their new home country. Such an approach could illustrate the fact that children and their protection were placed at the heart of the IRO's care.

After the incident with Nina, the Soviet representatives asked for permission to interview all other children who had been sent to Belgium. However, their request was rejected by the Belgian authorities who explained that there were no more Russian children among those who had arrived in Belgium.²⁰⁸ This reply was not unforeseen considering the declining cooperation between the IRO and the Soviet authorities by 1950 became clearly visible. Nevertheless, it demonstrates that children of Ukrainian or Polish-Ukrainian origin, whose names were on the same list as Nina's name, were not counted to be Russian or Soviet nationals. This suggests that, in the end, it became less important how to define such minors, either as Ukrainians, Polish-Ukrainians, Russian-Ukrainians or using any other definition.

²⁰⁷ "Inter-Office Memorandum. Unaccompanied Children."

²⁰⁸ "AJ/43/301," n.d., AN, Paris.

The only element that was truly important was not to define them as Soviet citizens or stateless.

It is worth adding that despite all the efforts to explain and formalize how Polish-Ukrainian children should be registered and where they would be resettled, the welfare officers experienced confusion and misunderstanding about these issues until the end of the IRO's mandate in 1952. There were several reasons for this lack of clarity ranging from tensions between the IRO's declared objectives to repatriate all children and the actual practices and policies of the military governments, to contesting the nature of the child's identity. Many sides were engaged in the process of the children's resettlement: relief workers, military authorities, national governments, representatives of the national organizations and, finally, the children themselves. All of them had their own ideas about what was in the "best interests" of the unaccompanied children. Vague and broad policies on repatriation and resettlement provided some room for the UNRRA's and IRO's field officers to adjust them to their practical needs. In the end, the IRO, UNRRA and Anglo-American military authorities changed the procedure for the registration and resettlement of unaccompanied children from the Baltic States and the former Eastern Polish lands. From 1946, resettlement for these children, in fact, became preferred to repatriation. In 1947 this had already become a consistent policy. This was what people like Father Killion, Colonel Miller and other field and relief officers asked for in their letters to humanitarian officials.

Chapter 3

A “Code For Communication” With the Soviet Officials: The IRO and American Military Officials’ Policies and Practices

A twenty-three-line newspaper column, accompanied by a picture of a girl bearing the title: “Police Guard on Crippled Girl” was published in September 1948 in the “Stars and stripes” newspaper. The newspaper itself was issued by the American occupying authorities in Germany. This article vividly illustrates that unaccompanied children of Ukrainian origin became the subject of political conflicts between the Soviet authorities and the American military and humanitarian officials and read:

“A German police man who said he had “ordered to keep the Russians away” yesterday guarded 14-years-old Helena K[...] as she lay in hospital in the U.S. sector of Berlin. The girl, a crippled orphan whose custody is in dispute between the Americans and the Russians, is of Ukrainian parentage. She is in the need of an operation after being crippled by paralysis. The Russians, in demanding her custody, claim her as a Soviet national. Although they have offered to provide the necessary surgical attention, the U.S. authorities refuse to release the girl without consent of the International Refugee Organization.”²⁰⁹

Started to unfold from early 1946, the tensions around these children became one of the first steps toward Cold War confrontations.

As the previous chapter has shown, in processing decisions regarding children of a Ukrainian origin, both, the IRO and the military authorities, preferred to hold them back rather than to send them to the Soviet Union. Lengthy debates about the national belonging and citizenship of these children were held by the international humanitarian authorities and military officials in the US zone, and they eventually concluded that such children had no government to represent them. According to international law, unlike adults, children could not make decisions regarding their citizenship or future plan, therefore, their parents, other people or organizations had to make decisions on a child’s behalf. Normally, in the case of an unaccompanied child, a national liaison representative became the child’s guardian. Yet, the only official governmental representatives who would claim responsibility for Ukrainian

²⁰⁹ “Police Guard on Crippled Girl,” 1948, 6.3.2.1/84325545, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

children were Soviet officials, who considered the children to be Soviet citizens. However, the US and UK military authorities were not inclined to recognize the Soviet government's rights over the children from the former Eastern Polish territories. Nor would they allow Ukrainian émigré societies to be responsible for these children. As a result, the U.S. Army administrative command in Europe (EUCOM) became the legal guardian of the Ukrainian children.

The UNRRA's and IRO's welfare workers and the US military authorities decided on these principles through the course of internal debates. At the same time, on the intergovernmental level, they entered into a dialog with the Soviet authorities regarding displaced unaccompanied children from the Ukrainian territories. How they negotiated the future of Ukrainian unaccompanied children with the Soviet repatriation representatives on the ground? This chapter aims to shed some light on the Soviets', as well as the US authorities' and welfare workers' activities and maneuvers in the post-war "battle for children". In a wider context, this chapter will examine the general evolution of inter-Allies relations after the Second World War and demonstrate how the exchange of DP children, was discussed by Soviet repatriation and liaison officers, on the one side, and the IRO officers and the American military authorities, on the other. As it was shown above, the fact that unaccompanied children of Western Ukrainian origin were Ukrainian nationals, who officially did not have any governmental representation, offered the Anglo-American officials and humanitarians the opportunity to argue that they should not be repatriated to the Soviet Union. As a result, from 1946 children who were presumed to be of Ukrainian origin, and especially those coming from Western Ukraine, were one of the groups contested by the Soviet authorities and relief workers. Their repatriation and rehabilitation became a matter of political and humanitarian debates. Their welfare and future depended on the opinions of welfare workers and on political decisions made by the US military authorities. Their resettlement clearly highlighted the first signs of deteriorating relations between the Soviet Union and the US. Debates and decisions regarding the future of these children reflected the Cold War rhetoric that was used by the IRO's personal, the Western military authorities and the Soviet representatives. What is even more interesting is that the first small, but revealing instances of such decisions took place in 1946 long before Harry S. Truman spelt out his doctrine enacted the policy of countering Soviet influence in Europe and beyond.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ President Harry S. Truman first proclaimed his doctrine in Congress on March 12, 1947.

The IRO's staff and Western military authorities' decision to withhold children from repatriation was met with disapproval by the Soviets, which led to the lengthy debates on the nation-state affiliation of children from the former Polish territories that became Western Ukraine, but also of children from other parts of Ukraine. The Soviet authorities stood firm to their claim that Polish-Ukrainian children should be regarded as Soviet citizens and thus the framework of the general repatriation policy should be followed. Grounding themselves on the Yalta agreement, they requested that the Western occupying powers return all Soviet children, including unaccompanied children of Ukrainian origin. In particular, they accused the Allied powers of concealing facts about the children's origin or forging their documents. However, the dialogue between the Soviet representatives and the IRO regarding children ended with no agreement. In this situation, the Soviet authorities used any and all opportunities to claim custody of these children. Meanwhile, the welfare officers and US military authorities developed different procedures to hinder Soviet communication with Ukrainian children until the US zonal authorities had finalized their decision on the children's future.

It has to be said that the group of children from the Baltic countries, could create similar problems for the welfare and US military officers. In fact, many of the decisions made regarding the UNRRA's and IRO's policies on special cases of unaccompanied children referred to children from both Polish-Ukraine and the Baltic. While these policies could be analyzed equally for both groups, there were some tentative distinctions between the two of them. In the eyes of the Anglo-Americans and humanitarian workers, the repatriation of Ukrainian children meant returning them to the heart of a communist country, whereas in the 1940s the Baltic countries were considered to be not as deeply influenced by communism.²¹¹ When the events described in this research unfolded, the fear of communist ideology spreading throughout the Western world was already present and the Soviet impact on children was something that many people were desperate to avoid. Additionally, western recollections of the violence that occurred in the 1918-1919 or the famine in 1932-1933 and then in 1947 in Soviet Ukraine also could play a certain role. If the welfare workers had also been aware that until the early 1950s armed conflict continued between the Soviet Army and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in the newly added East Polish territories, then this too could

²¹¹ Judt, *Postwar*, 2010, 191.

have made the region less attractive for children's return. Finally, Ukrainian DPs and *émigrés*, national committees in exile and children, who were old enough to express their position, took a stand against travelling back to Soviet Ukraine.

The Repatriation Question, The IRO's Constitution and Soviet Withdrawal

For the immediate post-war period, the literature characterizes the relations between the Soviet Union and the American, British and French military authorities in occupied Germany as friendly or at least cooperative and describes a time, when the Soviet newspapers pictured friendly handshakes between the Soviet and American authorities and their joint celebrations. It has been suggested that the wartime alliance against the spread of Nazism and the post-war need for humanitarian aid as well as supplies of food and money, pushed the East and the West to work together. It was believed that the combined efforts of the four Great powers could bring and maintain a future peace in Europe.²¹² The Soviet representatives actively participated in the United Nations sessions, attended the committee meetings and discussed post-war order, peace planning and movements of populations towards their home countries. However, over a short time, the situation changed completely. The problem of refugees and displaced people paved the way for strong disagreements and represented a starting point for the ideological battles between the East and the West.²¹³ For the first time since wartime cooperation, the debates on the DP question highlighted deep conflicts between the Soviet government and the Western Allies that turned out to be unsurpassable.

Scholars have argued that in 1946 and 1947 the negotiations on the DPs status and their rights clearly exemplified the Soviet-West controversy on the grounds of human rights politics, ideologies and conceptions of democracy. Witnesses of the debates on the DPs status and rights, as well as scholars researching these wars of words in the UN rooms and *couloirs*, described the situation as one that showcased a collision of two worldviews: the one that cherishes the rights of the people, and the other that clings to the rights of government. The Soviet conception saw the state as a supreme entity over its people, whereas the West's viewpoint defended the superiority of individuals and their rights over the state's power. This

²¹² Timothy Johnston, *Being Soviet: Identity, Rumour, and Everyday Life under Stalin 1939-1953*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 129–30; Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 31.

²¹³ Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 11,15,20.

depiction of the West and the East was widely used throughout the Cold War.²¹⁴ The distinction between these two worldviews is crucial for understanding the disputes around the repatriation and resettlement of displaced children. While the Soviet authorities grounded their reasoning in the rights of the state over “its” children, the US military authorities and international humanitarian officers underlined that their first duty was to protect the individual child and his or her rights.

The following pages offer an overview of the key stages in the Soviet’s and Allies’ positions on displaced children that begins with the Allies negotiating for the exchange of prisoners of war (POW) and displaced persons, and terminates at the point when the Soviet representatives left the discussion room. It became evident that the Soviet’s general policy on repatriation made no distinction of accompanied or unaccompanied. Everyone, regardless of their age, gender, ethnic background and health conditions were to be returned. Most interestingly, the Soviet authorities argued that neither adults, not children who had been uprooted during the war were refugees. According to their view, adults who refused to be repatriated “betrayed” their Motherland. Minors, meanwhile, could not ask for a politically tainted status, such as refugee, because they were not yet political beings by virtue of their age.

As we have seen above, initially, all the actors who planned rehabilitation programs and schemes agreed that the return of displaced people to their home countries was the main objective. The international humanitarian organizations, the UNRRA and its heir the IRO, together with the Allied authorities were supposed to support the recovery of people after the war and to facilitate their return to their homes. Under the Yalta agreements, the four occupying governments gave their approval to the exchange of the DP and POW populations between the occupied zones and to act jointly in searches for lost people in all four zones. The national governments sent their representatives and liaison officers to occupied Germany and Austria. Their tasks were to search for their fellow citizens, to assist in confirming people's nationality and to help in moving them back to their home countries.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Catherine Gousseff, “Des migrations de sorties de guerre qui reconfigurent la frontière : ouverture et refermeture de l’URSS avant la Guerre froide,” 2007, 434; Cohen, *In War’s Wake: Europe’s Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 11, 15, 20, 29.

²¹⁵ Reinisch, “Internationalism in Relief”; Cohen, *In War’s Wake: Europe’s Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*.

From the very beginning of this “grand return home” the Soviet Union and its satellite countries held a firm position regarding the repatriation of their citizens. The Yalta agreement which was signed between the Soviet Union, the US and the UK, included a demand for unquestionable, and if needed forced, repatriation of all Soviet POWs and civilians. As a result, by the end of September 1945, 2,272,000 DPs were sent from the British, American and French zones of occupation to the Soviet Union.²¹⁶ Meanwhile, the Soviet authorities sent home around one million of Western nationals, including civilians and prisoners of war from their zone.²¹⁷

With the passing of time, the pressure of the DP's claims and political circumstances caused the relief workers and the Western authorities to facilitate resettlement alongside repatriation. Since the autumn of 1945 displaced people, especially those who originated from Eastern European countries, began to object more and more often to repatriation and, instead, hoped for emigration. The voices of these people were neglected during the summer of 1945, but by the end of the year, they pushed forward discussions about a law that would clearly define the status of displaced people and non-returnees.²¹⁸ From September 1945 onwards forced repatriation started to cease and finally the resolution submitted to the UN General Assembly on 12th February 1946 stated that not a single person should be sent back to their home country by force.²¹⁹ What is more, the February resolution introduced the right of asylum for those, who could justify that repatriation would endanger their lives. Displaced people could ask for refugee status based on the threat of political persecution in their home country.²²⁰ In September 1947, a former vice-director of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, published an article in the journal “International Organization” in which he explained how UN officials defined the differences between displaced people and refugees. In his words, the essential feature of refugees was that they were uprooted but the fear of oppression in their home country impeded their return,

“These refugees are distinguished by the characteristics which throughout human history have represented a special - and specially difficult - problem. *They are outside of their countries of nationality or former habitual residence because of*

²¹⁶ Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 199; Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 5–6, 11, 20.

²¹⁷ Gousseff, “Des migrations de sorties de guerre qui reconfigurent la frontière,” 431.

²¹⁸ Holian, “Anticommunism in the Streets,” 139–40; Gousseff, “Des migrations de sorties de guerre qui reconfigurent la frontière,” 431.

²¹⁹ Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 27.

²²⁰ Bevans, “International Refugee Organization Constitution, with Annexes,” 299.

fear for life or liberty on account of race, religion or political belief, and are not yet firmly re-established. Many of them were not refugees in the strict sense when they first left their countries, having been removed therefrom by the Germans for forced labor or other purposes; these have entered the refugee category while abroad, having become unwilling to return home because changes there have created in them the fear which is the central point in the definition just given.”²²¹

From 1946, those DPs who refused repatriation stayed in the Western occupied zones and formed a part of the so-called last million. The majority of these people were citizens of Eastern European countries, and many of those who came from the former eastern Polish territories became the so-called “hard core” refugees, as their resettlement turned out to be a long-standing humanitarian problem.²²² The US authorities admitted that neither the UNRRA nor the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, established in 1938, could solve the problem of non-repatriates, people who did not wish to go back home. Neither of the two agencies had a working plan that included the option of emigration for the DPs. For this reason, they agreed to create a new international organization, the future International Refugee Organization, that would have a mandate to resettle people.²²³ The IRO was founded by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1946 and by July 1947 was fully immersed in working with the DPs. It was publically announced that the IRO would work on resolving the DP problem in Europe by repatriating and resettling them,

“To provide a final solution to the problems of hundreds of thousands of refugees and persons displaced by the war and who still remain in the occupied zones of Europe, the International Refugee Organization was established by the United Nations. [...] As provided in its constitution, the primary task of the International Refugee Organization will be repatriation of refugees and displaced persons, with the secondary task of resettlement of persons who, for valid reasons, cannot return to their countries of origin.”²²⁴

Unlike the UNRRA, the IRO was not completely subordinate to the Allied military authorities, and, theoretically, it had greater freedom in its actions and ability to make decisions. However, the US government financed more than half of its budget. This fact gave

²²¹ Patrick Murphy Malin, “The Refugee: A Problem for International Organization,” *International Organization* 1, no. 3 (1947): 443–44.

²²² Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 8.

²²³ Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 7–12, 17–18, 28; Gousseff, “Des migrations de sorties de guerre qui reconfigurent la frontière,” 432.

²²⁴ “International Refugee Organization,” *International Organization* 1, no. 1 (1947): 137.

its contemporaries a reason to believe that by using the IRO, the US authorities gained control over migration movements in Europe and beyond. The Soviet spokespersons, in addition, claimed that the organization was a tool for American politics in Europe.²²⁵

The Soviet authorities had not changed their objectives and throughout the entire negotiation period with the Western Allied nations, especially in 1946-1947, in regards to the foundation of the IRO and the drafting of its constitution, they remained convinced that repatriation was the only possible solution for the DP problem. As a consequence, major controversies broke out over the issue of the legal status or refugee rights of DPs, and war criminals.²²⁶ During the discussion on drafting a UN resolution regarding refugees, the Soviet delegation, supported by the Yugoslav delegation, asked to make two amendments to the text. The first amendment demanded that no propaganda against DPs returning to their native countries or against the interests of the UN or its members should be allowed in the DPs camps. The second insisted on the unquestionable repatriation of war criminals even if they claimed refugee status. It emphasized that all “[q]uislings, traitors and war criminals, as persons who discredited themselves by collaboration in any form with the enemies of the UN” cannot “hide themselves under the guise of refugees” and should be returned to their countries immediately.²²⁷ Although the repatriation of POWs and war criminals was in line with the Allied nations’ views, the difference was that the Soviet authorities interpreted these notions much more widely than the other governments did. They defined collaboration and treason very broadly and flexibly applied these terms in relation to all possible political enemies, anti-communists and many of those who had been living abroad. People from the latter group were considered to have been “contaminated” by their new experience and now refused to go home. Any person found outside the Soviet Union after the war could potentially be accused of collaboration and was suspected of espionage or betrayal of the Motherland.²²⁸

The Soviet representatives claimed that most people would “naturally” want to go home, only those who had something to hide, for example, traitors or collaborators would have a reason to refuse. Instead, they preferred resettlement, or to stay in the DPs camps, rather than be

²²⁵ Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 10.

²²⁶ Cohen, 24.

²²⁷ “The General Assembly,” 1947, AJ/43/1036, AN, Paris.

²²⁸ Nick Baron, “Remaking Soviet Society: The Filtration of Returnees from Nazi Germany, 1944–49,” in *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945–50*, ed. Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 90; Polian, *Zhertvy Dvukh Diktatur*.

repatriated in order to either hide their guilt of committing war crimes and collaborating with the Nazi or to escape the work of reconstructing their homelands. Either of these reasons led to the conclusion that DPs were not refugees and could not be eligible for the long-term aid of the international humanitarian organizations or expect to be assisted in emigration.²²⁹

The Soviet officials firmly reasserted their standpoint regarding the repatriation of DPs in a very palpable manner. Along the western border of the Soviet Union, they built an extensive infrastructural system to regulate and facilitate repatriation from the West. This “enormous multi-headed mechanism of camps and transporting network”²³⁰ became the Soviet counterbalance to the DPs camps network that was established in Western Europe. During the war, with the advance of the Red Army to the West, the Soviet authorities launched unorganized repatriation activities using their embassies and military personnel for this purpose. In August 1944, the Soviet government issued the first official directive regarding arrangements for the Soviet citizens' return from abroad. Three months later, a top-secret resolution of the Council of the People's Commissars of the SSR (*Sovnarkom*²³¹) established the Administration of the Plenipotentiary of the Council of the People's Commissars of the SSR on Repatriation of Soviet citizens from Germany and German-occupied countries. The General Colonel, Philipp Golikov became its head and, consequently, a Plenipotentiary for Repatriation Affairs in the Soviet Union.²³² Departments and divisions responsible for repatriation were also opened on a republican level and in the regional council of deputies.²³³ The Repatriation Administration organized and supervised internal and foreign branches and missions involving repatriation activities. Additionally, it composed and sent repatriation teams with the task of searching for, and transporting people who were living in territories occupied by the American, British and French armies back to the Soviet Union.²³⁴

In order to transport, screen and control the flow of people returning from Germany and other countries, the Soviet government built a network of camps and temporary centers for assembling and returning people from Western and Eastern European territories. The ministry

²²⁹ Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 22–23; Gousseff, “Des migrations de sorties de guerre qui reconfigurent la frontière,” 432.

²³⁰ Polian P. cited in: Pastushenko, *V'izd Repatriantiv Do Kyeva Zaboroneno...*, 45.

²³¹ *Sovet Narodnyh Komissarov SSSR*, in March 1946 was renamed into the Council of Ministers of the USSR - *Sovet ministrov SSSR*.

²³² Pastushenko, *V'izd Repatriantiv Do Kyeva Zaboroneno...*, 42–44; Dyczok, *The Grand Alliance and Ukrainian Refugees*, 24–25; Polian, *Zhertvy Dvukh Diktatur*, 189–90.

²³³ Pastushenko, *V'izd Repatriantiv Do Kyeva Zaboroneno...*, 41–42.

²³⁴ Dyczok, *The Grand Alliance and Ukrainian Refugees*, 30.

of defense, *Narkomat oborony*, established 127 frontline and 57 army assembly-transit centers (*sborno-peresyl'nye punkty*) where crowds of repatriates were gathered before being conveyed across the Soviet border. Nine assembly-transmit centers (*priiomno-peredaval'nyh punkta*) were opened in the German and Austrian territories along the demarcation line between the Allied armies. The Soviet army used these sites for the exchange of POWs and displaced persons with the Western Allied powers.²³⁵

After the trains with repatriates crossed the western Soviet border they brought people to one of the 35 assembly-transit camps and centers placed alongside the border for screening and registration. Next, to these camps, the NKVD had its own network of verification-filtration camps. There the NKVD officers checked and interviewed all the DPs above fourteen years old, who had been 'contaminated' by the Western experience. The outcome of these investigations determined the future destination point of the repatriates, that is, would they be free to go home or not. Lastly, 45 assembly-transmit centers were opened close to or in the region of large railway stations. Trains transported people to these centers where they were supposed to be registered, fed, provided with medical and hygienic care and identity documents. After having stayed at these centers for some time and passing all the necessary procedures, the people were, finally, either sent to their old or new place of residence.²³⁶

The same system of assembly-transit centers and camps was used to repatriate children. Remarkably, however, this enormous system, which was designed to manage the movement of people, it seems, did not initially envisage that adults would come with children or, that children would arrive unaccompanied. In February 1945, the sanitary department of the Repatriation Administration issued general instructions on the repatriation of Soviet children. This instruction in general terms described how children should be collected and registered, brought to the repatriation centers and sent to the Soviet Union. It defined the people responsible for each phase of the repatriation process and the people who had to accompany the children, such as doctors, nurses, teachers, armed commanders and state administrators. The children's health was one of the critical points emphasized in the document. The instruction regulated what children should be given to eat and to wear and in which conditions they should travel in and be accommodated in the transition camps and centers. Particularly,

²³⁵ Pastushenko, *V'izd Repatriantiv Do Kyeva Zaboroneno...*, 42–44.

²³⁶ Pastushenko, 42–44.

“Arriving orphans must be separated from the adult population in groups of 20-25 children. Each group should be provided with the staff and necessary personal care items. Rooms allocated to children must meet all medical and hygiene requirements related to the temperature conditions, ventilation, lighting, and cleanliness and must be equipped with baby cots or trestle beds and bedding for each child. [...] All children must pass medical examination, sick children should be sent to the hospital.”²³⁷

However, in practice, it seems that neither of the repatriation facilities were prepared to receive infants, toddlers or young children. The reports sent to the Repatriation administration complained about the lack of suitable food, diapers, child’s clothing, pushchairs and qualified personnel.²³⁸ People who returned from the western occupied territories indicated the same issues, especially when they compared the conditions that they had experienced at the UNRRA’s or the IRO’s DP camps. At one of the train stations, two women were told to leave their children's strollers, which they had brought from Germany because, as there was no room for the strollers on the train. The women complained that unlike here,

“[i]n Germany we were provided with all kinds of assistance. Those, who had the infants were given special cards for children, for which we received fats, sugar, sweets [...]. We were able to buy a stroller for child, for the comfort and wellness of a child. In Germany they helped us to buy a stroller to raise children “culturally” (*chtoby kul'turno rastit' detei*), and here we are not given an opportunity to travel with it.”²³⁹

Such comparisons placed the Soviet system in an unattractive light and was a matter of concern for the administration. For this reason, this instance ended up in the report dedicated to the political education of the repatriated population.

From September 1945 fewer and fewer displaced people arrived at the Soviet repatriation facilities. The different views on the solutions for the DP problem between the Soviet and

²³⁷ “Instruktsiia Po Repatriatsii Iz Germanii i Okkupirovannyh Stran Sovetskikh Detei-Sirot i Vremenko Uteriavshykh Roditelei.” February 7, 1945, F.20, Op. 12, Spr. 763, Tsentral’nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Vyschchyh Organiv Vlady.

²³⁸ Zozulenko, “Letter to Narkompros and Narkomzdrav,” January 1945, F. 20, Op. 12, Spr. 355, Ark. 4,5, Tsentral’nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Vyschchyh Organiv Vlady.

²³⁹ She continued: “We have become of better culture now and will provide cultural upbringing to our children.” “Informatsiia o Politicheskoi-Massovoi Rabote Sredi Repatriirovanogo Naseleniia,” n.d., F.1, Op. 23, Spr. 1480, Ark. 14, Tsentral’nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Hromads’kyh Ob’ednan’. Here and further translations from Russian are mine.

Western authorities did not result in a consensus. Both the UN February resolution and the IRO foundation were introduced in anticipation that displaced people would be given the right to choose between repatriation, settlement in Germany or emigration. The Soviet officials, meanwhile, advocated that the international humanitarian organization that helps displaced populations should only serve one function, that is, facilitate repatriation.

After having drawn the Western representatives into a long process of debates and bargains, the Soviet delegation did not support the UN's resolution on the right of asylum for refugees in February 1946, nor did they vote for the IRO constitution in December 1946 or become its member-state. Sir George Rendelat from the Foreign Office in London, in his interview for the official history of the IRO, recalled that during the discussions in 1946 the Soviets came close to agreeing to a draft of the constitution. Mr. Feonov, a Soviet representative, agreed during one of the discussions with 18 out of 20 disputable paragraphs of the constitution's draft. Then during the General assembly, Mr. Vishinsky, another Soviet representative, turned down Feonov's decision. Thus, Rendelat summarized it occurred that "having led the Western powers along as far as they could, the Soviets and the Yugoslavs Governments finally stood out and refused to support the IRO constitution when it was put on vote".²⁴⁰ Later accounts made by the IRO's workers pointed out that the Soviets were not only against the IRO but of the entire system of refugee protection and therefore did not take part in voting on it.²⁴¹

The Search and Exchange of Children

Even though the Soviet representatives had withdrawn from the negotiations and refused to collaborate with the newly established IRO, they continued discussing the exchange of POWs and displaced persons with the Western Allies. In particular, they continued participating in the Directorate of Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons' meetings, as the member of the Allied control authority. However, from late 1945 onwards, the Soviet zone of occupation gradually became impenetrable to the Western authorities as well as the IRO's welfare officers.²⁴² Moreover, the search teams from the other three occupying powers only had a limited access to the Soviet zone. Even before the UN's 1946 February resolution on

²⁴⁰ "Conversation with Sir George Rendelat, the Foreign Office London," October 10, 1951, AJ/43/140, AN, Paris.

²⁴¹ "Conference with M. Blanchard," March 17, 1952, AJ/43/140, AN, Paris.

²⁴² Gousseff, "Des migrations de sorties de guerre qui reconfigurent la frontière," 433.

refugees, the mutual exchange of displaced persons and of information about missing people between the American, British, French authorities, on the one side, and the Soviet representatives, on the other, became visibly complicated. The polemics between diplomats during the UN's sessions adopted a Cold War rhetoric, and from the autumn of 1945 so did the actions and decisions of the people involved in the search for and identification of displaced adults and children. The analysis of displaced Ukrainian children's cases demonstrates that issues around unaccompanied minors became the *place d'armes* for the Cold-War wrestle between the former Allies. Discussions about the repatriation, resettlement and search for the relatives of these children provide exceptionally vivid examples of the tense relationships between the opposing parties. The problem that occurred with the repatriation of the Eastern European adult DPs led to conflicts between the former Allies. But, unlike with adults, when it came to the welfare of minors, the military officials had to speak on their behalf and, therefore, their statements often reflected the political atmosphere and were perceived as being politically charged. For instance, a decision about the non-repatriation of children would be read as a statement against the principles of population resettlement and renationalization of children and post-war treaties, the Yalta agreement in particular.

As early as September 1945, the debates held during the Directorate of Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons' meetings displayed a lack of the Soviet officials' will to continue collaborating in regards to the search for missing adults and children and their exchange. During the following months, the representatives of the four Allied powers met several times to discuss among other things the US officials' plan for the mutual exchange of information concerning people lost as a result of the war. The joint effort of all the occupying authorities in the four zones was particularly important on the search for and registration of unaccompanied children. Communication between the occupied powers and the national governments allowed the IRO officers to trace parents and relatives of displaced children in order to establish their origin, personal history, and to locate their parents and relatives. The latter would allow them to fulfil the main objective of the IRO, that is, the reunion of children and parents. During the first meeting in September the British representative raised the concern that while the French, Soviet, and American search teams had been permitted into the

British zone, the British officers were not allowed to the Soviet zone.²⁴³ As a matter of fact, since August 1945, three Soviet groups had been working with displaced people in the camps in the American, British and French zones.²⁴⁴ The British officer was anxious to know whether the situation would change any time soon so that the British search teams could gain access to the Soviet territory. In the end, he provocatively speculated that the Soviet government may have changed its position and in the belief that there was no further necessity for the mutual exchange of research teams.²⁴⁵

In response to the British representative's comments, Colonel Anatolii S. Yevseev, the chief of the Repatriation Department of the Soviet Military Administration in Germany,²⁴⁶ provided neither explanations nor promises, instead he assured the British officials that their assumption was not entirely correct. He said that to his knowledge there were no US or British citizens left in the Soviet zone. In addition, Yevseev explained that during the last two months, he had not received any official requests regarding missing citizens from the British or American authorities, whereas, the French administration had sent several inquiries. Therefore, he continued, the French representatives were able to visit any part of the Soviet zone and, in cooperation with Soviet officers', repatriate French, Belgian, Dutch and Luxemburg citizens. Summarizing he concluded that if the British and the US representatives sent specific inquiries, he would do his best to arrange for the assistance of Soviet officers to assist them in carrying out the searches.²⁴⁷

Nonetheless, the conflict was not settled and the issue of the reciprocal exchange of information in the search for civilians remained a matter for the future discussion. Over the course of the following meetings, it became clear that the Soviet officials had not changed their position and wanted to manage the search for missing people in their zone themselves. During the debates held on 19 September 1946, the British representative warned that "there was a danger of loss of goodwill between Soviet and British press, peoples and armies as a

²⁴³ "Allied Control Authority Directorate of Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons. Meeting in Berlin. Minutes," September 10, 1945, 6.1.1/82493261, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

²⁴⁴ Yan Foitzyk and Tatiana V. Tsarevskaiia-Diakina, eds., *Sovetskaia Politika v Otnoshenii Germanii 1944-1954. Dokumenty.*, trans. A.V. Doronin (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2009), 517.

²⁴⁵ "Allied Control Authority Directorate of Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons. Meeting in Berlin. Minutes," September 10, 1945.

²⁴⁶ Foitzyk and Tsarevskaiia-Diakina, *Sovetskaia Politika v Otnoshenii Germanii 1944-1954. Dokumenty.*, 811.

²⁴⁷ "Allied Control Authority Directorate of Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons. Meeting in Berlin. Minutes," September 10, 1945.

result of the apparent unwillingness of the Soviet Authorities”²⁴⁸ He asked that they allow British officers to search for their nationals in the Soviet zone and to provide them with the same facilities as the Soviet authorities had in the British sector. Colonel Yevseev, however, dismissed any further discussion regarding this controversial topic by saying that only the Soviet High Command, was in a position make decisions on such questions. He expressed hope that “the question would soon be settled favourably”.²⁴⁹ He replied in a very similar way to the US representative who asked about their lost military personnel in the Soviet zone of occupation and proposed to apply a principle of reciprocity in exchange for information regarding missing people in all four zones.²⁵⁰ The following meeting again brought no new results, Colonel Yevseev once more repeated that “the searches [for missing people] have already been made in the Soviet Zone” and indicated that after the Soviet administration had finished registering people in the zone, he would provide any details about US persons who were still there. Yet, this condition indicated that the American officials had to inquire about specific individuals who were known to be in the Soviet zone.²⁵¹

Eventually, no agreement was reached regarding the mutual exchange of information concerning civilians who were lost as a result of the war. Colonel Yevseev held the position that the American proposal concerning the reciprocal exchange of information was unnecessary. He said that the Central Tracing Bureau, established in 1944, covered all the necessary regulations related to the search of missing nationals. What is more, in March 1946, a month after the UN’s resolution on refugees was voted on, the Soviet authorities ordered to suspend the repatriation of Allied nationals, both civilians and POWs. From that moment on the return of Western nationals was subject to the unspoken precondition that Soviet citizens from the British, American or French camps be returned. In fact, as Catherine Gousseff has clearly shown in her study on the French POWs making their way back to their home country, during the summer of 1945 to the summer of 1946, the Soviet officials abruptly slowed the repatriation of French POWs from the Soviet zone of occupation.²⁵² By the summer of 1946,

²⁴⁸ “Allied Control Authority Directorate of Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons. Meeting in Berlin. Minutes,” September 19, 1945, 6.1.1/8249267-8249268, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

²⁴⁹ “Allied Control Authority Directorate of Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons.”

²⁵⁰ “Allied Control Authority Directorate of Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons. “

²⁵¹ “Allied Control Authority Directorate of Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons. Meeting in Berlin. Minutes,” September 29, 1945, 6.1.1/8249275-8249276, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

²⁵² Gousseff, “Des migrations de sorties de guerre qui reconfigurent la frontière,” 433; For te collection of document on this topic see: Catherine Klein-Gousseff et al., eds., *Retours d'URSS: Les Prisonniers de Guerre et Les Internés Français Dans Les Archives Soviétiques, 1945-1951*, Mondes Russes, États, Sociétés, Nations (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2001).

the Western border of the Soviet Union was sealed. At this point, the major movement of populations ceased, and, the idea of the negative influence of the decadent West on the Soviet citizens entered Soviet ideological discourse.²⁵³

The Western Allied authorities made an attempt to establish a tracing bureau in the Soviet zone of Germany, which could search for citizens from the United Nations' countries. However, their hope was ruined in early 1946, when they were informed that the Displaced Persons Central Information Bureau (*Tsentral'noe spravochnoe biuro o peremeschennyh litsah*), that had been established in March 1945 in Moscow, was responsible for tracing and registering not only Russian or Soviet citizens but also other lost nationals in the Soviet zone. Disappointment and, perhaps, a preview of future difficulties was expressed in the concluding sentence of the welfare officer's message on this issue: "[...] it is interesting to learn that these unfortunate people are now to become the responsibility of the National Tracing Bureau in Moscow".²⁵⁴

In light of the cessation of cooperation between the former Allies, the future attempts of the welfare and search officers to acquire information about missing children or their relatives from the authorities in the Soviet occupation zone faced many difficulties. In 1948, one of the reports described the search correspondence with the Soviet zone was "handicapped".²⁵⁵ Cornelia Heise, the chief of the child search branch, complained that instead of channelling a combined effort into the child search and identification process, the Soviet representatives showed no interest in visiting the Child Search Branch of the ITS and only criticized the IRO's work.²⁵⁶ The reason for such a "handicapped" correspondence ranged from logistical and organizational problems, such as lack of information and resources, to political ones. The Soviet officials it would seem were unwilling to provide any personal information about people who were on Soviet territory to the Western welfare workers. One of the reports noted that the Soviet authorities suspected the tracing officers of spying in the Soviet zone of occupation.²⁵⁷

²⁵³ Gousseff, "Des migrations de sorties de guerre qui reconfigurent la frontière," 441.

²⁵⁴ "Memorandum. Miss Warner to Miss E.Bark," January 4, 1946, 6.1.1/82498702, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

²⁵⁵ "Tracing in Berlin and the Soviet Zone of Occupation. 3 August 1948," n.d., 6.1.1/82498312-82498314, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

²⁵⁶ "Relationship with Soviet Liaison Officers Regarding Child Search and Tracing," July 19, 1948, 6.1.2/82486707, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

²⁵⁷ "Tracing in Berlin and the Soviet Zone of Occupation. 3 August 1948."

In a number of instances, the IRO's workers and ITS' (and before it the Central Tracing Bureau) search officers reported the difficulties that they faced when they tried contacting the Soviet authorities to acquire information about lost children. Most frequently they complained that the Soviet officials' did not respond to their inquiries or that when they did their answers took a long time to arrive. Besides, the welfare officer testified that instead of having a dialogue about lost children and their relatives they often had to deal with a complete silence or have known information repeated back to them. Even acquiring official documents, such as birth or death certificates, from the Soviet territories at times became a problem. In some cases, the Soviet repatriation office did not send the necessary documents even when this was a precondition for repatriation, for example, the papers that proved that the parents or relatives of a particular child were still alive and looking for their children. All these instances made the tracing workers suspect that the Soviet officers were not providing sufficient attention to their requests.²⁵⁸

In Search For Sources

The lack of a dialogue between the former Allies stimulated the search and relief officers to look for other options and sources, which could help them to obtain the necessary background information about displaced people and foremost children. Many of their contacts were informal, that is to say, they obtained information through the assistance of individuals working for or cooperating with the Soviet administration.²⁵⁹ The search and welfare officers believed that their contacts with the German police, the Committee of Ex-Political Prisoners, the Red Cross Organizations and the national committees established by the DPs were fruitful sources of information. For instance, in 1946 the Central Tracing Bureau's (CTB) report on the Soviet zone stated that the German officials in the zone provided more information than the Soviets could,

“In a survey obtained from the Soviet Zone it should be stated that replies received from German authorities in the zone have been very good, showing that trouble as been taken to explore the widest field possible. [...] Very often we [CTB] have tried both means and have received reports both from the Soviet and

²⁵⁸ “Report on Russian Section,” November 9, 1946, 6.1.1/82498611-82498613, ITS Digital Archive, Paris; “Monthly Narrative Reports IRO Austria for November 1947,” n.d., AJ/43/785, AN, Paris; “Relationship with Soviet Liaison Officers Regarding Child Search and Tracing.”

²⁵⁹ “Tracing in Berlin and the Soviet Zone of Occupation. 3 August 1948.”

the German authorities on the same enquiry; in many cases we have received negative replies from the Soviet but an exact location from the German police".²⁶⁰

The German police and the Committee of Ex-Political Prisoners could furnish the welfare officers with the details that were kept in the Soviet occupation zone of Germany.²⁶¹ It has to be said that the Soviet authorities used their contacts with the local German officials in the same manner as the humanitarians did, that is, to obtain information regarding DPs that resided in the US or British zones of occupation. The US military government strongly disapproved of such practices and attempted to prohibit the Soviet representatives from asking the German civil authorities for the details about DPs living in the IRO's camps, or free-living DPs, that is, those who lived outside of the refugee camps.²⁶² As a result, both sides saw the German administration as a possible source of information at the time of the Cold War confrontation.

Throughout the period of the IRO's work, its most valuable and helpful source appeared to be the Red Cross established in Soviet Bloc countries. In particular, the Red Cross in Moscow tended to reply more often than the Soviet Repatriation Administration's office. The Polish Red Cross was a useful source for obtaining some pieces of information about the relatives and families of Ukrainian children too. The IRO discovered another potential source, through the Polish press, the Civil Registry Records Archive in Poland held the registry books from Western Ukraine. Contacts with the archive, presumably, through the IRO's office in Poland or the Polish authorities, allowed the welfare officers to acquire the official birth, marriage, and death certificates for displaced people who came from former Eastern Poland.²⁶³

The national émigré committees at times were also able to furnish the welfare officers with some details about adults and children. In 1946, Cornelia Heise, chief of the child search branch admitted that adult leaders of the national groups in the DP camps were a valuable source of information especially in regards to children.²⁶⁴ Their members could play the role of experts, as they had a proficiency in the language, knowledge of geography and local

²⁶⁰ "Report on Russian Section."

²⁶¹ "Note on Discussion between Captain T. Shaughnessy and Captain R. Flohr. CTB," April 29, 1946, 6.1.1/8248340-82498341, ITS Digital Archive, Paris; "Report on Russian Section."

²⁶² "US Army Directive AG 211-GNMCS 'Privileges of Soviet Liaison Officers in Displaced Persons Camps Other than Wholly Soviet,'" March 8, 1946, 6.1.2/82489707-82489708, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

²⁶³ "Legal Letter No 8. Civil Registry Documents for Persons from Former Eastern Poland," December 24, 1948, 6.1.2/82489795, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

²⁶⁴ "Recognition of National Groups Who Have No Liaison Representations," July 3, 1946, 6.1.2/82491511-82491512, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

specifics, which made it possible for them to identify unaccompanied children. For instance, the search cases of the Ukrainian children demonstrated that the IRO's child welfare officers often wrote to the Ukrainian Committees in Germany, asking for any information about the background of children's parents and their location. Also, there are some indications that by 1948 the welfare and search officers preferred to work with the representatives of voluntary societies than with the national liaison officers. In August 1948, Cornelia Heise wrote to the ITS director that voluntary societies "with recognized status in the home country",²⁶⁵ were more useful and valuable in searching for children, identifying them and finding information about their families, than the national liaison officers. She indicated that the national liaison officers became dependent on their governmental authorities when making any decisions regarding children, "Liaison officers were at their maximum usefulness in the days when they were authorised to make decisions on nationality and to accept children for repatriation".²⁶⁶ It would seem that the centralization, bureaucratization and politicization, of the decision-making process regarding unaccompanied children, could complicate and slow down communication between the tracing officers and national representatives or even cut it off, as in cases with Soviet liaison representatives. Meanwhile, the members of the national voluntary organizations also had knowledge of the local geography, citizenship laws and channels of communication that the ITS search and welfare officers were interested in. In addition, they might be more responsive to the needs of child search and tracing.

As a consequence of the difficulties in communication with the Soviet officials, the welfare officers had low expectations about receiving any positive search results when it involved sending a request to the Soviet officials. The search office continued to inquire about lost parents or children using official channels such as the Soviet Tracing Bureau and the Soviet Red Cross. Even after receiving no answer, they would repeat the enquiry a few more times. In many cases, this correspondence could last for a year or more. In the end, nevertheless, when all attempts to acquire further details had failed, the humanitarian workers would conclude that no parents or relatives of a child had been found. Then, consequently, a child was proved to be unaccompanied and the welfare officers could set up a resettlement plan for them.

²⁶⁵ "Use of National Liaison Officers in Child Search and Tracing Programme," August 31, 1948, 6.1.2/82491601-82491602, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

²⁶⁶ "Use of National Liaison Officers in Child Search and Tracing Programme."

Beyond The Border: The Soviet Officers in The DP Camps of American Zone

The correspondence with the Soviet authorities was “handicapped”. The IRO’s contact with the Soviet repatriation and liaison missions in the American and British zones of occupation were not much better. With the advance of the Cold War, the cooperation and communication between the humanitarians and Soviet officials in the search for children and parents deteriorated. The US military authorities instructed the welfare officers to only send those unaccompanied children who had already been identified as Soviet citizens to the Soviet liaison officers. By holding the right to decide which children should be passed to the Soviet representatives the American zonal military authorities ensured their power over identifying the nationality and citizenship of displaced children from Eastern Europe. Their decisions were based on their political positions regarding the recent territorial acquisitions of the Soviet Union and on how they interpreted the citizenship of these children. This meant, for instance, that the children from Western Ukraine, together with children from the Baltic countries, were not recognized as Soviet citizens.

Sharing very little (or no) information about displaced people or POWs of other nationalities found in their zone of occupation, the Soviet authorities sent a large number of enquiries about missing children and adults who they believed were Soviet citizens. They demanded the full reports on the civil Soviet population staying in the other three zones of occupation and subsequent repatriation of those people from the American and British zonal officials. Finally, they attempted to see the alleged Soviet adults and children in person in order to persuade them to return home or, in cases of minors, to claim the custody over them.²⁶⁷

The administrative order No 199, issued by UNRRA headquarters in September 1946 was to become “a skeleton order for operational and repatriation procedures within which workable repatriation plans may be built”. It provided a wide field of opportunities for the Soviet representatives to communicate with DPs and encourage them to return home. This order summarized the US military authorities’ policy on these issues, and it was disseminated in March 1946 and had the force of law in the American zone of occupation.²⁶⁸ At the very beginning, the document stated that the UNRRA and the military authorities had agreed that

²⁶⁷ “Relationship with Soviet Liaison Officers Regarding Child Search and Tracing.”

²⁶⁸ “Administrative Order No. 199. ‘Repatriation of Persons Who Lived within the Boundaries of USSR Prior to 1 September 1939, and Persons from Lithuanian, Latvia, Estonia, and the Ukraine,’” November 11, 1946, 6.1.2/82486704-82486706, ITS Digital Archive, Paris; “US Army Directive AG 211-GNMCS.”

the “speedy return” of displaced people was the main objective of the UNRRA’s humanitarian assistance mandate. The document outlawed the use of force for returning people to their country of origin but described in detail how the Soviet representatives could act in order to persuade the DPs to accept repatriation. In this context, as it seemed, the Soviet officers had considerable room for action. In particular, they were allowed and encouraged to distribute printed materials, to meet with the DPs and to organize cultural activities. What is more, as claimed by the order, the information on tough emigration quotas, the “uncertain” future of the IRO’s status and work plans could also be communicated.²⁶⁹ The US Army’s order specified that, “Any accredited Soviet Liaison Officer will be given the privilege of explaining to, discussing with, and persuading any Soviet citizens, Baltic nationals and persons of doubtful citizenship who may be Soviet citizens in the matter of repatriation”, yet no “political or other propaganda” was permitted.²⁷⁰ In March 1946, almost a year after forced repatriation had ceased and a month after the UN’s February resolution on the voluntary character of repatriation, these documents several repeat times that everything should be done “in a manner which excludes the use of force, threat, coercion”.²⁷¹

Nevertheless, if carefully read and put in context with the demands and communications that the humanitarian officers and the Soviet representatives exchanged with each other, it shows that in early 1946 the Soviet representatives’ access to the DP camps and their communication with DPs and especially with unaccompanied children was limited to these policy documents. The limits were introduced with the administrative orders, such as the UNRRA’s order No 199 and US Army’s order No 33. These instructions regulated the right of entrance for the Soviet liaison officers to the DP camps, as it gave them the possibility to consult the lists of DPs and to interview people.²⁷² Despite the fact that the US army called these regulations the “privileges of the Soviet Liaison Officers”, they were rather obligations that restricted their possibility to meet with DPs. As specified in these instructions, the Soviet officers were permitted to visit the DPs’ camps, though only when accompanied by a member of the US military authority. They could interview any Soviet citizen in the camp, although only “in the presence of U.S. representative”, and could not talk with any “unwilling non-Soviet residents” in any of the DPs camps. The Administrative order No 33 indicated that the Soviet authorities could ask for a list of the Soviet DPs residing in a camp, but they would receive only the

²⁶⁹ “Administrative Order No. 199.”

²⁷⁰ “US Army Directive AG 211-GNMCS.”

²⁷¹ “US Army Directive AG 211-GNMCS.”

²⁷² “Administrative Order No. 199”; “US Army Directive AG 211-GNMCS.”

records of “all persons determined by US military authorities to be Soviet citizens”.²⁷³ Moreover, they could not demand the registers of the DPs from the local German administration.²⁷⁴ Finally, for instance, in the British zone of occupation, the directors of the DP camps held the right to limit or forbid the Soviet representatives from visiting the camp when such a visit would threaten the order and security of the camp.²⁷⁵

As scholarship has indicated the process of limiting the Soviet officers’ access to the DPs’ camps in the US and UK zones started in late 1945 - early 1946.²⁷⁶ Before autumn 1945, the Soviet representatives had almost uncontrolled access to the displaced persons’ camps and even participated in their administration by taking the role of the camps’ commandants.²⁷⁷ From 1946 the Soviet representatives and liaison officers were still able to visit the DP camps and talk to people, but the US zonal authorities and UNRRA camp officials tried to regulate and control each of their visits as much as possible in spite of the chaotic conditions in the occupied territories. In her memoirs one of the UNRRA’s welfare workers stated that in autumn 1946 the higher authorities discouraged them from allowing the Soviet representatives to meet with unaccompanied children, “many UNRRA workers had already been concerned [...] about the so far unofficial 'advice' from above not to allow Soviet liaison officers into DP camps nor to expose unaccompanied children to them.”²⁷⁸ Some of them, she continued, sometimes “ignored this advice at least with regard to the youngest unaccompanied children”,²⁷⁹ this was, exactly what the US military authorities wished to avoid.

The Soviet reaction to the policy and regulations that restricted their presence in the DP camps was sharp. They communicated in the press and through official correspondence and public statements their scepticism regarding the UNRRA’s and IRO’s work, they also expressed their suspicion concerning the repatriation policies of the Western authorities. Official Soviet propaganda personified the obscure concept of “the West” and told people that the British and American powers obstructed the repatriation of “Soviet” children using

²⁷³ “US Army Directive AG 211-GNMCS.”

²⁷⁴ “US Army Directive AG 211-GNMCS.”

²⁷⁵ Polian, *Zhertvy Dvukh Diktatur*, 263.

²⁷⁶ Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism*, 46.

²⁷⁷ Polian, *Zhertvy Dvukh Diktatur*, 215.

²⁷⁸ Gitta Sereny, *The Healing Wound: Experiences and Reflections on Germany, 1938-2001* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 49.

²⁷⁹ Sereny, 49.

different “formalities and their own notions of children's belonging”, as one of the Soviet administrative officials in Kyiv called it.²⁸⁰ The public broadcast messages and official statements, transmitted by the Soviet Union, accused the IRO and the American military authorities of deliberately attempting to “hide” the Soviet children from repatriation.²⁸¹ Similar complaints and accusations were repeated numerous times throughout the post-war decades and progressively became an integral part of the discourse in the Cold War battles.

The chorus of official and unofficial complaints specifically underlined that the Anglo-American armies together with the UNRRA's and IRO's humanitarian workers blocked the exchange of information and deliberately withheld the Soviet DPs. It was said that the leaflets disseminated in the DP camps distorted the description of the life in the Soviet Union, and persuaded people against repatriation to the Soviet Union and Soviet Bloc countries, while the Soviet books and newspapers, which described the real situation in the Soviet Republics, were not allowed in the camps. Moreover, the Soviets pointed out that the details about where the DPs could find a Soviet embassy or how they could apply for repatriation were not made readily available to them. The authorities in Moscow believed that they receive incomplete lists of Soviet citizens. Taking into account all these issues, the Soviet officials were convinced that the Anglo-American authorities violated the agreements signed between the former Allies, and resolutions adopted by the UN, UNRRA and the IRO.²⁸²

In this light, in 1948 Cornelia Heise, the chief of the child search branch, reported that the Soviet liaison officers “create an official flurry whenever they learn of children whom we have located and registered and whom they consider Soviet nationals”.²⁸³ Often this meant that the Soviet officers abruptly showed up at the DP camps or children centers and argued forcefully with the welfare officers regarding the children that they believed to be “hidden” from them. Such a case, for instance, occurred in 1946 at the children's home in the DP camp in Regensburg, where unaccompanied Polish-Ukrainian children lived. Gitta Sereny, a former UNRRA child care worker, described the Soviet officers' “raid” and their attempt to take the children,

²⁸⁰ Polkovnik Pysarenko, “Upravlenie Po Repatreatsii i Rozysku Grajdan Ob'edenionnyh Natsyi,” n.d., F.2 Op. 7 Spr. 7927 Ark. 69, Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Vyschchih Organiv Vlady.

²⁸¹ Polian, *Zherty Dvukh Diktatur*.

²⁸² “Memorandum Concerning Improvement and Speeding up of Repatriation of Soviet Citizens in UNRRA Camps and Outside Camps but Receiving UNRRA Assistance,” n.d., 6.1.1/82498315-82498317, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

²⁸³ “Relationship with Soviet Liaison Officers Regarding Child Search and Tracing.”

“[...] just before 11 p.m., four liaison officers accompanied by security officers in uniforms we had never seen before. Two covered trucks which arrived with them were parked across the street. They had been informed, they told us across the closed gate, that we were keeping fifty unaccompanied children in a Children's House, where they were being subjected to persuasive orientation with the purpose of dissuading them from returning home. They demanded to see them, now.”²⁸⁴

The camp director and welfare officers working there were informed beforehand by the US Counter Intelligence Corps that the Soviet officers would be coming, so they indeed “hid” the children, that is placed them with adult DPs who were supposed to play the role of their parents. Paradoxically, it would seem that this strategy demonstrated that the Soviet authorities had a reason accuse the US military officers and UNRRA of hiding the children. However, from the viewpoint of the welfare workers, such actions helped them to avoid violence and the intervention of the Soviet representatives in the UNRRA’s rehabilitation work with the children.²⁸⁵ The welfare workers still had to decide what would be in the “best interest” of these children and could not simply hand them over to the national representatives. Even Sereny, who believed that all children should be returned to their parents, in this particular case implied that children should not be forced to go with the Soviet representatives, especially considering that their parents might reside in Poland as well as in the Soviet Union.

Another such “flurry” happened on an afternoon in July 1949, when two Soviet repatriation officers accompanied by an interpreter visited the IRO children's home in Leoben city in Austria. This episode exemplified how the arguments that the IRO’s welfare workers used to prevent the Soviet officers from seeing unaccompanied children had evolved since 1946. The aim of their visit was to inspect the number of “Russian” children living in Leoben and to inquire when the IRO welfare officers would be ready recommend these children for repatriation. Upon their arrival, the repatriation officers had a short conversation with one of the IRO child care officers. The tone and the content of the dialogue demonstrated that the Soviet officers aggressively approached the discussion about “Russian”, meaning Soviet, children. As usual, they criticized the IRO’s work and expressed their suspicion about the number of Soviet children living in the camp. In the first place, the repatriation officer wanted to know why there were only two Russian children, as during his previous visit to Leoben,

²⁸⁴ Sereny, *The Healing Wound*, 31.

²⁸⁵ Sereny, 32.

“[t]he Camp Administration showed [him] documents for 3 Russian children”. “Where are these three Russian children?” wondered the Soviet representative, insisting that the child officer had to remember their previous meeting. She replied that she had no knowledge of which documents were shown to them before, but at the moment there were only two, presumably, “Russian” boys in Leoben's center. The IRO, she told him expected to receive the certificates of nationality for these children, but the Soviet representatives gave no credence to her words, one of the Soviet officers concluded that “When you say there are only two children when there are three, it is like saying that night is day and day is night”.²⁸⁶

This instance is revealing on several levels. First, it showed that even in 1949 the Soviet repatriation officers could access the IRO children's centers in the Western zone of occupation and talk to the welfare officers and children. However, the scene described above indicates that the Soviet officers' movements within the children's center were restricted to particular areas, that is, the room to which the IRO's officers invited them. In the same manner, their ability to act and make demands were narrow. They could receive documents and details regarding children whom the IRO and US military authorities granted permission. In addition, all official communication and papers regarding the children were sent via the central IRO offices. Finally, these cases highlighted the blossoming Soviet criticism against the IRO, which claimed that the humanitarians and US authorities deliberately blocked the repatriation of Soviet citizens, especially children.

In Leoben, the Soviet repatriation officers expressed their dissatisfaction at how the IRO approached the identification of the children's nationality and accused them of deliberately complicating the procedure so as to postpone the final decision: “This is absurd. It is just a clear demonstration that you use every artificial device possible to prevent these repatriations. This boy has a birth certificate - it is sufficient”.²⁸⁷ The childcare officer implied that their judgments were unjust and prejudiced. She advised them to check the records, including video recordings that would show “quite a number of children” had already been repatriated to the Soviet Union. She also explained the IRO's procedure for repatriation, namely, the need for a nationality certificate that had to be issued by the officials of the countries involved in child's identification. Her clarifications did not fully persuade the repatriation officers. They pushed on by insisting that the documents they saw were sufficient evidence of

²⁸⁶ “Visit of Soviet Mission. 13 July 1949,” July 14, 1949, AJ/43/990, AN, Paris.

²⁸⁷ “Visit of Soviet Mission. 13 July 1949.”

children's nationality. Finally, they asked to see the boys. They were only able to see one because the other one was out of the camp at the time, and after being assured that both boys were healthy and that their documents had been sent to the Soviet mission via the IRO office in Vienna, the Soviet repatriation officers left the Leoben Children's home.²⁸⁸

This episode caused anxiety and discontent within the upper echelons of the IRO. Their reaction is of particular interest for this research since it allows us to glimpse how the humanitarian and military authorities in the US zone communicated information about DP children to the Soviet representatives. The report that was submitted to the director of the IRO in Austria, the day after the incident in Leoben indicated that the child welfare officers should not show any documents to the Soviet representatives, especially those which contained "undetermined nationalities". It underlined that these documents were "confidential and property of IRO".²⁸⁹ According to US army regulations, the Soviet repatriation officers were excluded from the initial phase of deciding a child's nationality in the US zone of occupation, and were only able to see the files of children whom the IRO officers considered to be Russian or Soviet.

From the winter of 1945-1946, the welfare officers together with military authorities exercised full control over unaccompanied children in the US zone of occupation and decided when they would make first contact with their national representatives. The procedure of child identification was as follows. Firstly, the IRO's officers and workers at the Child Search branch of the International Tracing Service (or Central Tracing Bureau before 1948) collected all available background information about a child, the so-called social history, and verified its claimed nationality by all possible means in order to reach a final conclusion about his or her nationality. Only then were the documents sent to the national representatives, at which point, the liaison representatives were supposed to accept a child as a national or citizen of their respective countries and to approve or reject his or her repatriation. Nevertheless, the headquarters of the US military command always had the last word before the children's cases were passed to a particular national representative. In practice, this meant that the Soviet liaison officers would receive lists of displaced children and adults that had already been revised by the US military government. This was significant because the American officials did not consider that the Soviet liaison officers should represent Polish-Ukrainian children, so

²⁸⁸ "Visit of Soviet Mission. 13 July 1949."

²⁸⁹ "Visit of Soviet Mission. 13 July 1949."

they instructed the welfare officers not to report these cases to the Soviet liaison officers as well as cases of children whose nationality was in question. Following this scheme, from 1946 Polish-Ukrainian, and over time other Ukrainian children, ceased to be reported to the Soviet representatives, and likewise these representatives were excluded from participating in the process of certifying the nationality of these children.

Expressing their dissatisfaction about the way in which communication between the national representatives and humanitarian workers was conducted, the Soviet authorities demanded that the Western Allies “ cooperate fully with the Soviet officers visiting UNRRA camps”.²⁹⁰ They emphasized the need “to arrange for the Soviet officer visiting UNRRA camps free means of communication with Soviet citizens” and insisted, “to carry out, with the participation of the Soviet officers, a registration of all Soviet citizens”²⁹¹. The latter point is particularly enlightening for understanding the conflict at the Leoben children's center and, more generally, the disputes between the former Allied powers about child registration. The Soviet authorities did not trust the registration process that was administered by the IRO and was eager to screen displaced people, and especially children themselves. Their repeated demands on this issue indicated that it was never resolved. The Anglo-American authorities firmly stood their ground and were not willing to share any of the DPs' records or to let the Soviet's search personnel have unrestricted access to the DP camps and resettlement centers. From the incident in the Regensburg in 1946 when UNRRA was in charge of unaccompanied children until the Leoben case in 1949 when it was under the IRO's responsibility, the relationship between the Soviets and welfare officers had not changed much. In fact, the Soviet authorities had even less trust in the IRO than in UNRRA.

Lastly, to give a more balanced view, one has to acknowledge that the Soviet authorities were not alone in their attempts to gain authorization to search for children in occupied Germany and Austria. As reported by Cornelia Heise in January 1946, various countries pressured UNRRA for permission to search for “their” children in Germany. She pointed out that instead of combine efforts with the Central Tracing Bureau some countries had already been looking for their children in the occupied Germany. This problem was worrying for the humanitarians and was discussed during the inter-zone child welfare conference. The military command and the welfare authorities disapproved such practices in the same way, but their

²⁹⁰ “Memorandum Concerning Improvement and Speeding up of Repatriation.”

²⁹¹ “Memorandum Concerning Improvement and Speeding up of Repatriation.”

reasoning was different. Welfare officers were afraid that the representatives of the national countries would repatriate children on the basis of biopolitical and population problems and not the child's wellbeing.²⁹² In other words, although the welfare officers supported the return of children to their homelands, they underlined that the children's repatriation should not be a means for solving the population crisis. Having been put into words by the UNRRA's and IRO officers repeated the same idea. Those who upheld the idea of working in the child's "best interests" refused to reduce the child to a mere biological source for their nations. Building on this line of argument, the child welfare workers agreed that the task of searching for children in Germany should solemnly belong to the humanitarian agency that could conduct a "qualified" search and identification of children, the "UNRRA must pursue [search] program with vigor and continue to take the lead in search".²⁹³ The welfare workers most likely believed that unlike other actors in post-war relief they had the right qualifications and a presumed lack of bias. Eventually, the child repatriation mandate was administered by the UNRRA's and then IRO's welfare officers, and supervised by the military authorities in the American and British zones of occupied Germany and Austria. This did not undermine the general cooperation when searching for the children with the national liaison officers or voluntary organizations.

"A Very, Very Small Number of Soviet Children Have Been Located in The US Zone"

When in 1948 Cornelia Heise assured the Soviet representatives that the Child Tracing Service did not treat the Soviet cases differently, she could have been completely honest in her belief. In the same way that the welfare officer who spoke to the Soviet repatriation officers in Leoben could have conveyed her true belief that her office had not violated the rights of the Soviet repatriation representatives. In light of the uncertainties that surrounded the definition of Polish-Ukrainian or Baltic children's nationality, the welfare officers took a long time to ascertain the children's the 'true' nationality, for they believed that returning them to their true home would provide them with the best opportunity to prosper.²⁹⁴ Meanwhile, from a formal point of view, in the US zone, these children were not considered to be Soviet citizens.

²⁹² Cornelia Heise, "Monthly Report. Child Welfare Branch. January 1946," January 10, 1946, 6.1.2/82487241-82487243, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

²⁹³ Heise.

²⁹⁴ "Memorandum of Child Search."

All these sharp disagreements with the Soviet officials centered on the definition of Soviet citizenship. The authorities in Moscow believed that all those who resided within the post-war boundaries of the Soviet Union before the war were Soviet citizens. This implied that all the inhabitants of the Soviet Union within its new 1945 borders held Soviet citizenship regardless of their place of residence after the war or their refugee status. On top of that, they laid claim to all the children born to the Soviet women during or after the war, to all those found via the child search programs in German foster families, orphanages, child homes and other institutions.²⁹⁵ It is interesting to note here that after the Great War, the newly established Soviet government stripped all *émigrés* of Soviet citizenship on the presumption that they were all political enemies.²⁹⁶ Twenty-five years later, the already mature Soviet government insisted that even those who were away from home at the time of the territorial transfer, such as Western Ukrainians or citizens of the Baltic countries, automatically acquired Soviet citizenship.

Although both the American and the British authorities signed the Potsdam agreement,²⁹⁷ they did not recognize the fact that the Soviet Union absorbed Western Ukraine, Western Belarus and the Baltic countries (Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia). Therefore, they did not recognize that people from these territories held Soviet citizenship. This position had already been communicated to Moscow by the British government in summer 1945 and since then it had frequently been repeated. Consequently as non-Soviet citizens, according to the official statement, people from these territories were not subjected to forced repatriation.²⁹⁸

It is important to add that this policy on citizenship affected unaccompanied children the most. The uncertainty of their national status provided room for the Western authorities to claim that they had a legal right to withhold these children from being repatriated to the East. Adults after territorial transfer between Poland and the Soviet Union had a right to choose, and according to international law they were either supposed to accept or reject Soviet citizenship and on that basis decide whether or not they wanted to be repatriated. As was maintained by the rules, they could reject the proposition to be interviewed by the Soviet representatives or reject repatriation and ask for asylum. Meanwhile, as children could not

²⁹⁵ Polian, *Zherty Dvukh Diktatur*, 233–34.

²⁹⁶ Lohr, *Russian Citizenship*, 145–51.

²⁹⁷ See more on this topic: Neiberg, *Potsdam*.

²⁹⁸ Polian, *Zherty Dvukh Diktatur*, 200–201.

make legal claims, adults had to take responsibility for the children and decided for them. As it was sowed above, the welfare officers together with the American military authorities, as the higher authority in the occupied zone of Germany, assumed such a responsibility for the unaccompanied children of Polish-Ukrainian origin. EUCOM authorized the national status of these children and, subsequently, their repatriation.²⁹⁹ As a result, the unaccompanied children that EUCOM's headquarters did not authorize as being Soviet, were not redirected to the Soviet repatriation representatives. In other words, the American authorities were in the position of power to preselect the groups of children before the Soviet liaison officers could see them. In light of the coming Cold War, they did not wish to let the Soviet representatives select children for repatriation. They understood, it seems, that in such case the Soviet officials would repatriate children who had contested backgrounds. The Soviet authorities, meanwhile, continuously demanded that their officers be allowed to participate in the registration of the children. They expected to have a voice in making decisions on the children's nationality and their future settlement.

Regardless of all these rules, the IRO's welfare officers, as well as the Anglo-American military authorities, took a long time to formulate a clear official policy on the citizenship and nationality of unaccompanied children from the territories that had been newly absorbed by the Soviet Union. In December 1945 Cornelia Heise called for the guidance to establish the "nationality of the group of children called Ukrainian", so that to know which national representative should be responsible for them.³⁰⁰ Fourteen months later, however, she again emphasized in her report that the issue was not solved, "policy and legal problems involving children from Baltic countries and children of Ukrainian descent who lived within the 1939 boundaries of Poland require clarification".³⁰¹ It was clear that "Russian" children were referred to the Soviet liaison officers as Soviet citizens. Children from pre-1939 Soviet Ukraine were sometimes also repatriated to the Soviet Union. After the long discussion, in 1948 the UK, US and French authorities finally agreed that unaccompanied children of a Polish-Ukrainian origin, as well as Baltic children, were non-Soviet citizens.

²⁹⁹ "Military Government Regulations. Title 20. DPs, Dislodged Germans and Expellees."

³⁰⁰ Heise, "Child Welfare Field Report on Eastern Military District. November 28, 1945 to December 9, 1945."

³⁰¹ Heise, "Monthly Report. Child Welfare Branch. April 1947."

Across The Threshold Of The Cold War: “Berlin Tiff Over Girl”

This chapter opens with a quote taken from a newspaper report about a Ukrainian girl that caused a short but intensive dispute between the American and Russian officials in 1948.³⁰² Now, at the end of the chapter, it would be interesting to dig deeper into her story and its outcome. The incident, that took place in Berlin between the last days of August and the first days of September 1948, displayed how the conflicts over displaced unaccompanied children developed on the ground between two major powers, the Soviets and the Americans. It revealed the various practical procedures and structures that the IRO, ITS and US military government officials attempted to implement in order to prevent the unaccompanied child away from being repatriated to the Soviet Union. It demonstrated that the humanitarians and army officials acted together when they had to contest unaccompanied children’s cases with the Soviet officials. At the same time, this story showed that the IRO’s, ITS’ and US military command’s teamwork could lack a general sense of accord and in the end the zonal military authorities could and did decide on a child's future independently of the humanitarians. The girl’s whole story was documented in detail and investigated not only because information leaked out to the press, but also because, she was unexpectedly given back to the Soviet authorities.

The beginning of the story took place on 2nd June 1934, when the girl, Halina was born to Iwan and Jalocoweta Korolonko. She was her parents’ second child, and when she turned eight, in 1942, she and her family were deported from their village in Eastern Ukraine to Germany. There they settled in a camp that was organized within one of the schools in Charlottenburg, a neighborhood in the western part of Berlin. Her father and brother started to work at the “fire police” in Spandau and in Berlin's city center, respectively.³⁰³ A year after their arrival in Berlin, Halina was separated from her family because she became ill and was taken to the hospital on the eastern outskirts of the city. From there the girl was transferred several times to various hospitals until she found herself in the northern part of the city called Berlin-Buch, a neighborhood that was later occupied by the Soviet army.³⁰⁴ By that time the girl had already been paralyzed, most likely because of the poliomyelitis. Meanwhile, as the

³⁰² “Russia Demands Custody of Crippled Child DP,” *The Stars and Stripes*, August 30, 1948, 6.3.2.1/84325551, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

³⁰³ “Family Korolenko. CTB Berlin,” February 11, 1948, 6.3.2.1/84325558, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

³⁰⁴ “Korolenko Iwan, Korolenko Jalocowetta,” August 5, 1948, 6.3.2.1/84325563, ITS Digital Archive, Paris; katholischer Mädchenschutzverein, “Betr. Suchanzeige Korolenko,” January 29, 1948, 6.3.2.1/84325556, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

leader of the camp where the family lived reported, in April 1945, Halina's family left their shelter in Charlottenburg to join their father in Spandau. Almost at the same time, the “fire police” in Spandau claimed that Iwan Korolenko left the area and headed towards West Germany.³⁰⁵ It is unclear whether the family reunited in Spandau before traveling to the West, or not. The ITS records had no additional information about the family except the fact that Halina stayed behind in the Berlin's hospital, and since then heard nothing from her close relatives.

At this point the story could have ended and the girl could have joined the crowds of lost children whose parents were never found. However, her destiny became a matter that led to open conflict between the Soviet officers on the one side and the IRO and US military on the other, and placed her case into the framework of child welfare as well as into the discourse on innocence. Although, this framework at first sight outshone the political spirit of the debates, it still reflected Cold War politics. On 30th August 1948, an American newspaper that was issued in occupied Germany, published an article, which stated that a Soviet doctor and an ambulance accompanied by the Soviet officers had arrived at the Catholic hospital in the US sector of Berlin. These visitors had demanded a Soviet child be handed over to them. The child was Halina or as the article worded it: “[t]he innocent cause of the latest dispute in the Berlin area”.³⁰⁶ From this moment forward, Halina and her story became the subject of exceptional interest to the American military authorities, the IRO's welfare workers, ITS' search officers, the Soviet authorities and, probably, to the Berliners as well.

Halina's case went from being an ordinary story of an unaccompanied sick child that required treatment, to a matter of concern for the IRO and ITS workers as well as the US military authorities who initiated activities aimed at keeping the child in the US zone. The author of the article wrote that in 1946, the Catholic girl's protection organization (*Katholischer Mädchenschutzverein*) took the girl from the hospital in the Soviet part of Berlin, where she stayed after the war, and then transferred her to the hospital in the American sector. In January 1948, the members of the Catholic organization wrote to the ITS' Berlin office asking them to make an effort to find the girl's parents.³⁰⁷ This enquiry was presumably sent because the doctors at the hospital needed her parents' agreement to perform an orthopedic treatment

³⁰⁵ “Family Korolenko. CTB Berlin.”

³⁰⁶ “Russia Demands Custody of Crippled Child DP.”

³⁰⁷ V. Samsonoff, “Report on the Case of Halina Korolenko,” n.d., 6.3.2.1/84325555, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

and a surgery that might help her to walk again. The ITS attempted to find the parents and even sent a request to the Ukrainian Committee in Frankfurt-am-Main, but the search proved to be fruitless. The Child Search branch of the ITS in Arolsen could not provide any information about the location or contacts for Halina's parents.³⁰⁸

Having not found the girl's parents, the doctors wrote to the Soviet authorities asking them to authorize the treatment. It was said that they did so following German law, according to which, if the parents of a child were unknown, the government responsible for the girl could substitute for them and give permission for an operation. Believing that the Soviet officials were responsible for her, the hospital decided to write to them. Instead of replying, the Soviet authorities sent a doctor and several army officers, who came to the hospital demanding that the child be given into their care.³⁰⁹ An interesting detail in this story is that the Soviet authorities did not demand that the missing girl be returned until the doctors from the US sector attracted their attention to the case. In any event, the incident raised a disturbance at the hospital as the article report, the "American public safety officials were called in and blocked the Soviet move".³¹⁰ The girl was not handed over to the Soviet officers.

The official reason communicated in the press, as well as to the Soviet officials, stated that before the national representatives could take custody of Halina, the IRO had to investigate her case and try to find her parents and elder brother. In fact, it seems that this reason was only used to buy time, in order to authorize and justify her permanent settlement in the US zone of Germany. A close analysis of what happened next illustrates and explicates the strategies that the welfare and military authorities of the American zone followed in cases when a child's return to the Soviet Union was not believed to be the best option for their future. The US military authorities' first move, after the conflict at the hospital, was to inquire at the IRO's Berlin office about any information they had regarding the girl.³¹¹ Interestingly, a newspaper article, meanwhile, reported that V. Samsonoff, the chief of the ITS office in Berlin asked the office of the US military government to keep the child in hospital until they

³⁰⁸ Samsonoff; "Korolenko Iwan, Korolenko Jalocowetta"; Cornelia Heise, "Korolenko, Halina-Gabriela, Born 2.6.1934, Ukrainian," August 6, 1948, 6.3.2.1/84325565, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

³⁰⁹ "Russia Demands Custody of Crippled Child DP."

³¹⁰ "Russia Demands Custody of Crippled Child DP."

³¹¹ John Troniak, "Korolenko Helena, Born 2.06.1934 in Selo-SIjuwzi-Ukraine," September 16, 1948, 6.3.2.1/84325583, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

had conducted a search for her parents.³¹² According to the ITS' records the girl was registered with the IRO and the ITS in 1945 but the registration itself was incomplete. Since then there had been no progress in locating her father or any other relatives. This explanation fitted perfectly with the IRO's typical practice for cases of unaccompanied children. Before taking any actions they carefully investigated the child's background and searched for their parents and relatives. In this particular case, the claim that parents were living in a territory that was controlled by the Western Allies could have been a convincing reason for the girl to join them instead of returning to the Soviet part of Germany.

It would seem that the Halina's Ukrainian background was also used as a counterargument against the Soviet's claim to her. The newspaper articles continued to underline that the girl was of Ukrainian parentage, which reinforced the public impression that the Soviet authorities had no right to demand her return. Notably, the hospital workers, who initially did not consult the military or the IRO authorities, decided that the girl was of Soviet nationality. The ITS officers, however, had registered her as Ukrainian before the scandal developed.³¹³ After they checked her birthplace, they clarified that she was born "in territory that always has been Russian".³¹⁴ Technically, this implied that she should have been registered as the Soviet child, but this fact did not alter the initial plans to hinder her departure to the East, or the intention to trace her parents.

Several other decisive actions were taken immediately after the incident at the hospital, which indicated that the welfare officers might have always intended to keep the girl in their care. The zone and area child care officers from the IRO, and the welfare and child search officers from the ITS discussed the case exhaustively immediately after it had happened. A day later on 30th August 1948, they decided that Halina had to be transported to a hospital that was situated in the US zone of Germany. After a conversation between Mr. Studd, the child welfare officer from the US military government, and Mr. Troniak, the IRO area director in Berlin, a definite and detailed plan for Halina was swiftly outlined. According to it, the IRO would register Halina in the Aglasterhausen Child Center, and then would move her to the orthopedic hospital in Heidelberg where she would receive treatment. Remarkably, from a geographical perspective this plan of action meant that Halina would be conveyed from the

³¹² V. Samsonoff, "Tracing of Parents of Halina Korolenko," August 30, 1948, 6.3.2.1/84325567, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

³¹³ Heise, "Korolenko, Halina-Gabriela, Born 2.6.1934, Ukrainian."

³¹⁴ "Korolenko, Halina, Born 2.6.1934, Ukrainian," n.d., 6.3.2.1/84325569, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

US zone of Berlin, an Allied island in the Soviet zone of occupation, deeper into the American zone of Germany.

The US military government's officers supported this decision without hesitation or delay. Mr. Studd assured Mr. Troniak that permission for her transfer, which was required by the general regulations in the US zone of occupation, would be granted promptly. In fact, the military officials gave their permission immediately after Mr. Strudd received details about the future plan for the girl from Mr. Troniak. Moreover, the army intended to arrange a flight to transport her to Frankfurt am Main from where she could be taken directly to the Heidelberg's hospital. Finally, Mr. Studd was supposed to notify the Soviet Liaison officer that the girl would be cared for by the IRO, while they search for her parents.³¹⁵ All these negotiations and arrangements were put together within two days and by September 6th preparations were underway.

Meanwhile, the ITS officers once more contacted the Central Ukrainian Committee in Augsburg. This time the Committee informed them that they had found, Iwan Korolenko. Unluckily for the humanitarian and military officers, the man was not Halina's father. Nevertheless, the strictly confidential note reported to the IRO that if needed, he was ready to sign a declaration that she was his daughter.³¹⁶ Although with this statement, the IRO would have had a means to prevent the Soviet's from taking her, the suggestion was never acted on.

The plan for Halina was completed and implemented in an exceptionally short period of time. The case took the IRO officers three to four days to gather all the information, to make decisions and to arrange transportation. It is worth note that all these preparations happened during the Berlin blockade. Usually, it took the IRO several months or even years to handle similar cases. For instance, the military government often took a long time to sign the permission for moving children. In fact, as previously noted, the IRO had already been working on Halina's case for three years. But only when the child appeared to be "under police guard since a demand by the Russians for her custody was refused", did the IRO officers and the US military authorities consider her case to be urgent enough to expedite the

³¹⁵ "Report on Contacts," n.d., 6.3.2.1/84325570, ITS Digital Archive, Paris; "Report on Actions," 1948, 6.3.2.1/84325575, ITS Digital Archive, Paris; Troniak, "Korolenko Helena, Born 2.06.1934 in Selo-SIjuwzi-Ukraine."

³¹⁶ "Korolenko, Halina, Born 2.6.1934, Ukrainian"; Samsonoff, "Report on the Case of Halina Korolenko."

process.³¹⁷ It seems that the pressure of the Soviet's demands and the anticipated meeting with the Soviet representatives drove the IRO officers' and the US military authorities' need to have solid reasons for keeping the girl in the US zone of Germany.

Halina was fourteen years old when the incident happened, thus, her wish to return to the Soviet zone or to stay in the US part of Germany, theoretically, mattered but was not binding. Both sides of the conflict took her views into account and interviewed the girl, as her answer could have been used as additional evidence for supporting one plan or another. The reports and the newspapers' accounts observed the fact that when the Soviet representative interviewed Halina, he asked her whether she wanted to go back home. As claimed by "the Soviet-licensed German news agency" the girl replied, "I want to go to my homeland as soon as possible".³¹⁸ The American liaison officer, who was also present during the conversation, argued exactly the opposite. He claimed that the girl did not want to go back home and added that the interview was very confusing for the child.³¹⁹ Finally, the journalist from the "Stars and Stripes" confronted the statement by indicating that Halina said, "I don't know".³²⁰ Due to this uncertain evidence, the IRO authorities sent Miss Samsonoff, an ITS officer, to talk to the girl again and to resolve the misunderstanding.³²¹ Although, as we have seen, regardless the second interview's outcome, the decision regarding her future had already been made. The result of the second interview remained unknown, as at this point the story took an unforeseen turn.

On 10th September, Mr. Troniak from the IRO's child care division in Berlin learnt that four days earlier the girl had been sent back to the Soviet sector of Berlin. By all accounts, for the IRO officers this was an unexpected move. Throughout the process of this case they had proceeded with the understanding that they were working side by side with the US military government and shared similar views regarding the girl's future. The IRO was already actively making arrangements for Halina's transport to Western Germany, where the Aglasterhausen Child Center and Heidelberg hospital were awaiting her arrival. What is more, the day following the news of her move, Cornelia Heise, from the ITS search branch, was

³¹⁷ Troniak, "Korolenko Helena, Born 2.06.1934 in Selo-SIjuwzi-Ukraine."

³¹⁸ "Russia Demands Custody of Crippled Child DP."

³¹⁹ "Report on Contacts."

³²⁰ "Russia Demands Custody of Crippled Child DP."

³²¹ "Report on Actions"; Troniak, "Korolenko Helena, Born 2.06.1934 in Selo-SIjuwzi-Ukraine."

notified that the girl's father was thought to be living in the Munich area.³²² Nevertheless, on 6th September Colonel Frank Howley, the US commandant in Berlin, ordered Mr. Lambert, a public safety officer, to hand over Halina Korolenko to the Soviet authorities.

The scarce information on what had happened afterwards suggests that the IRO office in Berlin protested against the military government's actions.³²³ It is known that the IRO officers asked the military authorities to explain why the decision had been made without consulting them and wondered whether Colonel Howley was in a position to authorize the removal of a child from a hospital,

“We would like to know on what authority Col. Howley took action and also if he has the authority to grant entrance and exit permits, if he has information on the destination of the child, which we may record for the benefit of relatives who may later be found. On other words, we need sufficient information from Col. Howley to enable us to account for the action taken in reference to the child under our care”.³²⁴

The IRO headquarters used this incident to raise questions about relationships and share of responsibilities between the IRO and the American, British and French military governments in Berlin regarding DPs and foremost displaced children in Berlin sectors.³²⁵ Unfortunately, the outcome of the debates on this topic remained unknown.

An article entitled “*Russians Granted Custody Of Crippled Young Girl*”, in the “Washington Star” newspaper, put forward the explanations given by Colonel Howley.³²⁶ From the perspective of the archival sources it would seem that the IRO authorities at that moment only had this extract as a reference. Howley's statement was quite firm, dismissive and did not leave much room for the discussion. It has to be said that contemporaries noted that such explanations or comments were quite usual for Colonel Howley. He was known for a direct, concise and unapologetic style of talking and for not tolerating time-consuming political rhetoric. These attributes, according to the commentators, made him a good candidate for

³²² Troniak, “Korolenko Helena, Born 2.06.1934 in Selo-SIjuwzi-Ukraine”; Venita V. Lewis, “Korolenko (Kohbelinko), Helena,” September 10, 1948, 6.3.2.1/84325573, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

³²³ V. Gross, “Helena Korolenko,” September 23, 1948, 6.3.2.1/84325581, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

³²⁴ Lewis, “Korolenko (Kohbelinko), Helena.”

³²⁵ Lewis; Gross, “Helena Korolenko.”

³²⁶ Troniak, “Korolenko Helena, Born 2.06.1934 in Selo-SIjuwzi-Ukraine”; “From ‘Washington Star’. Copy,” September 13, 1948, 6.3.2.1/84325578, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

directorship of the military government in the American sector of Berlin, as in his daily work he had to contact and negotiate with the Soviet authorities.³²⁷

Coloney Howley explained that the girl's return was in accordance with the agreements signed between the four powers on the mutual return of the citizens from the occupied Zones, namely the Yalta agreement. The "Washington Star" cited him as saying that, "There were no political angles in this case", "according to our four-power agreement, there was no justification in holding her in our sector."³²⁸ Thus, he satisfied the Soviet's demand by returning Halina. From a formal point of view, the US zonal officials indeed could hardly justify the girl's stay in the US zone. In contrast, it remains unclear why the decision was made so hastily and at a moment when arrangements for the girl's departure to Heidelberg were already in progress. Colonel Howley remarked that no public announcement about this decision was issued because "there had been too much publicity about the case already."³²⁹ Eloquently, not only was no public announcement made, but the IRO officials and other people involved in the case only became aware of his decision after the girl had already been moved. Moreover, the ITS officers received advice not to notify the Central Ukrainian Committee about the fact that the girl had been handed over to the Soviet representatives. Despite the fact that Colonel Howley's contemporaries described him as holding a strongly antagonistic and anti-communist position towards the Soviets³³⁰ his decision to hand the girl over to the Soviet representatives seems to be even more unusual.

For whatever reason Colonel Howley chose to hand the girl over to the Soviet authorities, this case clearly shows that communication between the military high command in Berlin and humanitarian offices was not always effective. It also demonstrates that in cases like Halina's, where a person was identified as a Soviet citizen because he or she originally came from pre-1939 Soviet Ukraine, there was no clear position in regards to their repatriation or resettlement. The background information about the girl and her family allowed the military and humanitarian authorities to argue for and to justify both options. It would seem that sometimes when decisions were made by a single powerful actor, it was enough for them to

³²⁷ Earl F. Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946*, Army Historical Series (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1990), <https://history.army.mil/books/wwii/Occ-GY/index.htm#contents>.

³²⁸ "From 'Washington Star'. Copy."

³²⁹ "From 'Washington Star'. Copy."

³³⁰ "Additional Material: Frank L. Howley and Berlin (PDF Document)" (Routledge, 2014), <http://documents.routledge-interactive.s3.amazonaws.com/9780415886772/9780415886772/Ch13.pdf>.

decide one way or another. Colonel Howley was the person who had the authority and the necessary temperament to give such an order.

The general political context in which the incident took place also had impact on its development and outcome. Only two months had passed since the Soviet authorities had imposed a blockade on Berlin, hindering the American powers' access to the supply transport in their sector of the city. What is more, on 1st August, the work of the Allied Kommandatura in Berlin that was established for the four Allied powers to jointly govern technically ceased to exist as the Soviet representatives withdrew from participating in it.³³¹

The press' interest in the girl and her situation, evidently, also had a considerable influence on the proceedings of the case. The child and her situation became a matter of considerable concern for the welfare and military officers not only because the Soviet representatives came to the hospital and claimed the child back, but also because the whole story appeared in the media. In fact, the case came to the close attention of the IRO authorities after the article was published in "Stars and Strips". After the story came to an end, a brief internal investigation took place at the IRO in order to find out who had made the information available to the press.³³² Remarkably the press explicitly depicted the girl as "a victim of infantile paralysis", that is poliomyelitis, and "a pawn" of thee political confrontations. Between the lines she was seen as a victim of the Soviet's aggressive move to take her back and of uncoordinated decisions of the military authorities and the IRO. At the same time, the fact that the story appeared in the press could have strengthened the decision to hand her over to the Soviet officers. Although there were many reasons they could have wished to avoid too much publicity around such a controversial case for fear of seeming too high-handed in the early years of the overt and official Cold War.

In the end, were they fighting for a child or for a citizen? This case together with an overview of the debates around children of Ukrainian origin shows that for the Soviet authorities the age of a person did not matter because the aim was to return as many people as possible regardless of their individual situations. Even the possibility that Halina's family was living in a territory of Germany that was occupied by the Western Allies, did not impede the Soviet

³³¹ Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946*.

³³² Gross, "Helena Korolenko"; "Report on Actions"; "Korolenko Helena Born 2.6.1934 in Selo-Sijuwzi-Ukraine," October 2, 1948, 6.3.2.1/84325587, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

representatives from claiming custody over her. Regardless of their age they were children of the “Motherland” and they believed that the state’s care would be able to substitute for their blood family.

The welfare officers and Anglo-American military authorities saw the problem in a different light. The relief and rehabilitation programs for children after the war were subjected to mainstream post-war idea of working in the child's “best interests”. The latter was built on the Anglo-American idea of familial upbringing, education and attentiveness to children's psychological and physical conditions as well as to the social environment in which they would live.³³³ Nevertheless, it is questionable to what extent these ideas prevailed in the process of planning of Halina's future. Certainly, the interests of the child were guarded. The IRO’s welfare officers built a program for her treatment and made repeated attempts to find her family, but at the same time, this was all accelerated under the pressure of Soviet demands. It looked as though the threat of her returning to a Soviet country became a more important factor in planning her future. All other aspects of Halina’s plan were aimed at supporting and justifying moving her out of the Soviets.

What had happened to Halina after she was given to the Soviets remains a mystery. Did she stay in East Berlin or was she sent back to Soviet Ukraine to join other children in an orphanage? Did she receive an operation and regain the ability to walk? All traces of the girl were lost following her transfer back to the Soviet zone of Berlin. Any activities related to the arrangements that were made for her future on behalf of the IRO ceased. The ITS or IRO archive holds no information about her or her parents’ subsequent whereabouts. Neither she, nor her relatives contacted the ITS to locate one another. The paradigmatic lost child, Halina was separated from her family at the end of the war, then she strayed from the IRO’s welfare workers and, finally, after she crossed the border into the Soviet controlled territory she vanished from the archival records.

³³³ Zahra, *The Lost Children*.

Chapter 4

Social Care in The Field

The post-war program for child relief and rehabilitation was grounded on the theories that supported the psychological and physical rehabilitation of children and took into consideration national and international politics. When all these factors merged together, as was the case for the Ukrainian children, it became rather difficult to reach a decision about the children's future, as the theories and considerations contradicted each other and were difficult to resolve while still acting in children's "best interests". The Soviet authorities claimed custody for the Ukrainian children. The military government in the US and British zones declared that children from Western Ukraine were not to be sent to the Soviet Union, yet the IRO's official instructions did not forbid the repatriation of these children, neither did the Army's directives. At the same time, the Anglo-American theory of upbringing advanced that reuniting children with their parents would establish a healthy environment for the development of the child's inner self and allow them to mature properly. The immersion of children into their 'native' culture was an indispensable element necessary for preserving and developing the cultural identity that they had inherited from parents. All these aspects were seen as being in the children's "best interests", nevertheless, many unaccompanied children were sent to emigration centres or left in German foster families.

How were the welfare officers able to work with such unclear policies that were incompatible with the psychological principles of rehabilitation? These officers acted as mediators connecting displaced children with either the military authorities or national representatives, who had the power to decide whether the child would be repatriated or resettled. These officers went into the field and met with the displaced children, talked with them and then wrote the reports that summarized what they believed would be the best solution for the future of the particular child. Their recommendations, together with the overall results of the case's investigation, inevitably had some impact on the relief that was offered and the decisions that were made about the future settlement of unaccompanied children. Welfare officers produced the main narrative for each child's case, how they shaped it had a considerable impact on whether the child would stay in Germany, go with a repatriation transport or board a ship heading for his or her new home country. In their reports, they would often describe that a

child looked “happy” and was “attached to the foster parents”, or that he or she loved the foster parents and “felt safe with this family.” They made such evaluations and judgments as social workers, IRO officers, and as men or women.

Inevitably, the background, beliefs, and training of the welfare officers conditioned their evaluations and shaped their narratives about the displaced children. Throughout the relief work in Europe, the welfare officers were led by the idea of acting in the child's best interest, but this idea was not strictly defined.³³⁴ The elastic nature of this notion meant that it could be used to suit a variety of viewpoints. At the same time, the loose directives and policies regarding the future plans for the displaced children, especially for those in contested cases, such as the Ukrainian children, allowed the welfare officers act as events occurred and to put forward their own interpretations and viewpoints regarding each child's case. Child relief eventually became a curious amalgam of child welfare theory combined with the actual state of affairs that the social workers faced in postwar Germany. Examining all the nuances of emergency welfare in the field, this chapter analyses the children's cases within the wider context of child welfare and relief work in postwar Europe, the denazification of German society, and the growing confrontations of the pre-Cold War.

The UNRRA's and IRO's Welfare Workers

Cornelia Heise, Sharlott Babinski, Dorothy Marshall, Eleanor Ellis, R. Mussin Pushkin, Marjorie Farley, and Olnick Lawrence, these and many other people signed the numerous letters, memorandums and foster home investigation reports that were written over the course of the UNRRA's, IRO's and ITS's work. These humanitarian and search organizations employed a large number of people: in 1946 around 6000 men and 5000 women worked for the UNRRA in Europe.³³⁵ When in 1947, the UNRRA passed on its relief responsibilities in Europe to the IRO, the 1450 Anglo-American UNRRA fieldworkers continued to perform their duties as IRO employees. For instance, a counselling officer, Constance Moffet came from Australia to work for the UNRRA at the beginning of its operation in the American zone of occupation in 1945 and then continued her duties as an IRO officer working in the British

³³⁴ Zahra, ““The Psychological Marshall Plan.””

³³⁵ Salvatici, ““Help the People to Help Themselves,”” 428–29; Cohen indicates that more than 5000 Class I relief workers were sent to Germany from abroad: Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 63.

zone of occupation until 1951.³³⁶ Likewise, Charlotte Babinski sailed to Europe from the US in 1945 and worked as a child tracing and search officer in the US zone up until the time of the IRO's closure in 1952.

The working and administrative documents show us their names, posts and responsibilities, but it is not always possible to know more than the name and task that a welfare officer accomplished. Certainly, some of the workers who were engaged in the rehabilitation of displaced adults and children in Europe and beyond became well known, and their career paths and achievements have been praised and studied. Their biographies appeared in print and have been cited by scholars who have investigated into the topic of post-war humanitarian activities.³³⁷ Some of them left private records written during their activities or memoirs that were composed afterwards, recounting their experience and considerations. Francesca M. Wilson, Susan Pettiss and Kathryn C. Hulme, who were part of the original UNRRA workforce, published memoirs on their experiences of working in Europe after the war.³³⁸ Their narratives became widely known and have been widely cited in the literature that explores the assistance that was provided for children during and after the war. Gitta Sereny started to work with orphans in France before the war, and after 1945 for couple of years she continued her career as an UNRRA child welfare officer. She published several books, which are interesting because she described her life and work during Nazi rule as well as its aftermath, filling her stories with the people that she had met at that time.³³⁹ However, these are just few persons among many others whose names and biographies have been more difficult to trace.

The UNRRA and IRO were intended to become and were praised for being relief organizations that showcased the strength of international cooperation in delivering emergency aid. The relief and rehabilitation work in postwar Germany was planned as an international venture not only in terms of organizational issues relating to funding and intergovernmental cooperation but also in regards to the staff who were working for it.

³³⁶ "Notes on Interview with Miss Constance Moffet," November 23, 1953, AJ/43/140, AN, Paris.

³³⁷ See for example: Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*; Salvatici, "Help the People to Help Themselves"; Shephard, *The Long Road Home*.

³³⁸ Francesca M. Wilson, *Aftermath: France, Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia, 1945-1946* (New York, N.Y: Penguin Books, 1947); Kathryn Hulme, *The Wild Place*. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953); Susan T Pettiss and Lynne Taylor, *After the Shooting Stopped: The Story of an UNRRA Welfare Worker in Germany 1945-1947* (Victoria, B.C.: Trafford, 2004).

³³⁹ Sereny, *The Healing Wound*.

Cooperation among different nations was seen as a precondition for a common commitment to help the DPs and a necessity for securing peace for the future. The UNRRA brought workers of various nationalities from the US, Europe, Canada, Australia and other places in the world together to work with the DPs. The statistics for December 1945 demonstrated that 18% of the welfare workers came from America, 31% from Britain, and the British colonies, and 18% from France.³⁴⁰ At the same time, according to the estimated numbers for December 1946, 71% of the UNRRA's relief workers originated from the US and Britain. The growing predominance of Anglo-American employees together with the large contribution that the US made to the UNRRA's budget indicated that these two countries played a leading role in the post-war organization of relief and that their staff had a noticeable influence on the shape of, and approach to emergency welfare.³⁴¹

Observations made by several scholars assume that despite the traditional image of welfare as being predominantly women's work, the UNRRA employed more men than women as welfare workers, though women still constituted a large proportion of the welfare workers. In June 1946 approximately 63,7% of men and 36,3% of women worked for the UNRRA in Europe.³⁴² Five months later, in December 1946, it was generally estimated that women already constituted 44% of the employees.³⁴³ On the first sight, it would seem that the increase in the number of female employees slowly narrowed the gender gap. Despite this, the gender imbalance remained evident in the proportion of men and women assigned to specific positions in the organization. Men, often those with a military background, were more likely to occupy leading posts or to receive appointments with higher responsibility, such as chief of operations or legal adviser. While women were placed in positions that involved direct contact with the displaced adults and children working as caseworkers, counselors, or supervising the DPs at the camps and children's centers.³⁴⁴ Research has pointed out that this observation of gender balance has to be viewed carefully as the sources do not always provide

³⁴⁰ Gemie, Reid, and Humbert, *Outcast Europe*, 155; Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 63, 146.

³⁴¹ Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 59–64; Reinisch, "'Auntie UNRRA' at the Crossroads," 74, 77–79.

³⁴² Gemie, Reid, and Humbert, *Outcast Europe*, 146.

³⁴³ Shephard, *The Long Road Home* e-book.

³⁴⁴ Silvia Salvatici, "'Fighters without Guns': Humanitarianism and Military Action in the Aftermath of the Second World War," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 0, no. 0 (October 4, 2017): 11.

clear and complete data about the number of employees, their country of origin or their gender.³⁴⁵

Although the notion of an ideal type of international welfare worker existed, no strict requirements were imposed when appointing the UNRRA's or IRO's employees. People with a sufficient level of motivation, education, skills, and experience in the social services, or humanitarian vocation were accepted alongside well-trained social workers, pedagogues, nurses and doctors.³⁴⁶ As a result, for some of those applying to the UNRRA, and later the IRO, the job that they were expected to do was not a new one. They were motivated to help those who had survived the war and having studied social theory, social work or medicine, they believed that they were ready to serve. Some of them had even gained professional experience while working for the state or voluntary welfare associations prior to joining the UNRRA or the IRO. Humanitarian workers from the US, for instance, often had training in social work, which they acquired while participating in Roosevelt's New Deal relief program during the 1930s, and then they had strengthened their practice at the US's Federal agencies. Welfare workers from continental Europe gained a practical knowledge of emergency aid provision during the war, behind the battle lines. British personnel could rely on their knowledge of welfare provision and practice that they had acquired when managing uprooted populations during the evacuation campaigns in the war. Additionally, those who had previously worked for charitable volunteer organizations or for humanitarian missions after the Great War, in 1943-1947 applied to the UNRRA's and IRO's relief missions. Some of the American and British UNRRA volunteers had passed several weeks of training in their home countries before coming to Europe. Others either had very little social work or professional experience, or none at all, and for them, this was their first step into welfare relief.³⁴⁷

Many of the overseas welfare workers came to Europe only being able to speak English, with only a few knowing some French and/or German. Certainly, after a year or two spent in Germany or Austria, a number of them acquired greater language skills, most likely German. The work in the UNRRA's administration units promised to have fewer situations that required welfare workers speak a foreign language, but for the social officers working in the field, who interrogated German foster parents or children, the lack of a foreign language could

³⁴⁵ Gemie, Reid, and Humbert, *Outcast Europe*, 146.

³⁴⁶ Salvatici, "Help the People to Help Themselves."

³⁴⁷ Gemie, Reid, and Humbert, *Outcast Europe*, 148-59; Shephard, *The Long Road Home* e-book.

constitute an obstacle.³⁴⁸ Although social workers, who visited families with children, considered that their main task was to observe the family, the child and the home, their inability to talk to and understand the children and their foster parents pushed them to look for someone who could act as an interpreter. For instance, Pauline Bakeman(?), an UNRRA child welfare officer, relied on her “driver-interpreter-secretary” in such situations.³⁴⁹

Professional, or soon to become professional, social workers were not the only category of employees working with the DPs in Germany and Austria. Former or acting military officers and DPs also engaged in the post-war relief under the umbrella of the UNRRA or the IRO. Although the humanitarian mission in Europe was not directly under the Army’s command, military officers sometimes occupied various positions in the agencies. To begin with, Lieutenant General Sir Frederick Morgan was the chief of operations for the UNRRA in Germany.³⁵⁰ Even if he was not a representative example, other military officers were “pulled out” to take up various offices at the UNRRA and the IRO too. For instance, R. L. Gesner was sent to the UNRRA to lead the screening teams who were responsible for checking the DPs eligibility for the UNRRA’s benefits in 1946: “That was how I got started in the DP racket”, summarized Genser in his interview for the official IRO history.³⁵¹

From the beginning of the relief operation in Europe, the international relief agencies employed adult DPs and older children for the various jobs, such as assistants, drivers, kitchen workers and interpreters. They also worked for the US Army forces as civilian servants.³⁵² The instructions issued in December 1945 in the US zone of occupation obliged DPs who wished to apply for a position at the UNRRA to obtain clearance from the counter intelligence corps. The rules also indicated that being employed by UNRRA was a temporary job and could not be used as an excuse for refusing to go back to a person’s home country, the

³⁴⁸ Shephard, *The Long Road Home* e-book.

³⁴⁹ Pauline Bakeman, “January Report of District Child Welfare Officer,” March 2, 1946, 6.1.2/82487245-82487247, ITS Digital Archive online.

³⁵⁰ Shephard, *The Long Road Home* e-book.

³⁵¹ “Interview between Mr. R. L. Gesner, Chief Eligibility Officer, Italian Office and Mr. J. Mandel,” January 10, 1952, AJ/43/140, AN, Paris.

³⁵² Salvatici, “Professionals of Humanitarianism: UNRRA Relief Officers in Post-War Europe”; Lee Kruger, *Logistics Matters and the U.S. Army in Occupied Germany, 1945-1949* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), xxvii.

order itself stated, “The service of repatriable persons may be replaced with those of non-repatriables.”³⁵³

Giving an interview for the official history of the IRO, Myer Cohen, assistant director general of the UNRRA, said that DPs were employed: “because of the economics of it but also because of the important psychological aspect of the man having a job again.”³⁵⁴ The psychological aspect that he was referring to was part of a plan to help people to normalize their lives after the war. These ideas were grounded on the belief that the war had destroyed most of the survivors’ social skills. Without these skills, uprooted people would not become good citizens in their countries. It was assumed that the responsibility of work would help to reintegrate displaced people into a peaceful course of life in which the behavior of an individual conforms to a commonly accepted set of rules, laws and duties. In this context, the normalization of life also implied that a person needed to become a self-sustaining, useful and, most importantly, a desirable citizen in the future. Elaborating on this point, the welfare officers said that a paid job was an opportunity for many uprooted people to feel the dignity and confidence that was so easy to lose during wartime. Some of the welfare workers and authorities claimed that working obligations would save the DPs from idleness and teach them how to earn their living again. They suspected that being cared for by the UNRRA or the IRO during these years made the DPs forget how to earn their own living.³⁵⁵

The DPs were employed as Class II workers according to the rank classification of the UNRRA and the IRO. Class I personnel had the status of international employees and, consequently, enjoyed the benefits of having an international employment contract, such as higher salaries. Class II workers, unlike Class I, were not considered to be employed internationally and received remuneration in accordance with the local economy and the cost of living. As a result, their salaries were much lower than those of the Class I workers.³⁵⁶ It has to be said that the DPs who were already employed under the Class II category had an opportunity to apply for Class I status, provided that they satisfied a set of conditions. For

³⁵³ J. H. Whiting, “Team Bulletin No 31,” December 20, 1945, 6.1.1/82501782-82501785, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

³⁵⁴ “Interview between Mr. Myer Cohen, Mr. M. Hacking and Mr. S. Mapes,” December 20, 1951, AJ/43/140, AN, Paris.

³⁵⁵ Salvatici, ““Help the People to Help Themselves.””

³⁵⁶ Armstrong-Reid and Murray, *Armies of Peace*; Salvatici, ““Help the People to Help Themselves,”” 443–45.

example, one of the requirements obliged an applicant to have an “unquestioned citizenship status in the country of a member government”.³⁵⁷

Altogether, the giant apparatus of the UNRRA and the IRO was built of people with different experiences, backgrounds, language proficiencies, who had various ideas about what rehabilitation should be and motives that brought them to the humanitarian agency. Many of them wanted to change the world, bring democracy, peace, enforce human rights and to improve the lives of others. Contemporaries and later researchers described the UNRRA and the IRO workers as “liberal internationalists”, idealists, and pacifists, people who believed in cultural diversity and put their national feelings to one side for the sake of international collaboration. They thought they were rescuing refugees, saving Europe from the future wars, bringing peace and healing a society that had been shattered by the war.³⁵⁸ One of the welfare officers, for example, Mr. Marton said in his interview that the IRO managed to teach the DPs social norms and the codes of behavior anew: “without IRO Europe would have been filled with hundreds of thousands of thieves and robbers, and that the greatest achievement of [the] IRO had been to save Europe from such a disaster.”³⁵⁹ Inevitably, this cohort of international welfare workers also included people entering the UNRRA or the IRO for prosaic and practical reasons such as getting the job.³⁶⁰

Working alongside each other in Europe these people could not avoid conflicts, misunderstandings, clashes of interest and collisions due to their diverse visions on how to organize the rehabilitation process. Additionally, their ideas about the provision of aid and social services to the refugees often did not align with the reality that they faced in occupied Germany. This often created a lot of confusion, could slow down or interrupt their work and decision-making process. For instance, Pauline Bakeman, a district child welfare officer, complained that she was unable to perform her duties as well as she had imagined because her director did not share her views on the organization of social work or the opinions that came from headquarters. She wrote: “[he was] tremendously occupied with many problems, not in agreement with some of the ideas of the upper echelons, and not entirely sold on the idea of

³⁵⁷ Whiting, “Team Bulletin No 31.”

³⁵⁸ Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 62–63; Salvatici, ““Help the People to Help Themselves””; Reinisch, “Internationalism in Relief.”

³⁵⁹ “Interview with Mr. Marton,” September 6, 1951, AJ/43/140, AN, Paris.

³⁶⁰ Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 64.

the consultants of any kind - I have never known just where I stood.”³⁶¹ Additionally, she herself, it seems, disagreed with the policies of welfare provision that had been framed by the higher humanitarian authorities, she summarized: “I shall not dwell on the difficulties of carrying out the not-always-social views of those in Frankfurt, in the army and among the liaison groups. With my own personality problem of needing to know what I am doing and why this month has been a difficult one.”³⁶²

And yet, all these people worked together, negotiated and adjusted their theories and visions to the needs of relief and temporary welfare provision in post-war European cities. To look at how they did it in everyday life, I will analyze a case study of unaccompanied displaced children living with German foster parents. Many of these cases demonstrate that sometimes solutions required welfare officers to change or circumvent the rules or to reinterpret the child's situation and his or her prospects for the future. After the relief and reconstruction programs had started, it became clear that the child welfare officers had to set the welfare activities not only in terms of childcare theories but also according to political concerns, international relations and the experience that they had obtained in post-war Germany and Austria. Different components of the children's stories were collected in the foster home investigation files, child assessment forms and correspondence regarding particular children. When the welfare officers shaped the narratives about each child or the group of children they took into consideration political discourse of the time as well as their own beliefs and visions regarding child welfare.

Foreign Children Left with German Foster Families

Walla Pitschmarga lived with the Höpfl family almost from the moment of her birth in 1944.³⁶³ She was the daughter of a forced laborer from Ukraine, her mother passed away from postnatal complications shortly after giving birth to her in the hospital. Without a mother to care for her, Walla would have been sent to the orphanage for foreigners' children, where she

³⁶¹ Bakeman, “January Report of District Child Welfare Officer.”

³⁶² Bakeman.

³⁶³ Parts of this chapter I published in article “The Advantages of Repatriation Do Not Offset the Trauma of a Removal: IRO Welfare Workers and the Problem of Ukrainian Unaccompanied Children in German Foster Families”. In *Freilegungen. Rebuilding lives - Child Survivors and DP Children in the Aftermath of the Holocaust and forced Labor*, edited by Henning Borggräfe, Akim Jah, Nina Ritz, and Steffen Jost, Wallstein Verlag. Bd. 6. Jahrbuch Des International Tracing Service, 2017.

had little chance of surviving. Mrs. Höpfl, a German woman who stayed in the same hospital, after some thought, she decided to take Walla home with her.³⁶⁴

Walla's case was not unique. After the war, welfare officers working for the UNRRA and the IRO registered many foreign children as living with German families. Part of the registration involved identifying the children's origins and inspecting their living conditions. The information obtained during the registration was supposed to help the authorities to find a way out of an ethical and political dilemma: whether German foster families could adopt an unaccompanied Allied child or not. This was precisely the task that Charlotte Babinski, an IRO child welfare officer, was asked to assess in 1948 when she went to the "beautiful country of Bavaria" to visit unaccompanied Allied children who were living in German households. Walla along with several other children of different ages and nationalities was on Babinski's list, and as their cases indicate such children were taken in by German families through a variety of different paths.

After her visit to the Höpfls' house, Babinski wrote a report describing and assessing the family, the report stated, "Mrs. Höpfl is a simple, rural woman, and [her] ideas on child care are the same as those held by most average people". She was a "calm, placid, patient type" and surrounded Walla "with love and care". Babinski evaluated the family's house and clothing as poor but clean and tidy. Their income was not high, but it was enough for a family to live at a fairly low standard. The Höpfls were good workers, of "honest and upright character", and had a good reputation with their neighbors, and prior to Walla had been childless. The couple did not belong to the Nazi party, they tolerated foreigners, and went to church every Sunday. They seemed to match most of the IRO's standards for adopting children. Babinski acknowledged that this family would be able to offer a child a good home: "Nothing objectionable can be said about him [Mr. Höpfl] or his wife, and the care they give the child is very good".³⁶⁵

In spite of assessment of the family and their home, Babinski recommended removing Walla from the Höpfl family and placing her in the IRO's children's home: "I do not[,] after giving this case history serious thought, see that it is in the child's best interests, including the

³⁶⁴ Charlotte Babinski, "Foster-Home Investigation. Pitschmarga Walla," April 26, 1948, 6.3.2.1/82488139-82488146, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

³⁶⁵ Babinski.

satisfaction of its need for family security[,] to leave it where it is and allow family to go on with its plans.”³⁶⁶ This conclusion might surprise the reader considering that the inspections had been favorable and the family’s living conditions and “emotional atmosphere” matched the formal IRO requirements for foster families almost perfectly. What did Babinski think was missing then? What made her think that Walla should be removed from her present home with “good-hearted” parents where she looked “healthy and [felt] very happy”?³⁶⁷

Evidently, there were some negative aspects that were visible to an experienced welfare officer’s eye. The small and damp house where the family lived, the tight budget, and the couple’s relatively reserved way of life were among the disadvantages noted in the report. In addition, in 1934 Mr. Höpfl had been a member of the *Sturmabteilung* for a few months. In 1944, he was taken prisoner and spent three years in a POW camp in Britain.³⁶⁸ However, it seems that these facts were not the deciding factors in Babinski’s decision to remove the child, nor was the Höpfls’ living situation viewed as hopeless. Germany had been a defeated and occupied country, which had left it in economic and physical ruin so it was not uncommon to find poor housing conditions. Rather, it was the fact that a non-German child would grow up in a German family that made Babinski strongly argue for Walla’s removal. Babinski asked whether in the future Walla would be able to accept the fact that she was not of German but of Ukrainian origin. This concern prevailed among welfare officers, their conviction being that having an awareness of one’s “true” nationality was an important component of a child’s psychological health and well-being. For Babinski, the answer was obvious: if the Höpfls adopted Walla, then she “would never have the chance to let us know if she wanted to be German or Soviet Ukrainian.”³⁶⁹ As a result, Babinski recommended that arrangements be made for Walla’s repatriation to her home country, Soviet Ukraine, where she would be returned to her relatives or placed with a new foster family: “The child’s best interests would be best saved indeed if it were placed with the foster family of [its] own nationality in its own country”.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁶ Babinski.

³⁶⁷ Unaccompanied Child. Reg. No C00709796, 1947, 6.3.2.1/84434594/ITS Digital Archive, Paris; Supplementary Record – Face Sheet. Pitschmarga Walla, August 4, 1947, 6.3.2.1/84434596/ITS Digital Archive, Paris; Supplementary Record – Face Sheet. Pitschmarga Walla, August 8, 1946, 6.3.2.1/84434593/ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

³⁶⁸ Höpfl Josef, Born 2.5.07 in Geltendorf. Höpfl Maria, Maiden Name Mayr, Born 25.10.09 in Grossdorf, 1948, 6.3.2.1/84434614/ITS Digital Archive, Paris; Babinski: Foster-Home Investigation. Pitschmarga Walla.

³⁶⁹ Babinski, “Foster-Home Investigation. Pitschmarga Walla.”

³⁷⁰ Babinski.

On reading Babinski's strong arguments against the Höpfls' adoption of Walla, it might well be imagined that following the investigation she was sent away from her German home. Yet, in 1950, two years after Babinski had finished her investigation, Walla was still living with the Höpfl family. The US military authorities did not approve the plan to remove her from the family and repatriate her to Soviet Ukraine, and the welfare officers subsequently revisited the family and recommended that Walla be left with the Höpfls. In 1951, the US Courts of the Allied High Commission for the seventh judicial district in Augsburg came to the decision that "the best interests of said unaccompanied displaced child require its resettlement in Germany with present foster parents".³⁷¹ In other words, the Höpfl family was allowed to adopt Walla.

Walla's case vividly illustrates that making decisions about children's futures was a complex problem that required the IRO's welfare workers to take into consideration the child's wellbeing, social and psychological security as well as the individual situation. Moreover, the welfare workers needed to maintain a balance between political considerations, problems and limits of the emergency welfare program and the ideas on restoring justice after the war. The problem was that the various participants who were involved in child relief activities - welfare workers, military authorities, representatives of national government, children and foster parents - understood these notions differently and gave priority to distinct elements. At the end of the war, the idea of leaving non-German children in Germany was very unpopular, it was strongly opposed by national governments, political actors and social workers. As such it is striking that by the end of the 1940s the integration of Allied children into German families became a feasible solution for the future settlement of some children. This change, it seems, was the outcome of the welfare officers' practice on the ground rather than their discussions and theories. The IRO welfare officers visited German families with foreign children, observed relations within the family and scrutinized the plans that foster parents had for the children. Satisfactory housing conditions, the family's economic situation, the foster parents' enthusiasm for adoption and their loving caring attitude towards the child created a positive impression of the family's desire to foster a child. In the meantime, the search officers from the IRO and the International Tracing Service (ITS) made every effort to find the parents or relatives of the children. Failure to trace, or contact the birth mother or to detect her clear interest in the child, led welfare officers to conclude that settlement in Germany with a foster

³⁷¹ The Matter of the Application of the IRO for the Resettlement or Repatriation of Walla Pitschmarga. Petition, 1951, 6.3.2.1/84434654, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

family could be a solution for displaced children, especially in cases where all the above-mentioned conditions coincided. In the case study of orphaned or abandoned displaced Ukrainian children, as this chapter also suggests, the inability to repatriate a child to their home was an additional reason for the IRO and the US military authorities to allow such children to be adopted by German foster families. As was shown in the previous chapters, from winter 1945-1946, the Anglo-American military authorities, together with some of the welfare workers, had already taken a stand against the repatriation of Ukrainian children to Soviet territory. This decision meant that welfare officers needed to find some other settlement plan for these children that would be in the child's "best interests".

The Child Search

In September 1945, in the British and US occupation zones, the UNRRA, together with the zonal military administration, launched a large-scale Child Search program designed to search for lost, abandoned and forcibly transported children in Germany, and return them to their home countries. In the French zone of occupation the search for children was conducted by the French military government. The Soviet occupation power did not participate in these activities and did not allow the search teams to work in their zone of occupation. In January and March 1946, the Allied control authorities in Berlin issued two directives ordering German officials to provide them with all available information regarding foreign adults and children living in the country during and after the war. This information was supposed to help the authorities to find and identify children that had been brought to Germany. Although the Child Search program was slowed-down and paused in 1947, in the following year the Child Search Branch of the ITS developed the so-called Limited Registration Plan (LRP), which aimed to reactivate the search for children in Germany. The new plan instructed the investigators to register all children born in or brought to Germany that had been living with foster families or in orphanages since 1939. The search and removal of children from "the German economy" continued, but alongside it, the US military officers and welfare workers continued to debate that the program took a long time, and needed additional funding and personnel.³⁷²

³⁷² "The Situation as to Unaccompanied Children. UN Hambros Report," May 1948, AJ/43/169, AN, Paris; "Child Search Activities of UNRRA," 1950, AJ/43/302, AN, Paris; Julia Reus, "'Everywhere Where Human Beings Are, We Can Find Our Children' On the Organization of the ITS Child Search Branch and Its Predecessors," in *Freilegungen. Rebuilding Lives – Child Survivors and DP Children in the Aftermath of the Holocaust and Forced Labor*, ed. Henning Borggräfe et al., Wallstein Verlag, vol. Bd. 6, Jahrbuch Des International Tracing Service, 2017, 41–69.

Interestingly, the Child Search plan was grounded on the socio-cultural ideas that foreign children should not live with German families and absorb their German identity but then in the files, such a plan was referred to as the need to take children away from “the German economy”. Why this formulation was used remains unclear, and it is only possible to speculate on the reason. Perhaps it was related to the fact that children were seen as the future citizens of their countries and accordingly as a potential source of labor force and economic development. If this premise is correct then it is also evidence that the problem of foreign children remaining in Germany was as much a matter of biopolitics and economy as it was of looking after the child’s wellbeing.

The staff at the Child Tracing Section, and as of 1948 the Child Search Branch, took on a demanding and laborious task to remove foreign children from German and Austrian society. They collected and screened all the available records from, the Third Reich’s social welfare organization, *Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt* (National Socialist People's Welfare), the local child welfare agencies, the *Jugendämter* (Youth offices), and various documents that were linked to the *Lebensborn* program and Germanization policy in order to trace foreign children and their parents. The UNRRA and IRO welfare officers interviewed people involved in wartime childcare hoping to gather pieces of information about the location of non-German children. The so-called search teams were composed of social workers who travelled from area to area in the British and US zones of Germany where they visited orphanages, hospitals, foster homes and childcare institutions in order to meet and interview the children that lived there.

Once they had identified and met unaccompanied Allied children, welfare officers were supposed to remove them from German institutions or foster parents and transfer them to the UNRRA’s/IRO’s Children’s centers where they could recover under the watchful eyes of the humanitarian workers and prepare to return to their home country. Meanwhile, the Child Search Branch’s staff collected information that could help to identify the nationality of the children and find their natural mother or relatives.³⁷³ The names of unidentified children were translated on the radio and in the newspapers that circulated in the all occupied zones of

³⁷³ Susanne Urban, “Unaccompanied Children and the Allied Child Search: ‘The Right ... a Child Has to His Own Heritage,’” in *The Young Victims of the Nazi Regime : Migration, the Holocaust, and Postwar Displacement*, ed. Simone Gigliotti and Monica Tempian (Bloomsbury Academic, 2016); Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 128–31; “History of the International Tracing Service, 1945-1951.Draft” n.d., 6.1.1/82493111-82493115, AN, Paris; “Memorandum of Child Search”; “The Situation as to Unaccompanied Children. UN Hambros Report.”

Germany and Austria with the hope that someone would recognize them. The welfare workers circulated the children's names to the representatives of the national governments, the liaison officers, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the national associations to obtain information that could help them to find the children's relatives. The successful outcome of all these ventures was seen as giving the children a chance to reunite with their birth mothers and to be resettled or repatriated to their home country.

According to the IRO's final report written in 1950, between 1945 and 1950, the search officers received 22,560 enquiries as to whereabouts of displaced children.³⁷⁴ Any letters sent to the ITS initiated a search for the child.³⁷⁵ To begin with, the tracing officers checked the child's name against ITS list of known unaccompanied or lost children. Then they used methods similar to those that welfare officers used when searching for the parents of unaccompanied children. Through these efforts, it was possible to collect some valuable clues about the child's whereabouts but to actually locate a child was still a challenging task. The IRO reported that from 1945 until the end of August 1950, only 4650 inquiries for missing children were solved.³⁷⁶ That is to say, the social workers either reconnected parents with their children or proved that the children were dead. The child search program was terminated at the end of 1950 but even today it is possible to send an inquiry to the ITS in Bad Arolsen and to receive the information that is kept in their archive.³⁷⁷

The history of the search for unaccompanied children indicated that the search officers located 22,884 unaccompanied children between 1945 and 1950. However, this estimate did not include, "several thousand additional children" found by the UNRRA's personnel shortly after the war when no records were kept.³⁷⁸ The UNRRA and IRO's officers believed that it was their duty to find all these children and to return them to their mothers, so that a natural mother-child bond, which was critical for their growth could be restored; to their family where they could develop into upright members of society; to their home country where they

³⁷⁴ "History of the Search for Unaccompanied Children," 1950, AJ/43/138, AN, Paris.

³⁷⁵ The procedure of tracing a child meant that someone had requested to find a lost child and provided any details about him or her, for example, the names and date of birth. Searching a child implied that the search and welfare officers looked for foreign children that presumably were living in Germany. Usually they had no particulars about these children. More details see: "The Situation as to Unaccompanied Children. UN Hambros Report."

³⁷⁶ "History of the Search for Unaccompanied Children."

³⁷⁷ "History of the Search for Unaccompanied Children."

³⁷⁸ These numbers included also Jewish children: 8,211 Jewish children located and 1444 enquiries received. "History of the Search for Unaccompanied Children."

could grow into the future citizens.³⁷⁹ The fact that these three elements were mentioned shows that the search for, and repatriation of children had to do with three different sectors of child relief: individual, connected with the development of identity, socio-cultural and socio-political.

Another explanation of why it was so important to search for and remove all non-German children from Germany referred the reader to the Nazi crime of kidnapping foreign children, especially children from Eastern Europe, and bringing them to Germany for the purpose of Germanization. The Nazi Germanization policy and the *Lebensborn* program were described as “<one of the cruellest and most far-reaching of crimes> [...] a vigorous, flourishing, if ruthless program by which <racially valuable> children from the surrounding countries, under cover of great secrecy, were brought into Germany to strengthen the German race and to weaken their opponents”.³⁸⁰ As Tara Zahra has indicated, such descriptions reflected an emotional portrayal of Nazi crimes against innocent children but also against the national countries as these children were their future citizens.³⁸¹

The child search program and the return of displaced children to the home countries was meant to reduce the malignant and socially damaging consequences of bio-political crime and to symbolize the Allies’ victory over their enemy. In 1948, one of the UN's reports on unaccompanied children stated: “the war was fought among other things to prevent Germany from keeping such [foreign] children, to make it impossible for any aggressor nation to deprive its neighbors of their most cherished treasure and steal their future.”³⁸² The majority of children deported for the Germanization program children came from Eastern Europe. As a result, the governments of Eastern European countries saw the return of stolen children to be an act of justice after the Nazi assault on their land and their children.

This kind of introduction to the issue of searching for displaced children was also typical for the official documents, memorandums and public statements, as well as the IRO’s internal documents. When delivered at the public level such rhetoric explained the urge for the child search activities and attracted support among individuals and national governments. The long

³⁷⁹ Zahra, “Lost Children.”

³⁸⁰ “Removal from German Families of Allied Children. Reasons Why This Is to the Best Interest of the Child,” January 21, 1948, 6.1.2/82487906-82487910, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

³⁸¹ Tara Zahra: *The Lost Children*, 125–127.

³⁸² “The Situation as to Unaccompanied Children. UN Hambros Report.”

quotations from the Nuremberg trials that judged the Nazi's programs on kidnapping children and Heinrich Himmler's writings on the "revitalization" of the German nation through the help of "foreign blood", were commonly used in the official texts on the child search program to underscore its importance and prove the need to remove foreign children from German families. The readers of newspapers and journals could see headlines such as the one issued in the Ladies' Home Journal in 1946 – "Returning Europe's Kidnapped children".³⁸³ These texts aimed to explain that racially valuable children had been taken from Eastern Europe to Germany in order to be brought up as Germans and educated under Nazi ideology with the German families or at the special childcare institutions. They were separated from their parents, their names were changed, and some of them already only spoke German.³⁸⁴ These stories put forward the point of view that non-German children should not be left in Germany because "from a legal, political and historical" perspective, Allied children did not belong to German society.³⁸⁵

As Tara Zahra has shown in her analysis, social workers believed that these children had to be renationalized, that is, restored to their original nation where they truly belonged. According to the postwar agreements that were respected by the UNRRA and IRO welfare officers, the repatriation of children was recognized as a right demand of the national governments. The idea that non-German children should be removed from German families was in line with the demands of national governments, which were convinced that all non-German children should be sent back to their home countries regardless of the circumstances under which they had arrived in Germany.³⁸⁶ As a result of the war, the population losses stimulated the national governments in many countries to eagerly demand that children who had been uprooted during the war children were returned. Ensuring that the offspring of different nations were returned home helped to fulfil the aspiration for the prompt recovery of war and for a future peace and prosperity in real terms.

While the social workers did not deny that the children had to be returned home, they were suspicious of the biopolitical arguments made by the national governments, like in the case on nationality identification discussed above. They were concerned that in their zealous pursuit

³⁸³ Quotation from 'Returning Europe's Kidnapped Children', 6.1.2/82485946–82485948/ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

³⁸⁴ "History of the Search for Unaccompanied Children."

³⁸⁵ Removal from German Families of Allied Children.

³⁸⁶ Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 118–45.

to repatriate the children, the government's representatives would overlook the children's well-being in the name of restoring their population losses. In January 1946, Cornelia Heise, a child welfare specialist reporting on the inter-zone child welfare conference wrote:

“All of the surrounding countries are pressing for permission to enter Germany in search for their children. Some are already doing so. There is grave danger that the interest of the child will be lost sight of and that political and population issues will be the deciding factors.”³⁸⁷

Their fears, it seems, were not groundless. The Polish government, for instance, claimed that at least 200,000 Polish children were taken to Germany to become Germans, although a recent study has shown that this number was largely exaggerated and that the number was probably closer to 20,000 children.³⁸⁸ Having discussed this matter with the occupying army officers, the welfare workers came to the decision that the search for the displaced children should be organized under the UNRRA's leadership.³⁸⁹ Likewise, the US or British military authorities were not happy with the idea that the national representatives might not coordinate with them when they conducted search operations in their zones of occupation.

As a result, over the course of ten years following the war, the child search program was managed by the relief and tracing officers at the UNRRA, the IRO, the Central Tracing Bureau (CTB), and as of 1948, the International Tracing Service, in the British and American zones of occupation. The US military command did not participate directly in the search activities but they were responsible for authorizing all the displaced children's movements within and without the occupied zones, and they controlled the access to the DP camps and the national representatives' children's centers. Even so, the national liaison representatives could contact the unaccompanied and lost children via the UNRRA and IRO officers.

The Dilemma of German Foster Families

When welfare workers discussed the urgent need to find and remove displaced children who were living with German foster parents and as such 'hidden' in the fabric of German society, they emphasized that child's wellbeing was as important as providing justice to the displaced victims whose countries had been subject to Nazi assault. A child's wellbeing was framed in

³⁸⁷ Heise, “Monthly Report. Child Welfare Branch. January 1946.”

³⁸⁸ Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 125–27.

³⁸⁹ Heise, “Monthly Report. Child Welfare Branch. January 1946.”

terms of the child's best interests, which was a key concept of the UNRRA's and IRO's work. When articulating the principle of working in the best interests of the child, welfare officers summarized: "[a] child needs love, care and a chance to learn. Above all, it needs security, financial and emotional".³⁹⁰ The authorities debated where to place displaced children so that his or her milieu could provide a child with all these elements: would it be a family or a childcare institution. These investigations demonstrated that psychologists and social workers who came from the US and UK considered that birth but also foster families would be the best place for children to develop and overcome their physical and mental trauma. Unlike them, some of the theorists and educational specialists in Europe argued that the collective environment of various children's institutions would ensure the best results in this endeavor.³⁹¹ Interestingly, what was the attitude towards German foster families and their ability to create a favorable environment for a child's recovery in this context?

The welfare officers asked a very similar question: "Does the German family offer a satisfactory or an unsatisfactory permanent home for an Allied unaccompanied child?"³⁹² This question, raised in 1948, reflected the long-running disputes among the UNRRA's and IRO's welfare workers and the military command regarding the possibility of leaving orphaned and unaccompanied children with their German foster parents. Could such a family setting provide the psychological, emotional, physical and economic comfort that was considered so important for a child's rehabilitation? Immersed in the rhetoric of working in the best child's interests, the problem of removing children from German foster families called attention to the children's welfare, their economic and social security, and the necessity to rear them within their native cultural environment. The need to provide justice to the victims of the Nazi's biopolitical crimes was given less attention in these discussions. The welfare workers thought that providing the best environment for the body and soul of the child was essential for planning his or her future settlement. Certainly, this viewpoint also paid considerable attention to the fact that if these children were left in Germany, they would be adopted into the families of their former enemy nation, but again the welfare workers examined this option from the perspective of working in the child's best interests.

³⁹⁰ Removal from German Families of Allied Children.

³⁹¹ Zahra, "The Psychological Marshall Plan," 52–56; Fieldston, *Raising the World*, 12–31.

³⁹² Removal from German Families of Allied Children.

Initially, it seems that framing these discussions in anti-German rhetoric in the child's "best interests" worked in favor of the arguments for removing of all the foreign children. In other words, whether the children had been deported, kidnapped for Germanization or left by natural parents, they should automatically be taken away from their German families and returned to their natural families, where they truly belonged. The vivid depictions of some children's misfortunes in German foster families in the press and in some of the reports served to prove that adoption into such families was a disadvantageous option which rather worked in the child's "worst interests". The shadow of the wartime Germanization program and the suspicion that a racist ideology was still present within German society, led advocates for the removal of children to believe that German foster parents were not capable of properly caring for foreign children and raising them as non-Germans.³⁹³ They underlined that "[...] the home which appears satisfactory to the child is likely to be the one which only yesterday ardently supported the Nazi doctrines. How can we, in the best interest of the child, abandon him to this possibility?"³⁹⁴ This rhetorical question could only lead to a negative answer. In addition to this, the reports and articles tended to portray the damaging nature of German families due to their poor economic and moral conditions, and the lack of interest and affection that they showed towards children and especially foreign children. It was emphasized that even after the war ended foreign children were badly treated, deprived of care and education and were instead forced to work,

"Instances of insecurity, abuse and exploitation of children in German care are mounting, to say nothing of number of cases in which care meets marginal standard only. Children are found at homes with emotionally unstable foster parents [...], children plod along at household of farm labor never having to school in Germany, children are living in families which hand them over to someone else at the first crisis which arises in the home".³⁹⁵

Certainly, such stories could be true. Nevertheless, the variety of experiences that wartime children were subject to suggested that these gloomy descriptions only reflected only one side of the reality. The stories and impressions shared by the welfare officers working in the field

³⁹³ Tara Zahra, "Lost Children", 51–60; Sara Fieldston, *Raising the World*, 27.

³⁹⁴ "Petition for Reconsideration of Decision to Discontinue Child Search," December 7, 1947, AJ/43/663, AN, Paris.

³⁹⁵ "Petition for Reconsideration of Decision to Discontinue Child Search"; Welfare officers described conditions of foreign children living in the children's institutions in a very similar way. See for example: Elsa Pick, "Unaccompanied Children," June 5, 1947, 6.1.2/82486063-82486069, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

also suggested that the problem of foreign children living with German foster parents was much more complicated. An UNRRA welfare officer from the Munich area, for instance, reported that babies and small children usually treated better than older children and adolescents, although, he added, the opposite situation could also be true, “You may also see a baby badly treated or an older child living happily with his (her) foster parents”.³⁹⁶ The complexity of the situation also mounted because the children were fostered under different circumstances and in many cases.

However strongly worded the Nazi crimes of kidnapping “racially valuable” children were described, the reasons behind non-German children’s presence in German families or childcare institutions were far more variable and complex. The IRO’s and ITS’s files on such children provide some additional details about the stories of their adoption into German families. Welfare officers were eager to know under what circumstances foster parents took children into their homes, in order to reveal their real intentions towards a child and to make a decision about his or her future. From the stories about child’s family circumstances, the welfare officers could learn that female forced laborers chose to foster out their newborn children to private care. Certainly, such decisions were not always made voluntarily. After recovering from childbirth, mothers were obliged to return to their workplace and continue working and employers in many cases did not allow children to live with their mothers. According to the childbirth regulations of forced laborers’ work, newborn children had to be placed in a care institution for foreigners’ children or be placed in private care. Inevitably, the decision to place a child in to foster care, likewise into a childcare institution, was always influenced by the real (or perceived) danger of such children being neglected, underfed and abused. Nevertheless, children living in German families had a better chance of surviving than the babies who were placed into state institutions for racially undesirable children. Women forced laborers believed they were only giving away their children for a short period.³⁹⁷ They visited their children, paid for the child’s care and often planned to reunite with them some day. However, when the war was over, many women for various reasons never returned for their children. Some of them started new families, others were afraid of going back home with children born out of wedlock in Germany. Meanwhile, it was not

³⁹⁶ Knut Okkenhaug, “Excerpt from Report of Knut Okkenhaug,” November 15, 1946, 6.1.2/82487741, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

³⁹⁷ Elizabeth Harvey, “Last Resort Or Key Resource? Women Workers From The Nazi-Occupied Soviet Territories, The Reich Labour Administration And The German War Effort,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 26 (December 2016): 165 See also this article for more details about female forced labors from Soviet Union.

uncommon for German foster parents to develop an affection for these children, to treat them as their own, and after the war to adopt them.

On other instances welfare workers learned of cases where foreign children were taken into German families by chance, e.g. out of a feeling of compassion for an abandoned child. For instance, Walla, the girl whose story introduced the above part of the chapter, entered the Höpfels family in this way. Still, there were also more convoluted stories where both reasons could meld together, as was the case for a girl named Maria. In 1944 a “transport with workers from Ukraine” arrived in the city where Gertruda and Josef S. lived. Since her husband had been ill, Gertruda explained, she went to take in the Ukrainian workers, as she needed help to run her inn and farm. There she noticed a small girl and offered her a piece of bread. A man, who was introduced as “the translator on the transport”, advised her to take the girl and explained that the child had no relatives traveling with her. He added that, “the family taking the child would receive the best worker”. Gertruda, after some hesitation, agreed to take the child and selected another man to work for her.³⁹⁸ Until the end of the investigation, the welfare officers could not tell for sure whether Gertruda took the child because she felt sympathy for the girl or because she expected her to work for the family in the future. Despite that, the family applied for adoption and received approval from the welfare officers and occupying authorities in 1951.

In the end, taking into account the considerable diversity of individual situations of children living with German families, it was not entirely evident that their removal from the foster family where they were properly cared for and became attached to the foster parents would be the best solution. At the same time resettlement not always brought only positive outcome. In September 1946, a child search officer reported that the removal of children from German foster families was “in many cases [a] very painful experience” that required “patience and sagacity”.³⁹⁹ The instructions on the removal of foreign children from German families satisfied the theoretical principles of post-war child rehabilitation, the interpretations of working in the child's “best interests” and appealed to a general sense of justice. However, they were rather general and therefore not always practical. With the welfare workers’ increasing experience in the field, they became aware of the fact that these formal instructions

³⁹⁸ Charlotte Babinski, “Foster Home Investigation. Szenkowicz Maria,” May 18, 1948, 6.1.2/82488150-82488159, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

³⁹⁹ Marie Meylen, Monthly Report. UNRRA. September 1946, 1946, 6.1.2/82487315–82487320/ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

overlooked countless difficulties related to the emotional reactions of the children and foster parents when they attempted to take the child or children away. At the inter-zonal conference in October the child search specialists recognized that this was “a very delicate job” that required the “most skilled workers and a considerable investment of time in each case.”⁴⁰⁰ In the field, the social workers faced all sorts of nuances and had to take them into consideration when deciding the future of a particular child.

To begin with, welfare workers found that the children were often unwilling to leave their foster homes if they had been living there from very young age. The foster parents could also refuse to give up the babies or older children, and could even appeal against the decision to the German or occupying authorities.⁴⁰¹ Meanwhile, the reports drew a vivid picture of how strongly foster mothers could become emotionally attached to their children, for instance by quoting woman’s statement that she would “rather kill the child and herself, than be separated from her”.⁴⁰² In another report a welfare officer stated that the child and foster mother were “very upset” when they saw her, they “were crying bitterly”, and the foster mother firmly protested against the removal of the child: “The foster mother kept on saying, that she would never give up the child, and that she would rather kill herself, so that we could only get the child over her corpse.”⁴⁰³ Of course, these rhetorical strategies could be used by the welfare officer to sustain his or her belief that the child should stay with the family. Nevertheless, it also underscored the fact that the removal of children from their foster families was not a smooth process. In fact, once displaced children were located they were not withdrawn from their German foster parents until a solution for them had been found. For some children, like Walla, this process could last more than five years, but inevitably after such a prolonged period, separating foster parents and children became an even more difficult task burdened with emotional distress and the foster parents’ protests.

This kind of experience encouraged welfare workers, especially those working in the field to question the policy that prescribed to the removal of all foreign children from German families regardless of their circumstances. Cornelia Heise, the chief of the ITS’s Child Search

⁴⁰⁰ Eileen Blackey, “Minutes of Inter-Zonal Conference on Child Search and Repatriation,” October 16, 1946, 6.1.1/82502654-82502676, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

⁴⁰¹ Zahra, “Lost Children,” 78–83.

⁴⁰² R. Mussin Pushkin, Gabiyska (Sawiska) Anna Rosa, Born 9.4.44, May 25, 1949, 6.3.2.1/84185047/ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

⁴⁰³ Ella Laursen, “Baranenko Helena Erna, Born 21.1.44, USSR,” March 2, 1950, 6.3.2.1/84152679, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

Branch admitted that the IRO officers were divided in their opinion regarding the fostering of foreign children in Germany: while some of them adopted a positive standpoint, others completely rejected such a possibility.⁴⁰⁴ The arguments on both sides focused on the child's best interests, weighing repatriation against resettlement or adoption, and discussing which option could provide a better physical and psychological environment for the children's rehabilitation and upbringing. Tara Zahra has shown in her study that the UNRRA's and IRO's welfare officers in general, "consistently favored removing children from German homes and returning them to their home country of origin".⁴⁰⁵ Many of them believed that it would be better for the children to return to the parental home, or a national home, which was their country of origin. At the same time, the fieldwork and family evaluation reports demonstrated that contact with the children and foster parents as well as an evaluation of the future perspectives that unaccompanied children had in their foster families in contrast to those after their resettlement or repatriation could change the welfare officer's opinion.

Charlotte Babinski, the child welfare officer who visited Walla, for example, gives the impression that she believed that foreign children should not stay in German families. She strongly argued against the possibility of adoption for Walla and the other children on her list despite the fact that the family conditions were favorable. Out of ten families, she only recommended one child for adoption, the one who had already been officially adopted during the war. Regardless of all the probable advantages of having a German foster family, the worry that a child could be absorbed by German society was a sufficient reason for Babinski to disapprove any idea of adoption. In the final report on her investigation into some foster families in Bavaria, Babinski stressed the idea that non-German children in German families were disadvantaged because not only were they separated from their parents and their native culture, but they also were becoming German, "culturally speaking".⁴⁰⁶

Interestingly, Anna Woltjer, the second IRO child-care officer who visited Walla's foster family, two years after Babinski was less critical regarding the possibility of fostering foreign children in Germany. Her report shows that close attention to the psychological and emotional needs of a child could also be an argument for keeping the child in a German family. She was

⁴⁰⁴ Cornelia Heise, Proposed Use of Charlotte Babinski on a Temporary Basis for Special Investigations, March 15, 1948, 6.1.2/82487965/ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

⁴⁰⁵ Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 131.

⁴⁰⁶ Charlotte Babinski, Summary on the German Home Placements, July 2, 1948, 6.1.2/82487987-82487989/ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

more concerned with the fact that separation from a foster mother could cause long-lasting emotional disturbance for a child, while repatriation did not always guarantee either better living conditions or a reunion with the birth mother. In the report on Walla's case, she wrote: "The child is now 5 1/2 [years] old and has been since birth in this family. Tracing for relatives has had no success up till now, and there seems little chance relatives will ever be found. It is true the child was born to a forced laborer but as it has been left so long with the present foster family, it seems to me that the advantages of repatriation do not offset the trauma of a removal."⁴⁰⁷

The cases where welfare officers had to decide what would be in the "best interests" of children who would be repatriated to the Soviet Union, such as Ukrainian children was even more complicated. Should they stay with their caring German foster parents or should they be taken away and sent back to the Soviet Union? In her memoirs, Gitta Sereny recalled how troubling this dilemma was for her in 1946, as a twenty-three years old young UNRRA child welfare officer,

"What are we doing, I asked myself. What in God's name were we doing? The question which so often occupied us was what was the 'right' solution of this human conundrum? To return the children to parents who longed for them but in an impoverished and largely destroyed Eastern Europe, to an ideology unacceptable to many of us? Or to leave them with their loving German second families, in Germany, our immediate past enemy which had obtained them by crime of truly biblical proportions? What *was* in the best interest of the children?"⁴⁰⁸

Not being able to give a definitive answer to this question, as it was not an easy one, Gitta at least stated that she was against letting these children be transported overseas.⁴⁰⁹ In order to find a solution for this challenging and controversial issue, the UNRRA's and IRO's social workers spent long hours collecting information about the child's family circumstances and analyzing them.

Inevitably, a welfare officer's personal position on the adoption of non-German children, including his or her individual beliefs, education and training in social work, had a noticeable influence on their recommendation about the child's rehabilitation plan and future settlement.

⁴⁰⁷ Anna Woltjer, Foster Home Visit in Order to Check the Present Situation, May 4, 1950, 6.3.2.1/84434637. ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

⁴⁰⁸ Sereny, *The Healing Wound*, 49.

⁴⁰⁹ Sereny, 50.

Their views remain imprinted in their reports and correspondence, in the words and expressions that they used to describe a child, the foster parents and the situation in general. The lack of instructions from the IRO or military headquarters, or the uncertainties about particular groups of children, additionally encouraged the welfare officers to investigate the children's cases in-depth. Likewise, the general nature of the orders given by the humanitarian and military zonal headquarters provided an opportunity for the welfare officers to form their own opinion on what would be better for one child or another based on what they observed in the field and learned in theory.

Having said this, it seems important to unravel their reports to see what kind of work stood behind them and how their results were framed in order to support their position on whether a particular child could stay in a German foster family. For this, let us follow Charlotte Babinski and other welfare officers like her into the houses of several German foster parents, in order to see which elements and circumstances could best support the arguments made for the adoption of children in contrast to resettlement or repatriation.

Child Case Investigation

The UNRRA's and IRO's approaches to the DPs relief were often described as bureaucratic and lacking flexible attitude towards individual cases. The studies has shown that former welfare officers noted in their memoirs that after having worked for the humanitarian agencies for some time, they gained the impression that statistical sheets, nominal rolls and departure lists were more important than the actual people that they were helping.⁴¹⁰ While, indeed, both agencies produced a vast number of administrative documents and letters, the children's files demonstrated that the welfare officers took a very personalized approach to their problems and fate. Child search and child care officers gathered as much information as possible on each child, and took all the details about his or her life and wartime experience into consideration. This approach to childcare was heavily influenced by the casework method that had come into use in the US and Britain from the beginning of the century.⁴¹¹ The social workers, who came from the US to Europe generally used this method in their work with the displaced adults and, especially, children in post-war Europe. Although it was

⁴¹⁰ Salvatici, "“Help the People to Help Themselves,”” 437.

⁴¹¹ Jane Lewis, *The Voluntary Sector, the State, and Social Work in Britain : The Charity Organisation Society/Family Welfare Association since 1869* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 1995); Kathleen Woodroffe, *From Charity to Social Work in England and the United States* (Routledge and Kegan Paul [etc.], 1962).

applied various nuances, it encouraged the welfare worker to concentrate on the individual needs and problems of the person and to pay particular attention to their emotional and psychological problems.⁴¹²

After non-German children were located in German homes, they were registered with the UNRRA or the IRO. Although the rules instructed them to remove the child immediately, the welfare officers frequently left the children with the foster parents until their identity could be established, their relatives located, and the final plans for their repatriation or resettlement could be made. Alongside this, when the foster parents wished to adopt the child, the IRO started a foster family investigation, in order to establish whether the family was eligible: “to determine whether or not the home is one where we [the IRO] could conscientiously leave the child”.⁴¹³ Over the course of the investigation, welfare officers visited the children, observed their life and wellbeing in the foster home, and inspected the house and family atmosphere. They were expected to obtain detailed accounts about the children’s situation in their foster families and to provide reliable, eyewitness, and expert testimonies about the wellbeing neglect or abuse of these children. Using their expertise, they were expected to establish whether the prospective family would provide the best place for the child to recover physically and emotionally after the war. In the Thérèse Brosse writings, for instance, the general principles in arranging the recovery and re-education of orphaned children after the war indicated that they should be placed with a family where they could find “everything necessary for his “psychological convalescence” and the satisfactory development of his personality”, in material, physical as well as mental terms for the foreseeable future. The adults who cared for the children were to have “strong and normal” emotional relationships with them.⁴¹⁴ In this context “normal” parent-child relationships meant loving and caring parents who were aware of the child's physical and emotional needs, and who protected him or her from the dangers of the outside world, “it is thus the adult's part to ensure the child's 'emotional health'. He discharges that task thanks to the emotional link, which safeguards the child's security amid the snares of the outside world.”⁴¹⁵ Although Thérèse Brosse did not specifically mention German foster parents in this context, the UNRRA’s and IRO’s

⁴¹² Fieldston, *Raising the World*, 28.

⁴¹³ John Troniak, Berlin Child Care Case Blahyj Maria, July 6, 1949, 6.3.2.1/84168187/ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

⁴¹⁴ Thérèse Brosse, “War-Handicapped Children. Report of the European Situation” (UNESCO, 1950), 36.

⁴¹⁵ Brosse, 34.

welfare officers used similar cornerstone principles of social work practices when they visited these families.

In 1948, Charlotte Babinski went to conduct such investigations with several foster families in Bavaria. She took with her an “Outline for foster home evaluation” that advised her what to assess and how to report the information that she collected. It reflected the IRO’s general instructions on family investigations and guided social workers through the various details that they had to cover when visiting a foster family, such as, the child’s physical appearance and behaviour, the foster parents’ way of acting toward the child, their background, and social position in the community. The outline that Babinski used was fairly detailed, consisting of four sections titled “The child”, “Foster family”, “Legal requirements”, and “Summarized evaluation”.⁴¹⁶ Other welfare officers, even those not using the same outline, covered similar aspects about the child, foster family, and their life together in their reports.⁴¹⁷ In its approach the guide reflected the social work theory that underpinned a caseworker’s visit, which was intended to guard the special needs of children after the war. It was designed to provide tangible indications that a child was being cared for properly, not discriminated against or treated as an *Untermensch*, nor falling under the influence of Nazism.

Babinski’s and the other welfare officers’ rich and detailed reports on the foster families highlight the principal aspects that were deemed to be important when evaluating foster care. Placing this alongside the other details that the welfare officers discovered about the children’s life, it is possible to see the circumstances that led them to advocate for the adoption of foreign children by German families. Interestingly, from time to time their arguments were not in line with the IRO headquarters’ policies or theories on children’s recovery, instead they reflected the individual welfare worker’s vision on how a child’s physical and psychological rehabilitation should be achieved in a particular case.

In their initial visit to the family, welfare officers typically observed and described the life of the household in all its aspects, and collected information about the how children entered the German family. Usually they conducted unannounced inspections, and as such they expected to see the family in their daily routine. When Marjorie Farley visited Maria Blahyj, she noted,

⁴¹⁶ Cornelia Heise, Outline for Foster Home Investigations, April 26, 1948, 6.1.2/82486781–82486785/ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

⁴¹⁷ See, for example: John Troniak, Berlin Child Care Cases: Blahyj Maria, August 15, 1949, 6.3.2.1/84168190/ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

“At 10.00 am the four members of the family were in the rather small kitchen – cake and coffee on the table – and the impression was received that the picture was rather typical”.⁴¹⁸ Usually, the welfare officer found the family in an “old but satisfactory” apartment consisting of one or two bedrooms, a kitchen and a toilet or a bath, sufficiently or poorly furnished, kept tidy or “not especially neat but adequately clean”.⁴¹⁹ Housing conditions were an important part of the evaluation, although not a decisive one. Tidy, clean or neat rooms signified that the foster mother could be characterized as a good housekeeper, and that she cared about the health of her family and children even under the difficult circumstances of the post-war. After the war, particularly after the British and US had carpet bombed Germany, decent accommodations were not easy to find for many German families.⁴²⁰ This, it seems, was also clear to the welfare officers as they considered that the foster parents’ intentions and efforts to improve their living conditions to be a positive attribute.

Great emphasis was placed on the investigation of the “personal qualifications of the foster parents to assume child care responsibility”.⁴²¹ In other words, welfare officers collected information about the foster parents’ employment, monthly income, and their participation in the social and religious life of the community. This was all done to ensure that the family met the IRO’s formal requirements for German families who wished to adopt a child.⁴²² The material comfort that the family could offer the child was as important as the psychological comfort, but the welfare officers’ most important task was to study the family’s ideological environment. The social workers were very conscious to ensure that the foster parents had no affiliations to the Nazi party, army or any other Nazi organization. This preoccupation with the family’s ideology and views resulted from the fear that the foster parents would “contaminate” the child with Nazi ideas, and educate them in intolerant or racist thinking.⁴²³ The story about foreign children being kidnapped during the war assumed that “racially valuable” children were given to the adherents of Nazi ideology to be brought up with their values. In contrast, the social workers suspected that displaced children, especially those of

⁴¹⁸ Marjorie M. Farley, Investigation Report. Blahyj Maria, September 3, 1951, 6.3.2.1/84168230/ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

⁴¹⁹ A. Lap, Report on Visit to Foster Parents of Boigan Anna, February 23, 1951, 3.2.1.1/78951366/ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen; Lawrence Olnick, Report. Blahyj Maria, Born 6 December 1943, October 1949, 6.3.2.1/84168197/ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

⁴²⁰ According to Tony Judt, an estimated 20 million people were homeless in Germany after the war: Judt, *Postwar*, 2010, 16–17.

⁴²¹ Heise, Outline for Foster Home Investigations.

⁴²² “Provisional Order No. 75” (IRO, 1947), 6.1.2/82489786-82489790, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

⁴²³ Brosse, “War-Handicapped Children. Report of the European Situation,” 101.

non-German origin, might have experienced maltreatment at the hands of foster parents who were still ideologically faithful to Nazism. In order to investigate these questions the social workers interviewed the foster parents, then checked their stories by consulting with the local priests, neighbours, and the local German and occupation authorities.⁴²⁴ Inevitably, as a result the welfare officers occasionally found out that some of the German foster parents had been associated with Nazi organisations or the army. This could have been viewed as a very negative characteristic for a family wishing to adopt a non-German child. Nevertheless, as children's files have showed, if cleared during the denazification process, foster parents in fact still had a chance to adopt a child.

Even if the family was cleared of following a Nazi ideology and had no visible prejudices toward foreign children, there were other critical issues that might hinder the adoption decision. International welfare and education workers criticized the German model of child rearing and claimed that it had contributed to the emergence of a society that was inclined toward a totalitarian form of rule. American social workers and child-care professionals who came to the US zone of occupation to study German child rearing practices were alarmed to find that little attention was paid to the psychological and emotional problems of children in German families. German parents, they said, followed the outdated male-dominated, authoritarian approach to a child's upbringing and preferred disciplining and instructing over listening to children. To the American welfare workers, who were already trained to organize child-care by giving thought to the child's mental as well as the physical state, such an approach seemed to be wrong. Moreover, it was believed that by being educated in a tradition that allowed for no affection between parents and children made individuals more inclined to form a totalitarian society, as had happened in Germany with the pre-war generation.⁴²⁵

The recommendations made after the family investigation required that the welfare worker to provide an eyewitness account of the relations that had developed between the child and other members of the foster family. In her memoirs, Gitta Sereny noted that when planning her visit to a family she intended to observe how the children interacting with other family members, "it was essential for me", she wrote, "to see them first within the family circle".⁴²⁶ In particular, welfare officers looked for signs of harmonious child-parent relationships to

⁴²⁴ "Provisional Order No. 75"; Cornelia Heise, "Outline for Foster Home Investigations," April 26, 1948.

⁴²⁵ Fieldston, *Raising the World*, 24–25, 30–31.

⁴²⁶ Sereny, *The Healing Wound*, 34.

prove that the child was being well cared for. Lawrence Olnick, a welfare officer who visited Maria Blahyj several times, described that the girl was “[a]ctive, healthy, intelligent, well clothed, in good spirit” and had “excellent relationships with Mrs. Pumptow [the foster mother]”.⁴²⁷ At the same time, he observed that the foster parents “were very much attached to Maria, consider[ed] her their own child and wish[ed] to keep her with them always”.⁴²⁸ In the case of Anna Boigan, the welfare officer noted that the foster parents were attached to the girl “to such an extent that the child [was] a bit spoilt”.⁴²⁹ Although the latter description might sound negative, in this case for the welfare officer it signified that the foster parents tried hard to improve the girl’s childhood experience. His report summarized that Anna “looked very happy” and was “very fond of the foster parents”.⁴³⁰

“Treated the child as their own” was a frequently used expression in the files where children were recommended for adoption. When descriptions such as these were applied to the foster family it indicated firstly that the child was not regarded as an inferior member of the family. But also it implied that the welfare officers witnessed an expression of love, emotional attachment, and the broader set of tangible practices that responsible parents would undertake. They verified that the foster parents did not neglect the child’s education, as they would not do with their children, but might with an *Untermensch*. International social workers viewed education was a part of the childhood experience and for this reason the welfare officers inquired whether the child attended school and even contacted schoolteachers to ask about the child. For instance, Babinski asked Maria Szenkovicz’s teacher to make an evaluation on her and to provide a report on her grades. Apart from grades and school attendance the social workers were interested in teacher’s evaluation of the child’s behaviour. To recover and grow normally, post-war child-rearing specialists pointed out that children needed to develop a feeling of belonging to the community in which they lived, and the feeling of being equal with its other members. One of the ways to ensure this outcome was to understand how the child behaved with other children, for instance, at school. The report from Maria’s schoolteacher described her as an “average pupil”, “fond of nature and animals”, “polite, friendly and ready to help”, “obedient” and “popular among her schoolmates”.⁴³¹ For the

⁴²⁷ Olnick, Report. Blahyj Maria, Born 6 December 1943.

⁴²⁸ Olnick.

⁴²⁹ Lap, Report on Visit to Foster Parents of Boigan Anna.

⁴³⁰ Lap.

⁴³¹ Certificates from School, May 1948, 6.1.2/82488149/ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

welfare officer, this description meant that the girl had socialized well into the German community and did not feel inferior to the other children.

The local doctor was typically another source of authority in assessing the child's wellbeing and the foster family's suitability. The doctor would certify the family's health and would write a detailed specialized account of the child and the foster parents. Reading the doctor's letter about a girl, Dora, the IRO's welfare worker learned that she was healthy, although "looked a bit pale", well trained for her age, had "kind manners and easily respond[ed] to questions".⁴³² This observation made the doctor conclude that Dora's foster mother took care of her wellbeing and education, and that the family should be recommended for adoption: "Thus the foster-mother, who is making a very good impression and who also has the best intentions to care for the well-being and the education of the child, will make no difficulties if the question arises to give the child another home."⁴³³ Later, the welfare officer who inspected the family mentioned the doctor's conclusion in order to support her impression of the foster mother and the home.

However, the feeling of belonging did not mean assimilating or merging into German society, rather the opposite was encouraged. The welfare officers expected that the child would be informed of his or her background and that the neighbours would be aware of the fact that fostered child was of a foreign origin. During the war, children who had been "kidnapped" or "stolen" for the purpose of Germanization were subsequently fostered out to German families, often without revealing their true origin or, for example, were introduced as one of the German orphans of war.⁴³⁴ After the war this practice was publicly condemned. The post-war theory of child development emphasized a need for every individual to know his or her national roots. As a result, when arranging international adoptions, the humanitarian workers checked that the child was not stripped of its identity. For these reasons, for example, Babinski disliked the fact that Walla's foster parents initially planned not to tell the girl about her true origin. However, the parents could simply have misread how the IRO's welfare officer expected them to up-bring the child. For them, possibly, this intention seemed to be a way to demonstrate their anti-racist approach, to ensure that the child was not an inferior member of the family and society. The fact that the foster parents told the girl about her

⁴³² Dr. med. Dr. jur. Auer, "The Girl Dora Bereshna, Born on Aug 8th 1937, " May 19, 1949, 6.3.2.1/84161400/ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

⁴³³ Dr. med. Dr. jur. Auer.

⁴³⁴ Sereny, *The Healing Wound*, 37–40.

foreign origin by the welfare officers' next visit gives the impression that they tried to foresee what the IRO officers would expect them to do.

Interestingly, by underlining the necessity to teach the children about their “native” culture, welfare officers did not mention the fact that very young non-German children who grew up during the war with their German foster parents had few memories, if any at all, about their countries and cultures of origin. Moreover, some of the children had never been to their home countries. Nevertheless, cultural, like national, identity was seen as something that was inherited from one's parents. Adopting this viewpoint, the humanitarian workers and theorists merged anti-assimilatory and anti-racist objectives together with the ideas about the hereditary character of cultural identity.

Placed together, all these pieces of information about German foster families formed a backdrop against which the IRO officers subsequently discussed the child's future. Circumstances such as those described above generally spoke in favor of the family's being able to keep the child. However, there was no guarantee that the welfare officer would recommend adoption, as we saw earlier in the chapter in Walla's case. Despite all the advantages and merits of her German foster family, those who were adverse to the adoption of Allied children in Germany, like Babinski, placing foreign children in a German foster family would still go against the notion of working in the child's “best interest”. Such a notion went beyond good housing conditions and caring foster parents, for the children would be irrevocably disconnected from their birth mothers and their national communities.

The Narratives about Children and Their Mothers

The IRO's working principles took into account the international agreements and rules on their legal responsibility for the displaced children. According to these principles, parents were defined as the children's natural guardians and held “native and inalienable” rights over them that could typically not be transmitted to the state authorities, occupational powers or international organizations when the parents were alive. Inevitably after the war, the relatives of many uprooted children remained unknown. In such cases, the national governments became responsible for the orphaned or unaccompanied children, whose nationality was known, while the humanitarian agencies and military occupational authorities were

accountable for the displaced children of undetermined nationality.⁴³⁵ At the same time according to the Anglo-American child welfare theory, biological families and native culture provided the best environment for the child's rehabilitation and 'return to normalcy' after the war. These ideas were embedded in the UNRRA's and IRO's work and resulted in the principle that reuniting displaced children with their parents was of the utmost importance. When it was not possible to find the parents, it was advised to return the children to their national communities at least, that is, to repatriate them and then foster them out to a family in their home country. Abandoned and illegitimate children were supposed to return to their birth mothers' home country. The UNRRA's authorities declared that the agency could not arrange the adoptions of children of any nationality who in their charge. All inquiries about this matter were to be addressed to the children's national governments. Nevertheless, as the studies have indicated, some children were sent overseas to be adopted.⁴³⁶

Having decided that displaced children could be adopted by their German foster parents, the welfare officers had to show that breaking their own principles was in the children's "best interests". In practical terms, this meant that they had to prove that it was impossible or not advisable to reunite a child with his or her birth mother or to repatriate them. The confusion and uncertainty in the post-war regulations created some space for the social workers and the military authorities to circumvent the official rules and to declare principles that justified adoption in Germany. The death or the inability to locate a child's parents, especially the mother, and uncertainties about the child's nationality could undermine the child's repatriation plan. Insecurities about allowing displaced children to be returned to the Soviet Union, such as in the case of Ukrainian children, was an additional reason that encouraged welfare officers to find reasons to allow the children to remain in Germany. The pressure of the short time span in which the IRO was allowed to work in Europe and the scarcity of the IRO's resources provided an additional reason for them to insist that the children could stay in Germany. Combining these arguments the welfare officers could shape a narrative that in the end justified their decision to leave a child with a German foster family.

⁴³⁵ L.E. Levitan, "Guardianship of Unaccompanied Children," March 5, 1948, AJ/43/926, AN, Paris.

⁴³⁶ Zahra, *The Lost Children*.

The Birth Mothers

The IRO's and ITS's welfare officers invested considerable time into searching for a birth mother before making arrangements for a child's adoption. Reuniting a mother and a child was one of the highest goals of the IRO's and UNRRA's child relief mission, but they also completed a thorough search for the birth mother even when there was little hope of finding her, because it was important to prove that neither she nor her close relatives were not searching for the child. The humanitarian authorities probably wanted to avoid stressful situations, such as, needing to withdraw a child who was already established in a foster family when, after several years, his or her blood relatives suddenly appeared and requested that the child be returned to them. It was believed that situations such as these, caused additional emotional turbulence for the children as well as the conflict between the IRO and the national representatives. In fact, in order to arrange an adoption for a child, the regulations that the IRO followed required welfare officers to present the mother's death certificate, or any other evidence that she was dead, had renounced her child, or it was unlikely that any future search would be able to locate her. In any situation, where it was deemed that the birth mother would never return, it was suggested that a foster mother could well replace her.

The interviews with the foster parents were the first point of inquiry about the birth mother. From their statements, the welfare officers attempted to acquire any information about the child's entry into the family, any details about the birth mother's whereabouts and possibly even her, or her relatives, contact details. Meanwhile, the lists with the unaccompanied children's names were published in the newspapers, circulated around the DP camps and the occupation zones, and broadcasted over the radio.⁴³⁷ The entries of the Central Tracing Bureau, later the International Tracing Service, were checked to see if someone is looking for a child. The Red Cross, the liaison officers and voluntary organizations were asked about missing children or adults who were searching for their kids. In the case of Ukrainian children, the welfare officers typically sent their requests to the Polish state repatriation offices, representatives of the Greek Catholic Church in Germany, the Polish Red Cross, the United Ukrainian American Relief Committee, and Central Ukrainian Committee.⁴³⁸ The Soviet authorities were also contacted, although each such request for information included a

⁴³⁷ Reus, "‘Everywhere Where Human Beings Are, We Can Find Our Children’ On the Organization of the ITS Child Search Branch and Its Predecessors," 46–47, 57.

⁴³⁸ Charlotte Babinski, "Foster Home Investigation Sweschenetz Boris, Born 16.1.44," June 1, 1948, 6.1.2/82488201, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

lurking danger that the Soviet representatives would demand that the IRO hand over any unaccompanied child to them, regardless of whether they had any details concerning the mother. For instance, in 1949, in the search for Maria Shenkowicz's parents, the tracing officer suggested that the IRO refrain from contacting the Soviet representatives. He explained that the answer might take years, considering the poor communication between the Western and Soviet authorities while the request in of itself could provoke them to insist on the repatriation of the girl: "there is always the possibility that the Russian authorities will want to place a claim on the orphaned child on the basis that she originated from a territory which at the present belongs to the USSR."⁴³⁹

The typical procedure required the IRO's and ITS's workers not only to search for the birth mother but also to scrupulously collect all pieces of information about her nationality, family circumstances and probable location. Even if welfare officers could not find the parents they aimed at establishing their nationality because it determined the nationality of the child. According to the regulations followed by the military and welfare authorities, children inherited the nationality of their father, while children born out of wedlock inherited the nationality and citizenship of their mother.⁴⁴⁰ Details about the mother's location and family circumstances indicated whether it would be safe to send a child back to her or her relatives. The welfare workers also tried to establish whether the mother had willingly abandoned the child or not, as it would indicate whether she wanted the child back.

Putting all the available fragments of information about birth mother and father if he was known together, the welfare workers forged the best plan possible for the child on a case by case basis. The mother's status, it seems, was a powerful argument for justifying emigration, repatriation or adoption. The welfare officers could underline the need to repatriate a child so that he or she could rejoin their mother. In fact, the IRO's regulations specified that welfare officers should take the child from the foster family and hand him or her over to the birth mother if she asked for the child to be returned to her.⁴⁴¹ On the other hand, the welfare officers could use the fact that the mother was impossible to reach, dead, or had abandoned her child, to argue that children living with caring German foster parents should stay there. This conclusion was in line with the Anglo-American idea that a mother's care was an

⁴³⁹ Herbert H. Meyer, "Shenkowicz Maria, b. Approx 1939," February 17, 1949, 6.3.2.1/84477988, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

⁴⁴⁰ "Provisional Order No 33. Unaccompanied Children. PCIRO, Headquarters Geneva."

⁴⁴¹ "The Registration and Identification of Displaced Unaccompanied Children in Enemy Territory."

important element for the child's development. It could be summarized as follows: a caring foster mother was better than having no mother at all. Remarkably, in this context, welfare officers also considered that German foster mothers could substitute for birth mothers to foreign children.

Take, for example, Dora's case, in 1946 the UNRRA's team registered a Ukrainian girl named Dora, who lived with a German foster mother and her brother, a local priest. According to the UNRRA's records, Dora arrived in Germany with her mother from Ukraine in a train that carried forced laborers, but they were subsequently separated. In 1947, Edward Francel, a child search officer for the IRO carried out an exhaustive search for the girl's mother. He visited the former camp for forced laborers near Cologne, where the women had lived, the train repair factory, where Dora's mother had worked, and the orphanage from which Dora was given to the foster family. In the orphanage, Francel discovered that the child was brought to the children's home after her mother died, presumably during the air bombing of Cologne. Then he went to the police station, in the city where the forced labor camp was situated, in order to find any records about the mother's death. However, he was told that the documents about her death and work at the factory were most likely destroyed during the Allies' carpet-bombing raids. Edward Francel, then, headed to the nearby cemetery with the hope of finding the death certificate there but had no luck.⁴⁴²

Meanwhile, following standard procedure, the Central Tracing Bureau checked their records for any information about the girl's parents or relatives, and directed the requests "for general publicity over various radio stations in Europe, and in a large variety of different language newspapers."⁴⁴³ Two years later, in 1949, some information was finally obtained from a Ukrainian couple that had known the child and her mother. They informed the IRO team that the girl's natural parents had died in Ukraine and that Dora had come to Germany with her stepmother who perished in 1945. In their opinion, the girl had no other relatives in Germany.⁴⁴⁴ As a result, the search officers did not succeed in finding Dora's mother or relatives. Nevertheless, the fact that they exhausted all the possible options to locate the stepmother allowed the welfare officers to assume that the chance of finding her in the future

⁴⁴² Francel W., "Report on Bereshnaja Doris."

⁴⁴³ "Enquiry Concerning Missing Persons.," July 17, 1947, 6.3.2.1/84161383, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

⁴⁴⁴ "Letter From Wladyslaw Maziewicz.," January 24, 1949, 6.3.2.1/84161388, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen; "Application for Assistance PCIRO. Bereshnaja Odarka (Dora)," July 29, 1949, 6.3.2.1/84161391, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

was very small. Consequently, they could proceed with arranging Dora's adoption a to her present foster family.

Alongside the search for the birth mother, the IRO's social workers started the foster home investigation, following the procedure described in the previous section. In July 1946, the UNRRA's team registered Dora and left the girl in the temporary care of her German foster parents. In January 1949, three years later, the IRO's welfare officers went to inspect the family with the intention assessing whether allowing the foster parents to adopt Dora would be in her "best interests". They observed their life and living conditions and consulted the family's doctor on the health of the child and the foster parents. The first available report of such a visit was quite short but contained no critical comments about the family. At this point, it seems, the welfare workers had already decided that allowing Dora to stay with the foster family would be in her "best interests". The report reaffirmed to the reader once more that the girl's natural parents had died and that her stepmother had "most likely [...] perished in an air-raid" in Germany.⁴⁴⁵ In addition, the welfare officer asked Father Blum, the foster mother's brother, to confirm in writing, his agreement to take care of the child in the future and his sister's willingness to adopt the girl.⁴⁴⁶ This was done because, according to the rules, a single woman could not adopt a foreign child, but, interestingly, the brother's consent was enough to overcome this official requirement.

The welfare officers paid particular attention to the special care that the Blums provided to Dora because she was suffering from anxiety due to her experiences during the war. The Anglo-American theory of the post-war recovery warned that in such circumstances children might develop feelings of worry, unease and fear. Their habits of lying and the fear of expressing themselves freely were believed to be the signs of such distress. Nelly Brann, the child welfare officer, stated that Dora exhibited these symptoms or "her faults" as she described them.⁴⁴⁷ All the people involved in the case, the IRO's welfare officers, the local doctor, who examined the girl, and the foster mother, acknowledged this problem. The psychological theory of the time advised that special attention be paid to the surroundings of children with such a psychological condition so that they felt secure and loved. The Blums

⁴⁴⁵ "A Visit [...] to the Child and Her Foster-Mother," January 6, 1949, 6.3.2.1/84161386, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

⁴⁴⁶ "A Visit [...] to the Child and Her Foster-Mother."

⁴⁴⁷ Nelly Brann, "Report on Visit to Foster-Family Blum on 4.5.1949," May 30, 1949, 6.3.2.1/84161401, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

family's evaluation in the IRO officer's reports gave the impression that their household was exactly the right place for Dora. It stated that the foster parents understood her psychological problem and put a great deal of effort into helping Dora to heal: "Both Pastor Blum and his sister expressed good understanding for Dora and though they said that Dora often told lies, they were not judgemental at all in talking about it. [...] Miss Blum mentioned that she had been so concerned about Dora's lying that she had taken her to see the psychiatrist at the orphanage."⁴⁴⁸

The IRO welfare worker's next visit to the family resulted in a lengthy report that described the appealing way in which the foster mother and her brother behaved towards the child. Nelly Brann, the IRO welfare officer, who had worked on Dora's case from the beginning, summarized: "During this visit, I was impressed with the understanding, the tolerance and thoughtfulness of Pastor Blum and his sister in their relationship to Dora. I therefore feel that the best plan for this child would be to remain with the Blums who see her faults, but like her and want to help her and with whom Dora seems to feel really at home."⁴⁴⁹ This conclusion combined with the fact that her mother and stepmother had most likely passed away put Dora's adoption in a positive light.

In June 1949, after the family investigation was over, Nelly Brann, who handled the case, filled in the clearance form for an unaccompanied child, asking the US military authorities' permission to "let Dora Bereshnaja remain in her present foster [home]". She indicated in the form that adoption by the German foster family would be a "plan A" for the future settlement of this child.⁴⁵⁰ This conclusion was based on a three-year-long investigation. Having scrutinized the social background of the girl, her parents and stepmother, as well as the prospective foster family, the welfare officer explained why the proposed plan outweighed repatriation or emigration for Dora. In the report, Nelly Brann summed up that Dora was an orphan but that she had already found a new family and a new home where she could stay: "There is no trace of child's own family. She has found a new family in Pastor Blum and his sister who are ready to continue to care for her and to give her a good upbringing and training. The child feels at home with them and [it is] evident that all the security she ever had in her

⁴⁴⁸ Brann.

⁴⁴⁹ Brann.

⁴⁵⁰ "Clearance Form for an Unaccompanied Child," June 2, 1949, 6.3.2.1/84161402, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

life, is with this family”.⁴⁵¹ The IRO welfare board agreed with the welfare and child care officers’ conclusions and recommended that the child should remain with Fr. Blum and his sister, and on 23 July 1949, the Control Commission for Germany approved the IRO’s recommendation.

The last step in the adoption procedure was to officially register the foster parents as the legal guardians of the child. In this context, again, details about the birth parent's presumed death ensured that the foster parents could become the legal guardians for the child. In fact, after the IRO caseworkers received the approval for Dora’s adoption plan from the EUCOM, they faced the problem of appointing the foster mother as her legal guardian. The representative of the local Jugendamt office, which took care of this procedure, demanded a document “stating that in all probability the parents of Dora were killed during an air-raid”.⁴⁵² The welfare workers provided this official form allowing Dora's foster parents to officially become her legal guardians.

Children Left By Their Mothers

It would be wrong to assume that all the children fostered to German families had lost their mothers. Many were temporarily separated from them due to, illness, the regulations for forced labours in Germany, the unpredicted displacement of the mother or simply her decision to desert her child. When the war was over many mothers searched for their displaced children, but some did not. In 1947, the UNRRA's final report discussed the problem of children whose mothers had intentionally left them with German families at very young age. This group of children provided a distinct contrast to those who had been deported or separated from their parents by Nazi officials. The report acknowledged that although the women's decision to leave their children behind was what led to their separation, in this case it may have been the mother’s deliberate wish:

“Child Search workers report that a large percentage of the cases they are now locating are not the children who were brought into Germany but are those young children who were born in Germany and abandoned or released by their mothers.

⁴⁵¹ “Clearance Form for an Unaccompanied Child.”

⁴⁵² Nelly Brann, “Bereshnaja Dora, Born 8.8.1937, Pol/Ukr.,” July 13, 1950, 6.3.2.1/84161420, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

[A]t the end of the war many of these mothers preferred to leave their children where they were, rather than face repatriation with such a difficult burden.”⁴⁵³

The main trouble that the UNRRA and later the IRO faced was how to implement a future plan for these children. In the first place, they had to establish that the separation had indeed been initiated by the birth mother and that she had purposefully abandoned her child. If this was the case, then the UNRRA’s and IRO’s working principles advised welfare officers to refer such children to the national representatives of their respective countries. However, the report pointed out that despite the UNRRA’s official policy and that the majority of the national governments wished to return these children, it was commonly agreed that their cases required “more flexibility”.⁴⁵⁴

What they meant by flexibility was the decision to leave the child with their German foster families. The report acknowledged that although the military governments and some of the national governments, e.g. Dutch and Belgian, supported this plan, several countries had already challenged such a proposal. Moreover, the humanitarian authorities also thought that it was likely that the other national representatives in occupied Germany and Austria would do the same. Nevertheless, the UNRRA’s closure report suggested that allowing abandoned children to remain with their current German foster families could be in their best interests: “In carefully selected situations where the child has been under the care of the prospective adoptive parents for some time, completing the adoption might be more advisable than removing the child”.⁴⁵⁵ Even so, the recommendation to leave abandoned children with their foster parents was still treated with caution. It is noticeable that when suggesting this solution, the UNRRA’s welfare workers underlined that such a plan was only intended for children who had been abandoned by their mothers: “This [possibility of adoption] is particularly true for this group of illegitimate children who were placed by their mothers with German families with the express request that they be left there permanently.”⁴⁵⁶ This formulation allowed the welfare officers to counter the national representatives’ claim on the children, who wanted them to be repatriated. The main rationale behind such the UNRRA’s position was that it was the mother’s decision to abandon her children or foster them out to a German family. Framing the case in this way made it difficult for the national representatives to challenge it,

⁴⁵³ “UNNRA Closure Report on United Nations Unaccompanied Children in Germany.”

⁴⁵⁴ “UNNRA Closure Report on United Nations Unaccompanied Children in Germany.”

⁴⁵⁵ “UNNRA Closure Report on United Nations Unaccompanied Children in Germany.”

⁴⁵⁶ “UNNRA Closure Report on United Nations Unaccompanied Children in Germany.”

considering that it was commonly recognized that the primary carer, the mother had already made a decision for her children's future.

Analysing the statements made in the reports against the practices in the field, several interesting points can be raised. First, the welfare officers did not always foster out displaced children to the same German families that their mother had placed them in. During the war, these children could have changed foster families several times because their mothers, foster parents or the German administration had decided to move them from one place to another. After the war, the welfare officers could also decide that another foster family would be a better place for a child. Second, the report mentioned "illegitimate" children, but, not all of the children that the IRO considered for adoption in Germany were born out of wedlock. There were cases when the father was dead, his location was unknown or the relationship between the parents was difficult to prove. Remarkably, the issue of parents being forced to abandon their children or their abrupt forced repatriation was acknowledged in the UNRRA's and IRO's rhetoric but was rarely mentioned in this context. The welfare officers often wrote that forced female laborers released their children to a German family because they had no time for both work and childcare.⁴⁵⁷

When investigating the child's case, the welfare officers underlined the fact that for one reason or another the mother had decided to desert her child and leave him or her in Germany. Also they were eager to know if the mother's decision to abandon her child during the war was still the case after it was over. For this reason, the search officers invested a lot of time in trying to discover the mother's actual motives for leaving their children behind in order to establish the children's future plans. Having established or assumed that the natural mother had not returned for her children after the liberation, the welfare officers used this as proof that she would not try to lay claim to her children in the future. Consequently, they argued that in such circumstances, it would be better for unaccompanied abandoned children to stay with their foster families that were already taking good care of them.

Regardless of why a child was abandoned, according to the rules in the US zone, when the birth mother was found to be alive, she, as a natural guardian of her child, had to provide her written consent for her child to be settled in a German foster family. Nevertheless, the

⁴⁵⁷ See, for example: Charlotte Babinski, "Foster Home Investigation. Kudinow Walentin Walerij, b 25.4.44," n.d., 6.1.2/82488026-82488032, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

experience of the welfare workers clearly demonstrated that the chances of finding the mother were not very high. In the least complicated cases, the welfare officers were fortunate enough to locate her, interview her, and to acquire her relinquishment of parental rights, if she had indeed decided to abandon her child. This was the case with Maria Blachyj whose birth mother was found in Belgium where she had married a Belgian citizen after the war. The woman admitted that she was not interested in the girl and that there was no chance of bringing her daughter into her new family, as such she eventually agreed to sign a release document.⁴⁵⁸ Given that there was no possibility for Maria to live with her birth mother, according to the rules she was left with the option of being repatriated, sent to an orphanage or to another foster family. Meanwhile, the foster home investigation report acknowledged that Maria's foster mother treated the child very well and wished to adopt her. Drawing on their hands-on experience the welfare officers recommended that Maria be left with her foster family.⁴⁵⁹

Needless to say that cases where the mothers were found and their intention was clear, were rather rare. More often than not, search workers could spend several years searching for the mother, and yet had never finding her. This meant that the welfare workers often had to infer as to why the child was abandoned from details that they could collect. They started by interviewing the foster parents and the birth mother's former employers, some of their questions were aimed at acquiring more information about the mother and her location, while others were supposed to gauge her larger plans and interest in regards to the child. For instance, one of the search officers was instructed to ask the foster mother about her relationship, her possible contact or correspondence with the birth mother:

“Has she any letters from the mother in the interval that has elapsed? Has she any kind of document or letter which would indicate that the mother paid her some money for the child's care? How did the mother learn of Frau Bock [foster mother] in the first place?”⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁸ J. von de Vosse, “Nederlandsche Roode Kruis. Reply: Olga Bruyn-Blahyj,” January 19, 1948, 6.3.2.1/84168172, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen; Euprosia Olga Bruyn-Blachyj, “Relinquish Statement,” August 26, 1951, 6.3.2.1/84168227, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

⁴⁵⁹ A. Tsurikov, “Closure Statement. Blahyj Maria, Born 6.12.1943,” March 10, 1954, 6.3.2.1/84168246, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

⁴⁶⁰ Cornelia Heise, “Cabiyska (Sawiska) Anna Rosa (Rosalie), Born 9.4.44,” February 24, 1948, 6.3.2.1/84185046, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen.

Former employers were asked similar questions in an attempt to find out any details about the mother's background, her current place of residence, and again about her plans for the child. The search officers were particularly interested to know if the employer's wife

“received any letter from her [mother] which would give us [IRO] her forwarding address? Has she any work records indicating the length of service that might give some personal particulars. [...] Did Frau Schmid [employee's wife] know about the circumstances under which the mother came to Germany? Did she ever mention relatives back home? What is her story on the baby? Does she know where it was born?”⁴⁶¹

In this case, there were two questions that were explicitly aimed at finding out the reason why the mother had decided to give the child away. While interviewing the foster mother, the welfare officer asked if she could describe the birth mother “as the type of women who would abandon her child?” In the conversation with the birth mother’s former employer and his wife he asked: “Why did the mother allow herself to be separated from the child?”⁴⁶²

From these interviews, social workers sometimes learnt that the birth mother came to visit the child and wrote letters to them, but when the war was over, she left for an unknown destination without the child. Inevitably, the foster parents, who wished to keep the child, or the German authorities, who supported this plan, also appealed to the fact that the mother had deserted her child and returned to her home country. The foster parents interpreted the birth mother’s decision to leave her children behind in Germany as an example of bad motherhood. They attempted to establish the impression that the birth mother had completely failed to care for the child and his or her future. Their accounts were at odds with those that were recognized by the welfare officers' image of a 'good', virtuous mother who cared about their children and would raise them well. For instance, the story that the foster parents told about Helena Baranenko's mother allowed the welfare officers to conclude that the woman had had a chance to take the child with her but had decided to return home alone, deliberately leaving her child behind: “... [she] left after the liberation with the transport of Ukrainians for a DP camp in Austria. Then she returned and remained in Aufham for few days only.” The foster family lived in the same city, so it was easy to infer that the mother could have taken the child with her if she had wished to do so. But still, “[i]n June 1945 she left Aufham with her aunt”,

⁴⁶¹ Heise.

⁴⁶² Heise.

and the report further indicated that “They were on the way home” to Ukraine.⁴⁶³ Later the German administrative representative repeated in his support letter for the foster family that it had been the mother’s choice to leave the child with this particular family: “she [birth mother] had presented a child to Mrs. Hocheder as she knew that it would be there in good hands, and as she wouldn't take it along home”.⁴⁶⁴

Narratives in which the birth mother chose not to subject her child to an uncertain journey back to their home country, favored material goods in place of her child, or was careless about the wellbeing of her children were common. They also served to illustrate that such women were poor mothers. The story that the foster parents told about Katharina Kutylak's mother demonstrated that when she was packing to return to her home country, she was more concerned about her luggage than her child: “she had to make a choice between extra baggage and the child. She decided to leave the child with some family.”⁴⁶⁵ In another instance, the birth mother was described in a way that characterized her as a “good-looking girl” but too young, irresponsible and thoughtless to be a mother. The foster family and their neighbours also mentioned that she “had numerous boyfriends”, dated “a Negro soldier [...] and supposedly was pregnant by him”, then had a Czech boyfriend and could be pregnant again. She was not sure whether she would stay or leave the city.⁴⁶⁶

Whether the welfare officers believed the foster parents’ stories or not is difficult to say. Most likely they were aware of the fact that these comments and evaluations could be very subjective. Moreover, at times they suspected that foster parents embellished their stories. In this context, it is remarkable that throughout the cases analysed in this chapter there is no evidence that the welfare workers scrutinized the details of the mother's behavior or morals. It seems that when planning the future of a child who had lived in a German foster family from an early age, the welfare officers shifted their emphasis towards discovering the birth mother's intentions regarding her children after the war. Based on the collected evidence, assumptions and conclusions, the welfare workers were in a position to infer that the birth parents would never come back for their children, nor attempt to reclaim them. They summarized: “It is

⁴⁶³ Charlotte Babinski, Foster Home Investigation. Baranenko Helena, May 1948, 6.1.2/82487994–82488000/ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

⁴⁶⁴ “The Landrät Berchtesgaden,” n.d., 6.3.2.1/84152651, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

⁴⁶⁵ Charlotte Babinski, “Foster Home Investigation. Kutiak (Kutylak) Maria, b. 11.5.44,” 1948, 6.1.2/82488053-82488060, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

⁴⁶⁶ Babinski, “Foster Home Investigation. Kudinow Walentin Walerij, b 25.4.44.”

believed that the mother left for her home country. This, however, could not be verified. After the summer of 1945 nothing has been heard or seen of her.”⁴⁶⁷ This kind of conclusion became an important argument for supporting the adoption plan. Specifically, when the mother was not found, the welfare officers used it to demonstrate that a written consent to desert a child was not possible to obtain and, at the same time, that the birth mother was not interested in her children. For instance, the welfare workers recorded that everyone interviewed “regarded the child as a foundling whose mother was not interested in it, left without seeing it and who later could not be located”.⁴⁶⁸ In a similar way, when after the thorough search the ITS officer was sceptical about the future success in tracing the parents, he concluded: “it is doubtful that the parents are alive”.⁴⁶⁹

The Native Cultural Milieu

Bringing the children of Ukrainian nationality into focus helps to see how the welfare officers used the notion of nationality and belonging to advocate for adoption and to show that repatriation was not always in the child's “best interests”. The fact that these children were born to Ukrainian mothers brought to the fore the problem that their home country was a part of the Soviet Union. As a result, in the eyes of the US and British military authorities and some of the IRO’s welfare workers, the return of Ukrainian children to their ‘native’ environment was a less attractive option than resettlement in Germany. Despite the general fear about the potentially negative influence that German families could have on foreign children, the welfare officers saw it preferable to the probable negative influence of Soviet families, orphanages or foster homes. At times this was also true even for the cases where there was some evidence to suggest that the birth mother could be found in her home country.

The welfare workers were trained in a theory of childcare that had been developed in the US, and it argued that the family environment could promise to educate democratic citizens as much as it could cultivate the future members of a totalitarian society, as had happened in Nazi Germany. The social workers believed that the approach to children's education and childrearing in post-war Germany needed to undergo changes and would improve under their guidance. Meanwhile, the unfolding stages of the Cold War and the increasing rhetoric of the

⁴⁶⁷ Babinski, “Foster Home Investigation Sweschenetz Boris, Born 16.1.44.”

⁴⁶⁸ Babinski.

⁴⁶⁹ Meyer, “Shenkowicz Maria, b. Approx 1939.”

harmful and destructive influence of communism on families and children in the Soviet Union has a strong influence on social workers and officials in the Western zones of occupation. By the time the IRO's welfare officers had to make decisions regarding the future of unaccompanied foreign children, Nazism had already been defeated in Germany while communism in the Soviet Union was still a threat.⁴⁷⁰

The IRO rules on repatriation of unaccompanied children from 1947 indicated that a child could only be repatriated to the East if there was clear evidence that at least one of the parents lived there, and was actively searching for the child. The American and British military authorities officially stated that they would satisfy the claims of biological parents for the repatriation of their children without additionally examining such cases.⁴⁷¹ On several occasions, the UNRRA's and IRO's welfare officers were able to establish that the parents or mother had been repatriated to the Soviet Union shortly after the war. Following the central idea of child relief for the reunion of families, and foremost of children with their mother, this information should have encouraged the military authorities to send the children home to their mothers. Remarkably, however, in these instances, as the previous section has demonstrated, the notion of a family reunion was challenged by the assumption that the birth mother had intentionally abandoned the child and returned home alone.

At the same time, having assumed that the mother was repatriated to Soviet Ukraine, search officers had little chance of establishing whether she was still alive and looking for her children. Broken communications and rising tensions between the former Allies made the verification of such information much more complicated. The IRO's officers often complained that either they received no response to the requests that they sent to the Soviet Repatriation Administration, or that the information provided to them was unreliable.⁴⁷² The officials responsible for child repatriation from the Western zone of occupation had no confidence in what the Soviet authorities were saying about the birth mothers of displaced children.⁴⁷³ They were unsatisfied with their general statements and expected to receive some evidence that the parents were awaiting their children's return, or that institutional

⁴⁷⁰ Fieldston, *Raising the World*, 19–31; Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 210–11.

⁴⁷¹ Ralph A. Kennedy, "Investigation of German Foster Homes to Determine the Best Interest of United Nation's Children," June 10, 1948, 6.1.2/82487943-82487944, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

⁴⁷² Matters Discussed at Child Welfare Conference on February 2nd and 3rd, February 10, 1950, AJ/43/604, AN, Paris; Report on Russian Section; Relationship with Soviet Liaison Officers Regarding Child Search and Tracing.

⁴⁷³ Levitan, "Guardianship of Unaccompanied Children."

arrangements were being prepared for the children's arrival. The Soviet authorities, meanwhile, instead of searching for the mother or providing any particulars about the child's relatives, claimed their rights over Ukrainian children, taking it for granted that they were Soviet citizens and requested their repatriation.

Summarizing Anna-Rosalina's case, the IRO's search officer expressed his confidence that repatriation would inevitably mean that the girl went into a Soviet orphanage with no guarantee that the mother would be ever found. He used this conclusion to indicate that repatriation was not in the child's "best interests", implying that placing the child into a foster family, even if it was a German one, would be better for the child's rehabilitation than an orphanage, particularly, a Soviet orphanage. The girl, the search officer wrote: "undoubtedly will go to some Children's home, as certainly nobody will care to find the mother and then it is easy to guess what future awaits her. It seems that in this case the question of the child's best interests is to be taken in consideration."⁴⁷⁴ Putting all these arguments together he suggested that her present caring German parents would be a better option for Anna-Rosalina than returning her to Soviet Ukraine.

In similar cases, the welfare officers used the child's Ukrainian nationality to support their favorable opinion about adoption and to point out that these children had no country to return to. In order to provide formal grounds for their arguments, some of them stated that the children in question came from the contested former Polish territories. Some hints about this can be found in the children's cases when the child's nationality was changed, for instance, from Soviet Ukrainian to Polish Ukrainian, Western Ukrainian or simply to Ukrainian.⁴⁷⁵ As the difference between identifying a child as Soviet Ukrainian or Polish Ukrainian depended on their place of origin, geography and toponymy were the interesting instruments that the welfare workers used to justify a child's belonging. A girl Anna-Rosalina, living in a German family, was found to be of Ukrainian nationality but had Soviet citizenship because according to her birth certificate she had been born in a place called "Byelowseria", near Kyiv, that was a Soviet territory before 1939. However, the search officer working on Anna-Rosalina's case argued that she was not a Soviet citizen because there had been a mistake in locating her birthplace on the map. He said the town's name should be "meaning something like White

⁴⁷⁴ Mussin Pushkin, Gabiyska (Sawiska) Anna Rosa, Born 9.4.44.

⁴⁷⁵ For instance: Babinski, "Foster Home Investigation Sweschenetz Boris, Born 16.1.44."

Lakes” and “as no lakes are known near” Kyiv it probably situated in Polesie, a region that used to be a Polish territory and famous for its swamps and lakes.⁴⁷⁶

At times even the notion that children should grow up within their native cultural environment was not enough to withdraw a child from his or her German foster family and to send them to Soviet Ukraine. Rather it was the opposite, the fact that a child would be repatriated to the Soviet territory could become an additional reason for the welfare officers to stress that a German foster family would be a better option for the child's future. Even Charlotte Babinski, a child welfare officer who strongly believed that a child's native milieu was crucial for their development and often recommended that children be removed from their German families, wrote in a report on a boy who she considered to be Ukrainian: “This child was stateless. [...] If the child had a country to go back to, the adoption could be invalidated, and rightly so, to permit this child to return to his own group and country. As it is Ukrainians are resettling themselves, either in the German economy or Allied countries. [...] I would recommend to leave the child where it is.”⁴⁷⁷ This conclusion was upheld by the fact that, as with many other children, neither his mother nor any of the boy's relatives could be reached on the other side of the Soviet border.

For the children introduced in this chapter, it was eventually decided to leave them with their German foster parents. The reports on the fieldwork, which involved inspecting the foster homes, contact with the children and foster parents, and scrutinizing their lives, often indicated that the children were well cared for. At the same time, the search for the children's birth mothers and close relatives were often unsuccessful or demonstrated that the mother had deserted her children. This, it seems, provided the welfare officers with the grounds to recommend that placing abandoned or orphaned children with their current German foster parents, who also were eager to adopt them, would be the best option for the children's upbringing and future life.

The examples of unaccompanied children of Ukrainian origin revealed another reason why their foster parents' adoption applications were supported and approved. The lack of information about the parents living behind the Soviet border together with a growing fear of

⁴⁷⁶ R. Mussin Pushkin, “Cabiyska (Sawiska) Anna Rosa, Born 9.4.44”.

⁴⁷⁷ Charlotte Babinski, Foster Home Investigation Sweschenetz Boris, Born 16.1.44, June 1, 1948, 6.1.2/82488201/ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

the communist ideology impact on family created a ground for the presumption that repatriation to the Eastern countries involved a great danger for children. Therefore, the US military authorities and IRO welfare officers tended to conclude that it was not in the “best interests” of Ukrainian children to be sent to the Soviet Union, even if the birth mother was already repatriated. Thus, their adoption by German families became an option that IRO officers accepted as favorable for their upbringing and development.

The debates on this topic did not cease until the end of the IRO mandate in Europe and many contested cases of adoption were continued until 1951-1952 after they were heard in the District Court of the U.S. High Commissioner. Signed in October 1950, the U.S. High Commissioner law Nr 11 established that all decisions about the future of unaccompanied children in the U.S. zone would be made at the hearings of the District Courts. Tara Zahra reached the conclusion that Law Nr. 11 and the system of Courts “redefined 'the best interests of the child' in Cold War terms”, and “put Communism itself on trial in occupied Germany”.⁴⁷⁸ While this was true, it is also significant that in so doing, this new approach institutionalized and formalized the IRO welfare officers’ practices that were evident from at least 1947, in the cases concerning the Ukrainian children examined in this chapter, and those similar to it. Like some of the earlier welfare workers, Law Nr. 11 demonstrated that the American occupation authorities did not consider that repatriating unaccompanied children to Eastern Block countries was a part of the notion of acting in the “best interests” of the child. In her analysis, Tara Zahra has shown that American judges believed that “orphans repatriated to the East [...] were sentenced to a dreary childhood in Soviet or Polish orphanages whereas in America they would find loving adoptive family”.⁴⁷⁹ With this Law, the American occupation authorities affirmed that Soviet society and its families would pose a hostile environment where children could be indoctrinated with Communist ideology. As a result, the District Court’s decisions favored the resettlement of Eastern European children over repatriation, including cases when it impeded family reunification. At the same time, Law Nr. 11 made a step towards transforming Germans into friends who eventually could take care of foreign children, whereas the Soviet representatives were turned into the new “enemy”.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁸ Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 216, 221.

⁴⁷⁹ Zahra, 220.

⁴⁸⁰ Zahra, 217–21.

Interestingly, the possibility of emigration was not discussed in the children's cases analysed in this chapter. When repatriation was not advisable, the IRO, unlike UNRRA, had a mandate to help displaced adults and children to emigrate and the American military authorities did not oppose it.⁴⁸¹ Various resettlement schemes offered assistance in emigration for unaccompanied children and many of them left for Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries. However, for a variety of reasons the emigration of young and very young children in practice was a problematic, time-consuming, and difficult venture to arrange, especially at a time, when thousands of adults were waiting to board a ship or a train that would take them overseas. The arrangements needed for a child to emigrate required finding them a foster family or institution, who was ready to take in and provide a home for them. At the same time, the IRO had to finalize their work with displaced children before 1952, the date when its operation in Europe was due to come to an end. All these facts, it seems, explains why adoption by German families, whenever possible, was chosen as the best solution for unaccompanied children living in favorable foster families from an early age. Ultimately, the fieldwork was the laboratory where social officers learnt not only how to plan emergency welfare policy, but also how to implement it in their work.

Entanglement of Conflict and Cooperation: Military and Welfare Officers

When I started working on the documents related to children's relief, I did not think of questioning the military's welfare work in terms of the UNRRA's and the IRO's responsibility for unaccompanied children. The UNRRA's and IRO's archives provide few opportunities for such research. The language of the numerous letters and directives that were sent from EUCOM or OMGUS (Office of Military Government for Germany (U.S.)) to the UNRRA's and IRO's field officers did not invite any thoughts about the military government's possible interest in the humanitarian issues. Usually, these were written in a very formal, legal, impersonal and instructive language that provided only a few references to the details. The military government's offices, it seemed, were only involved in policymaking on the inter-zonal and international levels, and mediated the policies that were agreed between

⁴⁸¹ Bevans, "International Refugee Organization Constitution, with Annexes"; Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 33–35.

the Allies to the humanitarian workers. However, post-war humanitarian relief process is also a story about how the army became involved in social provision and emergency welfare.⁴⁸²

The aim of this section is to place military officers into the narrative of the resettlement of unaccompanied children and to discuss their complex and entangled relationships with the welfare officers. To what degree the various levels of the military government's officers were involved in a particular child's welfare, and what level of their professionalism they had in such matters remains beyond the scope of this section. Below, the analysis focuses on the roles that the army personnel took in caring for the DPs and on the debates that the welfare officers had with the military regarding the settlement of unaccompanied children. The issue with unaccompanied children living in German foster families serves as an example of how at first sight, the humanitarian and military officers' opposing views on such children's future led to the same conclusion. In cases of Ukrainian unaccompanied children, this conclusion implied that it would be better for the children to stay in their German foster families instead of returning to the Soviet Union.

When writing about the military authorities, welfare workers often complained that they were not interested in welfare or were more concerned about the politics and international relations than about children. Unlike them, the humanitarian authorities, it was claimed, first and foremost devoted their work to children, their welfare and the working in their "best interests". Without a doubt, when compared to humanitarian workers, the military command did concern itself more with the political side of the problem. For the US military government removing unaccompanied children from their German foster families was complicated, as their viewpoint on this problem needed to comply with post-war politics and diplomatic relations between the former Allies and other national representatives. This fact, however, did not imply that they paid no attention to civil affairs, or to children's welfare, after the war. Neither does it suggest that the military officers exclusively guarded their political interests, while welfare officers pursued only humanitarian aims. Military officers also thought about children's welfare and psychological comfort, although perhaps in a different way to the welfare officers. In any case, it does not seem right to exclude the military's welfare objectives only because they were enmeshed in inter-Allied politics. Having studied the files of the unaccompanied children, I find it difficult to draw a boundary between the apolitical

⁴⁸² Salvatici, "Fighters without Guns."

humanitarianism of welfare workers and political motives of the military authorities. Particularly, for the cases of unaccompanied children of Ukrainian origin, such as those studied in this research project, the evidence suggests that the welfare workers took the politics of the post-war period into consideration, especially, with the onset of the Cold War. In such situations, the humanitarian officers at times acted jointly with the zonal military authorities.

The UNRRA's and IRO's papers dedicated little space to the military's relief efforts but at the same time, it seems, shape an image of strongly conflicting opinions and goals between the military and welfare authorities. Describing their titanic work the UNRRA's and IRO's official history only reserved some space for the military officers and commanders of the occupation zones. The IRO archives, for instance, leaves the reader with an impression that the military authorities had little to do with the uprooted non-German population, especially with displaced minors after the war. The draft of the history of child relief and rehabilitation that was prepared by the IRO's workers only made a few references to the military officers' involvement.⁴⁸³ The discussions among the welfare officers quite often centered on their conflicts with the military authorities regarding the policies for DPs, which suggested that they paid no attention to humanitarian aspects. Complaints about the poor supplies that came from the Army's channels was also a constant theme in the letters and reports. Designed in this way the story about welfare for civilians after the war excluded the military officers' involvement in the emergency relief efforts.

It is possible that the humanitarians shaped the story so that it elevated their successes in post-war emergency welfare and therefore de-emphasized the army's accomplishments. However, it would be problematic to describe how the post-war relief and rehabilitation program was organized in occupied Germany and Austria by clearly separating the accomplishments and responsibilities of the humanitarian and military officers. The military command took over the functions of the state in the occupied territories, including tasks relating to welfare provision of the civilian population. Yet, the army's personnel could hardly manage the welfare tasks in the occupied territories on their own, in these areas they relied on the assistance of the humanitarian agencies. The conflicts, complaints and criticisms do not effectively describe

⁴⁸³ "History of the Search for Unaccompanied Children."

how the military commanders and officers participated in the relief activities and jointly worked with the welfare officers.

Civil Affairs Officers

Before UNRRA began its work in Europe, military command relied on its own forces to manage civilians and displaced populations. In 1942, in line with the Allies success in Europe, the British and US authorities started to plan for peace. One of its key elements was the establishment of military governments and the arrangement of civil affairs in the liberated territories as well as in soon to be occupied Germany and Austria. It was not possible to postpone the planning of the occupation and management of civil populations until the post-surrender time. The army command realized that even military phase of the war required a plan of action for the control of civilians.⁴⁸⁴ As the Allied forces moved deeper into the continent, they took control of territories where the order had to be maintained, and relief supplies distributed. At first, such measures facilitated the military operations, but also their purpose was to provide emergency aid to civilians. These responsibilities fell to the Civil Affairs Division (CAD) of the War Department, which was established in the US in 1943, as well as the British Foreign Office and its Research Department. The cooperation between the Allies in coordinating the military government and civil affairs policies was conducted through the Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander's (COSSAC) Civil Affairs Division. In 1944 it was reorganized into the G-5 Division, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF).⁴⁸⁵

The civil affairs detachments were integrated into the Anglo-American army that was fighting in Europe.⁴⁸⁶ They were composed of regular army officers and, probably, civilian personnel, who were employed in the Civil Affairs Division. From 1943 onwards, their members underwent courses at the Civil Affairs Training Schools. These schools were meant to prepare officers for running a military government in the occupied territories, to administer the civilian population and to provide initial public welfare in the liberated countries. The manuals and handbooks that were distributed to the civil affairs officers guided them through

⁴⁸⁴ Forrest C. Pogue, *United States Army in World War II. The European Theater of Operations. Supreme Command*, United States Army in World War II. (Washington, D.C., 1989), 75–76.

⁴⁸⁵ Brocades Zaalberg, *Soldiers and Civil Power*, 26–27, 31; Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 68; Reinisch, *The Perils of Peace the Public Health Crisis in Occupied Germany*, 22.

⁴⁸⁶ Brocades Zaalberg, *Soldiers and Civil Power*, 33.

their tasks in Europe and provided specific essential pieces of information about Germany and Germans.⁴⁸⁷

Following in the wake of the combative troops in the rear guard, the civil affairs officers were supposed to take the first steps in restoring the liberated territories. Among their tasks were the maintenance of law and order, the provision of basic necessities, as well as the prevention of conflicts and disease. Even if these were, in essence, civil oriented objectives and humanitarian activities, the purpose of the Civil Affairs Divisions during the active phase of the war was to facilitate military operations. In fact, literature on military history has pointed out that their primary function was to relieve the fighting troops from taking care of civilians, to forestall civilian interventions in combat operations and to prevent disorder at the rear of the Allied army.⁴⁸⁸

After planning military and civilian operations in Europe, SHAEF decided that the civil affairs officers would, among other tasks, provide the initial care for DPs and refugees. The British and American military command expected to encounter millions of refugees and DPs in Europe. In 1943, the Inter-Allied Committee on Post-War Requirements estimated that there would be at least 16 million DPs in Europe after the war.¹⁴ In 1944 the SHAEF Administrative Memorandum Number 39, made the military commanders in the field responsible for the control and care of DPs and refugees. The Supreme Headquarters' directive established a separate displaced persons department in the G-5 Division. The civil affairs officers organized the provision of food, clothes and medical aid for civilians, DPs and refugees, and when it became possible they, with the logistical help of the regular army units, assisted people in travelling to their home country. The SHAEF Handbook of civil affairs defined displaced persons as civilians found "outside the national boundaries of their country by reasons of war", whereas civilians who stayed within their country but away from their home were called refugees.¹⁵

In 1946 Malcolm J. Proudfoot, Professor of Geography, Assistant Director of the US Bureau of the Census, and in the US military government officer, described the Anglo-American DPs program for Germany and Austria in an article published in *The American Journal of*

⁴⁸⁷ Reinisch, *The Perils of Peace the Public Health Crisis in Occupied Germany*, 22–27.

⁴⁸⁸ Pogue, *The European Theater of Operations. Supreme Command.*, 83–84; Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946*, 53; Brocades Zaalberg, *Soldiers and Civil Power*, 28.

Economics and Sociology.⁴⁸⁹ He published this article in 1946 probably with the intention of replying to the public critique⁴⁹⁰ expressed in the Anglo-American army and UNRRA address for how they managed civil affairs, provision of care for DPs and repatriation during 1944-1945. The Army, he wrote, was the first to come to the aid of the refugees and displaced people in Europe:

“By the beginning of April [1945] the real flood of displaced persons began, and, with the rapid advance during April and the final collapse of the German armies in May, the entire DP problem with all of its immediate urgent human problems fell squarely into the lap of the Anglo-American armies.”⁴⁹¹

Proudfoot went further to say that from the time of the landings in Normandy, and during the combat phase of the war, the army officers provided care for DPs: “hundreds of officers and thousands of soldiers became expert in varying degrees in the essential tasks of mass feeding, housing, sanitation, medical care, transportation and the other operations involved”.⁴⁹² These were the officers of the Civil Affairs Division and soldiers from other service troops. They also received help and support from the French welfare teams, that were, “attached to Army and Corps headquarters, [and] performed heroic welfare tasks, frequently under shell fire.”⁴⁹³

From a military point of view, one of the civil affairs officers’ primary tasks was to control the local population, refugees and DPs, in order to avoid possible conflicts and to prevent them from interfering in military combat and manoeuvres. One of the military command’s biggest fears was that people would clog the roads and slow the movement of the Allied troops. Therefore, in order to keep the roads free, the military officers aimed to gather roaming refugees and DPs at established assembly centers and DP camps.⁴⁹⁴ They wanted to be sure that the uprooted populations would return home in a well-organized manner that would not resemble the “exodus” of people who fled from the advancing Nazi army.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁸⁹ Clarence E. Batschelet, “Malcolm Jarvis Proudfoot, 1907–1955,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 48, no. 2 (June 1, 1958): 173–74.

⁴⁹⁰ Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946*, 400.

⁴⁹¹ Malcolm J. Proudfoot, “The Anglo-American Displaced Persons Program for Germany and Austria,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 6, no. 1 (October 1, 1946): 42.

⁴⁹² Proudfoot, 38.

⁴⁹³ Proudfoot, 39.

⁴⁹⁴ Brocades Zaalberg, *Soldiers and Civil Power*, 28; Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946*, 53.

⁴⁹⁵ See, for example, how people were leaving Paris before its occupation by the German Army: Diamond, *Fleeing Hitler*.

As it becomes evident, in the initial plans for civil affairs and the military government, UNRRA was only given a minor role in providing aid to DPs behind the front line before 1945. As Proudfoot has also indicated, one of the motives behind this position was that not everyone in the Army was enthusiastic about the presence of non-military personnel in the military detachments.⁴⁹⁶ Once the war was over they planned to pass the care and responsibility for civilians to civil organizations and to restore local governments as soon as possible, but during the war the military retained control. A notable exception was the American and British Red Cross that accompanied the Allied army into battle, as they had done during the previous war. In this capacity, the Red Cross also helped to care for DPs.⁴⁹⁷ Donnison has indicated in his research on military government in the British zone of Germany that until at least 1946, the British army preferred to cooperate with the British Red Cross than with UNRRA because the latter had not proven itself in the eyes of the military commanders:

“Not only was this [the British Red Cross] experienced and well-tested organization, under Major-General G. M. Lindsay, able to take field before U.N.R.R.A., but its long record of successful co-operation with the Army gained for it the confidence of the military authorities, in a way that was inevitably denied to U.N.R.R.A.”⁴⁹⁸

Additionally, in the Allied control territories, the local welfare agencies, such as, the Mission Militaire de Liaison Administrative in France or Ente Comunale di Assistenza in Italy helped the civil affairs staff, to perform their duties.⁴⁹⁹

The reluctance of military authorities to incorporate civilians into the army's units was only part of the reason why the UNRRA's personnel began to actively participate in civil affairs later in 1945. The circumstances under which the UNRRA was founded played a role too. The agreement establishing the UNRRA was signed on 9th November 1943, but it took the UNRAA a while to initiate its activities in the field. In the beginning, the UNRRA was going through the difficult organization of working procedures, recruitment and training of

⁴⁹⁶ Proudfoot, “The Anglo-American Displaced Persons Program for Germany and Austria,” 40; Shephard, *The Long Road Home*, 166.

⁴⁹⁷ F. S. V. Donnison, *Civil Affairs and Military Government, North-West Europe, 1944-1946* (London: Her Majesty's State Office, 1961), 342–43, 345; Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 850.

⁴⁹⁸ Donnison, *Civil Affairs and Military Government, North-West Europe, 1944-1946*, 345.

⁴⁹⁹ Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 850; Silvia Salvatici, “Between National and International Mandates: Displaced Persons and Refugees in Postwar Italy,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, no. 3 (July 1, 2014): 523.

personnel. For instance, hiring people for the UNRRA's mission in Europe was particularly problematic⁵⁰⁰. Between December 1944 and April 1945, UNRRA only managed to send eight teams out of 450 to the field asked by the Supreme Command. Donnison in his book suggested that this happened because of a lack of transport and lack of "realism and drive in UNRRA preparations".⁵⁰¹ As it seems, Donnison, in general, was skeptical about the UNRRA's potentially successful role in post-war welfare provision. In spite of everything, the UNRRA's welfare officers fully took on the responsibilities for the DPs by autumn 1945.

Meanwhile, the prior calculations made by the Inter-Allied Committee on Post-War requirements heavily underestimated the number of people who were displaced as a result of the war. On the continent, the Allied Army encountered millions of refugees and DPs and faced the POWs as well as the concentration camp survivors. At the final count, around 60 million people, instead of the anticipated 16 million, were uprooted in Europe during or shortly after the war.⁵⁰² As a result, the human and economic resources needed to deal with the situation were underrated too. The military commanders together with the welfare planners were stunned by the amount of the DP and refugee crowds in Europe. They quickly became aware of the fact that uprooted people would constitute a much more difficult problem than they had initially thought when they had first landed in Italy.⁵⁰³ Advancing deeper into the continent, the Allied army witnessed the constantly growing number of refugees and DPs, POWs and concentration camps' inmates. The occupation of German territories brought millions of forced laborers and concentration camp inmates into the rows of uprooted people.

As a result, the rear assembly centers and camps for DPs and refugees became overcrowded. The Allied military command realized that the support of the DPs in the assembly centers would need to last longer than was expected. Destroyed roads, lack of transport as well as staff officers slowed down the repatriation process. Uprooted people from Eastern Europe added to the problem. They were in large numbers but their repatriation progressed at a slow pace, as military operations needed to cease in the East and communication and cooperation

⁵⁰⁰ Salvatici, "Professionals of Humanitarianism: UNRRA Relief Officers in Post-War Europe," 42–53.

⁵⁰¹ Donnison, *Civil Affairs and Military Government, North-West Europe, 1944-1946*, 345.

⁵⁰² Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee*, 2013, 4.

⁵⁰³ Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 307–8; Salvatici, "Between National and International Mandates," 522–24.

had to be established with the Soviet Union before they could be sent home. In addition to this, Eastern Europeans quite often refused to return to their home country.⁵⁰⁴

The DPs and refugees required food, clothing, shelter, medical assistance and transport that would bring them home. Many of them were also in need of psychological help and professional social assistance. Beyond that, as it became clear, a program organizing their life and free time in the DP camps had to be developed and implemented. Even though the American, British and French Red Cross, as well as local voluntary and national agencies, assisted the civil affairs divisions, the lack of people dealing with the DPs was felt. The Civil affairs officers struggled to supervise people in the DP's camps and assembly centers, as well as to maintain order and distribute relief supplies. The initial plan developed by the military command predicted that after the Allied army moved away, the German army from the territories of the Allied countries, and the local civil administration would assume responsibility and control for displaced people until they could go home. Nevertheless, after the war and occupation, the national governments were unable to deal efficiently with the DP problem without military support. The French example proved that they depended on the army for policing, supplies without them they would not be able to provide housing for the DPs.⁵⁰⁵ Moreover, the planners concluded that in Germany and Austria the former Nazi administration could not be allowed to supervise DPs and refugees who composed a great number of the former forced laborers and concentration camps' inmates. Consequently, they would remain under the responsibility of the military command and military government.⁵⁰⁶

In this context in November 1944, SHAEF signed a working agreement with the UNRRA according to which a newly established humanitarian agency would provide its personnel to administer the DPs' assembly centers and camps.⁵⁰⁷ They agreed to integrate the UNRRA's staff into the G-5 displaced persons' branch and, consequently, to the army groups and army headquarters.⁵⁰⁸ UNRRA officers gradually became involved in the relief and rehabilitation of the DPs in the camps and assembly centers, where they worked alongside civil affairs officers

⁵⁰⁴ Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 858; G. Daniel Cohen, "Between Relief and Politics: Refugee Humanitarianism in Occupied Germany 1945-1946," *Journal of Contemporary History* 43, no. 3 (2008): 444-45.

⁵⁰⁵ Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 847,852-853.

⁵⁰⁶ Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946*, 53.

⁵⁰⁷ Salvatici, "Fighters without Guns," 6.

⁵⁰⁸ Proudfoot, "The Anglo-American Displaced Persons Program for Germany and Austria," 40.

and voluntary welfare organizations, as well as under "the close supervision of the military authorities".⁵⁰⁹

The involvement of humanitarian personnel in civil affairs work did not imply, however, that the military officers and authorities withdrew from caring for DPs and refugees. Donnison even doubted that fully transferring the responsibility for DPs and refugees to the UNNRA was ever a profound or feasible plan for the military.⁵¹⁰ Salvatici has indicated that the military and welfare personnel jointly carried out the aid program in the DP camps and assembly centers, though they had unequal status and responsibilities. The occupation authorities at the British, American and French zones were in charge of housing, feeding, and caring for the uprooted people, their resettlement and logistical support of their return home.⁵¹¹ General Dwight D. Eisenhower, as Supreme Allied Commander, was officially in control of civil affairs, including the DP and refugee issues. The responsibility for the DPs care and repatriation remained under the direct control of SHAEF until its dissolution in July 1945.⁵¹² Then the US Forces European Theater (USFET) adopted in the US zone. Only by the autumn 1945, did the UNRRA's welfare officers more confidently start to manage the care and control of DPs and when in 1947 the responsibilities for the DPs were passed to the IRO, the welfare officers had already firmly established their expert position in this field. They coordinated the work of various voluntary organizations that were in place to aid the displaced populations.

Although the US and UK military forces planned and exercised civil affairs for the duration of the war and post-war period, the literature indicates that they were not always enthusiastic about engaging in civil affairs for a long period of time.⁵¹³ The army's primary task, some of the military commanders indicated, was to fight with an enemy and not to solve the problems connected with the civilians, such as rehabilitation and social welfare. To be precise, they were concerned with controlling civilians, DPs and refugees during the combative phase of the war, but less so with their long-term supervision. General George C. Hilldring, the chief of the Civil Affairs Division, argued in November 1943 that the US army was interested in

⁵⁰⁹ Proudfoot, 41. Donnison, *Civil Affairs and Military Government, North-West Europe, 1944-1946*, 353.

⁵¹⁰ Donnison, *Civil Affairs and Military Government, North-West Europe, 1944-1946*, 346.

⁵¹¹ Salvatici, "Fighters without Guns," 8.

⁵¹² Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946*, 51; Salvatici, "Fighters without Guns," 7-8.

⁵¹³ Reinisch, *The Perils of Peace the Public Health Crisis in Occupied Germany*, 27-28; Kenneth O. McCreedy, "Planning the Peace: Operation Eclipse and the Occupation of Germany," *The Journal of Military History* 65 (July 2001): 736-37.

civil affairs and military government as long as it concerned the facilitation of military operations:

“The Army is not a welfare organization. It is a military machine whose mission is to defeat the enemy on the field of battle. Its interest and activities in military government and civil affairs administration are incidental to the accomplishment of the military mission. Nevertheless, these activities are of paramount importance, as any lack of a condition of social stability in an occupied area would be prejudicial to the success of the military effort.”⁵¹⁴

After the fighting came to an end, the US army’s commanders once again raised the question of transferring the military government's responsibilities in the occupied territories to civilians. In June 1945, the Supreme Commander General Eisenhower, President Harry S. Truman and General Lucius D. Clay discussed how to pass military control over civil affairs to civilians in the near future. Clay's plan suggested integrating civilian workers into the military government’s apparatus so that they could progressively take over the civil affairs responsibilities from the military personnel. As a result, even though civilians joined the military government, a decision was taken to keep the occupied territories under the military command’s control until June 1946. In fact, in the US zone, the army remained in charge of military government and civil affairs for three years more, until 1949.⁵¹⁵

The military government was established in the American zone of Germany soon after V-E Day. The US Group Control Council and the USFET G-5 Division, which had previously handled peace planning, including civil affairs, became the governing bodies of the military government in the US zone and represented the US in the quadripartite administration of Germany. General Eisenhower, as commander of the US occupation forces and military governor of the US occupation zone, assumed supreme legislative, executive and judicial authority. The military officers of the army’s fighting groups were redistributed around Germany, reorganized into branches of the military government in order to become a part of the military government’s machine. Obviously, over the time, the US military government changed its structure and composition. Some of the army officers were redeployed, returned home or reassigned to new military tasks. However, the army did not drop its government functions in the occupied territories, nor did they transferred them to the civil administration.

⁵¹⁴ Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 153.

⁵¹⁵ Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946*, 401–4, 432, 443; McCreedy, ““Planning the Peace,” 736–37.

The changes in the staff's composition consisted of more civilians being brought in to work alongside military officers and to perform different tasks in the various levels of military administration.⁵¹⁶

The question immediately arises as to which military government workers, welfare or military, were engaged in DPs' matters and, in particular, which ones worked with children. In the context of this research, however, it is hardly possible to provide a thorough answer. The IRO and ITS archival documents suggested that military officers took part in children's welfare.⁵¹⁷ However, an in-depth investigation of this issue will be an objective for a future research project. Therefore, setting aside a detailed composition of military government, for now, let us focus on its functions and responsibilities as they related to welfare and particularly the DP problem. Issued in 1945, the Joint Chiefs of Staff's (JCS) Directive to the Commander in Chief of the US Forces of Occupation defined the objectives and responsibilities of the US military government in Germany. This directive, known as JCS 1067, established that the American military government among other tasks would supervise the administration of relief, reparation and restitution programs as well as the implementation of the welfare and repatriation of DPs. That is to say, the US military government was left in charge of civil affairs, including public safety, health, welfare, social care and displaced persons. In July 1947, directive JCS 1779 replaced JCS 1067 and repeated that the US Army would remain involved in civil affairs and would support the IRO with maintenance, care, protection and help in moving the uprooted people.⁵¹⁸

As a result, officers from the civil affairs division (G-5, USFET) and former fighting detachments participated in welfare and relief provision helping with the command, supply and humanitarian work on the ground during the whole occupation period. Social provision and control over the civil population was conducted with the help and support of the army units. The military officers maintained order and security in the DP camps and assembly centers as the military government's security troops. The US army carried on supplying the UNRRA, and the IRO that succeeded it.⁵¹⁹ Cars, gasoline, oil, food, medicines, telephones, as well as written communication, were provided via its channels, even though the humanitarian

⁵¹⁶ Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946*, 70–71, 425–26; Pogue, *The European Theater of Operations. Supreme Command.*, 511–14.

⁵¹⁷ Lynne Taylor provides a detailed discussion about the Allied Control Authority activities in her freshly published book: Taylor, *In the Children's Best Interests*.

⁵¹⁸ Kruger, *Logistics Matters*, 47–53.

⁵¹⁹ Donnison, *Civil Affairs and Military Government, North-West Europe, 1944-1946*, 346.

agencies always complained about being understocked. Cars were few, old and rusty, gasoline was in short supply while trains were unsuitable for transporting people, especially children.

Law and policy issues related to refugees and DPs who stayed in the US zone, their repatriation, resettlement or movements from zone to zone were in the hands of the army. The supreme commander (USFET) formulated policies regarding the repatriation of different nationals, non-repatriable people and unaccompanied displaced children. During spring and summer of 1945, following the Supreme command directives and inter-Allies agreements, the Allied army authorities repatriated six to seven million civilians.⁵²⁰ Meanwhile, the humanitarian personnel took care of the people in the DP camps and assembly centers, registered them and investigated their cases with the purpose of identifying their nationality and finding their relatives. In 1946 the military command sent its army officers to carry out a series of steps together with the UNRRA's welfare officers in order to screen the DPs registered with the UNRRA for their eligibility for international humanitarian care, assistance and protection. Numerous instances of the forged ID documents encouraged the military government to identify those who hid their true nationality or might have had collaborated with the Nazi regime during the war.⁵²¹

Another sphere in which the US military authorities and officers acted jointly with the tracing and welfare officers was in relation to displaced children. According to the USFET directive issued in October 1946 the US military government's Public Welfare and Land offices collaborated with the Zonal Tracing Bureau in searching for non-German children living in Germany. When such children were found, the USFET headquarters in consultation with the military government's Public Welfare office of the particular Land in Germany determined their eligibility for humanitarian care and decided on their removal from the German home or institution. The Zonal Tracing Bureau collected detailed information about the child's background, and they used this information to make their decision. The Public Welfare office of the US military government also mediated the decision regarding children between USFET and the DP centers run by welfare workers.⁵²²

⁵²⁰ Cohen, "Between Relief and Politics," 440.

⁵²¹ Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order*, 36–58; Cohen, "Between Relief and Politics," 445–46.

⁵²² Herbert F., "USFET Directive (Draft)."

The Military personnel also did not limit their activities to the offices of military government instead they took a direct role in the work of the humanitarian agencies in occupied Germany. The path from military to welfare office was not a rare one. People switched or were transferred from their military posts to civilian ones to become members of the UNRRA and the IRO.⁵²³ R. L. Gesner, a military officer, was the member of a group that was sent to screen DPs to assess their eligibility to receive the UNRRA's care. Being involved in this work, he stayed with the humanitarian agency until its dissolution and then worked for the IRO. When he was interviewed for the IRO history project in 1952 he was the chief eligibility officer at the Italian IRO office.⁵²⁴ Moreover, like Gesner, many of the male UNRRA welfare officers that went on to be appointed as chiefs had a former military background.⁵²⁵

In the end, from the last decades of 1945, the number of people dedicated to the relief and rehabilitation of DPs and refugees grew exponentially. As we have seen above, various members of staff from the military or welfare divisions worked side by side. Their duties and competences entangled in the spheres of care work that required them to make expert conclusions and gave them the authority to make decisions about the future of people's lives and to approve them. Military officers were engaged in welfare planning and provision as members of the military government or as workers of the humanitarian agencies. The UNRRA and the IRO attracted numerous employees with education and/or experience in social welfare, psychology or medicine, though there were many of those, who had absolutely no particular knowledge or skills. Different volunteering societies offered their help and personnel too. All the various agents of post-war relief had their own methods for addressing the complicated and long-lasting issues concerning displaced people. In such circumstances, conflicts, misunderstandings, disagreements and a lack of coordination were likely occurrences.

When speaking about the military authorities the UNRRA's and IRO's personnel criticized their approach to the problem of unaccompanied children. They repeated that the headquarters' policies regarding unaccompanied children often ignored social welfare and psychological sensitivity while pursuing political goals. In other words, the UNRRA's and IRO's officers doubted the military's experience in delicate matter of child welfare theory. A

⁵²³ Salvatici, "“Fighters without Guns,”” 10–11.

⁵²⁴ “Interview between Mr. R. L. Gesner, Chief Eligibility Officer, Italian Office and Mr. J. Mandel.”

⁵²⁵ Salvatici, "“Fighters without Guns,”” 11–12.

common rhetorical question that the welfare officers addressed to the military asked whether they ever saw an unaccompanied displaced child in front of them. They may have been right or wrong with such conclusions, but their line of reasoning attracts attention. In particular, the welfare officers believed that they were more competent in regards to emergency social care and the implementation of a new humanitarian approach. Their confidence originated from the mission assigned to the post-war humanitarian project and spirit embedded in its ideas and ideals: they were humanitarian rescuers of war-torn Europe.⁵²⁶ Their professional experience, knowledge and current field practice provided them with reasons to argue that their visions of welfare should lay the foundations for unaccompanied children policies.

Contemporaries and later scholars have described the UNRRA and the IRO as the first agency with the objective of transforming charity-type welfare into a new form of professional international humanitarianism.⁵²⁷ Their workers often had a degree in social care, from US universities, or years of welfare experience. In contrast, the pressing lack of qualified applicants pushed the agency to recruit people without any background in social care.⁵²⁸ While preparing to journey to Europe the UNRRA's employees had an opportunity to go through a two- to four-weeks training course that was intended to prepare them for what they would see and do in the liberated territories. However, spending these weeks in training centers in Maryland (US), Reading and London (UK), or Granville (France) barely prepared them to deal with the needs and problems of their future work with displaced people.⁵²⁹ Field workers could rely on the support of psychologists and psychoanalysts in the US, Britain and continental Europe who developed theories of post-war rehabilitation of adults and children, although their views on relief and rehabilitation were far from uniform.⁵³⁰ Considering all this and in spite of the organizational pitfalls, the UNRRA's and IRO's welfare workers believed that they knew how to best help displaced people.⁵³¹ Their self-assurance grew throughout their years of fieldwork in occupied Germany and, it seems, that this gave them the confidence to argue with the military authorities about policies concerning displaced people

⁵²⁶ Salvatici, 6–7.

⁵²⁷ Salvatici, "Professionals of Humanitarianism: UNRRA Relief Officers in Post-War Europe"; Reinisch, "Internationalism in Relief."

⁵²⁸ Salvatici, "Professionals of Humanitarianism: UNRRA Relief Officers in Post-War Europe," 246–51.

⁵²⁹ Salvatici, 250–55.

⁵³⁰ Fieldston, *Raising the World*, 12–23; Zahra, "Lost Children."

⁵³¹ Salvatici, "Professionals of Humanitarianism: UNRRA Relief Officers in Post-War Europe," 236–38; Salvatici, "Fighters without Guns," 10.

and to criticize them for their incompetence in regards to humanitarian questions and lack of empathy on-the-ground.

Nevertheless, sometimes unexpectedly, the sources allow us to glimpse the events from a different angle. A summary from a meeting that took place in February 1948 between the IRO and ITS officers on the one side and the representatives of OMGUS on the other is an example of such an opportunity. In particular, it showed that the military government officers used welfare reasons and language in order to convince welfare workers of their viewpoint regarding policies on unaccompanied children that were fostered out to the German families. The IRO's welfare workers were hostile to their line of argument during the meeting. Nevertheless, by 1951-1952 the welfare workers revised the children's cases that were touched upon in the 1948 meeting and came to the same conclusion that the military representatives had. This case pushes us to reflect on the role of the military authorities and officers in DP children's welfare. Without question, it is too early to make a definitive conclusion in this chapter but some points are worth spelling out. For instance, the opinions regarding unaccompanied children that were discussed at the meeting in 1948 were the source of conflict, because the military and humanitarian authorities held different views on child welfare and what was in the children's "best interests", not because of the military authorities political interests.

Children in German Foster Families: The View of Military and Welfare Officers

The problem of non-German children living with German families illustrated the disagreements between the welfare and military offices in the US zone of occupation, but also shows that in the end, both actors agreed that under specific circumstances unaccompanied children could settle with German foster families. The military authorities and welfare officers both participated in the process of making decisions about the destiny of each displaced child. According to the rules regulating the administration of the American occupation zone, USFET was responsible for DP children. Its headquarters authorized all the welfare officers' applications for the movement of children within and without the zone, including the final decisions on repatriation or resettlement.⁵³² The IRO welfare officers inspected the foster family, investigated the children's background and, with the help of ITS

⁵³² Herbert F., "USFET Directive (Draft)."

personnel, searched for the children's parents and close relatives. They wrote their expert conclusions indicating the future plan for a particular child that, on their account, reflected what would be in the child's "best interests". Their recommendations together with the child's case were sent to the military government authorities. They reviewed the case and either gave permission to remove the child from the foster family or not. The USFET directive of 1946 determined that the removal of children from German families or institutions could be accomplished only after the headquarters (USFET) had approved it.⁵³³

As in other situations in which the interests of the national governments were involved, the policy on the removal of children from German foster families was vague. The IRO field officers were informed about general orders but not about detailed instructions or the definite viewpoints of the military command regarding different situations. The broad official principle was formulated at the time of the SHAFE's and UNRRA's operations in 1945. It called for welfare workers to respect the rights of the children's national governments and, therefore, advised them to remove children from their German families and, subsequently, to repatriate them. The USFET directive indicated several important conditions that were attached to the decision to remove children: that the "the individual child will be specifically benefited with regard to health, environment and foreseeable future welfare".⁵³⁴ In other words, when it would be in the child's "best interests".

The military authorities typically considered that orphaned unaccompanied children could stay with their German foster parents, providing that the conditions in the family were satisfactory. The inclination of the military government in the US zone to reject the applications for the removal of non-German children from German families concerned the welfare workers. They became anxious when military government disagreed with the welfare officers' conclusions regarding what was in the "best interests" of a child. In order to talk through this lack of accord, the IRO welfare and ITS search officers met with the representatives of the US military government in Wiesbaden in February 1948. The whole range of issues that were discussed during this meeting, and then afterwards in the letters exchanged between OMGUS, the IRO and ITS offices, was framed into the policy problems. During the conference, the humanitarian workers persisted in asking for a clear guidance or policy related to foreign unaccompanied children living with German families. For the

⁵³³ Herbert F.

⁵³⁴ Herbert F.

previous two years, they had repeated similar requests for a definite policy in their monthly reports.⁵³⁵

During the meeting, the welfare officers expected to clarify who exactly held the responsibility to decide on the unaccompanied children's cases. Also, they wanted to make clear what criteria the military authorities used to authorize or reject the remove of non-German unaccompanied children from their foster families in Germany.⁵³⁶ Without a clear policy, the IRO workers complained that the military government decided on their own accord and the results of their decisions were difficult to predict. In a number of cases, OMGUS turned the requests down because the foster parents did not want to give up the children or rejected the resettlement plan because the nationality of a child was doubtful.

In spite of the clear emphasis on policy issues, it would seem that the conflict of ideas about what was in the child's "best interests" between the military authorities and welfare officers was another crucial cause for this discussion, and following it a demonstrative investigation of several children's cases took place. As a result, the welfare workers stated, the army authorities decisions that children stay with their German foster parents, did not always correlate with the children's "best interests".⁵³⁷ Cornelia Heise, the chief IRO child search officer, wrote to the acting chief of the ITS commenting on the situation:

"We are stalemated with Military Government, Public Welfare Branch, in all three Lands⁵³⁸ on cases in which the Government concerned⁵³⁹ and usually the Child Search Section feel that the child should be repatriated while Military Government withholds approval for removing the children on the ground that it is not to their best interest."⁵⁴⁰

To put it in other words, it seems that she was troubled by the fact that the military government disagreed with the IRO's expert conclusions regarding which option would be the best option for the child's future.

⁵³⁵ Heise, "Monthly Report. Child Welfare Branch. June 1946"; Cornelia Heise, "Monthly Report. Child Search Branch. March 1947," March 1947, 6.1.2/82487348-82487352, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

⁵³⁶ Cornelia Heise, "Proposed Use of Charlotte Babinski on a Temporary Basis for Special Investigations,"

⁵³⁷ "Conference at Wiesbaden. IRO with Military Government," February 1948, 6.1.2/82487951-82487952, ITS Digital Archive, Paris; Heise, "Proposed Use of Charlotte Babinski on a Temporary Basis for Special Investigations"; Charlotte Babinski, "Summary on the German Home Placements," July 2, 1948, 6.1.2/82487987-82487989, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

⁵³⁸ Hesse, Württemberg-Baden and Bavaria.

⁵³⁹ Meaning the home country of a child.

⁵⁴⁰ Heise, "Proposed Use of Charlotte Babinski on a Temporary Basis for Special Investigations."

Extremely broad as it was the concept of the child's "best interests" embraced countless objective and subjective points of reference relating to the psychological, physical and economic welfare of a child, his or her safety and prospects for education as well as having a happy or normal childhood.⁵⁴¹ Even political issues, such as fear of returning to their home country, was an integral part of this concept, although the welfare officers claimed that the principles of the child's rehabilitation were apolitical. Due to the elusive nature of the child's "best interests" conception, each agent of post-war relief, including the welfare officers, interpreted it differently, depending on the situation and goals. The IRO and ITS officers aimed at convincing military officers that their professionalism and fieldwork practice provided them with the necessary authority to insist that their vision of the child's "best interests" was more accurate and reliable. Particularly, during the meeting in 1948, they put emphasized their practical knowledge about the situation in which non-German children stayed in the German families: "Experiences with many situations left I.R.O. with the conviction that the German home by large offered inadequate security to the child."⁵⁴² Unlike this, the welfare workers claimed that the military officers had limited practical, and perhaps even theoretical, knowledge about child welfare and were directed by "generalities, sometimes highly coloured with emotional and political content" when took decisions about the child's "best interests".⁵⁴³

The military authorities, nevertheless, verbalized their position with the help of welfare-oriented explanations familiar to all, including the IRO workers, who advocated leaving unaccompanied children with their German foster parents.⁵⁴⁴ They argued that at times the decision to take children away caused more harm and distress to the children, parents and community than it brought benefit and comfort. They indicated that "some removals of children had been very badly done, leaving in their wake an upset family and community".⁵⁴⁵ Abandoned children, the military representatives argued, would most likely never return to their natural parents or relatives in their home countries. The chances were also not high that lost children, especially those of a young age, would find their family members. The US

⁵⁴¹ Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 96.

⁵⁴² "Conference at Wiesbaden. IRO with Military Government."

⁵⁴³ Cornelia Heise, "Investigation of German Foster Homes to Determine the Best Interest of United Nations Children," September 13, 1948, 6.1.2/82487928-82487929, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

⁵⁴⁴ Including the IRO welfare officers, see: Heise, "Proposed Use of Charlotte Babinski on a Temporary Basis for Special Investigations."

⁵⁴⁵ "Conference at Wiesbaden. IRO with Military Government."

military officers also suggested leaving children in with their German families when the nationality and citizenship of the children were uncertain until a further investigation had been completed.⁵⁴⁶

And yet, during this meeting welfare officers insisted on their point of view. To prove their position the IRO representatives, together with the tracing officers, proposed to undertake an in-depth study on a group of children who were in foster care in Germany. The objectives of the study were to find out what was happening with the children in the German foster families from a welfare, childcare and economic point of view. They claimed it would help to furnish the discussion on non-German children living in German families with tangible examples and evidence from the field. The IRO officers hoped it could also lay the ground for developing a consistent policy on children living with German foster parents.⁵⁴⁷ However, it would seem that the additional aim of the proposed investigation was to prove with undeniable evidence from the field that welfare officers were right in their position. During the debate with the military representatives, the welfare officers already asserted that a German home was not an appropriate home for foreign children.⁵⁴⁸ After the investigation had been done, Ellen Davidson, wrote a letter to the field representative in Munich indicating that now they had proof from the field that foreign children should not stay with German foster parents:

“The 10 cases completed by Miss Babinski and studied by us, confirm us in our belief that, for a variety of reasons, a German foster home is not satisfactory as a permanent placement for an allied child. We suggest you press on with the task of securing Military Government permission for children to be removed to IRO care, so that permanent plans can be worked out for them.”⁵⁴⁹

Cornelia Heise, chief of the child search branch, recommended that Charlotte Babinski conduct the investigations. In her opinion, Babinski was a reliable and well-trained welfare worker with considerable experience in child relief. By the time of the investigation, she had been working with child search branch for more than two years. Her professional responsibilities included the research of the individual child cases that often required her to

⁵⁴⁶ “Conference at Wiesbaden. IRO with Military Government.”

⁵⁴⁷ Heise, “Proposed Use of Charlotte Babinski on a Temporary Basis for Special Investigations.”

⁵⁴⁸ “Conference at Wiesbaden. IRO with Military Government.”

⁵⁴⁹ Eileen Davidson, “Foster Home Investigation Not Complete by Miss Babinski,” June 3, 1948, 82487958, ITS Digital Archive, Paris.

work with German families and institutions.⁵⁵⁰ Naturally, Heise limited only described Babinski's positive or neutral characteristics in order to prove her credibility and trustworthiness for the research that she was going to undertake. What Heise did not mention about Babinski was that she strongly supported the idea that the foreign children should leave their German families.⁵⁵¹ As a consequence, her recommendation to remove non-German children from German foster parents could have been biased. Having a generally positive description of a foster family and their attitude toward a child in her narrative report, Babinski recommend removing nine out of ten children from the foster parents that she had on her list. She predicted that the number of harmful foster placements could be even higher in the whole US zone of occupation, "it could be that had a larger sampling been made only one of fifteen or twenty placements would have been found satisfactory."⁵⁵² Her final report summarized that the investigation had showed that the removal of children would be the best policy, "The results of this study point to the formation of a policy of not leaving Allied children in German families; and, in their best interests, to removing them in order to repatriate or resettle them".⁵⁵³ Babinski also replied to the critics that the military representatives put forward during the meeting in Wiesbaden. She framed her explanation for why it was not good for displaced unaccompanied children to stay in German families into the principles of social work, underlining that emotional attachment between foster parents and children was not enough of a reason to leave them where they were,

"The thinking that emotional attachment is or should be the only basis for a claim on the child or for asking special consideration is not shared by this investigator. It is not believed that the foster family has a monopoly on love for the child in its care. Other factors are equally important. The nationality of the child (implying that the disposition of the child's future belong to some representative body); the composition of the foster family; the age of the foster parents' economic and social conditions of the family; and the emotional tone of the foster-family atmosphere have a real bearing on the development and future of the child."⁵⁵⁴

In this debate with the military government on German foster families, it would appear that, the IRO welfare officers intended to maintain the principle that they should have had more

⁵⁵⁰ Heise, "Investigation of German Foster Homes to Determine the Best Interest of United Nations Children."

⁵⁵¹ Babinski, "Summary on the German Home Placements."

⁵⁵² Babinski.

⁵⁵³ Babinski.

⁵⁵⁴ Babinski.

authority to decide on children's future. Viewed from this perspective, it was rather a rivalry for deciding who had expert knowledge on the children's welfare between two agents of emergency relief, than the critique of the military's approach to the future plans for displaced children. After all, many routine child cases that were investigated by the IRO's offices often ended with a recommendation to leave a child with the foster family. In fact, the IRO welfare officers revised the cases from the group investigated by Babinski and came to the conclusion that settlement in Germany would be an acceptable option. All the children, except one, in the end stayed with their German foster parents. What is more interesting, is that the analysis of the files relating to Ukrainian unaccompanied children suggested that the US military officers and IRO welfare workers agreed that the resettlement of these children, even if it meant adoption by a German family, would be a better option for them than repatriation to the Soviet Union (or Soviet Ukraine).

These instances invite us to think that in everyday work rivals often turned into allies. The social, economic or political contexts of a particular child's case pushed the welfare and military officers to side step their declared principles and to decide on the unaccompanied children's future with regard to a particular context. This approach was used when the resettlement and repatriation of Ukrainian unaccompanied children was negotiated with the Soviet authorities. From such a perspective, the concept of the child's "best interest" became a tool that helped to the military authorities and welfare workers to decide to leave the children in the German foster families rather than to repatriate them. It allowed both the military authorities and welfare workers to avoid the accusation that they were developing policies that would contradict the international agreements that were established according to principles of biopolitics or principles of social work. The statement that adoption would be the best option for a child's future sounded less political and less provocative because it was not against the interests of a specific country or government, but for the children.

Conclusions

The number of unaccompanied displaced children in Germany after the summer of 1945 was relatively small, compared to the number of uprooted adults. The number of unaccompanied children of Ukrainians or of Ukrainian origin would only have amounted to a few thousand. Remarkably, the analysis of the UNRRA's and IRO's work with these children has shed a valuable light on how the post-war international rehabilitation project was put into practice on the ground. It particularly contributes to our understanding of how the UNRRA's and IRO's social workers and the military authorities in the US zone of occupation planned and realized the future settlement of unaccompanied children, when at the time, several actors in the post-war peace settlement were competing for the children their identity and future. Putting Ukrainian children into the scope of the discussion, this study has shown that the inter-Allied geopolitics, biopolitics, child welfare concerns and individual views on child development converged in an attempt to settle these children at the dawn of the Cold War.

The UNRRA's and IRO's welfare officers saw themselves as being responsible for the rehabilitation of uprooted unaccompanied children and their future development. From the moment that they embarked on the rehabilitation project in Europe until 1952, returning displaced children to their families and nations became the main slogan of the UNRRA and the IRO. To this end, they provided displaced children of various nationalities with food, clothing, summer camps, training and education, they also helped to them to find their parents or other close relatives and arranged their return to their homeland. Nevertheless, in late 1945 it became clear that not all unaccompanied children, for instance, those of a Ukrainian or presumably Ukrainian origin, would be able to return home any time soon, and that some of them would need to find a home in another country. From early 1946, the repatriation of Ukrainian children considerably slowed considerably and was almost completely suspended by the end of 1951. This is because their return home became a contested matter between the Soviet and Western officials, particularly American and British, authorities. The problem of their nationality, citizenship, repatriation and resettlement caused debates among the international welfare and military authorities and ignited a conflict between them and the Soviet officials.

The territorial changes in Eastern Europe, specifically the annexation of Eastern Poland by the Soviet Union during and after the war, and the subsequent population transfers in the region almost inevitably led to disputes about the nationality and citizenship of the displaced children who came from those territories. After the war, the Soviet authorities demanded that all children of Ukrainian origin be repatriated, including those who came from the newly added territories, because in their opinion, these children were also Soviet citizens. However, in summer 1945 British and American officials declared that they did not recognize the Soviet Union's acquisition of the Eastern Polish territories, and the Baltic States. Departing from this point, my study has analyzed the evolution of the US military government's, the UNRRA's and IRO's policies and practices in relation to the children who were presumed to be of Ukrainian nationality, and had been uprooted from the former Eastern Polish territories. In an attempt to disentangle the tight knot of emergency child welfare and rehabilitation that was framed via geopolitical issues, this study has highlighted the nuances of the practical work that was conducted by the welfare officers and the various way that the concept of the child's "best interest" was applied to cases concerning Ukrainian children. While it was predictable that the American authorities and the UNRRA's and IRO's welfare workers were suspicious of the Soviet's claim to Ukrainian children, the impact that this had on the structure of the care and welfare that was provided to these children and the arrangement of their future settlement demonstrated several remarkable outcomes.

The dispute with the Soviet authorities over Ukrainian children suggested that child rehabilitation and welfare depended on political as much as humanitarian principles. The participation of the US occupation authorities and international welfare workers in pre- and early Cold War politics was enacted around the figure of a displaced Ukrainian child. The development of policies and approaches to the relief and rehabilitation of Ukrainian unaccompanied children remind the reader of the trajectory of the Cold War. This "Cold War" unfolded from early 1946 onwards, which is about two years earlier than traditional political chronology suggests, and most interestingly involved humanitarians alongside political actors. Although it was smaller in scale compared to the more widely known political events, it left a noticeable footprint on the welfare officers' everyday work, their ideas about child well-being, the application of the child's "best interests" concept and the outcome of unaccompanied children's cases.

From late 1945 onwards, the humanitarian workers and military authorities began withholding so-called Polish-Ukrainian children, that is, children who came from the annexed Polish territories, from repatriation to the Soviet Union. In order to explain this decision, they turned to a specific interpretation of the children's national belonging and hence of their "best interests". The US military authorities did not declare that they refused to return Ukrainian (or Baltic) children to the Soviet Union. Neither did the UNRRA's or later the IRO's, welfare officers received direct instructions from the humanitarian authorities or the Army ordering them to refuse to repatriate these children to the Soviet Union. Moreover, "returning home" officially remained the humanitarian officers' first choice among the broader range of future possibilities for uprooted children. Nevertheless, the Army used the geopolitical disagreement as a pretext for raising doubts about Polish-Ukrainian children's nationality so as to argue against the Soviet's claims to custody and repatriation. From February 1946, the US military authorities stated that Ukrainian children from the former Polish territories were not Soviet citizens. Their Ukrainian ethnic background and former belonging to the Polish territory meant that the Soviet representatives were not to be consulted about their future settlement. The zonal military authorities, particularly the EUCOM in the US zone, took legal responsibility for these children.

This formulation effectively allowed the military authorities to justify their refusal to the Soviet representatives while not openly breaching the post-war agreements. However, a consistent policy regarding the resettlement and repatriation of children from the former Polish territories had not yet been established. Polish-Ukrainian children were not identified as Soviet citizens, but nor were they affiliated to any other country as "Ukraine" did not exist. In 1948 the British, American and French military authorities finally established a policy that indicated that unaccompanied children born in the pre-Soviet territory of Ukraine were of Ukrainian nationality, but were without "a protection of national government". Such a formulation fit well with the state-oriented principle that constituted the basis for understanding the notion of a child's belonging and, at the same time, it prevented the Soviet officials from being able to claim any rights over these children. In practice, however, there was still a lot of confusion over their citizenship and the future plans until 1951. Throughout 1945-1951, the welfare workers, especially those working in the field, continued to ask the humanitarian and military headquarters to clarify their policies.

The welfare workers' and the US occupying authorities' attempts to place the problem of Ukrainian children into the frame of norms and rules provide us with yet another opportunity to observe that the notion of nationality and citizenship is intrinsically constructed, prescriptive and flexible. Legally minors had no right to opt for a particular citizenship, as such this implies that someone else would ascribe a status to them. Changing political environments, the turmoil of displaced populations and territorial transfers after the war formed a fruitful ground for the welfare officers and US military to assign national belonging to children of contested origin. Remarkably, the Soviet representatives or liaison officers were excluded from this process in the US zone of occupation. After 1946, the US authorities changed the procedures so that the Soviet representatives and liaison officers only received cases that the welfare officers had identified, and the EUCOM had confirmed were Soviet citizens. Children of Polish-Ukrainian origin, as well as occasionally other Ukrainian children, were not included in these lists.

The problem with the nationality of Polish-Ukrainian unaccompanied children also demonstrated the difference in how ideas about citizenship and nationality were interpreted and used by the former Allied powers. International humanitarian workers and US officials relied on an understanding of citizenship that was grounded on the homogenous nation-state in which nationality often converged with citizenship. The Soviet authorities approached this question from the perspective of political citizenship within a multi-national state or empire. This kind of interpretation suggested that citizenship could be different from ethnic nationality, as was the case in the Soviet Union. If the principle of nation-state citizenship led international welfare officers to argue that children could not return to the Soviet Union, the Soviet representatives saw this argument groundless. They continued to argue that all Ukrainian unaccompanied children should be treated as Soviet citizens. This was a dialogue of the deaf.

IRO's welfare workers, as well as the US military authorities, also used the concept of the child's "best interests" to legitimize resettlement over repatriation for Polish-Ukrainian children. This argument complemented the assertion that they did not belong to the Soviet Union. The Soviet representatives constantly criticized the UNRRA and the IRO for not repatriating children and accused the US military governments of illegally withholding Soviet children. The UNRRA's and IRO's relief and administrative officers, together with the US military authorities, in response, eagerly argued that they adhered to the principle that

repatriation underpinned peace planning. The UNRRA held no mandate to resettle unaccompanied children. The IRO's administrative order No. 33 that was issued in November 1947, defined the procedures concerning unaccompanied children and underlined that repatriation was "a normal solution for an unaccompanied child" of determined nationality. However, the same order specified exceptions to this rule, "it is recognized [...] that repatriation will not in all instances serve the best interests of an individual child, and that in some circumstances a plan other than repatriation may be indicated".⁵⁵⁵ The humanitarian and military authorities and officers never abandoned the repatriation principle when dealing with unaccompanied children. They reformulated it by adding that repatriation was the normal solution for a child of a determined nationality unless evidence suggested that such a determination would be contrary to the "best interest" of the child. It was the UNRRA and then the IRO field officers' responsibility to confirm or refute that repatriation was the best choice for a child.

By autumn 1945, the military officers, and by winter 1945-1946, some of the social workers were no longer certain that repatriation to the Soviet Union was in the "best interests" of the child. According to Anglo-American child welfare theory, biological families and native culture formed the best environment for a child's rehabilitation and "return to normalcy" after the war. Social workers believed that the preservation of children's national and cultural identity was an integral part of their healthy development. This implied that the welfare workers saw the nation as a kind of fictive family, which in the case of orphaned children, could substitute for the family.⁵⁵⁶ Such an interpretation also suggested that the nation had its own state and institutions that were able to take care of children. As a result, the notion of the child's "best interests" supported the principle that preferred repatriation to resettlement, and respected the demand of national governments to have their 'their' children returned to them. And yet, as this study suggests, the "best interests" of Ukrainian unaccompanied children, though not yet defined "in distinctly nationalist terms",⁵⁵⁷ took the changing borders and international relations into consideration.

The amalgam of child welfare with anti-communist or, to be more precise anti-Soviet, sentiment and political reasoning was apparent in the plans that the welfare and military

⁵⁵⁵ "Provisional Order No 33. Unaccompanied Children. PCIRO, Headquarters Geneva."

⁵⁵⁶ Zahra, "Lost Children," 57, 59, 71; Zahra, "Lost Children: Displaced Children between Nationalism and Internationalism," 203.

⁵⁵⁷ Zahra, "Lost Children: Displaced Children between Nationalism and Internationalism."

officers composed for the future settlement of children who were of Polish-Ukrainian or Ukrainian nationality. These children, like those of any other nationality, symbolized the biological future of a nation, but they were not supposed to become the biological foundation of the communist project in the Soviet Union. As it became evident, from 1946, welfare workers, as well as the US military governors, were less focused on discovering the precise background of Ukrainian children from the former Polish territories, instead, they were more interested in demonstrating that they were not Soviet citizens. At the same time, there were no indications that the welfare or military officers argued that the Ukrainian nation, or émigré communities, held any rights over these children. Rather the children's Ukrainian nationality became a tool that helped the welfare officers and military authorities to argue against the children's repatriation to the Soviet Union.

Welfare workers referred to the latest ideas about children's education and upbringing, implying that a communist country would not be the best place for them to grow up. In more general terms, they hoped that, if not repatriated, these children could save their identity from Soviet indoctrination. Interestingly, an eventual reunion with their families, or even their mothers, became less important in deciding the future of children who might or might not to be repatriated to the Soviet Union. Returning a child to his or her family was an indispensable part of a child's rehabilitation after the war, which also symbolized the democratic renovation of Europe.⁵⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the international welfare officers and the Anglo-American authorities could hinder the repatriation of children even when there were some clues that the parents or family were living in the Soviet Union. As a result, instead of returning to their home countries and being reunited with their relatives or families, many Ukrainian children were resettled under various schemes that were developed by the volunteer organizations and national governments.

What is most striking is that when defining what was in the "best interests" of a child in each individual case with regard to nationalist, religious and family differences,⁵⁵⁹ and the child's current circumstances, it seems that the welfare workers came to see their adoption into German foster families as a better solution than repatriation to the Soviet Union. Already, in the late 1940s, it became possible to foster foreign children, such as Ukrainians (but also of other nationalities) in German families. Even the anti-Nazi feelings and distrust of German

⁵⁵⁸ Zahra, 193.

⁵⁵⁹ Zahra: "Lost Children," p. 51.

families and society that was expressed by the international community faded away with the growing suspicion about the Soviet's claims.

The analysis of the field investigations that were conducted by the welfare officers in cases of foreign unaccompanied children, who were living with German foster parents has illustrated how on the ground the IRO's workers approached the complex task of deciding whether adoption would be the best solution for these children. As specified by the working principles of the humanitarian agencies, social workers approached each child's case individually. They had some general guidelines on how to work in such situations, but no answers to the multiple issues that could arise in specific circumstances. Therefore, the welfare officers in the field acted according to individual situations and their own beliefs about a child's rehabilitation and perspective on what was in the child's "best interests". Their reports include the narratives that reflected their own beliefs and decisions about what would be better for a particular child.

As such, the study of the field officers' recommendations provides insight into their daily work, which often required finding a compromise between theories on child welfare, personal beliefs, official policies, the position of the military authorities and practical challenges. There were many elements that the UNRRA's and IRO's social workers had to take into consideration: this included views on the child's "best interests" that gave prominence to the natural bond between a mother and her children, and to the cultural bond between a child and its native land; Anglo-American social theories that advised relief workers to find a suitable environment for children to recover after the war. The educational and social specialists insisted that a child needed a mother, a family, a country, citizenship, a feeling of belonging and a proper education. Anglo-American theories claimed that it was vital to provide wartime children with everything that could heal them from the consequences of war and help to overcome trauma. Also, it would help adults to recover if they brought up future citizens who might bear the morals that would prevent the future social cataclysms, such as the world wars. This general approach had few adversaries, though its practical implementation revealed many complications. When searching for such environments, humanitarians, army officers and the international community held intense debates over the idea of leaving unaccompanied foreign children in Germany. The field officers, meanwhile, scrutinized the German foster families and the lives of fostered children in order to find answers to this question.

Reports on their fieldwork, involved the inspection of foster homes, contact with the children and foster parents, and an in-depth screening of their lives. These inspections often indicated that the children were being well cared for. At the same time, the search for the children's birth mothers and close relatives often provided no results or indicated that they were living in a territory that was controlled by the Soviet authorities, as was often the case with Ukrainian children. The international humanitarian agencies, with exception of the Red Cross, had little or no access to the Soviet territories, except through direct contact with the Soviet officials, so they were unable to verify any details about the families and relatives of unaccompanied children. In 1946, the IRO's officers have already mistrusted the information that the Soviet representatives shared about such children's relatives. All these issues, it seems, prepared the ground for the welfare officers to suggest that the placing abandoned or orphaned children with their present German foster parents, who were also eager to adopt them, would be the best option for their future life.

In sum, adoption became the solution for many unaccompanied displaced children who were living with German foster families from the late 1940s onwards. The social workers' interpretation of welfare policy for displaced unaccompanied children evolved during the years that they spent in post-war Europe. Their experiences of working in the field led them to stop focusing on the negative perception of German foster families and to start evaluating the outcomes that the separation of the children from their foster parents would bring. This included the children's emotional distress and the difficulties with arranging new plans for their future settlement. Growing Cold War tensions, the fear of communism and its harmful influence on people and particularly children, it seems also, played its part in weakening anti-German views amongst the IRO's welfare officers.

The army's position on allowing German foster families to adopt Ukrainian children as opposed to repatriating them to the Soviet Union underwent small changes from the beginning of 1946. Anti-Soviet feelings only strengthened within the US military command's circles and made the repatriation of children across the Soviet border less and less likely. The EUCOM, which controlled the movements of children, tended to turn down the IRO's requests to remove Ukrainian children from German foster families so long as they were living in satisfactory conditions and being well cared for by their foster parents.

Yet the welfare workers' freedom to decide on the ground whether German families could adopt their foster children did not pass unnoticed by the humanitarian authorities. In 1948 the UN Hambros' report on unaccompanied children complained that the complex problem of unaccompanied children could not be "solved by the individual [IRO] worker but must be discussed by the policy-making organs of the UN".⁵⁶⁰ It seems that the UN's report showed that they disagreed with the welfare workers' conclusions regarding foreign children who were fostered out to German families. In particular, the author of the report articulated a concern that children who belonged to a particular country and nation would never be returned to their homeland. This example illuminates the gulf between the UN cabinet officials' theories and goals and the experiences of welfare field workers on the ground. The UNRRA's or IRO's methods were not openly criticized but the report insisted that the decision to allow German families to adopt their foster children should be made in the cabinets of the higher authorities, in this case, the UN authorities:

"They [children] are part and parcel of the future of their nation, the most valuable assets of an impoverished and suffering people. Stolen property is restored. What about the children? Shall a decision of principle be along broad lines, or shall it be left to the judgement of the individual welfare-worker to decide what are the best interests of the child? At best such a decision is a short term one. But until the principles to follow have been established on a higher level - the workers of the [IRO] have nothing to guide them but their own judgement and discretion. [...] It will be for the organs of the United Nations to give directions to the staff of the [IRO]."⁵⁶¹

Despite these conflicts, the IRO and US military authorities were often in agreement about the adoption of children by their German foster families in the US zone of occupation.

Despite all the collisions, the UNRRA, IRO and US military authorities, those "frères - et soeurs - enemies" of the post-war rehabilitation of unaccompanied children, often acted jointly to arrange the future settlement for children of Ukrainian origin. It is true that at times their relations were harmonious and at times very uneasy, which was specifically marked by the disputes on their expert knowledge on emergency welfare, child's psychology, belonging and the "best interests" of the child theory. The military and humanitarian officers formed particular ideas about what was the best future plan for unaccompanied children, and these

⁵⁶⁰ "The Situation as to Unaccompanied Children. UN Hambros Report."

⁵⁶¹ "The Situation as to Unaccompanied Children. UN Hambros Report."

views reflected their vision of the problems, responsibilities and duties in occupied Germany and their financial and manpower resources. Nevertheless, the social officers could find accord with the US military regarding resettlement and the “best interests” of Ukrainian children. The most vivid examples of such joint efforts include the cases in which Ukrainian unaccompanied children appeared in Soviet custody. Certainly, a deeper investigation of these issues will allow us to reveal more details about the intricate relationships between the two main actors of post-war relief in the occupied zones of Germany - the Army and the humanitarians.

List of Abbreviations

CAD - Civil Affairs Division

COSSAC - The Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander

CTB - Central Tracing Bureau

CSB - Child Search Branch

DPs - Displaced persons

EUCOM - The United States European Command

IRO - The International Refugee Organization

ITS - The International Tracing Service

NKVD - The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs

OMGUS - Office of Military Government for Germany (U.S.)

SHAEF - The Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force

UNRRA - United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration

UN - The United Nations

USFET - The United States Forces, European Theater

UUARC - The United Ukrainian American Relief Committee

List of Figures

Figure 1. New boundaries of Poland. Source: Plokhy Serhii, *Yalta*.

Figure 2 Soviet Ukraine. Source: Plokhy Serhii, *The Gates of Europe*.

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