Children of the Polish Republic

Child Health, Welfare, and the Shaping of Modern Poland, 1915-1939

BY

MELISSA J. HIBBARD
B.S. Carroll College, 2007
M.A. University of Illinois at Chicago, 2019

DISSERTATION

Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Chicago, 2022

Chicago, Illinois

Defense Committee:
- Keely Stauter Halsted, Chair and Advisor
- Marina Mogilner, History
- Małgorzata Fidelis, History
- Karen Underhill, Polish, Russian, and Lithuanian Studies
- Sean Martin, Western Reserve Historical Society

To the memory of my parents, Mike and Joni Hibbard.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe the largest intellectual debt to my committee members. Marina Mogilner pushed me to consider new frameworks and literature and continues to be my most enthusiastic supporter and most challenging critic. I still fondly remember conversations with Małgorzata Fidelis that fundamentally shifted my thinking about the project during our time as fellows at Institute for the Humanities at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). Karen Underhill reminded me to consider the Jewish narratives, contributions, and dimensions of the project. Sean Martin has been with me through nearly every phase of this project, offering gentle guidance and unwavering support. Finally, Keely Stauter-Halsted shepherded me through every step of the Ph.D. process over the past fourteen years. Beyond my committee, I would like to thank Robert Blobaum, who gave me my first tour of the Polish National Archives and first encouraged me to consider studying World War I and the early Polish Republic.

Research of this scope requires multiple sources of funding and administrative support. Financial support for this project came from the Jacob K. Javits Fellowship, the Fulbright Program, the UIC Institute for the Humanities, and the UIC History Department. I owe much gratitude to Hannah Landsman of the UIC History Department for helping me navigate from afar the many frustrating twists and turns of university bureaucracy.

The greatest gifts from this whole experience have been the people I have met. As an archivist at the Jewish Historical Institute, Ola Bańkowska taught me how to navigate Polish archives, while also hosting me during multiple research trips to Warsaw. Stephanie Lammers helped me gather and catalog sources during my final frantic weeks in Polish archives and libraries in 2013. Since meeting on our first day together at Michigan University in February 2009, Natalie Rose has read every seminar paper and funding application I have ever written and

become the lifelong friend one always hopes for. Finally, I thank Laura Brade, Gillian Glaes, Jill Jozwiak, and Tiffany Wilson-Keesey, made writing a less lonely and frustrating process by joining me in various writing accountability groups.

Since 2017, I have been a full-time teacher of fifth through eighth-grade students in four schools in three states. Along the way, I met people who graciously volunteered their time to read chapters and edit them to their final versions. Thank you to Nancy Beilis, a parent at Poly Prep Country Day in Brooklyn, New York, and Miranda Whitmore and Sara Bramble of Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart in Bethesda, Maryland. I must also include a special note for two of my former students: June Dorsch and Marisa Triola. When they were middle schoolers at Poly Prep, I convinced them to join the history club and guided them through the process of competing in History Day. Although I no longer teach at their school, I have kept them in my life, consulting on their projects and inviting them to help with my own work. I fondly remember the day I taught them how to write Chicago-style citations, which I had promised would be the most boring lesson of the year. We soon found ourselves in fits of laughter. And yet, the lesson must have stuck. As they reviewed the citations for this dissertation, they caught errors that evaded most other expert eyes. Outside my committee, June is the only person who has read and commented on the entire draft. She did so with great enthusiasm and insight, all while managing her own midterms, research projects, and active extracurricular schedule. It has been a great honor to teach and mentor these talented young women.

The day I defended this dissertation fell fifteen years, almost to the day, after my parents, Mike and Joni Hibbard, were tragically killed. The accident that claimed their lives happened mere hours after I handed in the first draft of the first chapter of my college thesis advisor.

Therefore, this moment feels both joyous and painfully poetic. During the twenty-one years that I knew them, they endowed me with the wit, grit, and sense of adventure that carried me to this point. I miss them terribly; they would be so proud to see me reach this milestone. I dedicate this dissertation to them.

And finally, to my husband, Dan Duncan, who I met on a houseboat in Paris during my 2012-2013 research year abroad. At that point, I had no idea the profound role he would play in my life nearly a decade later. I could not imagine a kinder, gentler, more supportive partner. Whether he was warming cups of tea, cooking dinner, walking the dogs, or offering an insightful comparison between writing and carpentry, he did whatever he could to help me cross this finish line. With less than fifty short days until the arrival of our first child, I am eager to close this chapter and write a new one with him.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	The Landscape of Polish Child Care	4
	Historiographical Review	15
	Method	23
	Sources and Chapter Structure	32
II.	SAVE THE CHILD, BUILD THE NATION	41
	The Main Welfare Council: Background and Origins	44
	Daycare Beyond Its Proper Task	50
	“Only the Village Can Save a Generation”	59
	“Save the Children”	73
III.	NO GOD BUT HUNGER	84
	Milk and Money	88
	The Americans Arrive	91
	Aid for “Pitiable Little Persons”	96
	Playing By America’s Rules	99
	The Challenges of Enactment	102
	A Crisis of Authority	110
	The Bolshevik Invasion	121
	The Ethnic Politics of Foreign Aid	126
	Reduction of the Feeding Program	140
IV.	NURTURING NEWBORN POLAND	146
	Matka Polka Reimagined	163
	Professionalizing the Female Care Force	169
	The Little White House	178
	The Station’s Reach: Class, Ethnicity, and Geography	184
	Home Invasions	205
V.	EDUCATING HYGIENIC AGENTS OF CHANGE	219
	The Tasks of a School Doctor	224
	Hygienic Care in Jewish Schools	227
	Children as Agents of Social Change	223
	Fostering a Generational Divide	236
	Limits to Children’s Agency	239
	Limits to the School Hygiene Program	243
VI.	FROM SUMMER ORPHAN TO CHILD CITIZEN	251
	Summer Camps as Liberation from Urban Prisons	255
	Rational Relaxation	260
	Citizens of the Children’s Republics	262
	Creating the Embedded Citizen	269

"Because All at the Colony are Free, all are Equal" 286

VII. FINDING HOMES FOR POLAND'S FORLORN CHILDREN. 302
The Postwar Orphan Crisis 307
Institutional Care. 326
Methods of Arrival. 328
Critiques of Institutional Care. 334
Attempts to Address Concerns. 338
Foster Care. 352

VIII. CONCLUSION. 369

BIBLIOGRAPHY. 385

VITA. 403

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARA	American Relief Administration
ARAECF	American Relief Administration European Children's Fund
ARC	American National Red Cross
CKO	Central Citizen's Committee
CKPD	Central Committee for Children's Relief
CKRD	Central Commission for Children's Rescue
CRB	Commission for Relief in Belgium
ERC	European Relief Council
JDC	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
MWRiOP	Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment
PAKPD	Polish-American Children's Aid Committee
PKOD	Polish Committee for Children's Welfare
PKPD	State Committee for Children's Relief
PPS	Polish Socialist Party
PTMS	Polish Society of Social Medicine
RGO	Main Welfare Council
TOM	Society for the Protection of Children and Youth
TOZ	Society for Safeguarding the Health of the Jewish Population
TPD	Society of Children's Friends in Cracow
ZLRP	Association of Physicians of the Polish Republic

SUMMARY

The dissertation looks at the intersection of children, social care, and state formation. From 1915 to 1939, the project traces the increasing encroachment of medical, social care, and state authorities into children's lives and families, the expansion of care beyond philanthropic and charitable realms, and the crafting of approaches and environments to counteract the harmful effects of the home and the street on Poland's future citizens. It looks at policy as enacted on the ground and scientific, medical, and political discourses as translated, negotiated, and altered in real-life practice.

The project explores Poland's evolving network of child care of state and non-state actors shaped, which disciplined society through child- and family-focused interventions; the evolution of the child as a conceptual category and a container for intense social anxieties; the formalization of the medical community's knowledge and power in society; and the transition from philanthropy and charity to social medicine, social welfare, and social pedagogy amid persistent shortages in funding, resources, and personnel. It traces the transformation of child welfare from an entirely private, charity-driven system during the partitions to a mixed welfare economy characterized by a weak state and robust non-state providers.

The dissertation draws on archival and published source material related to wartime relief work, international humanitarian relief efforts, inspections of welfare institutions, institutional activities, and professional discussions about child well-being. By focusing on children as a tool of state building, children's activists chose a particularly moral-social issue to an otherwise political-economic project. Interrogating the discourses and methods of childhood governance employed by the interwar Polish state and non-state providers reveals the kind of "model citizen" they were hoping to create.

INTRODUCTION

The founding of the interwar Polish state occurred amid grim circumstances. Once the dust of the First World War and subsequent border conflicts finally settled, ninety percent of Polish territory lay as wounded battlefields. Marauding armies had trampled crops, exploded bridges, destroyed railways, disappeared livestock, raided banks, ransacked houses, and torched churches and synagogues. Shortages of food, goods, and services accelerated threats of starvation, malnourishment, and exposure while epidemics raged affecting millions. These postwar hardships hit society's youngest members particularly hard. In 1919, Władysław Szenajch, a Polish physician and director of the Ministry of Health's Child Welfare Department, speculated there were regions of the country with no more children under age five. William R. Grove, the first director of the American Relief Administration mission in Poland, recalled children of that era as "little old men and women," silent without smiles, and "carrying the troubles of the years on their grave little faces."[1] With instances of orphanhood and abandonment widespread and malnourishment and disease on the rise, one thing was clear: Poland may have been reborn, but its children were struggling to survive.

In 1923, the Polish Committee for the Protection of Children (*Polski Komitet Ochrony Dzieci)* launched *Child Care* (*Opieka nad dzieckiem*), the first professional Polish journal dedicated to issues of child health and welfare. In the first paragraph of the inaugural issue, Bronisław Krakowski—a man of many titles that included *Child Care's* editor, a social worker, children's rights activist, advisor to Ministry of Health, long-time head of the Department of Child Welfare for the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (*Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki*

[1] William Remsburgh Grove, War's Aftermath: Polish Relief in 1919 (New York: House of Field, 1940), 170.

Społecznej, hereafter Ministry of Social Welfare)—opened with a passionate summary of Poland's recent struggles to regain its freedom:

> Through the darkness of captivity, the thorny trail of Siberia, through the walls of Wrześni went Poland dignified in its pain, strengthened by faith in its unexpired rights. The age of violence did not drown the mighty cry of "Poland is not yet dead." And these words engaged in the Polish soul blended into the harmonious chord of the will of the nation. The years of torment elapsed, the aftermath of casualties increased stigma of suffering. 1830, 1863, the relentless struggle of freedom fighters, finally the incident of the whole world war—a mighty struggle about tomorrow and the sacrificial blood of the best sons of Poland, ascertained the indelible truth: "There is no coffin for the soul."[2]

After this powerful opening, which summarized Poland's experience of partition and its struggle to regain independence, Krakowski invoked the importance of children for rebuilding the Polish state. He argued that simultaneous with structural rebuilding and economic revival, social welfare for Poland's children constituted an essential part of "the work of establishing the existence of the reborn Fatherland."[3] As the days of captivity and anguish came to a close, Poland looked to its future. Although its source of fortitude under the partitions had been the maternal heart, Krakowski maintained that the wellspring of Poland's future was the child.

The extent of postwar destruction, poverty, and suffering launched questions about the general population's health and welfare to a place of central importance in interwar Polish society. In its first few years of independence, Poland became the site of extensive international relief efforts soon followed by the growth of a domestic care network devoted to bringing modern, professional approaches to medicine and social care to Poland's urban centers, towns, and villages. Concerns for societal well-being became encoded into the new government. Some of the early Republic's first laws concerned public health and welfare, and in 1918, Poland became the first country in Europe to have a ministry explicitly devoted to health matters. The majority of these efforts focused on the vulnerability of children. Throughout this process,

---

[2] Bronisław Krakowski, "Dziecko przyszłością narodu," *Opieka nad Dzieckiem* 1 (1923): 1.
[3] Krakowski, "Dziecko przyszłością narodu," 1.

several limitations, anxieties, and impulses guided the formation of child welfare in the Second Republic. Those themes included Poland's recent liberation from captivity, a desire to distance itself from the legacy of the partitions, Poland's rebirth as an independent state coterminous with postwar reconstruction, and Poland's need to establish itself as a strong state aligned with western democracies that could stand up to internal and external threats to its existence. Given these anxieties, the survival of children was framed as the survival of Poland; the physical, mental, and moral strengths of children became Poland's strength.

In 1915, the Germans permitted Poles to manage their own social welfare organization, which opened up new opportunities for political activists, private institutions, and local officials to enact child rescue programs in the name of Poland. After independence, Poland became the site of extensive international relief work targeting children's needs. International relief was soon followed by the development of a domestic child welfare network distinct from private charitable and philanthropic initiatives of the previous century. As the developing child welfare regime, a mixed-welfare economy made up of state and non-state providers, gradually included stronger links to state funding and oversight, it still relied on many non-state actors with multifarious although sometimes overlapping agendas. Although the dissertation considers child welfare as enacted in one state, the hybrid state of welfare means tracing efforts that pursued different national projects, namely a Poland for ethnically Polish Catholic children, a Poland for children of all faiths and ethnicities, and various Jewish national projects. At different points in the dissertation, I consider actors and initiatives from across these multiple trajectories to describe networkers that developed between state and non-state actors. Despite the persistent challenges presented by lack of funds, resources, and personnel, interwar child welfare represented an innovative period of progress that was drastically interrupted by the Second World War.

"Children of the Polish Republic" looks at the intersection of children, social care, and state formation. Beginning with the First World War and ending on the eve of the second, the project traces the increasing encroachment of medical, social care, and state authorities into children's lives and families, the expansion of care beyond philanthropic and charitable realms, and the crafting of approaches and environments to counteract the negative effects of the home and the street on Poland's future citizens. The study looks at policy as enacted on the ground and scientific, medical, and political discourses as translated, negotiated, and altered in real-life practice.

This dissertation explores Poland's evolving network of child care through examining how state and non-state actors shaped and disciplined society through child- and family-focused interventions; the evolution of the child as a conceptual category and a container for intense social anxieties; the formalization of the medical community's knowledge and power in society; and the transition from philanthropy and charity to social medicine, social welfare, and social pedagogy amid persistent shortages in funding, resources, and personnel. Simply speaking, it traces the transformation of child welfare from an entirely private, charity-driven system during the partitions to a mixed welfare economy characterized by a weak state and robust non-state providers. Between these two points is a rich and complicated history about the intersections of war, international relief, social reform, state building, and ethnic relations.

The Landscape of Polish Child Care

From about 1870 to 1914, the rise of industrialization, its accompanying social and economic problems, and multiple wars led to increased state intervention regarding families and children. Children from working-class backgrounds across the western world became matters of

nationalist interests via the influence of charitable and philanthropic organizations.[4] In 1900, Ellen Key, a Swedish child advocate, proclaimed the twentieth century to be the "century of the child," which marked the point at which Western states began paying attention to child welfare.[5] At this time, many countries had established public schools and juvenile courts, centralized bureaucracies began forming to address the needs of mothers and infants, and social reformers—usually women—began pressuring governments to create policies to protect children at youth.[6]

In the Polish lands, this process was delayed by a period of Prussian, Russian, and Austrian partitions, which lasted from 1772 until 1918. Poland's long history of partition by foreign powers definitively shaped its welfare development. During the partition era, imperial authorities paid little to no attention to matters of social welfare, leaving the tasks of social care to voluntary organizations, charities, and religious orders. Despite these limitations, the last decades of the nineteenth century saw considerable growth in social care, particularly regarding children and youth. Numerous voluntary societies focused on aspects of child care, including orphanages, nurseries, summer camps, playgrounds, soup kitchens, and hostels.[7] Many private societies were connected to various political parties, workers' movements, agricultural circles, social hygiene, and the eugenics movement.[8]

---

[4] Ivan Jablonka, "Social Welfare in the Western World and the Rights of Children," in *The Routledge History of Childhood in the Western World*, ed. Paula S. Fass (London: Routledge, 2013), 380.

[5] Dirk Schumann, "Child-Rearing and Citizenship in the Twentieth Century," in *Raising Citizens in the Century of the Child: The United States and German Central Europe in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Dirk Schumann (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 2.

[6] James Schmidt, "Children and the State," in *Routledge History of Childhood in the Western World*, 183.

[7] See Izabela Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Agnieszka Małek, Krystyna Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960: Final Report of Polish Team," *Network for Historical Studies on Gender and Social Work in Europe*, University of Siegen, 35-36, accessed April 16, 2016, http://www.sweep.uni-siegen.de/content/Results/Results/Final_Reports_PDFs/Poland_Finalreport.pdf.

[8] Marian Balcerek, *Rozwój opieki nad dzieckiem w Polsce w latach 1918-1939* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1978), 53-60.

Although these developments paralleled ones in western Europe, the restrictions placed by partitioning powers on societies, charities, and religious orders—especially in the Russian partition—drove much of the activity underground and limited it to a relatively narrow and regional focus. The experience of partition combined with an active sphere of self-help organizations created what Dagmar Schulte calls "a specifically Polish phenomenon" whereby "the social activists, which engaged in education and care issues [became] the protagonists of civil society in Poland."[9] When these "social activists" (*działacze społeczni*) took on social care, they did so often in a conspiratorial fashion, working not with but against the state as a patriotic obligation and a means of preserving the Polish nation. No matter an organization's status as legal, illegal, right, left, religious, or secular, all social initiatives under the partitions served as pathways for the cultural, economic, and social development of the Polish nation.[10]

Even though a Polish state did not yet exist, the increased social need brought on by the First World War combined with German permission inspired Poles to experiment with and imagine how public welfare might look and operate on a national scale. As partitioning powers shut down many charitable and educational institutions, local authorities and newly formed civic committees began to address growing wartime needs. In September of 1914, Warsaw citizens formed the Central Citizen's Committee (*Centralny Komitet Obywatelski*, CKO), which also operated branches in the surrounding region. In its ten months of operation, the committee provided material and monetary aid for five-thousand adults and children affected by the war, cared for 3,700 children in temporary shelters, and placed nearly twenty-thousand children into two-hundred-fifty orphanages. After it closed in 1915, its activities were assumed by the Main

---

[9] Dagmar Schulte, "The History of Social Work in Eight Eastern European Countries from 1900-1960: An Overview," in *Guardians of the Poor--Custodians of the Public: Welfare History in Eastern Europe, 1900-1960*, ed. Sabine Hering and Berteke Waalwijk (Opladen: Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2006), 113.
[10] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960," 36.

Welfare Council (*Rada Główna Opiekuńcza*, RGO), the central social aid organization in the German-occupied zone. The RGO coordinated efforts with a network of county and municipal care councils and organized a Department for the Protection of Children and Youth. As of November 1918, the RGO was helping over 125,700 children in 1,430 locations.[11] Perhaps most telling of this shift toward country-wide activity was the RGO's "Save the Children" campaign, which sought to raise money "everywhere in the land of Polish places" and "everywhere a large group of Poles can be found."[12]

The RGO played a central role in wartime relief for the former Congress Kingdom of Poland. The organization's leadership and most of its provincial networks remained in the hands of the aristocracy, the plutocracy, and the clergy, but some projects were influenced by progressive social activists. As RGO leaders focused on the biological rescue of Poland's younger generations, they were thinking about designing systems for educational and child care systems in the future state. As hope for independence grew in 1917, various political and social groups began to intentionally prepare for the postwar years by developing plans for social care and education after the war. Marian Balcerek identifies two main threads of these conversations about how to approach education and social care for children should independence be achieved. The first—initiated by a progressive cohort of doctors, hygienists, lawyers, teachers, and liberal intelligentsia closely aligned with the workers' movement—demanded the full democratization of education, children's legal rights care, a state-organized system of child welfare, and seven years of free elementary school. They advocated that it was the responsibility of the state and society to prepare every child for social activity in a democratic state. The second thread—inspired either directly or indirectly by Poland's right-wing, ultra-nationalist political

[11] Balcerek, *Rozwój opieki nad dzieckiem*, 62-63.
[12] "Ratujcie Dzieci," Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN) Rada Główna Opiekuńcza w Warszawie (RGO) 52/1272, 3.

movement, the National Democrats—did not want children's rights expanded beyond the right to social care. Advocates for this second approach wanted a care system based on traditional philanthropic and charitable models with closer state inspection and supervision.[13] The resulting system lay somewhere in between these two visions.

Sabine Hering writes that the possibilities for social welfare development in interwar Eastern European states depended on the three factors: the conditions established during the previous period of partition and wartime occupation; the possibilities allowed by "the respective national, cultural, religious, and ideological conditions;" and by what she calls "a first wave of 'globalizing social welfare.'"[14] Given the history of robust social activity during the partitions and the relative freedom granted to the RGO during the war, Poland was primed to address children's social needs relatively soon after independence. After the First World War, a period which Dominique Marshall calls "a high point in the history of international child saving," Poland also became the target of extensive relief efforts conducted by the American Relief Administration (ARA), the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the American National Red Cross (ARC), and the American Society of Friends.[15] The postwar international relief missions helped set the agenda for interwar child welfare in Eastern Europe. All over the region, including Russia and later the Soviet Union, Herbert Hoover's ARA helped more than ten million children and shaped institutions of public and private child welfare for years to come.[16] In fact, Marshall credits American humanitarian aid after the war for Eastern European state's adopting social medicine and creating organized bureaucracies dedicated to child

[13] Balcerek, *Rozwój opieki nad dzieckiem*, 62-64.
[14] Sabine Hering, "The Influence of Culture, Denominations and Ideologies on Welfare History in Eastern Europe: Comparisons and Challenges," in *Guardians of the Poor-Custodians of the Public*, 35-36.
[15] Dominique Marshall, "International Child Saving," in *The Routledge History of Childhood in the Western World*, 475.
[16] Marshall, "International Child Saving," 476.

welfare.[17] However, the many problems of the immediate postwar period such as famine, economic crisis, mass unemployment, agrarian overpopulation, inflation, high illiteracy rates, weak state institutions, and other challenges associated with the economic, political, social, and cultural consequences of partitions made enacting centralized nationwide public welfare unattainable at least for the foreseeable future.

Somewhere around the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, child welfare became, in Ivan Jablonka's words, "a yardstick of civilization—the criterion by which one could measure a country's development." "In that sense," he continues, "child welfare is a fundamental element of our modernity."[18] While states in nineteenth-century western Europe pursued projects to improve children's lives, the partitions prevented that process from starting in the Polish lands until the end of World War I. At that time, an independent Polish state could finally develop its own forms of social welfare, free from the regulations and restrictions of its former partitioners.[19] In the early days of independence, the state took steps to signal its public commitment to childcare and social need. In 1920, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare created a Department of Child and Youth Welfare. Then on March 17, 1921, the new Polish constitution stipulated the right to social insurance, the state's responsibility to care for abandoned children, and its support for developing social care institutions. Article 103 of the "March Constitution" specifically stated that "children without sufficient parental care, whose upbringing has been neglected, have the right to receive care and help from the state within the

[17] Marshall, "International Child Saving," 477.
[18] Jablonka, "Social Welfare in the Western World and the Rights of Children," 380.
[19] Hering, "The Influence of Culture, Denominations and Ideologies on Welfare History in Eastern Europe," 35.

scope defined by the law."[20] This constitutional commitment signaled that child care no longer belonged to voluntary activity but was rather the responsibility of the state and all of society.[21]

Two years later, Marcelli Gromski—vice director of the children's welfare bureau and a prominent Polish doctor of social medicine who worked with the American Red Cross to popularize infant welfare stations—maintained that the constitutional amendment itself was not enough. Although Article 103 promised care for children "within the scope defined by the law," Gromski pointed out there were not yet separate laws to normalize maternal and child care. For example, Poland lacked any uniform laws requiring systematic registration of births, which made tracking infant mortality—a top concern for Gromski and many other physicians—quite tricky. Furthermore, Poland lacked legislation to regulate the state of care for unwed mothers and their children, who suffered from some of the highest rates of abandonment and mortality.[22] Krakowski, then president of the children's welfare bureau, shared these concerns. In 1923, he wrote that "without a legal basis for childcare, there is no guarantee of due organization or development."[23] He argued that child welfare needed to find "its proper legislative solution" in Poland simultaneous with physical reconstruction and economic revival. When he looked west, specifically to France and England, Krakowski saw legislation that marked child care as "one of the most important issues of social policy, the cardinal basis for statehood."[24] He wanted to see

---

[20] Izabela Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Agnieszka Małek, and Krystyna Slany, "The System of Care for Abandoned Children in Poland, 1900-1960: The Development of Family-Forms of Care," in *Need and Care: Glimpses into the Beginnings of Eastern Europe's Professional Welfare*, eds. Kurt Schilde and Dagmar Schulte (Opladen: Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2005), 182.
[21] Ibid., 181-182; Marceli Gromski, "Zasady organizacji opieki nad matką i niemowlęciem," *Opieka nad Dzieckiem* 1, no. 1 (January-February, 1923): 15.
[22] From 1904 to 1908, around forty percent of all newborns of unwed mothers in Warsaw died, see Gromski, "Zasady organizacji," 7.
[23] Krakowski, "Dziecko przyszłością narodu," 2.
[24] Ibid., 5.

Polish government at all levels and local social organizations exert all their power to assure care for future generations.[25]

Even with independence regained, most care work was still performed by voluntary organizations. Although for the first time, they were cooperating with an independent state rather than conspiring against an imperial one.[26] For the first four years of independence, the work of domestic organizations was supplemented by massive foreign relief efforts that collaborated with state authorities. The Polish state played a more minor role in child welfare development, which consisted of supervision, partial monetary support for voluntary institutions, and providing services like rail transport or storage for foreign donations. The state's primary role in organizing direct care for children was limited to specific groups of children without families, such as war orphans or children returning to Poland from Russia or the Soviet Union.[27] While the state-funded orphanages for select groups of children, Gromski argued that local government funding for institutions of social medicine was "vanishingly small."[28] Then on August 16, 1923, the *Sejm* passed a social welfare law which formed a normative basis for public welfare, defined the terms of operation for volunteer organizations in the field of social care, and formally ended the age of social care being occasional interventions and the exclusive domain of philanthropy or charity.[29]

The interwar period marked a time when opinions shifted to favor public social welfare over private philanthropic care. In 1932, Wanda Szuman—a pedagogue, psychologist, and

---

[25] Ibid.; Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, "The System of Care for Abandoned Children in Poland," 181-182.
[26] Ewa Leś, *Zarys historii dobroczynności i filantropii w Polsce* (Warsaw: Prószyński i S-ka, 2001), 89.
[27] Kateryna Stadnik, "The Repatriation of Polish Citizens from Soviet Ukraine to Poland in 1921-2," in *Homelands: War, Population and Statehood in Eastern Europe and Russia 1918-1924*, ed. Nick Baron and Peter Gatrell (London: Anthem Press, 2004), 119-137.
[28] Gromski, "Zasady organizacji," 15.
[29] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960," 36.

advovate of social pedagogy—wrote in the Ministry of Social Welfare's journal, "Social welfare cannot be carried out casually alone by the well-meaning and intelligent will of even hardworking individuals. Social welfare must be understood as a construction project, one must already know the building materials and structural rules. Already when building the foundations, one must know the type of roof that will be set."[30] Legislatures already signaled this change with the 1923 statute' intentional use of the term "social welfare" (*opieka społeczna*) instead of "social help" (*pomoc społeczna*). Previously, social care had been seen as the realm of charity, not a matter of state attention. However, the conceptual shift to social welfare was understood as using public funds and resources to meet the basic life needs of those individuals who are not able to do so on their own. The statute also simplified the procedure of placing orphaned or abandoned children in foster family care. Although the statute stated a public commitment to social welfare rights for those who needed it, including children, it failed to articulate the precise tasks and directions of the state's activity in regards to child welfare, which was exactly what child advocates like Krakowski, Szenajch, and Gromski were worried about.[31] The 1923 law did not reduce or replace the activity of philanthropic or charitable institutions in social care, especially considering the extent to which their work was still needed in the face of famine, hyperinflation, poverty, and economic recession. State-sponsored social care was not imagined as independent from but rather combined with existing philanthropic and educational work.[32]

Another feature of the shift from philanthropy and charity to social welfare was the professionalization of care workers. In 1923, Szenajch complained about the widespread belief

---

[30] Wanda Szumanówna, "Przeszkolenia urzędników opieki społecznej w Polsce," *Praca i opieka społeczna* 4 (1932): 377.
[31] Izabela Szczepaniak-Wiecha, "Traditions of the Social Work Profession in Interwar Poland (1918-1939)" in *Amid Social Contradictions: Toward a History of Social Work in Europe*, ed. Gisela Hauss and Dagmar Schulte (Opladen: Barbara Budrich Publishers), 80; Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960," 37.
[32] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, "Traditions of the Social Work Profession in Interwar Poland," 80, 85.

that "in order to take care of children, all one needs is a 'good heart.'" Although he acknowledged that a "good heart" could motivate one to enter care work, it could never replace the knowledge gained through practical work. "Among us yet," he lamented, "is a lack of properly prepared doctors, midwives, nurses, social health workers, managers of nurseries [and] daycares, social hygienists, and managers of dormitories, and orphanages, etc."[33] Many efforts were made to address the lack of professional training for individuals working in these fields. After the war, the American Red Cross, the Joint Distribution Committee, and the Rockefeller Foundation founded and funded several professional nursing schools in Poland. In 1925, Helena Radlińska, an internationally known and well-connected member of the Polish intelligentsia, created the first professional school of Polish social work at the Free Polish University in Warsaw. In addition, the state coordinated several shorter training courses led by Poland's robust crop of experts in fields related to health and welfare to provide training for the people already working in care institutions.

The demand for educated professionals to start leading care work, whether publicly or privately funded, was met by an executive decree on March 6, 1928 that addressed creating an institutional framework and more professional training for social work. The decree created the role of the "social guardians" (*opiekunowie społeczni*), which would support city workers with their knowledge of specific neighborhoods to identify areas of need, and "social welfare commissions" (*komisje opieki społecznej*), which could include members of city or communal councils, social guardians, and representatives of local social organizations and institutions. The catch was that social guardians had to work for free. They were eligible to receive reimbursements for expenses incurred as part of the work, but otherwise, their work position was

[33] Władysław Szenajch, "Najważniejsze warunki rozwoju opieki nad dziećmi," *Opieka nad Dzieckiem* 1, no. 2 (March-April 1923), 53.

listed as “honorable and unpaid.”[34] At the time, some critiqued the reliance on citizen volunteers to perform welfare work as a return to old-fashioned charity rather than an embrace of modern social work.[35] In 1927, the state did issue three executive decrees regarding the qualifications of directors for care institutions and regulations for care institutions, followed by a 1930s executive decree on accounting and reporting in care institutions. These regulations did more to tighten state supervision and control over voluntary activity in the care sector than they did to create new public systems of care.[36]

Despite the state’s slow progress or low capacity to create a comprehensive public child welfare system, the interwar period saw many significant theoretical and practical achievements. These innovations were driven by leaders in their fields including Czesław Babicki, a pedagogue and organizer of childcare who advocated for abandoned children and “family forms” of care; Ludwik Krzywicki, a sociologist and socialist activist who wrote about the concept of upbringing through active participation in social life; Janusz Korczak, a doctor, pedagogue, and social activist who wrote guidelines on child care and institutional upbringing; and Helena Radlińska, a pedagogue, professor, and founder of Polish social pedagogy who advocated for the analysis of a child’s whole situation including their environment. Their influence resonated as both practitioners and teachers. These thinkers, among many others, wrote widely on their topics, participated in international conferences and conversations, taught courses at Radlińska’s school of social work and for supplemental state training programs, consulted in various state ministries and committees, contributed to and edited professional publications such as *Child Care*, and invited visitors from around Poland and abroad to visit their facilities. It must be emphasized that

[34] “Rozporządzenie Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej z dnia 6 marca 1928 r. o opiekunach społecznych i o komisjach opieki społecznej,” *Dziennik Ustaw*, 266-267, No. 29 (1928): 545.
[35] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, “Traditions of the Social Work Profession in Interwar Poland,” 81.
[36] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, “History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960,” 37.

no matter the failings in state organization or funding of social welfare activity, Poland achieved high standards of child welfare thanks to the progressive and highly creative work of Polish intellectuals, professionals, and activists devoted to child welfare in the interwar period.[37]

The early 1930s marked the beginning of an economic crisis that caused the state to reduce its expenditure on social welfare. It cut spending for social assistance by consolidating smaller care institutions that performed similar tasks, reducing the number of children admitted to care institutions through stricter selection, shifting from institutional care to foster care for orphaned or abandoned children, and declaring children fully independent at sixteen years of age regardless of how prepared they were for independent adult life.[38] Despite decreases in the number children admitted to orphanages, the amoung of children served by “open care” institions like summer camps and infant welfare stations continued to grow. As the state’s role contracted, voluntary organizations’ role in the welfare sector continued to increase. At the end of the 1930s, social reformers reevaluated the state of child welfare and believed that radical changes were still needed to achieve the coverage they imagined. The start of the Second World War drastically interrupted these efforts and threw child care once again into a state of wartime crises where the focus had to be on the physical survival of children.[39]

Historiographical Review

The First World War and the two decades that followed have conventionally been some of the most under-examined periods of Polish history. For too long, the Polish experience of the Great War remained neglected except for a few studies devoted to American-Polish and

[37] Schulte, “The History of Social Work in Eight Eastern European Countries,” 115.
[38] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, “The System of Care for Abandoned Children in Poland,” 183.
[39] Ibid.

Polish-Jewish relations.[40] Recently, Polish history during the Great War gained some much-needed attention with excellent studies by Robert Blobuam and Jesse Kauffman, but much work remains to be done.[41] While inadvertently leading to Poland's "glorious return" to Europe's map, the war also ratcheted up ethnic tensions and devastated Polish lands through famine, loss of life, structural damage, mass movement of refugees, and public health crises. The war brought an end to the region's three ruling empires, which dismantled the prevailing administrative, legal, and financial systems, destroyed established trade markets, sparked large migrations to and from Poland, and created many grey areas of contested citizenship that would not be resolved for years to come. Research on World War I and its consequences for the Second Republic is necessary to

---

[40] On relations with America during the war, consult Mieczysław B. Biskupski, *American Polonia and the Resurrection of Independent Poland, 1914-1918* (New Britain, CN: Polish Studies Program, Central Connecticut State University, 1989) and Biskupski, *The United States and the Rebirth of Poland, 1914-1918* (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Republic of Letters, 2012). For changes in Jewish communal life and Polish-Jewish relations, see Alexander Victor Prusin, *Nationalizing a Borderland: War, Ethnicity and Anti-Jewish Violence in East Galicia, 1914-1920* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2005) and works by Konrad Zielinski including "Polish-Jewish Relations in the Kingdom of Poland During the First World War," *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 2 (2008): 269-282; "The Shtetl in Poland, 1914-1918," in *The Shtetl: New Evaluations* ed. Steven T. Katz (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 102-120; *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie na ziemiach Krlólestwa Polskiego w czasie pierwszej wojny światowej* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Universytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2005); and *Żydzi Lubelszczyzny 1914-1918* (Lublin: Lubelskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1999).

[41] See Robert Blobaum, *A Minor Apocalypse: Warsaw during the First World War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press) and Jesse Kauffman, *Elusive Alliance: The German Occupation of Poland in World War I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015). Other works regarding World War I as experienced by civilian populations include Belinda Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Peter Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999); Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge, 2004); and David Rechtor, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War* (London, 2001). Chapters 1-4 of Maria Bucur's *Heroes and Victims: Remembering War in Twentieth-Century Romania* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010) provide an insightful discussion of mourning and memorial practices in Romania. For social and cultural histories of soldiers experiences in the east, see Alon Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War: Captivity on the Eastern Front* (London: Berg Publishers, 2002) and Liulevicius, Vejas, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity, and German Occupation in World War* (Cambridge, 2000).

better understand the social, political, economic, and cultural context from which independent Poland developed. For decades, the history of Poland's interwar period was studied less as a period between two world wars and more as a lead-up to its collapse during the Second World War. "Children of the Polish Republic" shows how Polish care networks were shaped by citizens' committees in the context of wartime restrictions and shortages and then further forged by foreign humanitarianism during the era of postwar reconstruction. I argue that both periods, rarely analyzed in connection to the interwar period, are fundamental to understanding the choices and structures that governed interwar child welfare. My approach flips a well-worn tendency to define interwar Poland by its latest and darkest period by instead writing history forward from the point of the First World War—the cataclysm that actually shaped the lives and consciousness of people living in the Second Republic.[42]

For decades, the scholarship addressing Poland between 1918 and 1939 focused on parliamentary politics, economic development, and diplomatic relations.[43] As valuable as this

[42] This dissertation joins recent works by Andrzej Chwalba and Jochen Bohler to consider how political issues and social processes of the years immediately following the armistice shaped the Second Polish Republic. See Jochen Bohler, *Civil War in Central Europe, 1918-1921: The Reconstruction of Poland* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018).

[43] Antony Polonsky's *Politics in Independent Poland, 1921-1939: The Crises of Constitutional Government* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) remains the authoritative source on politics and governance in the Second Republic. Piłsudski's rise to power and politics after his death are addressed by Joseph Rothschild, *Pilsudski's Coup d'Etat (*New York: Columbia University Press, 1966) and Edward Wynot, *Polish Politics in Transition: The Camp of National Unity and the Struggle for Power, 1935-1939* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1974). For surveys of interwar economic challenges see J. Taylor, *The Economic Development of Poland, 1919-1950* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1952) and Ferdynand Zwieg, *Poland Between Two Wars: A Critical Study of Social and Economic Changes (*London: Secker and Warburg, 1944). For matters of diplomacy and foreign relations consult: Anna M. Cienciała, *Poland and the Western Powers, 1935-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968); Jan Karski, *The Great Powers and Poland, 1919-1945: From Versailles to Yalta* (New York: University Press of America, 1985); Neal. Pease, *Poland, The United States, and the Stabilization of Europe, 1919-1933* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Neal Pease, *Rome's Most Faithful Daughter: The Catholic Church and Independent Poland, 1914-1939* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2009); Piotr Wandycz, *Polish Diplomacy, 1914-1945: Aims and Achievements* (London: Orbis, 1988); and *ibid*., *The United States and Poland*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).

literature is, it lacks social or cultural perspectives and produces a relatively singular focus on what Peter Stachura calls independent Poland's "failures" in democratic rule, economic reform, and ethnic relations.[44] Stachura calls for scholars to complicate this decisively negative and myopic portrayal of interwar Poland by exploring many of the other "unacknowledged or underestimated factors" that comprised the "fabric and integrity of Polish society and the state in these years."[45] He encourages historians to pursue research on Poland's cultural, intellectual, and educational advancements; its borders, security, crime and justice; its promotion and integration of national identity among ethnic Poles; its religious life and institutions; and its creation of a progressive welfare system and the considerable emphasis placed on family values during the Second Republic.[46] Even though I disagree with Stachura's uncritical categorization of these topics as areas of "Polish achievement," I see the "creation of progressive welfare system" as fruitful ground for fresh discussions of interwar Polish society, politics, and ethnic relations.

During the past two decades, scholars have begun considering the importance of incorporating Eastern Europe into the larger historical narrative of welfare development,

---

[44] Peter D. Stachura, "The Second Republic in Historiographical Outline," in *Poland Between the Wars, 1918-1939* ed. Peter D. Stachura (London: Macmillan Press, 1998): 1-12; Stachura, "Introduction" in *Poland 1918-1945: An Interpretive and Documentary History of the Second Republic*, ed. Peter D. Stachura (London: Routledge, 2004): 1-5.

[45] Stachura, "The Second Republic in Historiographical Outline," 7.

[46] Many works are starting to historiographical ground including Kathryn Ciancia, *On Civilization's Edge: A Polish Borderland in the Interwar World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021); Sean Martin, *Jewish Life in Cracow, 1918-1939* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004); Marci Shore, *Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation's Life and Death in Marxism, 1918-1968* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); David Petrucelli, "Pimps, Prostitutes and Policewomen: The Polish Women Police and the International Campaign against the Traffic in Women and Children between the World Wars," *Contemporary European History* 24, no. 3 (August 2015), 333–350; Ewa Plach, *The Clash of Moral Nations: Cultural Politics in Pilsudski's Poland* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006) and "Ritual Slaughter and Animal Welfare in Interwar Poland," *East European Jewish Affairs* 45, no. 1 (April 2015): 1-25; and Michał Wilczewski: "Obcy we własnym domu: Konflikty pokoleniowe i walka o „wiejskiego człowieka" w międzywojennej Polsce" in *Centrum światów jest tutaj*, ed., Tomasz Pudłocki and Jadwiga Sawicka (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, 2021), 1-25.

particularly in the late-imperial and interwar periods. However, the historical scholarship on social welfare in Eastern Europe is still sparse. Most of what is available comes thanks to the initiatives of the "Network for Historical Studies on Gender and Social Work in Europe." Founded in 2001 by Sabine Hering and Berteke Waaldijk, this interdisciplinary research group has produced four edited volumes, which constitute the most comprehensive treatment of Eastern European social work and social welfare history available in any language.[47] The work produced by these research teams challenges many long-held assumptions about welfare development that are derived from studies conducted on Western Europe. For example, Hering and Waaldijk explain that social work did not only result from middle-class reactions to industrialization. In Eastern Europe, which lacked both widespread industrialization and a sizable middle class, it was problems such as overpopulation, disease, and deficiencies in rural health and education services that spurred the development of professionalized social work.[48] While Western European narratives emphasize the "purity" of the social work profession—meaning that only trained social workers conducted it—the Eastern European case studies in these volumes find that women from other professions such as nursing and teaching also frequently engaged in social work activities, thereby blurring professional boundaries.[49]

This literature also displaces the nation-state as the main actor in constructing Eastern European social welfare. For decades, welfare historiography excluded analysis of Eastern

[47] Hauss and Schulte, *Amid Social Contradictions*; Hering and Waaldijk, ed., *Guardians of the Poor—Custodians of the Public*; Hering and Waaldijk, ed., *History of Social Work in Europe (1900-1960): Female Pioneers and their Influence on the Development of International Social Organizations* (Opalden: Leske + Budrich, 2003); Schilde and Schulte, ed., *Need and Care*.
[48] Hering and Waaldijk, *Guardians of the Poor—Custodians of the Public*, 32. They hypothesize welfare provision did not even differ so much in the west, but that stilted research agendas have entrenched these assumptions. For example, similar developments might have occurred in rural Germany or France, but the narrative has been crafted by research only focused on industrial centers.
[49] Ibid., 28.

European countries because of their differences in developmental stages, political regimes, and cultural institutions. As more scholars begin to address this topic, they are finding that the story of social welfare does not necessarily begin or end with forms of political rule. Tomasz Inglot's work on state welfare systems in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia reveals how welfare states can form over a long trajectory of time, barring many interruptions and replacements in central forms of state rule. Through comparing the growth of social insurance programs such as pensions, child care payments, family allowances, and sickness and maternity benefits, Inglot finds that "the collapse and replacement of a political regime does not automatically translate into the same radical change in the social policy regime." Inglot concludes that the foundations of welfare policy in these three Eastern European countries remained "deeply embedded in the institutional practice and memory of the state," at best only undergoing a "more subtle 'recombination' or 'reconfiguration" across regime changes and throughout many social, political, and economic crises.[50]

According to Walter Lorenz, the growth, decline, and changes in social services in Eastern Europe often "took place in contexts where the nation was not self-evident."[51] For example, many Polish social care initiatives started in the late-partition era, continued through the German and Austrian occupations of the First World War, and then finally found their fullest expression under interwar independence. Several of these initiatives and non-state providers continued to function even during and after Nazi occupation. Lorenz makes clear that "histories of social work are not always 'national' histories," yet that does not mean that social workers or non-state welfare providers do not engage in answering national questions or pursuing

[50] Tomasz Inglot, *Welfare States in East Central Europe, 1919-2004* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 41.
[51] Walter Lorenz, "Comparative Welfare History and the International History of Social Work," in *Guardians of the Poor—Custodians of the Public*, 31.

nationalizing agendas.[52] For example, Hering points out the triggering event for social welfare development in the Polish lands was the “longing for national identity” which “became the framework for organizing educational institutions and social assistance done by voluntary organizations.”[53] Therefore, Lorenz argues that instead of asking how different countries “solved their social issues at the level of national politics” we should instead investigate “how the ‘fit’ between the nation-state and social welfare has never been completed or uncontested.”[54]

Research on social welfare in Eastern Europe even challenges understandings of the welfare state itself. Lynne Haney argues that scholars of Eastern Europe need to broaden prevailing concepts of state regulation to include not only the level of state involvement but also the nature of that involvement. State welfare, Haney maintains, is a multilayered nexus of social policies, institutional practices, propaganda, and concrete social provisions. She warns against granting one layer analytical priority or assuming that one can be subsumed by the other. Haney approaches the state as a set of “multiple, conflicting apparatuses,” which “opens up the space for a study of state politics that is not reducible to the politics of the elites.”[55] When discussing social welfare in Poland, it is misleading to talk about strict divisions between public welfare and private charity. They were often one and the same, or were at least, increasingly intertwined.

The studies addressed here argue for a need to displace the dominant role of the nation-state in welfare development, but they do not entirely dismiss its importance. Some of the structural features of welfare systems developed beyond and despite state intentions and control, but it was the rise of nationalism and later the nation-state that initiated the imagining of children

[52] Ibid., 28.
[53] Hering, “The Influence of Culture, Denominations and Ideologies on Welfare History in Eastern Europe--Comparisons and Challenges,” in *Guardians of the Poor—Custodians of the Public*, 45.
[54] Lorenz, “Comparitive Welfare History,” 29.
[55] Lynne Haney, *Inventing the Needy: Gender and the Politics of Welfare* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 8.

as "national assets" and sites of "national investment."[56] As Sonya Michel and Eszter Varsa write, the association between children and national interest can be found in some form across most western societies in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, especially during times of regime change, national transformation, or national rebuilding.[57] For example, Patience Schell explores how children became national symbolic actors in Porfirian and revolutionary Mexico city through shifting concepts of child hygiene programs.[58] Likewise, Lisa Kirshenbaum, Catriona Kelley, and Tricia Starks all explore Soviet ways of refashioning children's everyday lives to harness their revolutionary potential.[59] Despite Eastern Europe's prevalence of nationalism and national crises, studies of children and youth and their relationship to the national question are still rare for that part of the European continent. One exception includes Tara Zahra's groundbreaking work, which explores how Czech and German national activists in Bohemia envisioned children as an amphibious and malleable national matter that could be persuaded and converted to the Czech or German camps through access to education and social welfare services.[60] Recent works by Sylwia Kuźma-Markowska and Sean Martin shed promising

[56] Sonya Michel and Eszter Varsa, "Children and the National Interest," in *Raising Citizens in the Century of the Child*, 28.
[57] Ibid., 27-49.
[58] Patience Schnell, "Nationalizing Children Through Schools and Hygiene: Porfirian and Revolutionary Mexico City," *The Americas* 60, no. 4 (April 2004): 559-587.
[59] Lisa Kirshenbaum, *Small Comrades: Revolutionizing Childhood in Soviet Russia, 1917-1932* (NewYork: RoutledgeFalmer, 2001); Tricia Starks, *The Body Soviet: Propaganda, Hygiene, and the Revolutionary State* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008); Catriona Kelly, *Children's World: Growing up in Russia, 1890-1991* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).
[60] Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*: *National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

new light on how much the health and welfare of younger generations mattered to parts of interwar Polish society.[61]

Method

In Czesław Kępski's words, Poland's interwar period is "in regard to child welfare, the period of transition between traditional and modern."[62] This dissertation traces that transition to tell Poland's particular story of "becoming a modern" through the lens of child welfare from the First World War until the end of the interwar period. When tracing this transition, one encounters a familiar array of early twentieth-century processes including the rise of biopolitics, the disciplining of populations, maternalism, burgeoning discussions about children's rights, the creation of state bureaucracies to manage the "social," the surveillance of the population's health and hygiene, the employment of norms to identify and categorize parts of the "social," the increasing authority of the expert-professional, the expansion of public roles for women as care professionals, and new forms of social citizenship or at least the demands for "social rights" for marginalized groups. Furthermore, we see the creation of a modern state, which proves critical to the formation of modern childhood.[63] As James Schmidt writes, "The modernizing state depended upon the creation of a model citizen who would give consent willingly to the political process, obey the dictates of that process, and generally act in a 'responsible' manner."[64] Interrogating the discourses and methods of childhood governance employed by the interwar

---

[61] Sylwia Kuźma-Markowska, *Dziecko, rodzina i płeć w amerykańskich inicjatywach humanitarnych i filantropijnych w II Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2018); Sean Martin, ed. and trans., *For the Good of the Nation: Institutions for Jewish Children in Interwar Poland, A Documentary History* (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2017).
[62] Czesław Kępski, *Dziecko Sieroce i Opieka Rad Nim w Polsce w Okresie Międzywojennym* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 1991), 53.
[63] James Schmidt, "Children and the State," in *Routledge History of Childhood in the Western World*, 174.
[64] Ibid., 181.

Polish state and non-state providers reveals the kind of "model citizen" they were hoping to create. To do that, several categories need further definition, elaboration, and interrogation.

The reader of this dissertation will encounter a variety of terms to refer to children's social care. The first, often referenced as what reformers consciously tried to move away from, is philanthropy. Robert L. Payton and Michael P. Moody define philanthropy as "voluntary action for the public good" and "moral action to the human problematic."[65] Like Payton and Moody, this dissertation uses philanthropy as "an umbrella term for the entire spectrum of voluntary actions for the public good."[66] As these authors point out, in popular usage, philanthropy often refers to acts that improve quality of life, whereas charity refers to acts intended to relieve suffering. Since my historical actors employed both terms, philanthropy (*filantropia*) and charity (*dobroczynność*), without much distinction, I often refer to them in conjunction with one another as a contrast to the social welfare (*opieka społeczna*) aspired to by expert-professionals. For social welfare, I use the definition provided by Melani Cammett and Lauren M. MacLean, which is "the direct delivery or indirect facilitation of services and programs that promote well being and social security," or in other words, "health, education, and support for vulnerable populations."[67] This study examines three broad categories of children's social welfare: open care (*opieka otwarta*), which includes the distribution of food or clothing, financial aid, medical assistance, and foster care; partially open care (*półotwarta*), provided by non-residential institutions such as nurseries, after-school programs, summer camps; and closed care (*opieka zamknięta*), which includes residential sites such as orphanages and sanatoria for children sick with tuberculosis and trachoma.

---

[65] Robert L. Payton and Michael P. Moody, *Understanding Philanthropy: Its Meaning and Mission* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), 6.
[66] Ibid., 38.
[67] Melani Cammett and Lauren M. MacLean, ed., *The Politics of Non-State Social Welfare* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 6.

Since this study is organized based on the interventions, the age range for what counts as a child shifts at different times. The Polish state was not clear about who it considered to be a child. The legal definitions of a child in the Second Republic seem to say childhood lasted from birth until somewhere around age thirteen or fourteen. A Decree by the Leader of the State on February 8, 1919 established free, universal, mandatory elementary education for children ages seven to fourteen.[68] An executive order by the President of the Republic of Poland on January 16, 1928 articulated that children under fourteen could be admitted and supported at provincial "care-and-education" centers.[69] Another presidential enactment from July 11, 1932 delineated between juveniles under thirteen and those from thirteen to seventeen who committed crimes. Individuals in the latter category were to be confined to custody centers for youth (*młodzieży*), which should be distinguished from the Polish term for children (*dzieci*).[70] According to this legislation, around age thirteen or fourteen one left childhood and began a new stage of life known as "youth." And yet, the period between thirteen and sixteen was a sort of liminal space. During the economic crisis of the 1930s, the state declared sixteen-year-olds as "self-dependent' as a way to limit spending on child care initiatives for teenagers.[71]

Non-state providers were free to set their own eligibility rules for who could receive services. Throughout the dissertation, there are examples of organizing bodies that extended services to individuals as old as seventeen when need or demand was high. Many organizations would bend rules around age limits for children in need. In the most narrow sense, the child that was spoken of in the interwar period among concerned policymakers and experts ranged from

---

[68] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960," 7.
[69] Ibid., 15.
[70] Ibid., 16.
[71] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, "The System of Care for Abandoned Children in Poland," 183.

infancy to fourteen years. In the broadest scope, the dissertation addresses services offered for individuals from infancy until about age seventeen or eighteen.

The nineteenth century saw the worldwide creation of various categories of vulnerable children in need of assistance, or what Karen Smith calls the "child-subjects of welfarist discourse."[72] The categories encountered in this dissertation include infants and toddlers from birth to age three who were welcome at infant welfare stations; "school-aged children" from seven to fourteen; "weak," "hungry," and "sick" children of a wide variety of ages transported to the countryside for foster care or summer camps; and "natural" and "social" orphans of a variety of ages. When discussing children as a social category, two threads must be considered. The first is the living flesh and blood child. The other is the symbolic child, which is a rhetorical construct. Karen Dubinsky points out that the symbolic power of children, often associated with innocence in the Western world, is so hegemonic that we barely notice it.[73] She writes, "In times of conflict, war, and social upheaval, children can become the bearers of huge social anxieties."[74] Given Poland's ever-present anxiety about winning and maintaining its existence, the language of Poland's survival became grafted onto bodies of children by actors with living memory of the time when Poland did not exist. Many of those actors had also been involved in the subversive fight to care for society and maintain Polish identity under the partitions. Thus, in the period of independence, they leveraged social medicine and social pedagogy to strengthen Polish society and maintain its success and sovereignty. By focusing on children as a tool of state building, these children's activists chose a particularly moral-social issue to an otherwise political-economic project.

[72] Karen Smith, *The Government of Childhood: Discourse, Power, and Subjectivity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 158.
[73] Karen Dubinsky, "Babies Without Borders: Rescue, Kidnap, and the Symbolic Child," *Journal of Women's History* 19, no. 1 (2007): 142-144.
[74] Ibid., 144.

Dubinsky also reminds us that there is a long history of post-revolutionary societies whose "national traumas are expressed through children."[75] Granted, the Second Republic would not be considered a "post-revolutionary society." Still, it was a society built in the midst of significant national trauma run by leaders eager to distance themselves from the past sins of the partitioning powers. When this happens, Dubinsky writes, we can see multiple formations of the symbolic child. Depending on the time period and the adult actors involved, the children of interwar Poland were framed as weak and violated, as war and famine's most "innocent victims," as "creature[s] temporarily helpless," as national assets, as a technique of state power, as individuals with rights, as beings separate from adults who are capable of many things and have talents yet to be discovered, as future and even current citizens, and as agents of social change. Throughout the project, children evolve from "vulnerable, innocent, dependent, and weak"—the formation Lisa Kirshenbaum calls those "most cherished, naturalized, and emotionally charged Western visions of childhood"—into independent, rational, agents of change.[76]

Another question that concerns historians of childhood is whether children are objects of state action, potential citizens, or vital participants in the state. As Schmidt writes, the world of children's rights is filled with paradoxes. While most social groups advocate for their own greater inclusion in the polity, adults advocate on behalf of children. Consequently, this serves to separate childhood from adulthood.[77] The resulting paradox is what Schmidt calls a "refocusing of substantial branches of the state on the lives of young people," specifically, the state-based plans for infant and child mortality health that "have undergirded much of the development of the bureaucratic state in the West."[78] In liberal language, the child is always a "citizen in

[75] Ibid.
[76] Kirshenbaum, *Small Comrades*, 5.
[77] Schmidt, "Children and the State," 174.
[78] Ibid., 175.

waiting."[79] Advocates for children's rights who focus on children having the right to play and relax, "imagine them as non-citizens, non-participants in the state."[80] A notable counterpoint comes from the Soviet Union, which saw children as citizens of the state. In this context, self-government manifested in the "children's soviets," which were councils that provided children the space to make decisions and discuss politics. More radical groups believed children had the right to leave their parents.[81] Interwar Poland's vision lay somewhere between children as "must play only" non-citizens and children as citizens emancipated from parents. Child care professionals of interwar Poland did not go so far as to encourage children to leave their families. However, there were some that praised the dissolution of family feelings among children in their care, encouraged children to take professional caretakers' advice over their parents', and promoted child-centered environments—sometimes referred to as "children's republics"—alternative homes. Whether children were seen as current or future citizens, expert-professionals imagined they were raising children who would be cultured (meaning polite, appreciative of order, and courteous), healthy, disciplined, hygienically-inclined, suited for communal living, tolerant of others' differences, willing to take responsibility for themselves and others, capable of "productive work," and civically engaged. If left untouched by professional expert interventions, many feared children would grow into sickly, frail drains on society or wild, unordered egoists only programmed to fight for their own survival.

If the Second Republic could be characterized as a weak state, what accounts for its robust and progressive social welfare system that embraced many cutting-edge global trends in social medicine and pedagogy? To understand, one must shift from thinking about a welfare state to a welfare regime, sometimes also called "mixed economies of welfare," made up of state and

[79] Ibid., 174
[80] Ibid., 185.
[81] Ibid., 185.

non-state providers.[82] Cammett and MacLean define non-state providers as “all providers outside of the public sector, including charitable and for-profit institutions, as well as domestic and international actors.” They maintain that non-state providers are always “diverse and variegated,” and that the lines between state and non-state providers are “frequently blurred.” Non-state providers can receive significant amounts of state funding, employ or utilize civil servants as workers, or deliver services from state-owned offices, yet they have “their own organizational origins and bases significantly outside the state.”[83] When states lack the capacity to provide strong public systems of social protection, such as was the case in the Second Republic, citizens must rely on a variety of non-state providers to meet their health, educational, and social needs.[84]

Cammett and MacLean articulate six types of non-state providers, four of which appear in this dissertation. The first is the secular non-governmental organization, which can be international or domestic. These groups are most often associated with delivering essential services to people in need and they tend to focus on serving a large number of people and/or advocating for social change. They may receive government funding, which further blurs lines between state and non-state actors. Examples from this dissertation include the American Relief Administration and the American Red Cross.[85] The second type is an ethnic or sectarian organization. While these groups are usually thought to only “serve their own,” they might expand their services to groups outside their faith or ethnic community depending on their broader political goals or the intergroup relationships of a particular context. Many of these

---

[82] Cammett and MacLean, *The Politics of Non-State Social Welfare*, 3-5; Smith, *The Government of Childhood*, 36.
[83] Cammett and MacLean, *The Politics of Non-State Social Welfare*, 6.
[84] Ibid., 257.
[85] Ibid., 44-45.

groups tend to be politically inclined.[86] Examples from this study include the Joint Distribution Committee, the Society for the Protection of Jewish Health, and the Medem Sanatorium.

The third category is faith-based organizations. These organizations link to activities that often predate modern welfare regimes. They have ties to religious communities, traditions, or places of worship, although their overt religiosity varies.[87] Cammett and MacLean distinguish them from the previous category based on their political engagement. They argue that sectarian organizations have "political foundations, goals, and orientations, and tend to operate where religious cleavages are politicized." On the other hand, faith-based organizations tend to engage less in formal politics and instead focus exclusively on charitable pursuits.[88] Sometimes faith-based organizations are openly sectarian, while others serve all groups regardless of their beliefs and faith.[89] An example of this type would be Polish Catholic charities or the Friends of War Victims Relief Committee, which was connected to the Quaker church.

The fourth category featured in this study is the community-based organization, which is on the more informal end of the non-state provider spectrum. Community-based organizations are self-organized grassroots associations formed to serve the interests of members of a neighborhood or community. They often develop out of existing institutions such as churches, schools, ethnic groups, or cultural associations, and they provide services at the local level with an often quite limited scale. Their staff interact with local communities daily and tend to come from the communities they serve. They are some of the groups best-positioned to gain trust at the local level, assess local needs, and develop their projects accordingly. However, since they rely largely on self-funding, there is little they can do to meet their community's needs when they run

[86] Ibid., 47.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid., 48.
[89] Michael Jennings, "Bridging the Local and the Global: Faith-Based Organizations as Non-State Providers in Tanzania," in *The Politics of Non-State Social Welfare*, 120.

out of money.[90] The examples of these organizations that appear in the dissertation are too numerous to mention, but they include groups that ran milk kitchens, infant welfare stations, clinics, orphanages, and summer camps.

Many non-state providers cropped up in the nineteenth-century empires of Eastern Europe, including the Polish lands, often in opposition to imperial rulers. However, by 1918, non-state providers in Poland were no longer working in opposition to the state. Rather, Agnieszka Małek and Izabela Szczepaniak-Wiecha characterize the Polish state and non-state providers working "cooperatively and in agreement."[91] When "successful collaboration" takes place between non-state providers and the government, it forms what Jennifer N. Brass calls "interpenetration," a phenomenon that often blurs the lines between non-state providers and the state. Interpenetration can take place in three ways. The first is through joint implementation, which is when there is an agreement between non-state providers and the government. For example, the government might provide technical expertise, while a non-governmental organization provides the funds, transportation, and logistical support for a particular project.[92] During postwar relief in Poland, the inverse occurred. Non-governmental organizations provided the technical expertise, while the government provided funds, transportation, and logistical support for child feeding, building a children's health program, and establishing nursing schools.

The second method is when the government embeds personnel into non-governmental organizations and vice-a-versa to facilitate "partnership and collaboration."[93] After the war, the Polish state brought in experts to staff and consult its ministries on various aspects of child

[90] Cammett and MacLean, *The Politics of Non-State Social Welfare*, 48-49.
[91] Agnieszka Małek and Izabela Szczepaniak-Wiecha, "Female Organisers of Social Care in Poland: From Charity to Professional Social Assistance," in *Need and Care*, 27.
[92] Jennifer N. Brass, "Blurring the Boundaries: NGOS, the State, and Service Provision in Kenya," in *The Politics of Non-State Social Welfare*, 109.
[93] Ibid., 110.

welfare. Many individuals who had roles in private society started working for state-funded institutions or at least helped to guide them at different times. The state relied heavily on these experts to shape social policy, and in some ways, the work of the expert-professionals in child welfare can be seen as the work of the state. Finally, integration took place with non-governmental organizations designing programs with the explicit goal of enabling ministries to enact their mandates.[94] This was true during the period of foreign relief when both the American Relief Administration and American Red Cross established child welfare structures that would be taken over by the Polish state after their departure. Expanding an investigation of social welfare provision to include state and non-state providers allows one to ask new questions. For example, what are the consequences of non-state provision of social welfare for children in Poland? More specifically, how did non-state provision in relationship with state provision expand or limit social services, diminish or enhance accountability to citizens, and promote or undercut state capacity?[95] Did non-state providers enhance or adversely affect accessibility, meaning the equity or sustainability with which people could access basic services? Were non-state providers accountable to citizens? And finally, how did non-state provision affect state capacity to provide social welfare for children?

Sources and Chapter Structure

The dissertation draws on a wide variety of archival and published source material related to wartime relief work, international humanitarian relief efforts, inspections of welfare institutions, institutional activities, and professional discussions about child well-being. Archival collections utilized at the Archive of New Documents (*Archiwym Akt Nowych*) in Warsaw

[94] Ibid.
[95] Cammett and MacLean, *The Politics of Non-State Social Welfare*, 32.

included records from the Main Welfare Council (*Rada Główna Opiekuńcza w Warszawie*), the interwar Ministry of Social Welfare, as well as regional governments (*Urząd Wojewódzki*). Records from the National Archive in Cracow (*Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie*), The State Archive in Łódź (*Archiwum Państwowy w Łodzi*), and the State Archive in Warsaw (*Archiwum Państwowe w Warszawie*) provided insight into the work of individual organizations involved in child care. Archival sources from the Hoover Institution Archives include records on the relief work of the American Relief Administration, the American Red Cross, the Friends of War Victims Relief Committee, and the Polish Grey Samaritans. Finally, collections used at League of Nations Archives in Geneva, Switzerland covered interwar Poland's public health initiatives. Some of the most fruitful sources were the magazines and professional journals related to child health and welfare, which surveyed state welfare policy changes and featured scholarly discussions and advice to parents and caregivers. Children's voices were the hardest to access. The children's newspaper *Little Review* (*Mały Przegląd*) allowed me to trace some Jewish children's discourses about the health and welfare initiatives they encountered. Children's voices were also occasionally accessed through social or "competition" memoirs, which were popular in the interwar period.[96] Limits on my time, travel, and linguistic abilities meant that I did not utilize materials from the Lublin-based Central Rescue Committee (*Główny Komitet Ratunkowy,* GKR), which was the RGO's corollary in Austrian-occupied zone of Poland; any Ukrainian-language records or publications; or the multitude of records on Jewish health and welfare initiatives including Joint Distribution documents and number of publications in Yiddish and Polish devoted to topics of child care.

The dissertation includes six chapters, which range chronologically from 1915 to 1939.

[96] See Katherine Lebow, "The Conscience of the Skin: Interwar Polish Autobiography and Social Rights," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 3, no. 3 (Winter 2012): 297-319.

The chapters are organized according to three chronological periods and the type of child rescue or child care services provided. The three main time periods addressed breakdown as follows: 1915-1921, the years of RGO work during and immediately following the First World War; 1918-1922, the years of intensive foreign humanitarian mission work in Poland; and 1922-1939, the years of Polish excerpt-professional management of state and non-state child welfare projects.

Chapter One examines child assistance networks that emerged during the First World War when Polish authorities, in the form of the Main Welfare Council, began enacting child welfare activities on an imagined national scale. The chapter focuses on the RGO's child relocation program "Village for the Children" and the country-wide "Save the Children" fundraising campaign, both of which sought to forge urban-rural integration, bridge partitions, and get citizens of the future republic thinking about "Poland's children" as a national rather than local matter.

Chapter Two explores the early years of independence when American humanitarian relief groups acted as the central organizing authorities for child relief activity. Focusing on the child feeding campaign of the American Relief Administration as well as the child health programs of the American Red Cross, the Society of Friends, and the Joint Distribution Committee, I explore the degree to which foreign influence was part of building welfare systems in a weak Eastern European successor state, while also discussing the challenges faced by foreign relief missions that operated without an understanding of local contexts.

Chapter Three begins at the moment of departure of foreign relief groups when newly-formed agencies like the Polish children's welfare bureau, the state Ministries of Health and Social Welfare, as well as local governments and numerous local societies assumed full

control of child welfare practices in independent Poland. When the ARA departed in 1922, it wanted the children's welfare bureau, which the Americans had created, to continue the work of child food relief. Taking cues from a different international organization, the ARC, the organization instead launched an intensive campaign to combat what it viewed as a more pressing issue: infant mortality. The chapter focuses on infant welfare programs that sought to reform Polish mothering practices through infant care centers, home visits, and public contests.

Chapters Four and Five shift to care for school-aged children. They consider how school hygiene programs and summer camps, with their prophylactic and social pedagogic "upbringing" agendas, encouraged children to lead healthy, hygienic lifestyles and served as major sites of socialization and alternative homescapes for Poland's youth.

Chapter Six rounds out the project by examining debates about institutional versus "family forms" of child care. In keeping with a partition-era tradition, the new Polish state of the 1920s threw its support behind closed institutions as the cornerstone of care for orphaned, abandoned children. However, by the mid-1930s, the state began to promote family placement and transformed foster care from fringe efforts to the preferred method of care for orphaned and abandoned children. The chapter explores the reasons and potential problems with this renewed interest in the family unit as an appropriate environment for proper upbringing.

The first two chapters focus on child-saving initiatives run or sponsored by bodies other than the independent Polish state. At their core, both initiatives are focused on the biological rescue of children from hunger and starvation, although the stakes and goals of these projects are profoundly different. Both projects are born out of imperialist intentions. First, German authorities allowed Poles to practice self-government through welfare management, which was part of a larger initiative to shape postwar Poland into a satellite state of Imperial Germany.

Second, the ARA, a formally apolitical humanitarian organization, wanted to "train" Poles to self-govern and rationally manage their welfare apparatus and make Poland a state safe for Wilsonian democracy and resistant to the spread of communism. Both projects operated to make Poland useful and loyal to the respective countries of Germany and the United States.

Because the child-saving initiatives of Chapters One and Two were managed by two discrete organizations, the RGO and the ARA, it is easier to identify their underlying political and ideological agendas. The RGO wanted to reconstruct a nation that benefited the Polish-Catholic ethnic core by uniting landholders, peasants, and workers, but not Jews or Germans. Using children in body and symbol, RGO leaders tried to raise the national consciousness of peasants and endear them to an imagined, not yet existing, independent Poland of which they saw themselves the moral authorities. They demonstrated their devotion to the urban masses by sending their children out to the countryside to save them from starvation. Although the RGO formally claimed to embrace all children "regardless of religion," the majority of its initiatives benefited Polish-Catholic children. It did turn to Jewish communities for donations. The RGO did not have to confront the issue of aiding Belorussian, Ukrainian, or Lithuanian-speaking children because those populations were not demographically part of the territory it served during the war.

RGO projects were caught at the crossroads between traditional and modern approaches to childcare. The old philanthropic guard that comprised most of the organization's leadership, influenced by their "good hearts," leveraged children's symbolic power for nationalist purposes without building sustainable care networks or focusing on the hygienic or pedagogical quality of the care. The few more progressive members of RGO leadership—namely Władysław Szenajch and Maria Tańska—wanted to see child care move away from its traditional, philanthropic past

towards a comprehensive, public system with a specific articulation of children's rights.

During the war, many social aid actions still had to take place with a conspiratorial spirit. Although the RGO was formally authorized by the occupying forces to manage social welfare, its leaders directed those actions towards purposes of planning for a fully independent Polish state that was not simply a satellite to Imperial Germany. The consequences of this arrangement were that many of the RGO's initiatives focused on nation-building among adults, not the modern administration of child welfare. With nation-building work in tight focus, the needs of real-life children became obscured. They instead operated as vehicles through which the RGO could legally perform its work away from the German gaze. While undoubtedly many RGO leaders believed that they were "doing good" for the children they saved, they were not engaged with contemporary child experts on how to best manage their care. Instead, they mobilized familiar, nineteenth-century forms of care such as rural relocation, daycares, and fundraising.

The ARA operated according to a much different logic. Poland was one of twenty-three countries where it tried to enact child-feeding programs according to the same guidelines, while also developing domestic welfare structures that could continue after the missions' departed. Like the RGO, the ARA engaged in "child saving" or "child rescue" because its aid was more temporary than sustainable. Furthermore, it was incredibly paternalistic in its focus on shaping the new Polish state into a rational, Wilsonian democracy that was fervently pro-American and anti-Bolshevik. Operating under Hoover's guidance to stay out of disputes between ethnic factions, the ARA administered aid to all children based on an assessment—albeit it an often subjective one—of physical need "without regard to religion." The geographical scope of the ARA's work expanded far beyond that of the RGO to include all of the eastern borderlands*,* which contained the most war-torn regions and least demographically Polish populations. One of

the lasting legacies of American humanitarian intervention in Poland was the domestic children's welfare bureau the ARA established, which formally promised in its statute to help children regardless of their identity. However, American relief workers carried their own individual prejudices. Despite their disparagement of Poles as "irrational," "unfocused," and "unorganized," they still privileged and prioritized ethnic Poles, Polish causes, and Polish leadership in the welfare sphere. They fed non-Polish children, but when disagreements arose between different ethnic groups over the distribution of food, clothing, medicine, or other supplies, American aid workers either sided with the Poles, refused to engage (unless forced to by Jewish organizations), or took on side projects to benefit Polish causes. Many of the aid workers displayed particular vitriol towards Jewish adults (although notably not children) calling them dirty, conniving, and self-interested.

When the ARA entered Poland, it expanded the technologies of the government of childhood by requiring medical professionals to qualify children for kitchens using the Pedlisi system, introducing guidelines for the exact amounts of foods children could be served, and demanding strict record keeping. The ARA effectively expanded the definition of the deserving child beyond the Polish-Catholic ethnic core, but with qualifications.

In 1923, the year after the American missions departed, Władysław Szenajch, a pediatrician who served the RGO and then the children's welfare bureau under the ARA, wrote in the second issue of bureau's new journal about his excitement that there was no longer the need to spend millions on meeting a child's basic animal needs like feeding. At last, he thought, the work of real child welfare could begin. It was a transition he called: "the end of rescue and the beginning of care." He continued, "After all, children died and die, fell sick and fall sick, were abused and are abused, were criminals and become criminals, not only because they are

hungry, but mainly because they are not properly cared for physically or spiritually, and because they must grow up and live in harmful conditions."[97] To achieve effective systems of child welfare, Szenajch said Poland needed three conditions: money, qualified personnel, and organization, meaning robust institutional networks for childcare run by public and non-public actors and a legal foundation for public care of children and mothers.[98]

Chapters Three through Six focus on work conducted in Poland after this transition, the welfare regime created by the Polish state and non-state actors, and the struggle to achieve Szenajch's three stated conditions. The focus of this work was on assuaging the effects of two interconnected forces that threatened Poland's younger generations with physical and moral decay: the harmful effects of the homes, city streets, and schools in which they were raised and the lack of proper enlightened, scientifically informed upbringing in either family homes or closed-institutions.

If nineteenth-century Polish social work could not be separated from national activism, what was social work's purpose once national independence was achieved? Since these chapters involve the work of a number of state and non-state actors, it is much more difficult, if not impossible, to summarize these initiatives as having one coherent agenda. What can be said is that taken together, they engaged in a type of apolitical biopolitics that used technologies inspired by the latest trends in social medicine, social pedagogy, and child psychology to discipline and influence children and their parents. Many experts driving this work were not as concerned with promoting the ethnic Polish nation defined by right-wing nationalists as they were concerned with how raising generations of weak children would threaten state vitality and survival; negatively impact society by creating socially dependent, unorder egoists weak in body

[97] Szenajch, "Najważniejsze warunki rozwoju opieki nad dziećmi," 52.
[98] Ibid., 59.

and mind; promote Poland's geopolitical fragility; and keep Poland from joining the ranks of the "civilized" democracies of the West. In other words, child welfare became not about getting Poland back on the map but rather making sure it stayed there.

CHAPTER ONE:
Save the Child, Build the Nation

Help! I shout! Help! Children are dying out from hunger, so dies our future, so dies Poland!
Władysław Reymont, 1916

In the summer of 1914, the blazing guns of August ripped through Eastern Europe and by a misfortune of geography the lands of partitioned Poland became a battleground for the warring Prussian, Russian, and Austro-Hungarian empires. As Russian and Austrian forces fought over Galicia to the south, German troops advanced from the west and burnt the Polish city of Kalisz to the ground. A year later, the Russian retreat brought looting and structural damage to Galicia and Congress Poland and forced the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of civilians to the Russian interior.[1] By the end of 1915, Austria and Germany had gained full control of the former Russian partition, which they occupied until the end of the war.

The Great War resulted in devastating material and human losses in the Polish lands. In order to compel more able-bodied men to emigrate to Germany, the Germans pushed Poland's urban-industrial centers to the brink of extinction. They limited food transports, closed factories, cut off fuel supplies, and interfered with the work of charities and self-help organizations. Train cars loaded with coal and timber rolled off to the Reich, while Polish cities were left to freeze.[2]

As prices rose and shortages grew, the specter of starvation loomed large. Diseases flourished among the cold and hungry masses. In 1915 alone, the mortality rate from tuberculosis rose forty percent. During a 1916 visit to a "plague ridden" corner of Lublin, the capital city of the Austrian-occupied zone, Adam Czarnecki, a Polish native and correspondent for the *Chicago*

[1] Congress Poland was the Polish state created in 1815 during the Congress of Vienna and ruled over by tsarist Russia until World War I. For more on the forced evacuation of civilians from Russian territory. See Gatrell, *A Whole Empire Walking*.
[2] Arnold Toynbee, *The Destruction of Poland: A Study in German Efficiency* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1916), 1-7.

Daily News, shuddered at the sight of sick women with their skeletal children. He watched as onlookers shunned the women and children for fear of "the dread of disease that is upon them." In Warsaw, the capital city of the German occupation, Czarnecki witnessed what he called "one of the greatest battles against starvation ever waged by a whole nation."[3] He walked along streets filled with collapsed bodies and the statuesque outlines of begging children. Everywhere he turned, his gaze met bloodshot eyes and hollow cheeks. It was the picture of a people out of work, out of food, and out of hope. [4]

The war dealt an especially harsh blow to children's health. In the first two years of the war, fifty percent of those killed were children fifteen and younger.[5] The wartime mortality rate for working-class children ranged anywhere from thirty-five to fifty percent. Meanwhile, medical inspections found that ninety percent of Warsaw's school-aged children suffered from scurvy.[6] Czarnecki recalled seeing five-year-olds who could not walk or lift their heads and mothers who cradled corpse-like children with dusky faces, bleeding mouths, and sunken eyes.[7] As male heads of household died or disappeared, women and older children became responsible for keeping the family going. They left home every day in search of work or food, while younger children remained huddled at home, often without heat or clothing. The dire circumstances caused poverty, hunger, and child abandonment—problems that had long plagued urban landscapes—to skyrocket.[8]

---

[3] Anthony Czarnecki, "Starving Children in Stricken Warsaw," *Chicago Daily News*, May 12, 1916.

[4] "Starving Children in Stricken Warsaw," *Chicago Daily News*, May 12, 1916; Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry, "The Plight of Poland as Seen by Chicago Newspaper Man Returning to His Native Land," *Chicago Commerce* 12 (May 1916): 24-28.

[5] Leś, *Zarys historii dobroczynności i filantropii w Polsce*, 73.

[6] Jerzy Holzer and Jan Molenda, *Polska w pierwszej wojnie światowej* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Wiedza Powszechna, 1973), 158.

[7] Czarnecki, "Starving Children."

[8] Balcerek, *Rozwój opieki nad dzieckiem*, 61; Stanisław Kruszewski and Mirosław Zdziarski, *Zycie robotnicze w Polsce, 1913-1921* (Warsaw: "Książka,"1923), 49-53.

The war's devastating effects on Poland's child population drew attention from society's elite, including the esteemed Polish novelist and future Nobel laureate, Władysław Reymont. In a 1916 article published widely in Polish newspapers, Reymont implored his fellow Poles to save Poland's children. In London, Reymont had witnessed orphans parading down city streets and holding banners that asked cheering crowds to save them. To Reymont, needy children on public display signaled a capital city that valued its youngest, most vulnerable residents. Warsaw's children were, by contrast, "dark shadows" with "dead faces" that haunted basements, alleys, and city squares. Above the capital city "death circled like a hawk. . . picking out the weakest chicks." If Poland was to resurrect after the war, he believed that Polish society must unite and save the children of the capital city. "For if children die out from hunger," he warned, "so dies our future, so dies Poland."[9]

Polish elites in German-occupied Polish territory embraced the idea that child survival was linked to nationalist hopes. The social suffering brought by the war opened up new opportunities for local officials, political activists, and private institutions to "act national" in the name of Poland as they mobilized to rescue children and other vulnerable populations. In late 1915, the Germans granted Poles permission to manage their own social welfare organization called the Main Welfare Council (RGO), which formally began operation on January 1, 1916.[10] This decision came as part of the Germans' larger plan to build a Polish state autonomous in cultural and domestic matters but subordinate to Germany in foreign and military affairs.[11] By allowing Poles control over social welfare administration, the Germans unintentionally opened up space for Polish elites to begin building trust with the popular classes and encourage national thinking across multiple social classes and geographic regions.

[9] "Ratujcie Dzieci," 1916, AAN RGO 52/1245.
[10] Blobaum, *A Minor Apocalypse*, 112.
[11] Kauffman, *Elusive Alliance*, 3.

Child saving offered a particularly rich area for RGO action. First, children served as a powerful and emotional metaphor for Poland's fragile future. Second, the Germans paid less attention to programs related to children. It was within this symbolically rich space somewhat outside the occupier's gaze that the RGO organized child welfare projects to serve the dual function of saving real live children while also leveraging them as national symbols to promote ideas of Polish statehood and urban-rural integration. This chapter explores three wartime projects designed for purposes of child saving, nation building, and state crafting. The first was a network of daycares (*ochrony*) intended to provide children with modern supervision and education. The second was the urban to rural child relocation program "Village for the Children," (*Dzieci na Wsi*) which evacuated over ten-thousand urban children to the countryside to save them from starvation while also strengthening urban-rural ties through familial love and sacrifice. Finally, the chapter examines the "Save the Children" (*Ratujcie Dzieci*) fundraising campaign, which by collecting money for poor children became a way for the RGO to surveil peasant populations and inculcate them with nationalist sentiments.

Although the project organizers met multiple setbacks, child-saving measures demonstrated RGO leaders' intentions to promote the idea of a unified Poland among distinct social groups by trying to alleviate children's suffering. Essentially, child saving became a means to turn peasants into future citizens of the imagined Polish Republic. Throughout that process, the children targeted for rescue were sometimes further marginalized and even harmed by the very projects intended to save them.

The Main Welfare Council: Background and Origins

On August 5, 1915, the German government assumed control of Warsaw and appointed German officer Hans Hartwig von Beseler to run the Imperial Government General of Warsaw.

Over time, Beseler became interested in training Poles in the practice of self-government and creating the institutional foundation for an independent Polish state after the war. He imagined this state would function as a constitutional monarchy and a satellite to Imperial Germany. To prepare Poles for statehood, the German occupiers sponsored a series of nation-building projects that included the reinstatement of a Polish university in Warsaw; the teaching of Polish history, language and literature in public elementary schools; and the development of what historian Jesse Kaufmann calls a "nascent central state" in the form of a small Polish army and elected city councils. As part of this experiment, Beseler granted Poles management over social welfare matters through the Main Welfare Council (RGO).[12]

When Beseler signed off on Polish management of the RGO, he unwittingly tapped into a long-standing tradition of Poles using social aid for projects of national preservation and agitation under foreign occupation. During the partitions, Polish social care was inseparable from the independence movement.[13] As partitioning powers tried to stamp out Polish national identity in the nineteenth century, Poles formed secret schools under the guise of official charitable societies.[14] At these schools, "social activists" (*działacze społeczni*), precursors to Polish social workers, taught illegal courses on Polish history, culture, and geography. By the turn of the century, nearly every social institution broke some kind of law to promote Polish national identity. Social activists saw themselves as working not with but against the occupying governments for the cause of national liberation.[15]

---

[12] Ibid., 2-4.
[13] Małek and Szczepaniak-Wiecha, "Female Organizers of Social Care in Poland," 25; Balcerek, *Rozwój opieki nad dzieckiem*, 51.
[14] Such underground schools included the "Flying University," founded in 1885 and funded openly after 1906 as the Society of Scientific Courses (*Towarzystwo Kursów Naukowych*) and the Pedagogical Society (*Towarzystwo Pedagogiczne*) created in 1903.
[15] Mary Deller Brainerd, "Helena Radlinska: Expanding Conceptualizations of Social Work Practice from Poland's Past," *International Social Work* 14, no. 19 (2001): 20;

During the war, citizen's committees continued the tradition of using social work as national manifestation. Before the German occupation, Russian authorities suppressed social institutions and as a result, Poles organized civic committees (*komitety obywatelskie* or *komitety opiekuńcze*) to fill the void. The Central Citizens Committee (*Centralny Komitet Obywatelskie w Warszawskie,* CKO*),* founded on August 3, 1914, distributed supplies from the Russian government and other foreign sources, coordinated local rescue actions, and ran provincial citizen's committees across the former Polish kingdom. In less than a year, the operation had provided approximately half a million people with food and money, created 108 shelters for children and adults, fed and supervised twenty-thousand children in daycares, and housed 3,700 thousand children in temporary shelters. Eventually, during the Russian retreat of 1915, the CKO began acting as a transitional government by creating domestic judicial and educational systems.[16] Although the invading German and Austrian forces soon dismantled these systems, CKO leaders had shown how wartime aid networks could use social care as a way to build and strengthen Polish institutions under foreign occupation.

After the Russians relinquished control of the Polish Kingdom, the Central powers divided the territory into two. Germany claimed the northwestern section with Warsaw as its capital and Austria-Hungary established a central government in Lublin for the south-eastern zone. On September 12, 1915, the Germans liquidated the CKO and its subordinate committees, but three months later, they authorized the creation of the RGO.[17] To prevent its expansion into

---

Szczepaniak-Wiecha, "Traditions of the Social Work Profession in Interwar Poland," 84; Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960," 49-50.

[16] Leś, *Zarys historii dobroczynności,* 74; Blobaum, *Minor Apocalypse,* 112.

[17] The RGO officially came into being on January 1, 1916, pursuant to acts of German occupying authorities on December 12, 1915. On July 13, 1915, the Lublin-based Central Rescue Committee (*Główny Komitet Ratunkowy,* GKR) was founded in the Austrian occupied zone. See See Holzer and Molenda, *Polska w pierwszej wojnie światowej*, 486-487; Marek Przeniosło,"Organizacja samopomocy społecznej w Królestwie Polskim w latach I wojny światowej," *Niepodległość i Pamięć* 33, no. 1 (2011): 57-72.

areas of law or education, the Germans limited the RGO's power to provide social welfare and reserved the right to inspect all RGO work, attend meetings, and veto resolutions.[18]

The RGO was governed by an Executive Board and Executive Council and had departments dedicated to general matters, finance, charity, child and adolescent welfare, economy, and reconstruction. Its funds came from several sources including the occupying Imperial German General Government; the Geneva-based Committee for Aiding Polish War Victims (*Komitet Generalny Pomocy Ofiarom Wojny w Polsce*) founded by Henryk Sienkiewicz, Ignacy Paderewski, and Antoni Osuchowski; the Poznan-based Committee for Aid Provision in the Polish Kingdom *(Komitet Niesienia Pomocy w Królestwie Polskim*); and private donations. The RGO ran a network of care councils (*rady opiekuńcze*) that operated at the county (*powiat)*, district (*okręg*), municipal (*miejskie*), and communal (*gmina)* level. Delegates from the provincial care councils met regularly with the Executive Council to report on activity and receive instructions.[19]

In general, the RGO continued the nineteenth-century trend whereby charity and philanthropy remained the domain of the landed gentry, the Catholic clergy, and the wealthy elite.[20] Chairs of the Executive Board and Supervisory Council included Adam Ronikier, a nobleman, conservative social activist, and politician; Stanisław Staniszewski, an attorney, and eventual Warsaw appellate court judge; Stanisław Dzierzbicki, an engineer, economist and social activist-politician; and Prince Eustachy Sapieha, a member of a prominent magnate family.[21]

Even though a cadre of powerful elites ran the RGO, integration of the common man into their organization was essential to their political vision. The RGO drew most of its membership

---

[18] Blobaum, *Minor Apocalypse,* 112.
[19] Balcerek, *Rozwój opieki nad dzieckiem,* 62; Przeniosło "Organizacja samopomocy," 58.
[20] Holzer and Molenda, *Polska w pierwszej wojnie światowej*, 486-7; Balcerek, *Rozwój opieki nad dzieckiem*, 61.
[21] Blobaum, *Minor Apocalypse*, 88; Kaufmann, *Elusive Alliance,* 87.

from the Inter-Party Political Circle (*Międzypartyjne Koło Polityczne*), a political amalgamation formed in 1915 of National Democrats (*Stronnictwo Demokratyczno-Narodowe*), Realists (*Stronnictwo Polityki Realnej*), and some progressives. RGO leaders drew inspiration from Roman Dmowski, the founder of the National Democrats and so-called "father of modern Polish nationalism."[22] Dmowski rejected the domination of old gentry society and believed instead, as historian Piotr Wandycz writes, that "a new Polish nation based on the people (*lud*), which was 'young' but conscious of its nationality, could be molded according to the precepts of modern nationalism."[23] Dmowski believed that through promoting the Polish nation as an object of veneration and loyalty among the common classes, Poland would grow more resistant to potential occupation and Ukrainian and Lithuanian claims on Polish territory. Dmowski's vision of the Polish nation included no room for Ukrainians or Jews. Ukrainians had to assimilate into Polish culture and Jews would remain an alien people, save for the small few he viewed as capable of assimilation.[24] Pursuit of Dmowski's "integrated social whole" became crucial to the RGO's mission. Guided by the principle "that the foundation of every nation is above all the people (*lud*)," central leadership asked local councils to collaborate with workers and peasants and to form subcommittees made up of local clergy, teachers, farmers, and "individual representatives from all social classes."[25] By bringing together landowners, intelligentsia, clergy, workers, and peasants around a common social cause, RGO leaders hoped to forge a sense of national unity between the elite and popular classes.

---

[22] Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Lands of Partitioned Poland,1795-1918* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), 291.
[23] Wandycz, *Lands of Partitioned Poland*, 292.
[24] Ibid., 293.
[25] "Sprawozdanie z działalności wydziału opieki nad dziećmi i młodzieżą," December 12, 1915-April 1916, AAN RGO 52/835.

To enact this vision, RGO officials needed to earn the trust of people who over a century of occupation had learned to distrust governing bodies. One way RGO leaders distinguished themselves from past and present occupiers was to promote Polish children as a nationwide priority. Rather than group children and adults together as one common charitable cause, the approach taken by other wartime aid groups, RGO leaders began thinking about children's needs as discrete from the adult population. In 1916, the RGO became the first major governmental, or in this case, proto-governmental body in Polish territory to create a department specifically devoted to child welfare. That same year, Dr. Władysław Szenajch, whose status as a well-known pediatrician and more progressive social activist made him an outlier in the RGO, wrote:

> Care for children is social work and should therefore not be philanthropic in nature, but should instead have the character of social responsibility. It is not necessary to treat child welfare as an act of goodwill, but like a responsibility of the whole nation on which depends the fulfillment of the future and the well-being of society.[26]

To Szenajch, who directed the hygienic-medical section for the RGO's Department of Child and Adolescent Welfare (*Wydział Opieki nad Dziećmi i Młodzieżą*), social work was national work. Rescuing children from the scourge of war required action from the whole nation, and likewise, the survival of the nation relied on saving its youngest generations.

However, the RGO's work never fully embraced the reformist spirit that Szenajch hoped for, as control of the child welfare department remained firmly in the hands of society's old philanthropic guard. In December 1915, Count Ronikier appointed Józef Troetzer, a member of one of Warsaw's successful industrialist families, to head the department. Although Troetzer had worked plenty organizing wartime social aid and charity, he had no professional training or experience in the fields of medicine, education, or child development. The department's only real

[26] Władysław Szenajch, *Tymczasowy projekt organizacji opieki nad dziećmi i młodzieżą* (Warsaw: Laskauer, 1916), 4. Quoted in Balcerek, *Rozwój opieki nad dzieckiem*, 62-63.

expert influence came from Szenajch, a pediatrician and advocate for the modernization of child welfare; and Maria Tańska, a teacher of Polish language and history who would later go on to found the first State Teacher's Seminary in Zduńska Wola and publish several books on rhythmic movement and games for children.[27] Szenajch and Tańska represented progressive voices in an otherwise conservative institution. Like Szenajch, other physicians, hygienists, lawyers, teachers, and social activists of the liberal intelligentsia wanted to see the RGO's work eventually develop into a state-organized system of child welfare and legal protection of children's rights. More conservative individuals acknowledged a child's need for adequate care, but neither wanted to articulate specific rights for children, nor see childcare develop beyond established philanthropic models.[28] These competing visions of traditional versus more modern approaches to child care influenced all of the RGO's child-saving initiatives during the war.

Daycare Beyond Its Proper Task

When the RGO assumed control of child welfare in German-occupied Poland, one type of institution, the *ochrona*, took center stage. *Ochrona*, a Polish word that means "protection," describes an institution akin to a modern nursery school, preschool, kindergarten, or daycare. The origin of this institution traces back to the era of the industrial revolution in France and England. In 1766, Lutheran pastor John Frederick Oberlin arrived in Ban de la Roche, a remote Alsatian county located about thirty miles south-west of Strasburg, to discover a region devoid of any schools. Three years later, Oberlin organized an infant school that assembled young children in light, spacious rooms under a teacher's watchful eye.[29] The teacher taught children the

[27] "Matki, Żony, Emancypantki," Muzeum Historii Miasta Zduńska Wola-BLOG, Muzeum Historii Miasta Zduńska Wola, last updated March 13, 2017, http://muzeumzdunskawola.blogspot.com/2017/03/matki-zony-emancypantki.html.
[28] Balcerek, *Rozwój opieki nad dzieckiem*, 63-64.
[29] David Salmon and Winifred Hindshaw, *Infant Schools: Their History and Theory* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1904), 5-6.

foundations of reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion and promoted habits of neatness, politeness, and truthfulness. Besides learning academics, the children learned how to knit, spin, sew, and garden. Four decades later, Robert Owen, a wealthy Welsh owner of a cotton mill, implemented a similar concept in New Lanark, Great Britain. Owen's infant school served working-class children ages three to six by providing them with lessons, character development, and space for indoor and outdoor play. Both infant schools—Owen's and Oberlin's—fed larger social agendas. Oberlin's program exposed peasant children to "standard French" as a counterweight to the Lorian dialects they spoke at home, while Owen's school, meanwhile, offered evening lectures for adults and older working children.[30]

By 1837, infant schools had arrived in the Russian empire, namely in St. Petersburg and Warsaw.[31] The Polish articulation—the *ochrona*—fulfilled its formal duty by supervising young children, while also serving the conspiratorial purpose of national education. Under the Napoleonic Code, which was adopted in the Duchy of Warsaw in 1808, daycares and nurseries were allowed to operate in the mother-tongue of the children they served. Consequently, preschool teachers could instruct children in Polish, Yiddish, and Hebrew at a time when all other educational institutions were forced to use Russian. While Poles used the *ochrona* to preserve Polish national identity and promote ideas of independence, Jewish communities used their form of daycare, the *kinderheym*, to circumvent Russian limitations on Yiddish and Hebrew language education.[32] This legal loophole allowed centers for early childhood education to become cornerstones of national education and cultural preservation under Russian occupation.[33]

---

[30] Salmon and Hindshaw, *Infant Schools*, 6-8; Elizabeth Bradburn, "Britain's First Nursery-Infant School," *The Elementary School Journal* 67, no. 2 (November 1966): 57-60, accessed January 2, 2019, https://doi.org/10.1086/460337.
[31] Balcerek, *Rozwój opieki nad dzieckiem*, 37.
[32] Kalman Weiser, *Jewish People, Yiddish Nation: Noah Prylucki and the Folkist in Poland* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 127; Leś, *Zarys historii dobroczynności,* 50.
[33] Leś, *Zarys historii dobroczynności*, 50

By the time World War I started, Polish speakers under Russian occupation had been using *ochrony* (the plural form of *ochrona*) to promote Polish national causes for almost a century. In 1914-1915, citizen's committees founded and funded several *ochrony,* passing on fifty-five of them to the RGO at the end of 1915. When the RGO officially began its activity on January 1, 1916, it had already opened ninety-five additional *ochrony* in fifteen out of the forty-nine counties of the German-occupied zone.[34] Six months later, RGO director Adam Ronikier struck a deal with the occupying government that allowed *ochrony* to operate free from German inspection and the restrictions placed on primary, secondary, and post-secondary schools.[35] German inspectors complained that daycare work was slipping outside their surveillance, but Ronikier managed to win a lengthy negotiation that secured RGO daycares as "independent from the occupying government."[36] Ronikier instructed the Department of Child and Adolescent Welfare to prioritize *ochrony* over all other child welfare projects saying, "The country should have as many *ochrony* as possible so that people understand how to create *ochrony* before any other institution."[37] It was not that *ochrony* better served children's needs so much as the fact that they could be used to launch other potentially subversive activities beyond the watchful German gaze. Within a year of operation, the RGO oversaw 1,413 *ochrony* that served 72,429 children in all but two counties of the German-occupied zone.[38]

---

[34] "Sprawozdanie z działalności wydziału opieki nad dziećmi i młodzieżą," December 12, 1915-April 1916, AAN RGO 52/835.

[35] "Posiedzenie Komisji Opieki nad dziećmi i młodzieżą w dn. 3 Lipca 1916 r.," in *Sprawozdania z zjazdu delegatów rad opiekuńczych w Warszawie w siedzibie Rady Głównej Opiekuńczej w dniach 1 2, 3-im Lipca 1916 roku,* ed. J. Laskowski (Warsaw: n.d.), 26, AAN RGO 52/40. For more on Polish-language education under the German occupation, see Chapters 4 and 5 in Kauffman, *Elusive Alliance*.

[36] Ibid. 24.

[37] Ibid. 26.

[38] "Verzeichnis der Registrierten Feursorge-Anstalten per 1.Dezember 1916," AAN RGO 52/835.

Traditionally, charities and religious missions had run daycares in the Polish lands. The daycare workers, typically women of low-education, acted as mere babysitters who reportedly paid little attention to the children's physical and mental development.[39] During the war, some organizations made efforts to modernize their daycares by incorporating practices targeting social hygiene and childhood restoration. For example, workers at daycares sponsored by the Warsaw-based Society for Aid to Jewish War Victims (*Towarzystwo Niesienia Pomocy Żydom Ofiarom Wojny*) reported that it provided children with impeccable sanitary-medical care as well as a stimulating and nurturing environment. Daycare workers at this facility filled the days with lessons meant to develop a child's mind including arts and crafts, singing, physical exercises, and outings to a nearby park. They also taught the children everyday sanitary practices to prevent infection such as gargling and the use of handkerchiefs. At the facilities, children ate two meals a day and in the winter, weaker children received a supplementary breakfast of sugared tea and bread. If children needed clothes, the society provided them. Five times a month, doctors inspected the facilities and examined the children, keeping track of their weights and chest and skull measurements. When necessary, they directed children to the free services of specialists including surgeons, pediatricians, and experts in ocular, skin, ear, nose, and throat disorders. During 1916, the society's most modern facility, Daycare II at 4 Twarda Street, boasted zero infectious outbreaks. Despite the world of war and want that surrounded them, staff did what they could to provide children with protection, nutrition, and respite that they might not otherwise receive at home.[40]

While the above-mentioned society ran daycares that promoted social hygiene and childhood restoration, RGO *ochrony* continued the nineteenth-century tradition of clandestine

[39] Balcerek, *Rozwój opieki nad dzieckiem,* 37-38.
[40] Towarzystwo Niesienia Pomocy Żydom Ofiarom Wojny, *Towarzystwo Niesienia Pomocy Żydom Wojny, 1916* (Warsaw: Gazety Handlowej, 1916), 12-16.

education and patriotic upbringing. The day after Ronikier struck his deal with the German occupiers, Maria Tańska, RGO Director of Education for the department of child welfare, informed delegates from the regional care councils, "In today's times, the *ochrona* must fulfill yet another function beyond its proper task." Tańska implied that daycares should serve as community centers where children, teens, and adults could gather for lessons, lectures, and libraries.[41] To support this initiative, RGO representatives equipped *ochrony* with posters, maps, globes, and anthologies of Polish poets; textbooks on "native history," natural history, and Polish geography; and book collections known as "people's libraries" (*biblioteczki ludowy*). Some *ochrony* offered evening courses in sewing, cutting, and weaving for working children up to age fifteen. Care council leaders even planned to use *ochrony* in the evenings to host youth clubs, vocational schools, workshops, agricultural schools, reading rooms, and adult literacy courses.[42] Under the guise of children's social aid, RGO leaders utilized *ochrony* to address what they saw as the educational needs of the common man. By engaging in the work of social, vocational, and national education, the RGO saw itself preparing Poles of the provinces for citizenship in the one-day independent state.

RGO leadership also used *ochrony* to revive the Third of May as a point of patriotic celebration in small towns and villages. The Third of May, known also as Constitution Day, was first celebrated in the late-eighteenth century to commemorate Poland's 1791 Constitution. Banned under the partitions, the holiday did not officially reappear until 1919. Nevertheless, various pro-independence activists continued to celebrate it in secret throughout the nineteenth century. During the war, children attending RGO daycares celebrated Constitution Day with

---

[41] "Posiedzenie Komisji Opieki nad dziećmi i młodzieżą w dn. 3 Lipca 1916 r.," 26, AAN RGO 52/40.

[42] "Sprawozdanie z działalności wydziału opieki nad dziećmi i młodzieżą," December 12, 1915-April 1916, AAN RGO 52/835.

songs, declarations, and parades. Older girls decorated community buildings with banners sewed and embroidered in their evening workshops. One RGO official noted the mood was "especially celebratory" in the communities of Pruszków, Marki, and Falenty, and called it a day that all children, young and old, "would not easily forget."[43] Such sentiments were important to RGO leaders because many peasants had long rejected the holiday for its association with the nobility of the old republic.[44]

Nevertheless, *ochrony* still needed to serve young children. The Department of Child and Adolescent Welfare set its sights on two goals: centralizing the curriculum and professionalizing its workforce. In 1916, Tańska distributed sets of lesson plans, rules, and plans to all regional delegates.[45] She also mandated that daycare workers be transformed from babysitters to educators. Since most female daycare workers had only an elementary school education, Tańska found their "mental level and general preparation" far too low.[46] Father Fulman, a priest from Częstochowa, echoed her concerns, stating that lessons from uneducated women only undermined the RGO's initiative.[47] With dozens of new *ochrony* opening each month, it was impossible to require daycare workers to complete a two-year training program. It was no more preferable to send women from Warsaw to run provincial *ochrony*. "Girls from the city and clinics," Tańska remarked, "never do this work well," meaning that they did not have much effect on rural communities. The best approach, she decided, was to train local women to work

---

[43] Ibid.
[44] M. B. B. Biskupski, *Independence Day: Myth, Symbol, and the Creation of Modern Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 37.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] "Posiedzenie Komisji Opieki nad dziećmi i młodzieżą w dn. 3 Lipca 1916 r.," 26, AAN RGO 52/40.

in their own communities. She wanted to take "girls from the people (*lud*)" and prepare them for work "on the people."[48]

In 1916, the RGO began bringing women from the provinces to Warsaw for a two-month training course at Celina Bronowska's school for *ochroniarki* (*ochrona* workers). Celina Bronowska herself had trained under Maria Weryho-Radziwiłłowiczowa, one of the first proponents of Polish preschool education.[49] Attendees of Bronowska's course studied the subjects they would be expected to teach, which included reading, writing, Polish language, literature, history, geography, nature, drawing, games, bee-keeping, herb-drying, and children's gardening. To supplement their coursework, trainees from the provinces completed internships at Warsaw *ochrony* and pediatric out-patients clinics and attended talks by Józef Troetzer, the wealthy industrialist in charge of the Department of Child and Adolescent Welfare.[50]

As a second step, the RGO hired seven men and women to work as "visitors" (*wizatorzy*) who would inspect daycares and direct their work towards RGO objectives. Expertise in early childhood education was not a prerequisite. Instead, the RGO hired inspectors with "familiarity with life in the provinces," and "interest in matters of the people (*lud)*."[51] Once hired, inspectors trained by touring Warsaw's shelters, daycares, and clinics, and reading Ms. Tańska's and Dr. Szenajch's papers twice a week. As they began inspecting daycares, these newly christened experts of the RGO brought "scientific help" as well as a "recommended collection of materials" to the provinces.[52] Inspectors proved essential to keeping the Department of Child and

[48] "Sprawozdanie z działalności wydziału opieki nad dziećmi i młodzieżą," December 12, 1915-April 1916, AAN RGO 52/835.
[49] Bogna Lorence-Kot and Ada Winiarz, "Preschool Education in Poland," *Kindergartens and Cultures*: *The Global Diffusion of an Idea*, ed. Roberta Wollons (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 180.
[50] "Sprawozdanie z działalności wydziału opieki nad dziećmi i młodzieżą," December 12, 1915-April 1916, AAN RGO 52/835.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.

Adolescent Welfare in “tight contact” with all regional *ochrony.* After “long years of Russification and captivity,” Tańska worried that there were too few people in rural areas who could be trusted to run *ochrony*. “The Moscow government,” she said, “put down deep roots not only among the common people but also among the so-called intelligentsia.”[53] She hoped that between targeted training and inspection, provincial loyalties could be redirected towards the RGO and its imagined Poland.

Aside from promoting a Polish patriotic curriculum among the “common people,” daycares allowed the RGO to engage in other foundational practices of modern statehood, such as statistics gathering and population surveillance. In July 1915, Troetzer informed provincial delegates that the RGO was only interested in supporting “competent” institutions, which meant each council needed to start recording all costs associated with daycares, shelters, and orphanages under their control. That included counting the number of children served at each institution. Troetzer also asked local councils to start researching the death and birth statistics of each community as a way to “watch over the balance of our people.”[54] Troetzer was shifting the idea of social care from a community-based pursuit born of philanthropic sentiment or religious devotion to one of national protection. He argued that the Warsaw-based RGO had a moral responsibility to count, protect, and preserve the provincial population for the survival of the Polish nation. In this statement, there was no “us” and “them,” only a unified “ours” that belonged to a centralized body in the would-be capital city.

As the department of child welfare focused on developing a curriculum of national education for daycares, hygienic and medical concerns fell to the wayside. Dr. Szenajch, the department’s Director of Hygiene and Medicine (*Dyrektor działu higieniczno-lekarski*), routinely

[53] Ibid.
[54] “Posiedzenie Komisji Opieki nad dziećmi i młodzieżą w dn. 3 Lipca 1916 r.,” 26, AAN RGO 52/40.

submitted plans to increase hygienic care in RGO childcare institutions. However, in 1916, only three percent of the RGO's institutions--which included fourteen infant welfare stations and fifteen children's clinics--offered children medical or hygienic services. RGO members recognized that "very few councils know about the work of rational care for children," but they were not inclined to push the issue lest it jeopardize the goodwill they were trying to build in the provinces. The department stated it would only promote the issue of hygiene in areas where councils were well-organized, had available doctors, and an existing "spirit of organizing this kind of care."[55]

As *ochrony* spread across the provinces, RGO institutions failed to meet the growing social needs of children, especially in the cities. In December 1915, the town of Zduńska Wola—a once booming small industrial center located forty-eight kilometers southwest of Łódź—was home to approximately four-thousand working-class children in need of food, shelter, and supervision. Of those four-thousand children, only 130 found shelter in the town's two *ochrony*. "And what happens to the rest?" one RGO member asked. "They are neglected and waste away in poverty."[56] Shortages of work, food, fuel, and shelter left many urban families teetering on the edge of survival. In Łódź, the second-largest city in German-occupied Poland, a columnist from the Cracow newspaper *The New Reform* (*Nowa Reforma*) visited a working-class tenement to find its inhabitants suffering slow deaths. When a teenage girl answered his knock on the door, she answered simply, "Our parents are gone." The father died the week before from exhaustion; the mother passed the day after his funeral. Next door, he met another teen left to raise his four orphaned siblings. In a third unit, small children sat huddled and weeping on the floor of an empty flat. Their mother had died and their father had disappeared to the countryside

[55] "Sprawozdanie z działalności wydziału opieki nad dziećmi i młodzieżą," December 12, 1915-April 1916, AAN RGO 52/835.
[56] "Co Nam Dała Kwestia Ogólnokrajowa," AAN RGO 52/87.

in search of food.[57] These kinds of stories were common. The lack of industry, food, and fuel in Polish cities under the German occupation pushed many families to the brink of extinction. They lost their savings, their jobs, their homes, and sometimes even their minds. With the children quite literally deteriorating in public view, RGO officials questioned the urban environment's role as a proper nest to sustain young Polish chicks. With death circling above like Reymont's proverbial hawk, the RGO looked to the provinces with hope and certainty that they could save Poland's children and thus, its future.

"Only the Village Can Save a Generation"

In 1915, RGO officials introduced a program to save Polish urban children from death and decay. "Village for the Children" ("*Wieś dla Dzieci*") was an ambitious urban to rural child-relocation scheme that dispatched thousands of children from cities to rural private homes and shelters. This child-saving project, which ran from 1915 to 1921, relied on an inverted paternalism that ran contradictory to other RGO projects. In contrast to the *ochrony* movement, where inspectors from Warsaw infiltrated the rural environment under the banner of modernizing and standardizing institutional childcare, "Village for the Children" called upon rural folk to save the city by literally taking its children into their huts and cottages. It was based on the belief, as articulated by RGO official Jan Ciechanowski, that "only the village can save a generation of children."[58]

Such a child-saving approach was neither new nor unique. From 1853 to 1929, the Orphan Trains Movement in the United States relocated 250,000 children from east coast cities to foster families in the rural midwest. Midwestern farm families partnered with various child-welfare agencies and institutions to house hundreds of thousands of children in exchange

[57] Arnold Toynbee, *The Destruction of Poland*, 27-29.
[58] Jan Ciechanowski, July 28, 1917, AAN RGO 52/846. Emphasis in original.

for their labor.[59] In the late nineteenth century, forty-two percent of children cared for by the Berlin Orphan Administration resided in rural foster homes or institutions.[60] Rural relocation programs such as those in the United States and Germany were influenced by reformers' deep anti-urban sentiments, their belief in the moral and physical restorative potential of country life, and the desire to deinstitutionalize child welfare. During the First World War, rural relocation also became a way for cities in Central Europe to alleviate urban food and shelter shortages.[61]

The RGO began dispatching children as soon as December 1915 and continued to do so until 1921. By early 1918, the organization had relocated over eleven-thousand children from Warsaw, Łódź, Częstochowa, and Sosnowiec to rural counties all over the German-occupied zone. On paper, "Village for the Children" appeared to be a novel solution to wartime poverty. In a 1918 booklet entitled "Save the Children! How The Village Saved Urban Children," the RGO depicted one family's miraculous albeit fictitious rescue. Three years after her husband left to fight with the Russian army, an unemployed mother enrolled her eldest children, Staś and Mania, in "Village for the Children." They left Warsaw anxious and excited, but once in the countryside they were welcomed by peasants with open arms and thick slices of homemade bread. Staś and Mania embraced country living, soaking up all the fresh air, sun, and life-giving qualities it could

---

[59] Megan Birk, "Supply and Demand: The Mutual Dependency of Children's Institutions and the American Farmer," *Agricultural History* 86, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 78-9; Stephen O'Connor, *Orphan Trains: The Story of Charles Loring Brace and the Children He Saved and Failed* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), xvii.

[60] Brian J. Els, "'Creating Free and Good People': Idealization of the Countryside in the Berlin Orphan Administration, 1890-1914," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2010): 412-413.

[61] Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*: *National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008): 153-4; Maureen Healy, *Vienna and Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War in Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 222; Alexander Watson, *Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary in World War I* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 358; Andrew Donson, *Youth in a Fatherless Land: War Pedagogy, Nationalism, and Authority in Germany, 1914-1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 144-146.

offer. The booklet's colorful illustrations showed Staś reclined against a golden haystack regaling his farmer-host with tales from the city. Mania, meanwhile, tended geese and learned how to keep a proper peasant home. By summer's end, the children returned to their mother healthy, ruddy, and happy. With tears of joy, she asked God to "bless and generously reward the honorable farmers who rescued her children from the grave."[62]

Despite promises of food, hospitality, and familial love, children's real-life accounts of rural homestays revealed the program's deep flaws. At age 11, Janek recounted his experiences with "Village for the Children" to Maria Falska, a pedagogue working at Janusz Korczak's Our Home (*Nasz Dom*), a progressive children's home for Christian children in Pruszków. Janek remembered standing in line with his father and brother, Józef, at Warsaw's Smolna Street children's shelter and seeing a sign that said, "Enroll your children for the village, send them to a peasant." A more realistic description, he later scoffed, would have read "Feed cows." As Janek recounted his story to Falska, he spoke rapidly with intense eye contact and big gestures. When Falska asked him to slow down, he grew agitated and only spoke faster: "They told us that it was for summer vacationers, that we would be able to run. But that wasn't the case." After a week in the Smolna Street evacuation center, which Janek described as a disgusting hovel with vomit-covered floors and warm water masquerading as soup, he and Józek departed for Ciechanówek, a village thirty-six kilometers east of Toruń. It was in this village, 175 kilometers from home, that boys found themselves on display outside a church. After mass, peasants gathered around to size up the new child arrivals. Janek recalled this encounter with certain disgust: "What a throng that was, people crowded around us—looking at us front and back—like we were cows at the market, like they were going to purchase us at the fair." One woman

[62] Rada Główna Opiekuńcza, *Ratujmy dzieci! Jak wieś uratowała miejskie dzieci* (Warsaw: Lit. W. Główczewski, 1918), 1-4.

approached him and declared, “This one—too small.” She turned to Józek and sneered at his deformed finger. She then went back to Janek and said, “I'll take this one.” Janek found his time in Ciechanówek boring and stressful. As an eight-year-old boy from the city, he had no idea how to tend cows. He felt scared and helpless as the cattle meandered through the meadow. “I often cursed and cried,” he told Falska. “Sometimes such anger overcame me.” The only bright spot in Janek's life in the countryside was the kindness shown to him by the farmer's three daughters.[63]

Stasiek, who was only five when his brothers left Warsaw, remembered the horrible state in which Janek and Józef returned. After their mother died, the boys' father went out to visit them. He found Janek so frail and poorly cared for that at first he did not recognize his son. Józef, he discovered, had been forced to sleep out with the animals and spent each night clutching a barn cat to keep warm. The next day, their father returned with fresh clothes and took the boys back to Warsaw. Although he was a poor widower with four children, he could not stand to let them stay out there and suffer.[64]

Abuse and exploitation like what Józef and Janek experienced was well-known and widely documented. Upon visiting villages where children were placed, RGO officials found the children to be dirty, poorly clothed, covered in bites, and showing signs of exposure. Ciechanowska County, the site of Józef and Janek's placement, was home to one of the more diligent care councils, and yet RGO reports stated that even there the majority of relocated children were subject to all kinds of unhygienic and immoral conditions.[65] Provincial shelters were just as bad if not worse. When Teofil Juszkiewicz visited his twelve-year-old daughter at a

[63] Maria Falska, *Nasz Dom: Zrozumieć, Porozumieć się, poznać*, Zakład wychowawczy “Nasz Dom”: Materiały źródłowe, vol. 1, eds. Marta Ciesielska and Barbara Puszkin (Warsaw: Anchor, 2007): 121-124.
[64] Ibid., 106-112.
[65] “Sprawozdanie ze zwiedzania schronisk w Ciechanowskim przez kierownika sekcji A. Frydrychsa,” AAN RGO 52/845.

rural shelter in Kołoząb, a Pomeranian village seventy-six kilometers south of Gdańsk, he found her emaciated, barefoot, and dirty. Like Józef and Janek's father, Juszkiewicz worried that his child's life was at risk. Although he lacked the means to care for her himself, he immediately took her back to Warsaw. He later told the RGO, "at least I would feed my own child a bite of bread."[66] Children who returned from the countryside often bore the scars of hard labor. Antoni Bara, a boy who worked all winter without proper clothes, returned in the spring of 1919 with open wounds and extensive frostbite. After five years of working a farm in Lipnowski county, the host of seventeen-year-old Kazimierz Komowski's sent him back to Warsaw with nothing more than the shirt on his back. Although RGO officials renounced this "unheard of exploitation," they did not have the power or resources to stop the systematic abuse pervasive within the program.[67]

The RGO could not afford to pay the foster families. Instead, it was expected that children would perform "light farming work" in exchange for room and board.[68] In reality, rural hosts were free to exploit the children as they wished, discarding and returning those that proved too much of a burden. Despite RGO stipulations that all children should be given access to schooling, placed children were routinely denied access to rural schools. Village officials argued that rural schools were for rural children and if outsiders wanted an education, they needed to pay a monthly fee. Since neither the RGO nor local care councils could cover the costs, the responsibility fell to individual "peasant guardians," who often pricked at the idea of paying school fees "for a foreign child."[69]

---

[66] Toefil Juszkiewicz to RGO, April 8, 1919, AAN RGO 52/854.
[67] "Do Rady Opiekuńczej pow. Lipnowskiego w Lipnie," March 30, 1920, AAN RGO 52/849.
[68] "Wielmożny Pan Edward Geisler Przewodniczący Komisji Ratowania dzieci przy Wydziale Dobroczynności Publicznej w Warszawie," April 25, 1917, AAN RGO 52/838.
[69] "Krótkie sprawozdanie z działalności sekcji 'Wieś dla dzieci' od 1 Grudnia 1915 r.,/t.j. od chwili powstania jej do 1 Wrześ.1916," AAN RGO 52/846.

As the winter of 1916 approached, it became apparent that RGO was in serious need of clothing donations. RGO officials first asked for help from the local care councils who swiftly responded that they had their own children to manage.[70] From here, the Department of Child and Adolescent Welfare looked to the RGO's own Department of Charity (*Wydział Dobroczynności*), only to be refused again. Finally, the department asked Warsaw City Council, which responded that it would not support a program over which it had no control. City council members thought that if the RGO wanted to send children out to the provinces, it should have enough resources to support them. Thus continued "a vicious cycle of requests," while thousands of children were left to face harsh winter without warm clothes or shoes.[71]

The RGO's failures to resolve such disputes left children in a vulnerable position. Rag-clad children could not attend school and were more likely to fall ill and be sent back to the city. In the fall of 1916, a priest named Father Suracki arrived in Warsaw to negotiate the return of twenty-three barefoot and "half-naked children" placed in his village of Kossowa. RGO representatives told him to take it up with the local welfare council and he told them to all go to hell. He then stormed off, the report stated, "without so much as a goodbye." While Suracki was in Warsaw, Ms. Zdanowicz, a woman in Kossowa who had assigned the children to foster homes, rounded up all twenty-three children and left them at the train station unsupervised. By coincidence, the group was discovered by Ms. Jaworski, a woman traveling from Warsaw to visit her own two children. She shepherded the group to a nearby village where they sought help from the local authorities. The mayor gave them a place to sleep and a local priest collected money for their train tickets. Jaworski contacted an RGO chaperone traveling in the area, who agreed to

[70] "Sprawozdanie sekcji 'Wieś dla dzieci,'" October 26, 1917, AAN RGO 52/846; "Krótkie sprawozdanie z działalności sekcji 'Wieś dla Dzieci' od 1 Grudnia 1915 r.,/t.j. od chwili powstania jej do 1 Wrześ.1916," AAN RGO 52/846.
[71] "Krótkie sprawozdanie z działalności sekcji 'Wieś dla dzieci' od 1 Grudnia 1915 r.,/t.j. od chwili powstania jej do 1 Wrześ.1916," AAN RGO 52/846.

take the children back to Warsaw. Along the way, some of the children grew sick. Back in Warsaw it was discovered that Zdanowicz had never recorded the children's names or home addresses. Many of the children were so young that they could not remember where they had lived in Warsaw. One tiny girl, "all chewed up by vermin from head to toe," could not even remember her first name.[72]

The Kossowa incident revealed how poorly the RGO miscalculated rural enthusiasm for hosting urban children. Peasants expected farmhands but instead received malnourished city waifs. In "Village for the Children's" first month, the RGO sent twenty-two children to Karnków in Łowicz county only to have nineteen of them returned because they were the "inappropriate age," likely meaning they were too young for farm work. By 1918, when child placement had fallen to 650 cases from 4,914 the previous year, the RGO reported that rural families had grown tired of the program. They were sick of the demands it placed on them materially and were also fed up with urban children's arrogance and aversion to chores.[73]

The Kossowa case further demonstrates how little control the RGO had over its regional apparatus. In Warsaw, the RGO officials presented "Village for the Children" as a well-organized, modern enterprise that operated according to a strict system of intake interviews, doctors' exams, vaccinations, registration cards, bath tickets, and scheduled departure dates. But once a train loaded with children left Warsaw, that all fell apart. Upon arrival, members of the local clergy or gentry placed new arrivals in homes or shelters, with most children going to small-landholding farmers. Few councils adhered to the RGO's request for monthly reports on each child. Instead, they lost children's identification cards, relocated children at will, sent them

[72] "Raport sekcyi 'Wieś dla dzieci' w sprawie odesłanych dzieci a powiatu Sokołowskiego znajdujących się pod bezpośrednią opieką pani Zdanowicz i ks. Proboszcza Surackiego z Kossowa," AAN RGO 52/846.
[73] "Wydział 'Wieś dla dzieci' Rady Głównej Opiekuńczej.'" AAN RGO 52/84.

back to Warsaw with no explanation, registered children to multiple hosts, and requested clothing for children that were never sent. Hosts who found a child too costly, too sick, or "too demanding," might send the child back to Warsaw unannounced or drop her off at a local shelter. By October 1917, "Village for the Children" records were so disorganized that one RGO official admitted he often had no idea where children ended up.[74]

What started as the RGO's attempt to gain society's trust through child saving became an administrative debacle that gambled with children's lives. As thousands of civilians began returning from Russia in 1918, parents flooded the RGO's central office eager to reclaim their children after years of separation. The answers they received could range from vague to appalling. In the summer of 1919, Wiktor Nowacki's mother requested an update on her son; seven months later she still did not know his whereabouts.[75] In March 1920, Juljan Sędzik asked for his son's return after eighteen months in the countryside. He was told that his son was last registered to a woman named Marjanna Gryzka in Ostrołęcki County, but that he might have moved to a shelter in the town of Ostrełęce, 120 kilometers north of Warsaw. As of April 7, 1920, the son was still missing with no leads.[76] By September 1918, Warsaw city police were picking up children on an almost daily basis who had either escaped or were returned by their host.[77] The return of children from the countryside added to the public visibility of suffering

---

[74] "Roczne sprawozdanie z działalności Sekcji 'Wieś dla dzieci;'" AAN RGO 52/846; "Krótkie sprawozdanie z działalności sekcji 'Wieś dla dzieci' od 1 Grudnia 1915 r.,/t.j. od chwili powstania jej do 1 Wrześ.1916," AAN RGO 52/846; Rada Główna Opiekuńcza w Warszawie, "Kopiał Sekcji 'Wieś dla dzieci," from February 26, 1920, AAN RGO 52/849; "Sprawozdanie sekcji "Wieś dla dzieci," October 26, 1917. AAN RGO 52/846.
[75] "Do Rady Opiekuńczej pow. Łomżyńskiego," March 1, 1920, AAN RGO 52/849.
[76] The archival file has no further information on these children. It is unclear if they were ever located and returned to their families. See "Do Rady Opiekuńczej pow. Grójeckiego," March 12, 1920, AAN RGO 52/849; "Do Rady Opiekuńczej Ostrołęckiego," April 7, 1920, AAN RGO 52/849.
[77] "Do Rady Opiekuńczej," September 26, 1918, AAN RGO 52/89.

children on city streets, the very problem "Village for the Children," and further hindered RGO's ability to keep track of its children.

Sometimes parents' only hope was to take matters into their own hands. People desperate to locate their children trekked dozens to hundreds of kilometers, sometimes on foot, to reclaim the children they entrusted to the RGO.[78] The lucky ones found their child at the expected location; others arrived to hear only vague or misleading clues about their child's whereabouts. Anguished parents began putting pressure on the RGO. After waiting seven months for the location of her son, Wiktor Nowacki's "very anxious" mother sent her parish priest to sort out the matter.[79] Other parents, like Czesław Staniszewski's mother, returned to the RGO office day after day demanding news of her son.[80] RGO employees complained of hysterical mothers pelting them with insults and threatening legal action. One RGO official told the regional care councils, "if you had to deal directly with parents like we do, we are completely certain that you would not only be sending us reports but would also want to quickly answer our letters."[81] The RGO had fashioned itself as the great protector of urban children, but in practice RGO officials seemed often annoyed and burdened by the constant bombardment from eager and nervous parents. The loss of these children constituted a total administrative failure, and no amount of pleading could guarantee an answer from dysfunctional or noncompliant care councils.

Despite known abuses, the RGO kept sending more and more children to the countryside. In 1916, it sent 2,172 from Warsaw alone, and the following year that number more than doubled to 4,914. By early 1918, it had dispatched eleven-thousand children from Warsaw,

[78] "Do Pana Prezydenta C.N. Wyższego Sądu Administr. przy Generałgubernatorstwie Warszawskim, Nr. 7340, 1918," AAN RGO 52/89.
[79] "Do Rady Opiekuńczej pow. Łomżyńskiego," March 1, 1920, AAN RGO 52/849.
[80] Ibid.
[81] AAN RGO 52/846.

Łódź, Częstochowa, and Sosnowiec.[82] Citing growing misery in the cities, RGO officials still planned in October 1917 to send ten times as many children to its provincial councils.[83] Steadfast in its determination to relocate urban children, the RGO repeatedly dispatched children to known problem areas. Rypiński county, noted for being one of the worst when it came to answering RGO correspondence, was also one of the counties receiving the most children in 1917.[84] Not even the death of a child would necessarily disqualify a willing foster parent. When two girls died under host Irena Targowska's care, an RGO official wrote that while Targowska might have acted swifter in seeking medical help, he was certain the conditions in her country home were still better than the children's original homes in the city. On April 10, 1920, Targowska was informed that she would soon receive two more children.[85]

Despite well-known signs of abuse and exploitation, the RGO continued to send children by the thousands out to the countryside. It was a response driven in part by ideology and in part by practically. As previously stated, nineteenth-century child relocation schemes stemmed from fear of urban environments and belief in the physical and moral superiority of rural life. In addition, the political mission of many RGO leaders was to bring members of the common classes into an "integrated social whole" who would venerate and defend the Polish nation against foreign intruders. RGO leaders intentionally sought ways to actively involve rural dwellers of the former Congress Kingdom child welfare work that endeared them to the RGO's vision of an independent Poland. Through relocation, RGO leaders attempted to weave cities and villages together in a web of mutual responsibility. Many members of the RGO, themselves landowners and advocates for agrarian reform, had deep ties to the countryside. They saw their

---

[82] Rada Główna Opiekuńcza, *Ratujmy dzieci!*, 6.
[83] "Sprawozdanie sekcji "Wieś dla dzieci," October 26, 1917, AAN RGO 52/846.
[84] "Wykaz ilości dzieci wysłanych przez sekcję "Wieś dla dzieci," w 1917 r." AAN RGO 52/846.
[85] "Wielmożna Pani Irena Targowska," April 10, 1920, AAN RGO 52/849.

work with the RGO as a way to endear the common man to a "national-social manifestation." The RGO consciously tried to evoke rural populations' "civic sense" (*obywatelskie poczucie)* by telling them they had something unique to offer the children of Poland.[86] RGO leaflets praised rural folk as people who knew how to think, feel, and act in moments of misfortune. It told them that what they lacked in financial capital, they made up for in fields and farmhouses.[87] One RGO appeal reminded peasants that their wartime suffering paled compared to that experienced in the cities because at least they still had bread and potatoes to spare. The RGO framed Warsaw as not just a capital city, but as villagers' own mother who, in their own times of hardship, had accepted them with warm embrace, food, and shelter. If they stepped up to help her now, the RGO promised that Mother Warsaw would repay them "a thousand times over."[88]

The work also satisfied a practical need. During the First World War, Central European governments and charities used child relocation to deal with shortages in food and shelter and to provide supervision.[89] In Warsaw, a policy that removed children from the starving city and the public eye was crucial to the RGO's ability to maintain credibility in the face of increasing shortages. During the last two years of the war, food grew even scarcer, economic situations worsened, and epidemics ruled the day. The state of children's health declined so much that it left RGO officials convinced that poorly-clothed children required to spend the winter of 1917-1918 in Warsaw would not survive. More charitable institutions closed each month from lack of milk, medicine, and food. From this perspective, shipping children to the countryside seemed to be the only affordable solution. The RGO also had to manage the influx of refugees and return migrants in the wake of the Russian revolution. As children, many of them unaccompanied, poured in

[86] "Wysyłanie dzieci na wieś," *Okólnik Rady Głównej Opiekuńczej*, 11 (March 22, 1917): 121-122.
[87] Rada Główna Opiekuńcza, *Ratujmy dzieci!*, 6.
[88] "Gospodarze i Gospodynie!" November 22, 1917, RGO 52/89.
[89] Watson, *Ring of Steel*, 358.

from the east, Warsaw's shelters faced a severe crisis of overcrowding. "Everything is overflowing," remarked one RGO official in September 1918.[90] To make room for refugee children, the RGO began moving even more children out of Warsaw's shelters and into the countryside. Parents who surrendered their children to shelters were warned that their child might be sent away to a farm family "for good."[91] At a time when rural communities were returning more children than they received, RGO officials begged local care councils to keep children with their host families or at least hold them in provincial shelters.[92]

Unlike the *ochrony* project, where the RGO educated people to serve in their own communities, "Village for the Children" asked people to accept children from different class and cultural backgrounds. That ran counter to the way many provincial communities were used to thinking about charity, which traditionally went to support the vulnerable in one's own community. In order to incorporate peasants into this new moral economy, the RGO tried to combine rural sensibilities with more modern tropes of civic duty. The RGO praised rural folk as hospitable and generous people who truly lived by the old Polish saying, "Guest in the home—God in the home." In "How the Village Saved Urban Children," the RGO called farmers "citizens of Piast Poland," which made reference to a ruling dynasty from the late-900s to 1340. For people who worried constantly about the reinstatement of serfdom, this reference to Piasts spoke to a time when they were not serfs and connected their civic participation to a Poland that respected and embraced peasantry. "When a brighter sun shines on Poland," a 1917 circular promised, peasants will be "bestowed with gratitude and appreciation for their civic virtues as leaders of the nation."[93]

---

[90] RGO to Rady Opiekuńczej, September 26, 1918, AAN RGO 52/89.
[91] It is unclear whether "*na stałe*" was used to emphasize that the children would be residing in the countryside permanently or for several months or years.
[92] RGO to Rady Opiekuńczej, September 26, 1918, AAN RGO 52/89.
[93] "Wysyłanie dzieci na wieś," *Okólnik Rady Głównej Opiekuńczej*, 11 (March 22, 1917): 122.

By far, "Village for the Children's" most redeeming trait was the biological rescue of young bodies. Children housed in the countryside reportedly posted gains on average of between ten and fifteen pounds.[94] In 1918, RGO reports claimed that out of six thousand children sent from Warsaw, only fourteen died. If these numbers are to be taken seriously, the program yielded tremendous results considering the starvation and epidemics that children would have faced if left in cities.[95] However, considering the program's poor record of keeping track of the children it dispatched, this statistic is likely inaccurate. Nevertheless, RGO officials referred time and time again to such numbers as proof that the program was working and that child life was being preserved. But that preservation came at a cost. Until the program ended in 1921, RGO officials remained unwilling to consider the emotional toils, the physical neglect, as well as the multiple compromises made to the protection of children's hygienic state and education. Furthermore, at the time of the RGO's liquidation, hundreds, possibly thousands of children were still out in the countryside. When the Ministry of Social Welfare took over for the RGO in February 1921, it acquired the cases of 3,631 missing children who were sent to the countryside during the German occupation. The following year, the ministry had only reunited thirty two children with their families or guardians and placed four in orphanages. In 1922, the Ministry of Social Welfare was still working with local authorities to try to locate and retrieve missing children, including many whose families had not yet applied for their return.[96]

In terms of forging meaningful urban-rural relations, RGO efforts proved far less successful. Urbanites and villagers remained skeptical of one another. Parents expressed

---

[94] "Sprawozdanie z działalności Centralnej Komisji Ratowania Dzieci z funduszu Czerwonego Krzyża Amerykańskiego," Archiwum Państwowe w Warszawie (APW) Komisja Ratowania Dzieci Funduszu Amerykańskiego Czerwonego Krzyża w Warszawie 130/1.
[95] Rada Główna Opiekuńcza, *Ratujmy dzieci!* 8.
[96] "Sprawozdanie z działalności Ministerstwa Pracy i Opieki Społecznej w roku 1921," *Praca i Opieka Społeczna* 2, no. 2 (1922): 129.

reluctance at the idea of surrendering their child to peasants (*chłopcy*) and the RGO fielded many complaints from parents who wanted their child back as soon as possible to save them from peasant mistreatment. From the farmers' perspective, they wanted farmhands, but instead thought they received lazy, arrogant children, ill-suited for the demands of rural life. Hosts grew sick of the poor attitudes children and their parents displayed, and by 1918 there was such a lack of willing hosts it looked like the program might have to end.[97]

Despite being the largest Polish aid organization under the German occupation, the RGO still lacked the political capital, administrative oversight, and material resources to ensure the proper protection of people's children. During the five years of "Village for the Children's" operation, the authorities involved bickered over various responsibilities to care for the children, while also exposing them to rampant exploitation and abuse with little to no consequence for the perpetrators. The notion that rural placement was closely monitored by "the whole country" amounted to nothing more than an empty threat.[98] The RGO had very little control over or even information about what happened with the children once they left Warsaw. Some of this was by design, but mostly it was the result of a rudimentary and atomized welfare apparatus that although theoretically integrated center and periphery still functioned with a fairly locally-based mindset and approach. What had been constructed as a "countrywide" problem was conveniently passed off to local authorities. Even though children in the village were still frequently deprived of access to clothing, education, and adequate care and supervision, relocating them from urban centers to the provinces diluted the crisis, thus rendering it less perceptible to the public eye. In the end, "Village for the Children" might have physically relocated children from Warsaw and other cities, but it did so at the cost of opening them up to different kinds of abuse, suffering, and

[97] "Wydział 'Wieś dla dzieci' Rady Głównej Opiekuńczej," AAN RGO 52/84; "Sprawozdanie z działalności sekcji "Wieś dla dzieci" do dn. 9 Lutego 1916," AAN RGO 52/846.
[98] "Gospodarze i Gospodynie!" November 22, 1917, RGO 52/89.

long periods of family separation. It was a case where the symbolic potential seen in the mass transfer of children from city to countryside overshadowed the fates of real living children who were too often lost in the shuffle.

"Save the Children"

During the war, the RGO promoted deep involvement in social work as a way to forge a common Polish citizenry from urban and rural populations. A third RGO project to support this mission was "Save the Children" ("*Ratujcie Dzieci*"), a week-long fundraising festival that occurred every summer from 1916 until 1921. Unlike daycares or urban to rural relocation programs that cared directly for the flesh and blood child, "Save the Children" leveraged the image of a symbolic Polish child to stimulate wide social engagement across many regions and social classes. RGO leadership used the campaign to connect formally divided territories into one imagined Poland and to cultivate patriotic sentiments among the peasantry. Wacław Janasz, an RGO member from an intelligentsia-gentry background who ran "Save the Children," said that anyone who did not support social activity did not understand their place in a larger national community.[99]

In 1916, RGO officials gained German approval to start "Save the Children" and soon it became one of the care organization's largest projects.[100] Each June, the week-long celebration included performances, concerts, special lectures, and public collections of money. In cities, collections were accompanied by theatre and musical performances, flower sales, and raffles. In rural communities, collection days transformed into "national celebrations with banners, processions and patriotic songs."[101] Of the money collected each year, the RGO kept about half

[99] Wacław Janasz, "Ogólne Wrażenie z Kwesty 'Ratujcie Dzieci,'" 1917, AAN RGO 52/87.
[100] Marek Przeniosło, *Chłopi Królestwa Polskiego w latach 1914-1918* (Kielce: Wydawnictwo Akademii Świętokrzyskiej, 2003), 272.
[101] Janasz, "Ogólne Wrażenie z Kwesty 'Ratujcie Dzieci,'" 1917, AAN RGO 52/87.

and distributed the rest among local councils.[102] The RGO used funds to support its shelters, nurseries, convalescence homes, feeding stations, as well as transportation, clothing, and medical care for "Village for the Children." Care councils could have used the remainder to support local child-care initiatives. As the total amount collected increased from year to year, the RGO's cut made up a larger percentile of its overall annual budget. In 1916, "Save the Children" funds made up 6.8 percent of the total budget, the next two years it comprised between nine and eleven percent.[103]

The first collection, which lasted from June 11 to June 17, 1916, raised a net profit of 539,833 rubles (the equivalent of about 16.2 million U.S. dollars), coordinated the efforts of an estimated fifty-thousand people, and solicited donations from approximately a million more.[104] Rather than label donations as "charity," the RGO called them a "citizen's tribute" towards the noble work of rescuing Poland's youngest generations. To solidify the collection's "whole country" (*ogólnokrajowa*) nature, the RGO ran "Save the Children" according to the principles of saturation, simultaneity, and uniformity. "Save the Children" occurred for the same seven days across all parts of the German-occupied zone. Six weeks before the event, the Warsaw-based central committee prepared promotional materials, compiled figures, printed forms, and drew up instructions to distribute local councils. During donation week, collectors posted themselves on the street corners, town squares, and church steps in over 22,000 communities. In rural areas, collectors traveled door to door soliciting donations. In exchange for a donation, contributors

---

[102] Grabski and Żabko-Potopowicz, *Ratownictwa społeczna*, 132; Marek Przeniosło, *Chłopi Królestwa*, 272.
[103] Rada Główna Opiekuńcza, *Ratujmy dzieci!* 7-8; Grabski and Żabko-Potopowicz, *Ratownictwa społeczna*, 132.
[104] *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, December 1916 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1916), 728; Władysław Grabski and Antoni Żabko-Potopowicz, *Ratownictwa społeczna w czasie wojny* (Warsaw: Towarzystwo Badania Zagadnień Międzynarodowych, 1932), 132; Janasz, "Ogólne Wrażenie z Kwesty 'Ratujcie Dzieci,'" 1917 AAN RGO 52/87.

received a stamp or badge to wear, which then advertised "Save the Children" to everyone else they encountered that day.[105]

While most RGO initiatives were limited to the German Imperial General Government, after only one year of operation, "Save the Children" spread to the Austrian-occupied zone. In February 1917, representatives of the Lublin-based Central Rescue Committee (*Główny Komitet Ratunkowy,* GKR), the RGO corollary in the Austrian-occupied Poland, proposed holding simultaneous collections in both territories. The GKR had been running collections but wanted to combine forces with the RGO to help cover administrative costs and divide the proceeds. The Germans and Austrians agreed, and for seven days "Save the Children" operated in both zones using the same posters, emblems, mottos, and rules.[106] Although the "Save the Children" central committee was composed mostly of aristocrats, clergy, and the wealthy urban elite, the RGO instructed local care councils to organize committees that consciously integrated local clergy, teachers, farmers, and "individual representatives from all social classes."[107] RGO organizers hoped that similar to other child-saving projects, "Save the Children" could successfully bring together landowners, the intelligentsia, the clergy, and the everyman around one common "social-national manifestation."[108]

Involving people from multiple social strata in the common "social-national manifestation" of saving children was essential to the RGO's political vision of Poland's future.

---

[105] *Głos,* May 11, 1917; Aneta Stawiszyńska, "To było orkiestra," *Ziemia Łódzka* 136, no. 1 (2013): 4-5, accessed January 29, 2015, https://www.lodzkie.pl/ziemia?start=40.
[106] "Protokół posiedzenia Komisji Kwesty z dn. 25 Lutego 1917 r. w lokalu R.G.O.," AAN RGO 52/87.
[107] Notable figures included Władysław Reymont, Władysław Szenajch, and Adam Sapieha, the Cracovian Bishop and later cardinal who led major Polish relief organizations during both World Wars. The only woman on the committee was Józefa Klawerowa, who represented the Stowarzyszenie Zjednoczonych Ziemianek, a Polish Catholic organization for gentry women. See "Kwestia," AAN RGO 52/87. Another source lists Jozef Troetzer's wife as a member. See *Głos,* May 11, 1917.
[108] Janasz, "Ogólne Wrażenie z Kwesty 'Ratujcie Dzieci,'" 1917, AAN RGO 52/87.

Where Jews fit into that future was less clear. When the RGO started work at the end of 1915, leaders Adam Ronikier and Antoni Olszewski assured the Jewish Community of Warsaw that the RGO did not discriminate based on religion. Its goal, the men stipulated, "was to bring assistance to all citizens of the country, without distinction of faith."[109] In practice, however, the RGO did very little to embrace the needs of Jewish children. "Countryside for the Children," one of the organization's largest child-saving efforts, focused exclusively on Christian children with no parallel evacuation project for Jewish children. This was not for lack of poor Jewish children in the cities. By 1916, Jewish children in Warsaw were dying at a rate double to that of Christian children. By the early months of 1917, the death rate of Jewish children ages fifteen and younger had increased 180% since 1914. By summertime, the weight of Jewish children had fallen by sixty percent from the average minimum.[110]

Despite the organization's failure to include many Jewish children in their overall relief efforts, the RGO also tried to include Jewish communities into the fundraising campaign. During "Save the Children" fundraising drives, Janasz told provincial delegates and local clergy that "the entire country, all social classes regardless of faith, views, or material position" should raise money for the country's children.[111] One sign of the RGO's "Save the Children" attempts to reach out to Jewish communities was the grafting of the campaign's iconic image of two children knelt praying at an angel's feet onto a Star of David. However, Jewish communities did not support the effort as Janasz had hoped. He complained about the lack of Jewish surnames on donor registries and remarked that besides a few notable exceptions, Jews "demonstratively avoided participating in the fundraising campaign."[112] This should not have come as a surprise.

---

[109] "Do Zarządu Towarzystwa Niesienia Pomocy żydom-ofiarom wojny," February 1, 1916, AAN RGO 52/106. Emphasis in original.
[110] Blobaum, *A Minor Apocalypse*, 167.
[111] Janasz, "Ogólne Wrażenie z Kwesty 'Ratujcie Dzieci,'" 1917, AAN RGO 52/87.
[112] Ibid.

While the RGO looked to cast a wider fundraising net, it was not making meaningful efforts to support Jewish institutions with that money. Moreover, Jewish communities were already struggling to support their own separate care institutions.

In his study of Polish-Jewish relations during the First World War, Konrad Zieliński investigates the RGO's overall distribution of funds among non-Catholics. He finds that while the RGO did give some grants to Jewish institutions, it did not do so in proportion to the population of different ethnic groups. In February 1918, eighty-three of the 102 monetary subsidies went to private educational, charitable, or care institutions serving Catholic children in Warsaw. The remaining nineteen grants were distributed among one Russian Orthodox, fourteen Jewish, and four Lutheran institutions. At the time, Warsaw's population, if one takes into account the refugee population, was about forty-percent Jewish.[113] The neglect of Jewish children by the RGO--the largest social care organization in the German-occupied zone and the self-proclaimed moral authority of occupied Poland--reveals the extent to which their vision of a future independent Poland was one that, like the radical right's, did not include Jews.

Similar to the child-relocation scheme, "Save the Children" relied almost entirely on the participation and enthusiasm of rural communities. About seventy percent of total donations received came from rural areas, with small-land holding farmers and poorer peasants contributing proportionally more than large-landholders. Rural responses, however, ranged from apathetic to downright hostile. The care council of Nowomiński county, located just east of Warsaw, tried to only fundraise for local causes. In other communities, young men and teens enrolled to collect donations refused to distribute the specially prepared stamps because they contained the white Polish eagle. In some villages, people barred collectors from entering their

[113] Konrad Zieliński, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie na ziemiach Królestwa Polskiego w czasie pierwszej wojny światowej* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2005), 328.

cottages and refused to sign the donation forms for fearing they were being drafted into the Polish Legions.[114] When RGO instructors tried to "direct the thoughts of peasants towards the future of the country" with lectures on Polish history, people would walk out saying "they did not care to hear about Poland."[115] Finally, in a village outside Częstochowa, wild rumors circulated that the money would not help needy children, but would instead be used to fund a new king that would reinstate serfdom.[116]

Once again, the RGO struggled to promote a project in the name of unity that did not yet exist. Some rural communities resisted the very national character of the campaign itself. As subjects of the Russian Empire, they had learned to fear the central state and were not comfortable giving to an organization based far away, for children that were not theirs, and in the name of a country with which they did not strongly identify. They showed suspicion over the motivations for this fundraising and feared the consequences of their involvement. In some ways, peasant suspicions were not unfounded. The RGO was using its collection efforts as a way to surveil rural populations. "Save the Children," Janasz said, gave the RGO a way to "to ascertain the general mood in the country among all the social classes." Registers filled with donors' names revealed which areas, right down to the specific village, cottage, and family, exhibited a positive feeling towards Poland and shared in this "national-social manifestation."[117] "Save the Children" collections allowed RGO officials to take the temperature of nationalist sentiments in specific communities and to know where to focus their "instruction" and "education" among the very people they were asking for money.

---

[114] Rada Główna Opiekuńcza, *Ratujmy dzieci!* 7-8; Grabski and Żabko-Potopowicz, *Ratownictwa społeczna*, 132; Janasz, "Ogólne Wrażenie z Kwesty 'Ratujcie Dzieci,'" 1917, AAN RGO 52/87; Marek Przeniosło, *Chłopi Królestwa*, 272.
[115] "Projekt," AAN RGO 52/87.
[116] Przeniosło, *Chłopi Królestwa*, 272-273n66.
[117] Janasz, "Ogólne Wrażenie z Kwesty 'Ratujcie Dzieci,'" 1917, AAN RGO 52/87.

Janasz was confused about why collections worked in some places and not in others.[118] One factor he thought was the talent and agility of the lecturers. Those who could appeal to the peasant imagination had better luck. If peasants were going to leave because they "did not care to hear about Poland," a skilled lecturer would ask if they wanted to hear about "the activity of the RGO, the defense of Częstochowa, the relief of Vienna, and the planting of potatoes."[119] He might hook their attention with this last topic, then slowly maneuver back to the meaning of the May Third Constitution. For example, RGO instructors in Łowicz and Lipnowski counties were such skilled presenters that the audience peppered them with questions about topics of serfdom and Polish history, then went on to repeat what they heard to friends and family.[120] Janasz blamed any local resistance on poor education. According to Janasz, "You can tell the huge effect of schools on national consciousness." Villages in which at least a few of the farmers had finished school were more sympathetic to the RGO's message. In these communities, readings and lectures met with large audiences could be repeated several times over, with a healthy dialogue developed between speaker and curious attendees. Janasz believed that RGO actions met more success in places where the local people had developed a "certain culture thanks to daycares, schools, and local activity." Only these "cultured and enlightened villages," as he called them, had the national consciousness to understand the purpose and effects of social work.[121]

By merging the social with the national, the RGO had upset the established charitable order. Peasants used to giving alms to their local parish were skeptical of a secular authority

---

[118] Ibid.
[119] The "defense of Częstochowa" refers to the 1655 siege of Jasna Góra when the Swedish Army attacked the monastery outside Częstachowa, which was home to treasured ancient icon of the Virgin Mary. The "relief of Vienna" refers to Polish King Jan Sobieski's armies' defense of Vienna against the Ottoman siege in 1683. See Brian A. Porter-Szucs, *Faith and Fatherland: Catholicism, Modernity, and Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 364.
[120] "Projekt," AAN RGO 52/87.
[121] Janasz, "Ogólne Wrażenie z Kwesty 'Ratujcie Dzieci,'" 1917, AAN RGO 52/87.

managing donations. In order to build trust within rural communities, the RGO mobilized local clergymen as rural liaisons. When door to door collections failed, priests organized special collections at mass and wrote letters to parishioners. Donating through the church provided villagers a greater sense of security and anonymity, and priests could help explain the goals of "Save the Children" collections, which granted the action greater legitimacy.[122] The one frustration RGO officials expressed about enlisting the help of priests was that when collection reports came in, they were ordered based on parish, rather than commune (*gmina*) or municipality (*miejski*). Although the RGO leaders needed priests' local knowledge and social capital, they wanted to displace local parishes as the primary providers of social care.[123]

Despite setbacks, RGO officials found "Save the Children" to be a huge success. In 1917, the collection raised 949,268 marks and yielded almost twice that much the following year.[124] Barring some local pushback, Janasz still thought the collection made an impact on rural communities by enlightening farmers and providing them a sense of the "existence of Poland, which was great and strong."[125] He spoke about rural participation in "Save the Children" as religious conversion, celebrating examples where villages inspired one another to "repent" and "decide to surrender donations."[126] "Save the Children" successfully mobilized a huge strata of the population and brought in significant donations to support children-saving initiatives. With this collection, the RGO redirected the well-worn philanthropic methods of celebrations and fundraising towards a new purpose of territory integration and citizen formation.

* * *

[122] Janasz, "Ogólne Wrażenie,'" AAN RGO 52/87; Marek Przeniosło, *Chłopi Królestwa*, 272n65.
[123] Janasz, "Ogólne Wrażenie z Kwesty 'Ratujcie Dzieci,'" 1917, AAN RGO 52/87.
[124] Rada Główna Opiekuńcza, *Ratujmy dzieci!* 7-8; Grabski and Żabko-Potopowicz, *Ratownictwa społeczna*, 132.
[125] "Projekt," AAN RGO 52/87.
[126] Janasz, "Ogólne Wrażenie z Kwesty 'Ratujcie Dzieci,'" 1917, AAN RGO 52/87.

World War I opened new opportunities for the RGO to promote ideas about Polish nationhood and engage in statecraft through social care. The Germans' decision to grant Poles management of wide-scale welfare networks took hold while wartime suffering pushed the biological rescue of young lives to the forefront of many political and public discussions. Consequently, children's rescue from death and physical decay became linked to the very survival of Poland. RGO leaders leveraged child-saving projects to prepare rural populations for Polish independence and nation-build among the popular classes.

Although a Polish state did not yet exist, the increased social need brought on by war inspired Poles to experiment with and imagine how public welfare might look and operate on a national scale. The RGO established itself as the central organizing body in Warsaw and oversaw a network of local councils across the German-occupied zone. RGO leaders experimented with modern governance by pushing for more standardized practices, professionalization, and greater control over childcare institutions.

In terms of actual child saving, the RGO measured its success numerically. In November 1918, the very month that Poland regained its independence, the RGO controlled 1,430 different institutions that cared for approximately 125,700 children. It had spent forty-million marks on child rescue since December 1915. The RGO also oversaw 1,225 non-residential daycares as well as 124 residential ones, and claimed to have saved over 200,000 children from starvation through daycares and rural relocation.[127]

RGO projects also engaged in a mission of cultural politics and citizen education that had little to do with the plight of the flesh and blood child. Polish social care had long been tied to the defense of the nation, and during the war the RGO was granted an opportunity to not only

[127] "Komunikat R.G.O," May 2, 1918, AAN RGO 52/901; Grabski and Żabko-Potopowicz, *Ratownictwa społeczna*, 132.

defend but also develop the nation. As hopeful Polish state builders, RGO leaders seized upon child saving as an opportunity to foster greater urban-rural integration and test the spread of national consciousness all in the name of Polish children. Through daycares and "Save the Children" fundraising, it attempted to educate children and adults about the Polish nation in order to promote loyalty towards that nation. Reactions in rural communities included wild enthusiasm, apathy, suspicion, fear, and outright hostility. As former subjects of imperial Russia, many peasants had learned to fear the central state and were not inclined to act in the name of children or a nation with which they did not identify. Nevertheless, Wacław Janasz, the fundraiser's director, praised "Save the Children" as a massive success, in terms of money raised, territorial integration, and citizen formation. Janasz spoke of peasants' decisions to donate money as an almost religious conversion to repent and surrender a "citizen's tribute" to help the children of Poland. He believed that despite rural resistance, the RGO had begun the process of educating peasants that Poland had risen from the ashes of imperial occupation, and was, in fact, strong and great.

The RGO's other child-saving initiative, "Village for the Children," relied on an inverted paternalism through which the RGO called upon rural folk to save the nation by accepting urban children into their huts and cottages. The successful enactment of this program relied on an urban-rural moral economy that simply did not exist. Rural communities were not looking to take on extra children to feed and clothe at their own cost simply out of national obligations. Rather, many families participated in order to acquire low-cost farmhands, thus indicating their inability to envision urban children as part of their community or universe of moral responsibility. Urban parents, meanwhile, looked at the countryside as a source of life-saving food while also maintaining a healthy skepticism about a peasant's ability to care for their

children. This relocation system left children open to abuse and exploitation at the hands of their rural hosts.

Children were treated no better by the RGO. The RGO failed to maintain control or achieve compliance from its provincial care councils, and therefore lost track of many children, leaving family reunification up to the individual children, parents, or the kindness of the occasional stranger. At a time when progressive reformers in other countries were starting to favor family-form care over institutional care, the tarnished legacy of "Village for the Children" left Polish pedagogues and policymakers skeptical of foster care, which delayed its development in Poland for about fifteen years.

In contrast to the wide scope of the RGO's fundraising effort, the type of "Polish children" being protected was more narrowly defined. The war did elevate children as a new social priority, but the RGO's main priority was urban Christian children, especially those living in Warsaw. The organization relied on rural communities for money, food, and generosity, but RGO organizers did not see rural children as needing aid. The RGO mostly excluded Jewish children from its efforts, thus forcing them to rely on Jewish charities for survival. Only the arrival of American aid towards the end of the war would later force the RGO to reconsider its definition of the deserving child.

RGO leaders saw themselves as acting in the best interest of "the entire country," however abstract, fractured, or ill-defined that country was. Yet regardless of how much money the RGO raised, widespread suffering of children continued to plague the urban landscape well into the early years of independence. As resources grew more limited, the RGO and other Polish leaders looked abroad for help.[128]

---

[128] "Druga Kwestia Ogólnokrajowa," *Okólnik Rady Głównej Opiekuńczej* 11 (March 22, 1917): 122-23.

CHAPTER TWO
No God But Hunger

Poland can have no peace till she has regained prosperity and her people have ceased to starve.
Eustachy Sapieha, Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1920

In January 1919, two months after the armistice that ended the Great War, US Army colonel William Remsburgh Grove traveled to Poland on assignment from Herbert Hoover. Hoover, the head of US wartime relief efforts in Belgium, sent Grove as part of a small team to investigate hunger and famine conditions in newly independent Poland. During his first few months in Poland, Grove met a fourteen-year-old boy named Abraham Lichowski whose story embodied so many of the struggles endured by families during and after the war. When the German army invaded in 1915, Abraham, his mother, and four siblings left their home in Pińsk, now in southwest Belarus, and sought refuge outside of Warsaw. In January 1919, the family returned to Pińsk, at which point the mother passed away from illness and exhaustion. After her death, the children sold her fur coat to support themselves, but as food and funds grew sparse, Abraham took off for Warsaw. He had heard rumors that an American mission had come to Poland's capital city and he hoped that connecting with them would earn him passage to America. Abraham managed the nearly three-hundred-mile journey to Warsaw on foot with just five rubles and three pounds of bread. He left his siblings at home in hopes that American flour would soon arrive to ease their hunger. When he arrived at the ARA's central office in Warsaw, he spoke with Colonel Grove directly. Grove told Abraham of the plan to feed the children of Poland, but he also indicated it would come with certain stipulations. The travel-weary boy assured Grove that all of Pińsk opposed Bolshevism and that he, a Jewish child, was not opposed to eating with Christians. At that particular moment in his life, he told Grove, he had no God except hunger.[1]

[1] Grove, *War's Aftermath*, 73-74.

During the Second Republic's early years, millions shared in Abraham's desperation. Poland had succeeded in regaining independence, but years of war and occupation had left its land battered and its population sick and hungry. Under normal circumstances the territory that comprised the Second Polish Republic could have produced enough food to feed its population. However, during the war, German, Russian, and Austrian troops had requisitioned foodstuffs, grain, livestock, and farming implements for their own purposes. Meanwhile, the British blockade from 1914 to 1919 prevented life-saving imports. By the end of the war, Poland's native food supply was depleted, thousands of kilometers of land lay uncultivated, and the population was starving. Hungry and unemployed people stood all day in line for bread that sometimes never arrived. Families desperate for fuel and money sold or burnt everything they owned. In the throws of starvation and exposure, many fell prey to typhus, tuberculosis, and cholera.

The hardships of war and its aftermath hit society's youngest members particularly hard. One in three children after the war had rickets or tuberculosis. In some working-class neighborhoods, fifty percent of children suffered from tuberculosis of the lungs or bones. At the dawn of independence, child mortality had risen to five times its pre-war figures. Władysław Szenajch, who after his time with the RGO went on to head the Ministry of Health's Department of Child Welfare, warned that there were parts of the country "where there are no more children under the age of five."[2] Poland may have been reborn, but its children were struggling to survive.

After the war, American humanitarian groups answered Poland's cry for help and arrived ready to wage a new war on child hunger. From 1919-1922, Poland became the site of extensive relief efforts conducted by the American Relief Administration (ARA), the American Jewish

---

[2] "Bliżej ni określona notatka, prawdopodobnie napisana przez W. Szenajcha w 1919 r." AAN RGO 52/6 as quoted in Balcerek, 72.

Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the American National Red Cross (ARC), and the American Society of Friends. Along with food, clothes, and medicine, foreign aid groups brought with them new ideologies, approaches, and agendas that fundamentally shifted the focus of Poland's child welfare project. During the war, the RGO utilized child welfare as the cause that could knit rural and urban communities into a common fabric of mutual responsibility and national sacrifice. It did so not only for the biological rescue of the Polish nation but also in the name of Poland's social and geographical unification. In practice, however, the social unification most sought by the RGO remained limited to saving urban, Christian children and promoting positive feelings for a soon-to-be Polish state among rural Christians. Jewish children lay outside the RGO's moral universe of responsibility, except in rhetoric and fundraising efforts. Pursuing the agenda of social and geographical and social unification among urban and rural Poles overshadowed ensuring children's quality of care, as the RGO focused more on the numbers of children relocated, funds raised, and institutions supported.

After the war, foreign relief workers encountered setbacks similar to those RGO leaders faced during the war. For example, the Americans often thought the Poles to be disorganized, and local communities continued to ignore instructions from American and Polish officials. In addition, foreign aid workers had to learn to navigate the ongoing border conflicts, overcome cultural and linguistic barriers, help the flood of repatriates from the east, and maintain operations during the 1920 Bolshevik invasion. Examining Poland's founding moment through the lens of child relief efforts highlights the ongoing vulnerability of Poland's population during this extended period of border conflict, mobile populations, and unstable government.

American aid groups redirected the Polish state-building project and helped modernize the Polish child welfare system by distancing it further from previous philanthropic and

charitable models. American aid workers were not so much interested in cultivating national thinking as they were focused on teaching Poles to rationally manage their resources, organize a more efficient and stable bureaucracy, conform to American principles, and check the spread of Bolshevism. As the organization at the helm of all postwar Polish relief, the ARA established its own structures, institutions, and bureaucracy to oversee aid distribution. Aid workers, who included decommissioned military officers, doctors, and nurses, imported American progressive-era ideologies and practices that focused on rational bookkeeping, selection, and determination of need. They marginalized members of the old philanthropic guard and gradually transferred more authority to the "expert-professionals" who would come to dominate child welfare in the Second Republic.

In addition, aid groups broadened the geographic focus of child welfare to areas of frontier expansion and border conflict, including the former Russian Pale of Settlement and eastern Galicia, areas that aid workers determined were at most risk of starvation, epidemics, and Bolshevik influence. These also happened to be the areas with the largest concentrations of Jews, and non-Polish identifying Christians including Ukrainian, Belorussian, and Lithuanian speakers, which forced an expanded definition of the deserving child in the Second Republic. The ARA enforced a new non-sectarian approach to children's aid that required need be determined by children's physical state rather than ethnic identity. The result was food and health programs that served children who were Polish-Catholic, non-Catholic, non-Christian, and non-Polish speaking. However, as much as American aid workers touted the principle of impartiality, they were not free from prejudice against the people they encountered. In reality, many of the American workers operated with a severe bias against Jews that was quite common in 1920s America. Consequently, American relief workers struggled to live up to the principle of

non-sectarian aid as many workers continued to privilege ethnic Poles and Christians as the postwar period's most innocent and deserving victims.

Milk and Money

Humanitarian relief arrived in Poland as the culmination of both Polish and American desires. Throughout the war, RGO leaders had secured aid from a smattering of foreign organizations including the Committee of Princess Tatiana (*Komitet W. Ks. Tatjany*), the Friends of Poland in England (*Przyjaciółki Polski w Anglii*), and the Swiss General Committee of Assistance to War Victims in Poland (*Szwajcarski Komitet Generalny Pomocy Ofiarom Wojny w Polsce Vevey*) run by two famous Poles: the novelist Henry Sienkiewicz and pianist Ignacy Paderewski.[3] However, pleas to America went unanswered. The Allied blockade of the Central Powers prevented organizations in the United States from sending aid to Polish territory.[4] Herbert Hoover managed to convince British authorities that aid to Belgium would not be requisitioned by German troops, but the same logic did not hold for Poland. Without approval for widespread humanitarian relief to occupied Poland, Poles were left to fend for themselves until the end of 1917.[5]

In November 1917, Eustachy Sapieha, RGO Chairman and later Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Wacław Janasz, Executive Secretary of the RGO's "Save the Children" Committee, traveled to Switzerland in hopes of securing emergency food aid and funds from American groups. They returned to Poland with two offers. The first was a donation of $200,000

---

[3] Grabski and Żabko-Potopowicz, *Ratownictwa społeczna*, 1 32.
[4] "Annex No. 2: Polish Organisations in the United States to Mr. Asquith, January 8, 1916," in *Correspondence Respecting the Relief of Allied Territories in the Occupation of the Enemy* (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1916), 10.
[5] Braden Little, "Humanitarian Relief in Europe and the Analogue of War, 1914-1918," in *Finding Common Ground: New Directions in the First World War Studies*, eds. Jennifer Keen and Michael Neiber (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 144-148.

from the American Red Cross that could be used to purchase food and clothing for children living in institutions. The second was a donation of condensed milk from the Rockefeller Foundation intended to feed young children and nursing mothers. Fund disbursements from the ARC arrived in December 1917 and February 1918. Before December 1917, RGO leaders distributed their funds with relatively little oversight. However, foreign money came with foreign rules. ARC funds could only be used to purchase clothing or foodstuffs for "those children of allied nationality in Polish territory now under control of the Central Powers" ages ten and younger, whose lives were most at risk. Therefore, Janasz and Sapieha formed a new RGO committee--The Central Commission for Children's Rescue (*Centralna Komisja Ratowania Dzieci,* CKRD)--which offered funds to children's institutions in large cities such as Warsaw and Łódź; industrial centers like Zagłębie Dąbrowskie, Sosnowiec, and Żyrardów; and other counties including Częstochowa, Kalisz, Płock, and Błonie.[6] Requests from institutions in rural counties still hosting children from Warsaw were separated and forwarded directly to "Countryside for the Children."[7]

The influx of new money allowed the RGO more influence over child-care institutions. Institutions applying for the new CKRD funds became subject to RGO inspection, which revealed measles outbreaks, cribs without plastic sheets, and children with long hair and poor appearances. RGO inspectors discovered nurseries that cared for very few children at high costs and orphanages where "children dressed in bows and expensive dresses are never bathed." Inspectors also found institutions that could be models "not only for the capital, but for the whole country." The influx of foreign funds provided RGO leaders new leverage to begin to "repair the

[6] "Paraphrase of Cable Received November 22, 1917, American Legation, Berne," APW Komisja Ratowania Dzieci Funduszu Amerykańskiego Czerwonego Krzyża w Warszawie 130/1.
[7] "Sprawozdanie z działalności Centralnej Komisji Ratowania Dzieci z funduszu Czerwonego Krzyża Amerykańskiego," APW Komisja Ratowania Dzieci Funduszu Amerykańskiego Czerwonego Krzyża w Warszawie 130/1.

evil" of many chaotic and mismanaged child welfare institutions.[8]

Foreign aid also required RGO leaders to expand their definition of the deserving child. Gifts from the American Red Cross were supposed to fund care "for Polish children without distinction of faith, up to age ten."[9] This mandate pressured RGO leaders to share more funds with Jewish organizations. In response, Janasz added Dr. Stanisław Natanson to represent the Warsaw Jewish Community on the CKRD board, which was otherwise composed of members from Janasz's "Save the Children" executive committee. Nevertheless, tensions arose between Jewish institutions and the RGO. On December 14, 1917, the Union of Jewish Schools and Popular Education (*Żydowski Związku Szkolny i Oświaty Ludowa)* applied to the CKRD for money to feed and clothe about six-hundred children attending four Jewish schools. The application stated that the group was out of money, the children were poorly clothed, and urgent help was needed. After a week, the CKRD responded that it had decided to "at this time decline" until it could follow up with further inspections. Plans for inspection were not scheduled until after December 27, at which point all funds for December were already disbursed.[10]

In January, representatives from the Union of Jewish Schools visited Janasz's office and alleged that he received them "most 'angrily,' very impolitely, even brutally."[11] Noah Prylucki, founder and editor of the Warsaw's daily Yiddish newspaper *Der Moment*, wrote that Janasz acted "not as the director of a public institution, but as a private person, a debtor, who could not or did not want to pay more in the face of a creditor, who had the boldness to demand something."[12] Later that month, CKRD representatives told the Jewish association that while

[8] "Działalność Komisji Ratujcie Dzieci," AAN RGO 52/87.
[9] *Kurjer Warszawski*, February 18, 1918, APW 130/1.
[10] Noccha Priłucki [sic.], "Na straży," *Moment,* Nr. 21, January 25, 1918, APW Komisja Ratowania Dzieci Funduszu Amerykańskiego Czerwonego Krzyża w Warszawie 130/1.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

they intended to divide American donations among all poor children without regard to faith, the funds would only support institutions with Polish language instruction.[13] Many Jewish schools and institutions, of course, operated in Yiddish. Prylucki fired back in *Der Moment*, “It is stupid to believe that the American Red Cross would make a Warsaw child’s right to live subsidiary to the school in which it learns or the language they teach at that school.” Yet, wrote Pryłucki, “The children are Jewish, so now they are no ones.”[14] *Der Moment* called for public protest against the CKRD to remind them that “this money is not their own,” and that “it is the property of hungry children—Jewish and non-Jewish.”[15] Organizations like the ARC and the Rockefeller Foundation could try to dictate the way aid was distributed in Poland, but so long as the RGO was the main welfare apparatus, its leaders still possessed the power to narrowly define the deserving Polish child.

The Americans Arrive

Only a few months after the Great War began, Herbert Hoover, a forty-year-old American mining engineer, founded the Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB), a neutral, voluntary organization that spent one billion dollars on civilian relief to feed nine-million French and Belgian citizens. Even while chairing the CRB, Hoover had his eye on Poland. In February 1915, he discussed the possibility of implementing a similar relief plan in the German-occupied Polish Kingdom. Later that year, he sent his close friend, colleague, and Stanford University entomologist Vernon Kellogg to meet with the leaders of the German General Government and the Central Citizens Committee in Warsaw. At the end of 1915, word arrived that wartime relief

[13] Noccha Priłucki, “Na Straży,” February 22, 1918 APW Komisja Ratowania Dzieci Funduszu Amerykańskiego Czerwonego Krzyża w Warszawie 130/1.
[14] Noccha Priłucki, “Na straży,” January 25, 1918.
[15] Ibid.

for Poland would not be possible, which left Hoover feeling deeply disappointed.[16]

One month after the armistice, Hoover sent Kellogg back to Warsaw to map out plans for immediate food relief. Kellogg's was just one of many missions dispatched that winter. By the end of January 1919, Hoover had missions planning relief operations in Belgrade, Budapest, Prague, Trieste, Vienna, and Warsaw. On January 4, 1919, Kellogg was joined by the rest of the American delegation, which included US Army officers Colonel William Grove and Captain Chauncey McCormick and Maurice Pate, an American businessman who had worked for the CRB. Assisting this mission was Count Jan Harodyski, a London-based Galician Pole who collaborated closely with Ignacy Paderewski and Roman Dmowski, leader of Poland's right-wing nationalist movement, to secure Allied support for Polish independence.[17] Grove remembers rolling into the Cracow train station to a "very enthusiastic crowd" eager to greet the American mission. A local delegation took them to City Hall for tea, liquor, and sweets before ushering them to the hotel where they once again faced a cheering crowd of curious onlookers.[18] Although Grove "greatly enjoyed this first real contact with the Polish people," he soon realized Poland's true state of emergency. "The Poles did not tell us that people of the cities were actually

---

[16] George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover:The Humanitarian, 1914-1917* (New York W.W. Norton & Company), x, 185-6.
[17] Vernon Lyman Kellogg, *Herbert Hoover:The Man and His Work* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1920), 261; Sidney Brooks, *America and Poland, 1915-1925: Being the Story of Rebirth and Restoration of the Polish Nation and America's Participation Therein* (American Relief Administration, 1925), 20; Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: Years of Adventure, 1874-1920* (New York: Macmillan, 1951), 356; Piotr Stefan Wandycz, *The United States and Poland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 116; Marta Aleksandra Balińska, "Assistance and Not Mere Relief: The Epidemic Commission of the League of Nations, 1920-1923," in *International Health Organisations and Movements, 1918-1939*, ed. Paul Weindling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 82; Frank M. Surface and Raymond L. Blank, *American Food in the World and Reconstruction Period: Operations of the Organizations Under the Direction of Herbert Hoover, 1914-1924* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1931), 222.
[18] Grove, *War's Aftermath*, 34.

starving at the time," Grove recalled. But that fact was not easily hidden.[19] In Łódź, the Americans met women who stood in lines for bread that never arrived. In Lwów, they watched "fine, respectable-looking men, women, and children" hover around a butcher shop waiting to be thrown a small piece of meat or entrails.[20] Near the Dąbrowa mining region, they heard rumors about babies born without eyes because their pregnant mothers had nothing to eat.[21] After their initial sweep, the American mission estimated that one-third of Poland's population needed immediate food assistance.[22]

Later scouting missions discovered the most extreme suffering existed in the famine-gripped agricultural districts east of the Bug River.[23] During their retreat through this region, the Russian soldiers had burnt four-thousand villages, destroyed two million homes, and devastated the 1915 harvest.[24] The soldiers' pillaging of machinery, grain, and livestock, and forced evacuation of much of the population meant that by 1919 less than five percent of the region's tillable land was under cultivation.[25] As Hoover's men toured this area, known by the Polish term *kresy* meaning "borderland," they witnessed the grotesque human suffering that results from famine.[26] In Kovel, women picked through horse manure to harvest undigested oats, while dead and dying bodies littered the streets of Pińsk. Children with dark sunken eyes and

---

[19] Ibid., 40.
[20] Ibid., 54-5.
[21] Ibid., 59.
[22] Balińska, "Assistance and Not Mere Relief," 82.
[23] Generally speaking, the territories referred to would become the interwar voivodeships of Białystok, Lwów, Nowogródek, Polesia, Stanisławów, Tarnopol, Wilno, and Volhynia. Today these lands are located in eastern Poland, western Ukraine, western Belarus, and south-eastern Lithuania.
[24] Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover*, 185.
[25] "The Need for Children's Relief Work in Poland and the Way in Which This Need Has Been Met by the American Relief Administration European Children's Fund Mission to Poland," Hoover Institution Archives (HIA), William Parmer Fuller Papers (WPF) 57007/1.
[26] "Fuller to Friends in the USA," September 6, 1919, HIA Adaline W. Fuller Papers (AWF) 72015/1.

tiny bloated bodies wandered around bewildered crying for scraps of food. As caravans of repatriates returned daily from Russia, bringing with them little more than misery and disease, it seemed as if suffering in this region only worsened.

Reports from Poland and other parts of east-central Europe prompted Hoover to act quickly.[27] On February 24, 1919, President Wilson created the American Relief Administration by executive order, appointed Hoover the director, and authorized five million dollars from presidential discretionary funds to launch the operation.[28] The ARA established a central office in Paris and dispatched personnel to assist European governments with food relief. Between 1919 and 1924, the ARA carried out field missions in Armenia, Austria, Czechoslovakia, the Free City of Danzig, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia, northwest Russia, and the Soviet Republics. Of these operations, Poland's was the largest in terms of dollars spent until 1921 when the ARA began working in the Soviet Union.[29] Hoover started the ARA to rebuild east-central European countries devastated by the war and to keep Europe's fledgling democracies from descending into anarchy or communism, which he called, "a new form of organized destruction of Liberty."[30] Believing that communism's "infectious poison was spreading alarmingly among all starving peoples," Hoover fought the spread of Bolshevism with the best weapon he knew: food.[31]

---

[27] "A Brief History of the ARA Children's Relief Operations in Poland," HIA WPF 57007/4.
[28] Matthew Lloyd Adams, "Herbert Hoover and the Organization of the American Relief Effort in Poland (1919-1923)," *European Journal of American Studies* (online) 4, no. 2 (2009): 10, https://journals.openedition.org/ejas/7627.
[29] Surface and Blank, *American Food in the World and Reconstruction Period*, 81-2.
[30] Hoover, *Years of Adventure*, 283; Eugene P. Trani, "Herbert Hoover and the Russian Revolution, 1917-1920," in *Herbert Hoover: The Great War and Its Aftermath, 1914-1923*, ed. Lawrence E. Gelfand (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1979), 114.
[31] Hoover, *Years of Adventure*, 283; Eugene P. Trani, "Herbert Hoover and the Russian Revolution, 1917-1920," in *Herbert Hoover: The Great War and Its Aftermath, 1914-1923*, ed. Lawrence E. Gelfand (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1979), 114; Brooks, *America and Poland, 1915-1925*, 20.

Formally, Hoover instructed ARA officials to stay out of politics without exception.[32] However, Hoover himself was not above leveraging food aid for political influence. For example, Hoover did not care for the brand of leadership practiced by Józef Piłsudski, Poland's Chief of State (*Naczelnik Państwa*) from November 1918 to December 1922. Hoover saw Piłsudski as a military dictator who violated "all centrist American ideals of Wilsonian democracy."[33] In January 1919, Kellogg recommended that Hoover's old friend and collaborator Ignacy Paderewski be given a stronger role in the government. Hoover had met Paderewski many years before when, as an undergraduate at Stanford University, he had invited the world-famous pianist to perform at the university. The two reconnected in 1915 when Hoover tried to move aid into occupied Poland and they maintained cordial relations for many years. Hoover told President Wilson he would withhold food aid to Poland until Piłsudski named Paderewski as Prime Minister. Wilson made the threat, and Piłsudski appointed Paderewski to the position on January 16th, 1919.[34] Historians have debated how much Hoover's intercession influenced Paderewski's appointment, but regardless, Hoover certainly thought he could use "food diplomacy," as Murray Rothbard calls it, to influence the development of the Polish state.[35]

Hoover and the ARA continued to exert political influence in Poland for the next few years. After Paderewski's appointment, Hoover succeeded in getting his close friend and Belgian Relief Commission associate Hugh Gibson appointed as America's first ambassador to Poland. Later that year, Hoover sent a "whole staff of expert advisors" to serve in the Polish departments

---

[32] Adams, "Herbert Hoover and the Organization of the American Relief Effort in Poland," 17.
[33] Rothbard, "Hoover's 1919 Food Diplomacy in Retrospect," 101.
[34] Hoover, *Years of Adventure*, 356-7.
[35] Murray Rothbard frames Hoover's threat made through Wilson as directly resulting in Paderewski's appointment. See "Hoover's 1919 Food Diplomacy in Retrospect," 10. Meanwhile, Hoover biographer Kendrick A. Clements argues that it was "internal politics, not Hoover's nor anyone else's external interference that explained Paderewski's rise to power." See Kendrick A. Clements, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Imperfect Visionary, 1918-1928* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 16. Hoover, *Years of Adventure,* 356-7.

of public health, finance, mining, commerce, and railways. By Rothbard's assessment, these American advisors would "administer and virtually run the Polish government" during its first few years.[36] What started as food aid, expanded to become an early American experiment in European state building.

Aid for "Pitiable Little Persons"

Initially, Hoover planned only to provide food relief for the general population, but the reports of suffering children convinced him to take further action. Even though Hoover rarely wrote about his religion or childhood struggles, historians have speculated that Hoover's Quaker upbringing and own experience of being orphaned led him to have a special place in his heart for children's issues.[37] Regardless of the motivation, the plight of children in east-central Europe moved Hoover more deeply than any other aspect of postwar suffering. He worried that if left unattended these millions of "pitiable little persons" would become a "menace to their nations" and eventually a "menace to all mankind."[38] As a result, in March 1919, Hoover created a special ARA children's bureau called the ARA European Children's Fund (ARAECF) or Childfund for short. Childfund was a private, volunteer, non-governmental organization, which directed food supplies donated through congressional appropriation and the National Security and Defense Fund to children in Poland and other countries in east-central Europe.[39]

Originally, the ARA was supposed to withdraw from Poland on August 1, 1919, but that summer Paderewski pleaded with Hoover to continue feeding civilians. On July 12, 1919, Hoover authorized children's food relief to continue in Poland and transferred management of all

[36] Rothbard, "Hoover's 1919 Food Diplomacy in Retrospect," 101-2.
[37] Clements, *The Life of Herbert Hoover*, 3.
[38] Hoover, *Years of Adventure*, 321.
[39] Brooks, "America and Poland, 1915-1925," 16; "The Need for Children's Relief Work in Poland and the Way in Which This Need Has Been Met by the American Relief Administration European Children's Fund Mission to Poland," HIA WPF 57007/1.

ARA aid to Childfund.[40] Pursuant to Hoover's rules, child feeding was a joint operation between Poles and Americans. The ARA provided the food and paid to ship it to Danzig, so long as the Polish government arranged for transport, storage, and distribution. In Warsaw, the ARA's Polish headquarters employed seven American staff members and six American general inspectors who supervised aid distribution in the provinces. In addition to the general inspectors, all of whom were officers in the US Army, the ARA employed thirty Polish-American female nurses recruited from Polish immigrant families and trained by the Young Women's Christian Association. This group of women, dubbed the "Gray Samaritans" because they wore gray uniforms, brought professional training, knowledge of Polish language and customs, and a dedication to the Polish people. The task of the Gray Samaritans and the general inspectors was to make sure that all feeding operations were "carried out along the lines of the desires and broad fundamental principles established by the American donors."[41]

Hoover wanted the ARA to build a Polish welfare apparatus that could continue its work after the Americans withdrew. On March 23, 1919, representatives of the Polish government and the ARA created a children's bureau called the Central Committee for Children's Relief (*Centralny Komitet Pomocy Dzieciom*, CKPD*),* a name that changed at least three more times over the next decade. They placed the bureau under the Ministry of Health's protection and appointed Paderewski's wife, Helena, as president because of her interest in philanthropy. The bureau's central committee was made up of eight other men and women actively interested in child welfare. The Health Minister, Tomasz Janiszewski, delegated Władysław Szenajch, the pediatrician who had worked for the RGO and now the ministry's Director of Child Welfare, to

---

[40] Adams, "Herbert Hoover and the Organization of the American Relief Effort in Poland," 11, 22.

[41] "A Brief Description of the Work Conducted in Poland by the American Relief Administration in Cooperation with the Polish Government," HIA American Relief Administration (ARA) 23001/701/10.

coordinate with the Americans to finalize the details of the children's relief organization. During the war, the press attacked RGO leaders for their lack of professional training and expertise in child welfare.[42] By contrast, the ARA-sponsored children's welfare bureau brought together a number of expert-professionals who were experienced in child welfare, pediatric medicine, pedagogy, schooling, social hygiene, and interested in developing modern, progressive institutions to support children's social and developmental needs.

For what the bureau gained in specialized expertise, it still lacked in business acumen according to the Americans. When William Parmer Fuller took over Poland's Childfund operations in the fall of 1919, he found that the organization "lacked men of business capacity to assist in the organization of the large undertaking which the ARAECF was establishing."[43] The bureau was in charge of the distribution, inspection, and control of all children's relief supplies, yet reportedly failed to distribute them with any swiftness or efficiency. When the ARA temporarily took over food distribution for two weeks in May, it quickly moved two-thousand tons of food that previously sat idle.[44] Only three months after the bureau's creation, ARA officials removed Helena Paderewska as president and replaced her with Tadeusz Gawlikowski, a man handpicked by William Grove and Oscar Saenger, a prominent Warsaw business owner. They also assigned Jan Odechowski, the bureau's delegate to the Polish Ministry of Food Supply (*Ministerstwo Aprowacji*), to take over distribution. New departments were created for distribution, inspection, finance, accounting, statistics, extraordinary revenues, medical, sanitary supplies, general affairs, and a central office was established at the Hotel Bristol in Warsaw.

---

[42] "Brief History of the PAKPD," April 1, 1921, HIA ARA 23001/96/2; Harold H. Fisher, America and the New Poland, with the collaboration of Sidney Brooks (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1928), 234; "Jak dręczone są dzieci w schroniskach R.G.O.," *Przegląd Wieczorny*, June 6, 1919; Bronisław Chybowski, "Martyrologia dzieci polskich w schroniskach R.G.O.," *Gazeta Polska*, June 22, 1919; Świadek, "Schronisko R.G.O.," AAN RGO 52/900.
[43] "Brief History of the PAKPD," April 1, 1921, HIA ARA 23001/96/2.
[44] "A Brief History of the ARA Children's Relief Operations in Poland," HIA WPF 57007/3.

Finally, in what would be the first of many name changes, the organization dropped the “central” from its name and instead became the State Committee for Children’s Relief (*Państwowy Komitet Pomocy Dzieciom,* PKPD).[45]

Playing By America’s Rules

Despite adding the word “state” to the Polish organization’s name, the Americans still controlled the terrain of postwar relief. In 1920, when the ARA officials accused the Polish government of trying to raise funds in America, Hoover threatened to withdraw children’s food aid if the Polish government did not immediately stop. He said that multiple applease to support Polish causes would confuse donors and reduce expected donations. Since Hoover neither believed in the efficiency of separate relief efforts nor wanted to yield any control over rebuilding east-central Europe, he required that all aid organizations work under the guise of his European Relief Council (ERC).[46] Members of the ERC, which was run by the ARA, included the American Friends Service Committee, the American Red Cross, the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Knights of Columbus, the National Catholic Welfare Council, the Young Men’s Christian Association , and the Young Women’s Christian Association. Aid groups were allowed to run their own programs so long as they abided by ARA rules and submitted reports to ARA headquarters.[47]

The ARA had three strict guidelines for any kitchen serving Childfund food. Recipients could only receive one meal a day, the meal had to be cooked and consumed on-site, and children had to be admitted “without regard to religion, nationality, politics or any other factor

[45] Adams, “Herbert Hoover and the Organization of the American Relief Effort in Poland,” 36; Surface and Blank, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period*, 227.
[46] Adams, “Herbert Hoover and the Organization of the American Relief Effort in Poland,” 15.
[47] Brooks, “America and Poland, 1915-1925,” 33; Adams, “Herbert Hoover and the Organization of the American Relief Effort in Poland,” 15; R.F. Allen to R.E. Olds, June 7, 1921, HIA American National Red Cross (ARC) XX482/115.

except the physical condition of the child."[48] Local welfare councils were organized with similar logic that required committees "must represent the prevailing races, religions and classes."[49] Harold Henry Fisher, historian and curator of American Relief Administration Archives from 1921 to 1934, described the process as such: "Where Jewish and Catholics, for instance, predominated, as they usually did in all parts of Poland, each must have a representative on the committee, and where a town or district contained several nationalities, as they often did, especially in the borders, each group must be represented."[50] The result was local aid committees made up of individuals who identified as Polish, Lithuanian, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, Russian, Jewish, Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, Ukrainian Catholic, and Lutheran. When conflicts arose between groups of different ethnic or religious backgrounds, ARA officials were supposed to encourage community members to tolerate one another for the higher purpose of child welfare.[51] The ARA's mandate marked a notable shift from the management of the RGO, which was an organization largely run by Poles for Poles.

ARA officials frequently invoked the principle of aid without distinction, yet its origins are unclear. It is well documented that Hoover felt sympathy for the plight of eastern European Jews after World War I, which historians have speculated was inspired by Quaker values of "harmony, unity, and voluntary community cooperation" as well as his close collaboration and friendship with many prominent Jewish-Americans.[52] For example, during the war Hoover hired Lewis Strauss, the son of a Jewish-German shoe salesman, to work as his personal secretary.

---

[48] American Relief Administration, *American Relief Administration European Children's Fund Mission to Poland* (Warsaw: Galewski & Dau, 1922), 10.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Fisher, *America and the New Poland*, 226.
[51] Brooks, "America and Poland, 1915-1925," 33.
[52] Sonja Schoepf Wentling and Rafael Medoff, *Herbert Hoover and the Jews: The Origins of the "Jewish Vote" and Bipartisan Support for Israel* (Washington, D.C.: David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies, 2012), 2.

According to Strauss, Hoover was a man uncolored by prejudice and was one of the few delegates at the Paris Peace Conference who advocated for Jewish rights in Poland. As a result of his sympathy for eastern Europe's Jews, he secured aid for hundreds of thousands of Jews in Poland, Ukraine, and Romania at a time when violence and other forms of antisemitism otherwise threatened their place in the European postwar order.[53]

Furthermore, Hoover's insistence on faith-blind aid and multi-ethnic cooperation stemmed from his Wilsonian-era understanding of postwar Europe's demographics. In his memoir, Hoover expressed fear and even disdain for Europe's ethnically mixed populations. He described Europe as a continent filled with "irredentas" that did not neatly correspond with national boundaries. Between 1918 and 1923, Poland fought six border conflicts as it tried to expand and secure its territorial acquisitions.[54] By doing so, Hoover worried that Poland was acquiring "entirely too many fringes of Germans, Czechs, Russians and Lithuanians" for its own good.[55] Hoover feared that east-central Europe's unresolved "racial" differences would continue to spark conflict and thus threaten his humanitarian project. As a result, he tried to keep all American aid work "rigidly free" from any religious or political disagreements.[56] In this regard Hoover acted according to a logic quite different from the RGO leaders. He wanted to sidestep eastern Europe's irredentist frenzy, while the RGO had pursued an agenda of promoting Polish nationalist causes and valued the protection of Polish-Catholic children above all others.

Additionally, Americans elevated the role of expert-professionals in children's welfare work. Under the RGO, gentry, clergy, and local intelligentsia controlled most individual care

---

[53] Schoepf Wentling and Medoff, *Herbert Hoover and the Jews*, 6-8.
[54] See *Civil War in Central Europe, 1918-1921: The Reconstruction of Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Tomas Balkelis, *War, Revolution, and Nation-Making in Lithuania, 1914-1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); and Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End, 1917-1923* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Girous, 2016).
[55] Hoover, *Years of Adventure*, 357.
[56] Ibid., 283.

councils. The ARA, however, required that at least one physician sit on every local council. For the first couple of years, physicians could admit children to kitchens based on their own judgement. Then, in August 1921, the ARA implemented the Pelidisi system in order to eliminate personal bias from the child feeding process. The Pelidisi system, created by physician Clemens Pirquet who chaired the ARA's Austrian children's welfare bureau, determined a child's malnutrition by comparing the ratio between his or her sitting height and weight in grams. A child with a Pelidisi factor between ninety-five and one hundred was considered normal, a factor of ninety-four was considered underfed, and a child with a factor of ninety-three or below earned immediate admission to a feeding center.[57] Working as the gatekeepers to Childfund kitchens, physicians found new authority in the child relief effort.

The Challenges of Enactment

In March 1919, ARA inspector Maurice Pate followed the Polish army on their advance toward the Polesia and Białystok districts. When he arrived in Brest, the city that hosted the signing of the treaty that ended the war between Russia and the Central Powers one year prior, Pate slated the city for immediate food relief. The city had no soup kitchens or milk stations, and the average person consumed only 150 grams of bread a day if anything at all. On April 30, 1919, the first Polish Childfund kitchen opened in Brest to a crowd of two-thousand hungry children. From there the action spread as local committees set up feeding stations in schools, orphanages, and community centers around the country. By June, nearly 400,000 children ate meals cooked from Childfund shipments. The ARA's nutritional consultant, Dr. Alonzo Taylor, designed the ration of 167 grams of flour, beans, rice, evaporated milk, fats, sugar, and cocoa to

[57] Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period*, 158, 228; "The American Relief Administration European Children's Fund in Austria," ed. General-Commissariat of the Amerikanische Kinderhilfsaktion für Österreich, trans. Hubert W. Tschirf (Vienna: J. Weiner), 19.

compensate for the lack of "growth foods" in children's diets. Eventually, the Joint provided the ARA with kosher fats and live cattle to allow Jewish kitchens to serve kosher meals.[58] The rations, although a godsend, sometimes puzzled local welfare committees. When committee members in Brest opened the crate of cocoa, they did not know what it was. Recalling how much the Americans emphasized cleanliness, committee members concluded the powder must be some sort of soap and proceeded to wash the walls with it.[59]

This story circulated among American aid workers as an example of Polish folly and ignorance, but it also revealed the incongruence between the foreign mission and local context. Melani Cammett and Lauren M. MacLean find that non-state welfare providers better understand local needs and design programs that more effectively and appropriately address these needs when they are rooted in the communities they serve.[60] When American relief workers arrived in Poland, they entered a culture and a landscape about which they knew very little. As a consequence, local conditions often complicated and even impeded their work. ARA officials did not anticipate how much multiple railway gauges, lack of train cars and miles of damaged track would delay food shipments. When trying to transport a train car of canned milk the hundred kilometers from Brest to Baranowicze, Sergeant J. H. Lange was forced to reroute multiple times as he encountered damaged bridges, incompatible railway gauges, and a town recently captured by the Bolsheviks. ARA officials quickly discovered that several communities in the *kresy* were accessible only by foot unless they could secure the help of a local still lucky enough to own a horse and wagon. To speed up food shipments, the ARA purchased seven automobiles and the

---

[58] Grove, *War's Aftermath*, 72; American Relief Administration, *American Relief Administration European Children's Fund Mission to Poland*, 20, 25; Fisher, *America and the New Poland,* 215.
[59] Amy Pryor Tapping, "The First American Peace Corp," 1964, 54, HIA Polish Gray Samaritans (PGS) 57026/1.
[60] Cammett and MacLean, "Introduction," 33.

Joint contributed fifteen Ford trucks and twenty lorries.[61]

Even with these vehicles, the lion's share of food transport fell to local committees. Each month, fifteen regional depots dispatched food to 192 district warehouses across the country. Then local committees sent representatives to retrieve the rations. With horses in high demand, people could rent them out at high rates. ARA officials thought that peasants should transport food for committees free of charge, but this struck Captain Cyrill J. C. Quinn as unfair to those whose only source of income might be their horse. When horses could not be found, committee members had no other option but to carry the food by hand. People from Zambrów, south of Łomża, would trek thirteen kilometers to the nearest train station and then haul the rations home on their backs.[62]

Once shipments arrived in town, the ARA's strict guidelines for service and preparation were often abandoned. For the first several months of the operation, food shipments for children arrived faster than those for adults. Consequently, kitchen workers served Childfund rations to people of all ages. In communities with acute starvation, canned milk and raw rations were distributed right off the truck. Near Włodzimierz Wołyński, a small city in Volhynia, people did not believe that the Americans required food to be cooked, so committees simply had recipients sign a form stating that they preferred to receive raw rations. People in charge of distribution told American inspectors that they feared violating the ARA's rules less than they feared the angry mobs of hungry peasants.

Such breaches of ARA protocol arose because the organization's rules of distribution ran counter to local understandings of food, family, and the home economy. Cooking rations at home

---

[61] Grove, *War's Aftermath*, 78; American Relief Administration, *American Relief Administration European Children's Fund Mission to Poland*, 23.

[62] Grove, *War's Aftermath*, 78; Rice to Howard, September 7, 1920, HIA ARA 23001/706/2; Memorandum by W. R. Nellegar to ARA, September 11, 192, HIA ARA 23001/706/2.

made the most sense to those trying to sustain their family during famine. A woman in Pińsk told a Gray Samaritan that she liked the American kitchen all right, but she would have liked it a lot more if she could cook the rations at home. She was certain she could make better soup than the women at the kitchen. After all, she added, "Every mother knew best how to cook food for her children."[63] Christine Zduleczna, an American Gray Samaritan who worked in the Polesia district, heard from several local committees that they did not understand what difference it made to an American whether they cook all in one kitchen or in their homes.[64] To a rural woman who recently returned home after years of Russian exile, consuming all rations at once seemed wasteful and short-sighted. Granted, she had nothing to eat, but she also had nothing to grow. Rather than eat all the beans in June, she would rather plant some and have her own in the fall. It was during encounters like this when Zduleczna found herself torn between her sense of duty and her growing sense of local needs. As she later reflected in her notes, "Publicly we are against [planting], but down in our hearts we wonder if in their place we would not be tempted to do the same."[65]

While locals needed food to sustain whole families, the ARA only fed children ages zero to fourteen. In 1920, British writer Coningsby Dawson observed the limits of such a system:

> Going to the American soup kitchens you will find tiny mites of six and seven shivering in queues to secure the rations. They are there because they are the only members of the family young enough to be spared. If you question them, you will find that they have left still younger babies locked up in the squalid rooms that they call home. To prove their assertion they show you the key that they carry around their necks. From dawn to dark elder children and parents are out at work.[66]

The ARA made some attempts to widen the scope of people they could reach by extending its

---

[63] "Particular Incident from Polish Gray Samaritan Experience," HIA PGS 57026/3.
[64] "After War Farming in Poland," HIA PGS 57026/1; "Particular Incident from PGS Experience," HIA PGS 57026/3.
[65] "After War Farming in Poland," HIA PGS 57026/1.
[66] Dawson, *It Might Have Happened to You*, 84.

age limits to fifteen, then eventually to seventeen. What could not be changed was that Childfund rations were meant for children, not adults.

This was both confusing and distressing for the children being fed. Dawson encountered one such child who was anguished over the fact that she could eat while others in her family starved. The eight-year-old girl approached an ARA official and asked to be sent to America. When asked why, she began to cry and said that she was too young to help her family, but she figured if she went away, it would leave more food for someone else.[67] Officials from the ARA and other foreign relief organizations depicted children as the war's most innocent victims, but that is not necessarily how children saw themselves. They were aware of their place in the family and their contribution to or drain on that family economy.

In the wake of wartime destruction, families did everything they could to stay alive. Children often contributed by gathering, begging, or selling items to earn food or money. As parents died or became too sick and weak to leave the house, children became even more essential to supporting the family unit. In the countryside, that might have meant daily trips to neighboring villages to work for some seed or potatoes; in the city, children might resort to begging or thieving. When ARA rations became an option, children incorporated those into their practice. Mr. Janicki, the director of a school kitchen in Częstochowa district reported to the PKPD that children were resorting to various lies in order to take the food home to feed their families or sell it to strangers.[68] Janicki's complaint highlights a fundamental contrast in understanding between the aid providers and recipients. ARA and PAKPD inspectors told kitchen managers that food could only support child life. Therefore, teachers and community leaders told children that it was their obligation to their families, to Poland, and to their great

---

[67] Ibid.
[68] L. Janicki to PKPD District Office, April 9, 1920, HIA ARA 23001/707/2.

American benefactors that they eat this food and stay alive. That forced children to choose between two moral systems: that of the ARA-PKPD and that of their own parents, siblings, and other relatives. Teachers said it was a child's moral duty to eat the entire meal and stay alive, but to some children it made more sense to bring food home to share or sell it, rather than selfishly consume it at school.

The ARA's objective was that "not an ounce of food was to be used for anyone who did not need it," but the practice of child selection frequently relied on a much less scientific approach.[69] ARA officials asked school teachers and heads of local charities to draw up lists of children in need. Members of the local committees were then to investigate each case, after which a physician would determine the final selection. Physical exams were to occur at regular intervals so adjustments could be made. The idea was that children would be selected for feeding based on physical need alone and as certain children regained strength, children in greater need would replace them. One problem was that many communities lacked the physicians needed to carry out this task. In March 1919, H.N. Brailsford, a British war correspondent, reported that every doctor in Pińsk was gone on military duty. In the Mińsk district, at least two-thirds of the doctors had died from typhus. When American inspectors arrived in Brest to set up the first Childfund kitchen, the town's only remaining doctor just passed away.[70] In the absence of physicians to examine children, selection practices were ruled based more on popular opinion than on the medical paradigm. Community leaders and families assumed they knew best who needed help. Even after the introduction of the Pelidisi method in 1921, it only took hold at feeding centers in cities and large towns.[71] In most communities, children stood the best chance

[69] Fisher, *America and the New Poland*, 228.
[70] Grove, *War's Aftermath*, 74; "'Fighting Typhus in Poland,' Extract from notes taken by Dr. Baslund as communicated by the Central Committee of the Swedish Red Cross," May 1920, HIA Friends' War Victims' Relief Committee (FWVRC) XX333/2.
[71] American Relief Administration, European Children's Fund Mission to Poland, "How Food is

of being fed if they attended school or some other institution, had an adult advocate to place and keep them on a list, or could catch the sympathetic eye of an American inspector.

ARA officials questioned the degree to which selection by "mutual control between families" complied with ARA's intention to only feed those in greatest physical need.[72] William Fuller worried that the system favored children already associated with schools or orphanages. In January 1920, he told Hoover that committees tended to "feed all the children in schools and neglect the children of the streets; to feed those with individual or collective influence and to ignore the hungry waifs; in short, not to help the neediest."[73] That same month, Fuller reported to the London Childfund's office that almost no tests were being used for child selection, which meant that children "in good shape" received food while those "in bad shape" were left to starve.[74] However clear the line between "weak" and "strong" children seemed to William Fuller, his wife, Adeline, knew otherwise. Adeline Fuller, who volunteered as an ARA field inspector in 1919 and 1920, said there was "nothing more heartbreaking" than to visit schools and have to select children for feeding. She lamented, "Those who are not on the extreme edge of starvation are left behind. To hear them sob when they find that they are not picked for the meal a day makes one doubt the existence of supreme right and justice."[75] As distressing as this experience was for Adeline Fuller, she had the privilege of being an outsider who did not personally know the children. In smaller committees, those making the selections knew the children and their families. In many cases, the women working the kitchens had children to feed themselves. The

---

Distributed in Land. Method of Commodity Book-Keeping. System of Accounting and Control," HIA ARA 23001/702/3; Surface and Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period*, 158.

[72] American Relief Administration, European Children's Fund Mission to Poland, "How Food is Distributed in Land. Method of Commodity Book-Keeping. System of Accounting and Control," HIA ARA 23001/702/3.

[73] Fuller to Hoover, January 30, 1920, HIA WPF 57007/1.

[74] Fuller to A.R.A European Children's Fund, January 7, 1920, HIA ARA 23001/705/34.

[75] Adaline Fuller, "A Red Curse over Poland," *New York Times*, October 24, 1920.

scientific objectivity asked for by the ARA was no match for the local knowledge and communal ties tapped by individuals trying to keep themselves, their friends, and their families alive.

The mandate that children eat all food on-site also proved more difficult than the Americans expected. Communities along the old German-Russian front had sustained so much physical damage that by 1919-1920 there were few buildings left standing. Sometimes a children's kitchen consisted of only a kettle and benches in the open air. Open-air kitchens were impossible to heat and there was rarely any sort of cover under which children could eat shielded from the weather. The same Pińsk woman who wanted to cook the rations at home explained to the American inspectors how uncomfortable it was to cook for children in the rain, wind, and snow. Setting up kitchens in trenches and dugouts posed additional problems. In an old army trench outside Lida, Dr. Walker of the American Red Cross found children eating their meal while standing in between two and six inches of water, which they had to scoop out to keep the kitchen from completely flooding. After Walker's visit, residents of Lida built a proper children's kitchen only to have the Bolsheviks burn it down a few months later.[76] The ARA's Major William Nellegar admitted that while he did not want to see children eating outside in winter, he also realized it was completely unreasonable "to expect the people to stop operations on their much needed homes and build a weatherproof eating place for their children for one meal per day."[77] Many communities of the eastern borderlands required so much physical reconstruction that a facility for an American food program was not a top priority.

Lack of clothing further hindered the ARA's efforts. During World War I, the textile industry ground to a halt as armies requisitioned raw materials like wool and cotton. Children arrived at kitchens in tattered old clothes or makeshift garments made from burlap or curtains.

[76] "Particular Incident from Polish Gray Samaritan Experience," HIA PGS 57026/3; Brooks, "America and Poland, 1915-1925," 45-46.
[77] Memorandum by Nellegar to ARA, September 11, 192, HIA ARA 23001/706/2.

Only the most fortunate had socks and shoes, while most came barefoot. One Gray Samaritan called it "pitiful, yet amusing" to see the children arrive at kitchens with their "shoes" made of layered rags bound with twine.[78] When the weather grew cold, children had to borrow clothes from older family members so they could walk to the kitchen and eat their meal. Those who had no clothes to borrow simply did not attend.

Hoover became aware of the clothing shortage when he visited Poland in August 1919. Prime Minister Paderewski had been begging President Wilson to visit so that he could see how despite America's generous intervention "unemployment, disease, short rations…were making [the people] easy prey for the Communists."[79] Wilson declined, but sent Hoover in his place. Hoover arrived on August 12 accompanied by military admirals and generals. An assembly of Poland's leaders greeted the convoy at the Warsaw train station while a band played the Star-Spangled Banner. Two days later, Hoover attended what he called "the most profoundly touching incident" of his trip. It was a parade that took place at Warsaw's Mokotów Field and included anywhere from twenty-five to seventy thousand children gathered from various ARA kitchens. As Hoover sat in the grandstands of the Warsaw horse track, the sight of thousands of barefoot children parading by with their tin cups, handwritten banners, and American flag napkins brought him to tears. Immediately afterward, Hoover initiated plans to ship 700,000 sets of overcoats, stockings, and shoes to Warsaw, which could then be packaged into outfit bundles and distributed across the country.[80]

A Crisis of Authority

In November 1919, William Parmer Fuller, the son of a successful paint manufacturer in

[78] Christine Zduleczna, "Interesting Stories of Poland," January 31, 1920, HIA PGS 57026/1.
[79] Hoover, *Years of Adventure,* 358-9.
[80] American Relief Administration, *American Relief Administration European Children's Fund Mission to Poland*, 13.

San Francisco and a Stanford University graduate, left his position in London as the ARA's Assistant Director for Europe and traveled to Warsaw to replace Major William Nellegar, Chief of the American Mission in Poland.[81] Throughout the fall, rumors had circulated about Nellegar's weak leadership. When John D. Moyer toured Poland in October, he reported to Fuller, "I feel it is my duty to [the children of Poland], and to the organization, to say that I think that the so called reservedness of Major Nellegar crosses the border line into incompetency." Nellegar reportedly failed to work closely with other American aid groups, was being overrun by the Polish wing of the operation, and generally had no "pep." Furthermore, he was alleged to keep company with a woman whom Moyer referred to as "that of a so-called 'painted princess'" with an "unquestionably bad" reputation who lived in the Hotel Bristol. The lurid details of his social life combined with his lack of leadership made Nellegar the butt of many jokes among other ARA officers.[82]

Fuller arrived in Warsaw on November 8, 1919 and moved into the Hotel Bristol, the only hotel in town with heat and electricity. From the relative comfort of his room, Fuller watched as long processions of men bearing coffins wound their way down Krakowskie Przedmieście boulevard.[83] From this capital city ravaged by disease and starvation, Fuller hoped he could direct Poland to a speedy recovery. He soon realized, however, that he would have to start by cleaning up the American mission itself.

When he entered the ARA's central office in the back of the Hotel Bristol, Fuller was struck by its state of disarray. "The place looked precisely like a barn," he wrote on November 12. The office lacked appropriate furniture, necessary equipment, and a qualified stenographer.

---

[81] "American Relief Administration European Children's Fund Mission to Poland (Continued)," ARA WPF 57007/3.
[82] J. D. Moyer to W. P. Fuller, October 16, 1919, HIA WPF 57007/1.
[83] Amy Pryor Tapping, "Prelude to the Clothing Distribution," HIA PGS 57026/1.

There was no numerical record of the telegraphs between the Warsaw and London offices, and as far as he could tell, Nellegar's commodity reports were "based solely and entirely on a theoretical book inventory."[84] Over the coming days, Fuller realized that problems threatening the child-feeding effort stretched far beyond the central office. While Nellegar's "lack of pep" did not help matters, Fuller thought the greatest threat to Polish aid work was the Poles themselves. When describing the problem to friends in the United States, Fuller wrote:

> In business the Pole has much to learn. He has little sense of organization, almost no power of aggression and initiative, and knoweth not the meaning of the term "hard work." Speed and pep are quite beyond him. He has a good imagination, but with it a bad habit; he will sit at a desk and write out a wonderful plan; and then he considers that it is all done. The putting it into practice bothers him not at all. And six months later, he will explain to you the wonderful thing he has done, by that time believing implicitly his own statements and forgetting entirely that plan. . . .[85]

It was not that the Poles lacked good ideas, he thought, but that they lacked the grit and know-how to implement them. The condescension and antipathy Fuller displayed here towards his Polish colleagues remained a consistent feature of his descriptions of the Polish people throughout his tenure as Chief of the American Mission.

While writing this letter, Fuller likely had one particular Pole in mind: Tadeusz Galikowski. Earlier that year, the ARA had selected Gawlikowski to replace Helena Paderewska as head of the Polish children's bureau. After working with Gawlikowski for only a few weeks, Fuller found him to be deceitful, disorganized, and deprived of the skills necessary to manage a nationwide organization. Under Gawlikowski, PKPD operations had devolved into a state of chaos. Upon inspecting logs for the eight regional warehouses, Fuller discovered that PKPD workers did not keep track of how much food was in storage or where it was shipped. As far as

---

[84] Fuller to American Relief Administration European Children's Fund, November 12, 1919, HIA WPF 57007/1.

[85] W. P. Fuller to friends in the USA, March 14, 1920, HIA AWF 72015/1.

he could tell they had "no accurate or complete figures on anything."[86] Additionally, the Polish Ministry of Food Supply used the same warehouses and representatives from the ministry routinely "borrowed" Childfund rations without recording or replacing them. Not only did this food-swapping practice violate Poland's agreement with the ARA, but it also compromised the already unsteady flow of food to children's kitchens. The town of Płock stopped receiving rations on October 14. Two-hundred kilometers west, the town of Gostyn had not received rations since August. In some of the most food-poor districts of Eastern Galicia, kitchens serving 16,000 children total were forced to close in the late fall for lack of food. Meanwhile, other communities received way more food than they needed. For example, four cities northwest of Warsaw, were receiving rations for ten-thousand children but only serving 850.[87] PKPD instructions to committees were so vague that each district interpreted them differently. Circulars were sent so frequently that most seemed to "merely upset the various committees because of the difficulties of constant change." PKPD district managers felt confused about the scope of their authority, while Polish inspectors threatened to strike for lack of clear job descriptions. Fuller did not even think most PKPD employees were qualified for their positions. In December 1919, he wrote that most department heads and regional inspectors "were not the men for the work."[88]

What troubled Fuller the most was his sense that under Nellegar "co-operation of any hearty nature on the part of the [children's bureau] has ceased to exist."[89] Two days after arriving in Warsaw, he found a letter from the children's bureau dated October 31, 1919, which notified the ARA that the bureau would be raising the price of children's rations to sixty pfennigs. Until then, children who could afford it were only asked to pay between fifteen and thirty pfennigs per

[86] W. P. Fuller to A.R.A. European Children's Fund, December 24, 1919, HIA WPF 57007/1.
[87] Ibid.; Brooks, *America and Poland, 1915-1925*, 37.
[88] W. P. Fuller to A.R.A. European Children's Fund, December 24, 1919, HIA WPF 57007/1.
[89] Fuller referred to the children's bureau as the CKPD in this document even though the name was changed to PKPD a few months prior.

meal, while those who could not pay were fed for free. After a tense, hour-and-a-half-long phone call with Gawlikowski, Fuller saw no justification for the increase. Fuller, convinced that Gawlikowski was trying to turn a profit, reported to the London office, "It is not unreasonable to think that, if the facts are as they look, Gawlikowski may soon be looking for a job."[90] By Christmas Eve, Fuller decided that the only way to save the child-feeding mission from total failure was to override Gawlikowski and bring the PKPD under tighter American control.[91]

On December 29, 1919, Lieutenant Maurice Pate, a Nebraska-born Princeton graduate who had worked for Hoover's Belgium Relief Commission, moved into Gawlikowski's office.[92] At first, Fuller planned to have Pate co-direct the PKPD with Gawlikowski, but that soon proved impossible. Whenever Pate tried to do something, Gawlikowski "went on the peculiarly Polish plan of agreeing with everything we said and then throwing monkey-wrenches in the machinery behind our backs." On January 15, 1920, Fuller and Pate held a long meeting with Gawlikowski, during which the PKPD leader allegedly "lost his temper" and agreed he could not work with Pate. Fuller concluded that Gawlikowski's resignation was the only "reasonable alternative." Five days later, Maurice Pate, an American, assumed full control of the Polish children's welfare bureau.[93] Although Fuller admitted that the forced takeover of the PKPD violated the ARA's principles, he assured Hoover in a private letter that relieving Gawlikowski of his role was the only way to remedy the "dire failure" that had become Polish management of child feeding.[94]

In the eyes of ARA officials, Pate's leadership brought a hearty dose of American pragmatism to the struggling Polish organization. Pate implemented practices to ensure tighter

[90] Fuller to American Relief Administration European Children's Fund, November 12, 1919, HIA WPF 57007/1.
[91] W. P. Fuller to A.R.A. European Children's Fund, December 24, 1919, HIA WPF 57007/1.
[92] W. P. Fuller to A.R.A. European Children's Fund, December 31, 1919, HIA WPF 57007/1.
[93] Fuller to A.R.A. European Children's Fund, January 20, 1920, HIA WPF 57007/1.
[94] W. P. Fuller to H. C. Hoover, January 30, 1920, HIA WPF 57007/1.

enforcement, better bookkeeping, and a clearer articulation of PKPD orders. He decentralized the PKPD's provincial administration into fifteen regional offices and 207 district offices and forced the central committee to list the organization's purpose and rules of operation in an official statute. Finally, Pate promoted two Poles to leadership positions. Jan Odechowski was appointed PKPD Vice-Director and tasked with control over food distribution, railway transport, and warehousing. As third in command, Pate named physician Bronisław Krakowski to oversee all matters related to social work.

Although Pate's changes resolved the acute problems of accounting and food shipment, he could not eliminate the misuse of food rations within individual communities. For example, a Polish inspector in the Białystok region reported that although he suspected adults consumed as much as fifty-percent of children's rations, he felt completely powerless to stop it.[95] PKPD inspectors still lacked authority because they represented a central organization and a new state that did not yet have the respect and loyalty of some of the people it served. In the war-torn, post-imperial space of the eastern borderlands, rural inhabitants were more likely to be suspicious of Polish authorities. Since the sixteenth century, the dominating Polish presence in the *kresy* had been that of the Polish aristocratic estate owners who enserfed the local peasantry. By the dawn of the Second Republic, the prevalence of Polish landlords had waned, but the memory of their domination had not. Some peasants in the *kresy* may not have necessarily identified with any specific nationality, but they did see themselves as distinct from the Polish colonizer.[96] As agents of the new central state, PKPD employees were thereby seen in these areas

[95] "A Brief History of the PAKPD," April 1, 1921 HIA ARA 23001/91/2; American Relief Administration, *American Relief Administration European Children's Fund Mission to Poland*, 26.
[96] Local residents in these areas tended to identify themselves by the languages they spoke (dialects of Ukrainian, Belorussian, and Lithuanian, and often even Polish), the faiths they practiced (Eastern Orthodoxy, Ukrainian Catholicism, Roman Catholicism, or Lutheranism), or the villages in which they lived. See Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic*

as an extension of an unwelcomed colonizing presence.

Since local committees did not respect the authority of Polish inspectors, often the only way to correct ration abuse was through American intervention. Yet, similar to how provincial residents pushed back against the RGO's message of national unity during the war, local communities after the war were reluctant to embrace American progressive-era values and practices. Instead, locals might play to American's perceptions of them as weak, vulnerable, or ignorant to get what they wanted. For example, when a Gray Samaritan told villagers in Polesia that they needed to make sure that "American interests were carried out" every day, a woman reminded her "this is the first time people in the village have taken part in such a work. Being ignorant of the ways, we make many blunders."[97] Exchanges like this played well with American progressive-era reformers. Gray Samaritan Marta Graczyk, the child of Polish-American immigrants in Rochester, New York, wrote, "I found these tall, slender, burly headed, rather rough looking, illiterate men and women to be as human as our fellow men in a higher station of life, perhaps a little more genuine than many of us. Once you convince them of your goodwill towards them, they are as clay, at your command do all that they can."[98] Graczyk however, might have overestimated the Grey Samaritans' influence. In the spring of 1920, her colleague Christine Zduleczna discovered about a third of the villages she visited in Volhynia were still distributing raw food. She organized new committees, made members sign a pledge to abide by American rules and convinced the village heads to punish anyone who violated the rules with a three-hundred mark fine or one month in jail. Despite all Zduleczna's work, kitchens resumed

Borderland to Soviet Heartland (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 32-33; Kathryn Ciancia, "The Local Boundaries of the Nation: Borderland Guard Activists in Polish-Occupied Volhynia, 1919-1920," *Slavic Review* 78, no. 3 (Fall 2019): 671-693.

[97] "Particular Incident from Polish Gray Samaritan Experience," HIA PGS 57026/3.

[98] Ibid.

with the distribution of raw food as soon as she left town.[99] Zduleczna's experience was all too likely a common one. As of January 1920, only five ARA inspectors plus the Grey Samaritans were left to cover the whole country. At best, an American inspector could visit a particular kitchen every two months. As Fuller observed, "the average committee knows that the American inspector will not be around again for two or three months."[100] This meant that even when American inspectors stepped in, there was no guarantee that their interventions would have a long-lasting effect.

In order to correct ration abuse, Pate demanded better reporting from local committees and threatened to cut off food supplies from those who did not comply. Not everyone in the ARA agreed with Pate's hardline approach. For example, Nellegar, who after being replaced by Fuller as Chief of the American Mission was reassigned to inspect the Kovel and Lublin regions, thought Pate's approach was completely out of touch with the conditions on the ground. In 1921, the official policy was not to grant foodstuffs to committees that failed to file proper monthly reports. However, with adult illiteracy rates falling somewhere between thirty and fifty percent depending on the area, some communities lacked anyone who could even write such a report.[101] "In fact," Nellegar wrote, "it is the exception to find a man that can sign his name. They use crosses and thumb prints."[102] In villages along the Stochod River, where more people lived in trenches than in houses, Nellegar recommended that "a special controller for this district would be a good thing." By "special controller" he meant "a very liberal one" that could understand local conditions and grant exceptions as necessary.[103] Based on Nellegar's report, Captain Quinn,

[99] Zduleczna to W. P. Fuller, April 29, 1920, HIA PGS 57026/1.
[100] Hoover to A.R.A. European Children's Fund, January 7, 1920, HIA ARA 23001/705/34.
[101] Łukasz Zamęcki, "The Second Polish Republic-Selected Issues," in *Poland and Spain in the Interwar and Postwar Period*, ed. Jose Luis Orella Martinez and Małgorzata Mizerska-Wrotowska (Madrid: Schedas, S.L., 2015), 38.
[102] Memorandum written by Nellegar to ARA, September 11, 1921, HIA ARA 23001/706/2.
[103] Nellegar to ARA, September 11, 1921, HIA ARA 23001/706/2.

who became Chief of the Polish mission after Fuller, told the London office that he felt the success or failure of the ARA operation during the coming winter largely depended on the way the organization handled the situation in the Kovel district and others with similarly bad conditions.[104] It was an acknowledgment that given local conditions in the eastern districts, strict adherence to ARA stipulations in certain regions might ultimately do more harm than good.

Not all the American aid workers were as sensitive to the ways in which their presence harmed or disrupted local communities. For example, Gray Samaritan Graczyk and her colleagues were wildly amused by how their arrival in a town could incite utter panic. “People running away for their lives, children screaming, crowds gathering about us whenever stopping at a place was nothing unusual,” she wrote in her memoir. In a village eighty-some kilometers north of Wilno, a young woman nearly climbed a wall of the post office trying to escape Graczyk’s unit.[105] Graczyk and her colleagues concluded that locals’ fear stemmed not from recent trauma, but rather backwardness, and thus they felt comfortable invoking any measures necessary to get what they needed. In the early spring of 1920, Graczyk’s vehicle got stuck in what she called “a small lake of water” covering a road between Mińsk and Baranowicze. She and her driver managed to flag down a Polish army captain who went to round up locals to help. Nearby, the army officer found some peasants cowering in a hut. At first, they refused to help Graczyk’s party, whom they called *burżuj,* a derogatory slang term for bourgeois or “filthy rich.”[106] Nevertheless, the officer forced the peasants from their home at gunpoint and made them gather a horse and wagon to pull the Americans’ truck out of the mud.[107]

Graczyk’s story illustrates how humanitarian aid sometimes intertwined and even relied

[104] Quinn to Fuller, “Report on conditions in Kowel District,” HIA ARA 706/2.
[105] Martha Graczyk Gedgowd, “Traveling in Poland,” HIA PGS 57026/3.
[106] Ghil’ad Zuckerman, *Language Contact and Lexical Enrichment in Israeli Hebrew* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 77.
[107] Martha Graczyk Gedgowd, “Traveling in Poland,” HIA PGS 57026/3.

on regimes of trauma and violence. In no work was this more true than the traveling typhus brigades, a sister relief effort to the ARA's child-feeding program. In the summer of 1919, the American Polish Typhus Relief Expedition, headed by US Army Colonel Henry Gilchrist and volunteer units from the American and British Society of Friends volunteers, began traveling village to village with mobile baths and disinfecting and delousing equipment. Minister of Health Tomasz Janiszewski had invited the groups to help stop the epidemic of typhus, a disease spread by body lice that causes high fever, body rash, severe headache, and nervous disturbances. Although typhus had long plagued Polish territory, it reached epidemic proportions after the armistice. From January 1, 1916 to December 31, 1919, Congress Poland and Galicia had 431,200 recorded cases of typhus, although many more certainly went unrecorded. [108]

The mass movement of troops, prisoners of war, and refugees made Poland's eastern front with Russia the prime target for intensive typhus actions. On May 29, 1919, Janiszewski, declared need for *cordon sanitaire* from the Baltic to the Adriatic, in which any person infected with typhus and other diseases had to be detained, bathed, trimmed, and deloused.[109] When mobile typhus units arrived in remote communities, Colonel Gilchrist found they often attracted the same attention "as a country circus."[110] Posters went up, and soon the entire village gathered in the public square, buzzing with anticipation. At this point aid workers collected everyone's clothes and began the process of bathing, hair trimming, and disinfecting. On an exceptional day, people were curious and compliant. Other times, as Dr. Baslund of the Swedish Ambulance Service wrote, it was "utterly impossible to organize baths. We have the utmost difficulty in persuading the peasants to hand over their clothes to be disinfected, as they never remove them

---

[108] E.W. Goodall, "Typhus Fever in Poland, 1916-1919," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 13 (1920): 264, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/003591572001301507.
[109] Cornebise, *Typhus and Doughboys*, 15.
[110] Gilchrist quoted in "W. P. Fuller to friends in the US, March 14, 1920, HIA AWF 72015/1.

day or night!"[111] When peaceful persuasion tactics failed to work, Baslund's unit resorted to more forceful measures, such as happened in a village fourty kilometers from Mińsk:

> That same evening we endeavored to persuade the peasants to precede us [to] a sterilizing apparatus. They refused, being afraid of the brigands infesting the neighborhood of Minsk. Murders are frequent, and it is necessary invariably to carry arms. Finally, we started off at 4 am, the party consisting of three members of the ambulance personnel and a Russian interpreter. On arriving, the peasants informed us that the patients had already recovered! There was consequently no alternative but, clad in our protective garments, to force our way into the homes and take away our patients, midst the energetic protests of their families.[112]

In the midst of a typhus epidemic, public health officials would not cave to local fears that equated trips to the hospital with imminent death. Nevertheless, locals continued to resist and protect themselves from what they perceived as serious threats. One father hid his sick child with a neighbor to avoid surrendering her to a typhus brigade. Another villager showed such hostility to Baslund's unit that he and his colleagues "were obliged to depart, not being sufficiently strong to risk open strife." In a third case, the whole village fled into the forest as the unit arrived, only leaving behind one elderly woman lying on the ground trampled with two broken legs.[113]

When aid workers came to the eastern borderlands, they entered communities where the legacies of war, violence, and foreign rule engendered deep suspicion and fear of outsiders. Given the additional, ongoing threats of looting, violence, and displacement, the encounter between aid workers and local inhabitants was ripe for conflict and misunderstanding. Aid workers, armed with a sense of cultural superiority and modern medical regimes, were committed to helping people that they saw as fundamentally more backward and unenlightened

---

[111] In addition to the American and British typhus units, the Swedish Red Cross also sent a unit to work in the area of Mińsk. See "Fighting Typhus in Poland," extract from notes taken by Dr. Baslund and communicated by the Central Committee of the Swedish Red Cross, HIA FWVRC XX333/2.
[112] "Fighting Typhus in Poland," extract from notes taken by Dr. Baslund and communicated by the Central Committee of the Swedish Red Cross, HIA FWVRC XX333/2.
[113] "Fighting Typhus in Poland."

than themselves. This left aid workers blind to the ways that they were possibly harming or traumatizing the very people they came to feed and treat.

The Bolshevik Invasion

By the spring of 1920, Fuller and Pate had ARA-PKPD operations back on track. At that point, the joint operation was delivering food to 1,315,490 children a day at five thousand feeding points in 1,400 communities. Fuller reported that since the ARA's arrival a year and a half earlier, the death rate of children ages zero to fifteen had decreased by more than fifty percent. In some communities, thanks to the American kitchens, children were healthier than the adults. With agriculture and industry also starting to improve, it looked as if the Poles would be able to take over the feeding action by the end of the year.[114]

However, a slow-burning military conflict on Poland's eastern frontier threatened to derail this progress. Poland's tensions with Bolshevik forces began in February 1919 after German troops withdrew from Ober-Ost leaving vast unclaimed territory that had previously separated Polish and Bolshevik armies. On the morning of February 14, 1919, Captain Mienicki of the Polish army's Wilno detachment led sixty-two Polish soldiers into Bereza Kartuska, a Bolshevik occupied township 108 kilometers northeast of Brest. After a short skirmish, Polish forces took eighty Bolshevik soldiers prisoner and the Polish-Soviet War began.[115]

The conflict deeply concerned those running ARA operations. After all, Hoover's main motivation for funneling billions in humanitarian aid into eastern Europe was to check the westward spread of Bolshevism. When the Soviet government proposed peace to the Poles in January 1920, Fuller asked officials in London and Washington how he should advise Polish

[114] W. P. Fuller to friends in the USA, March 14, 1920, HIA AWF 72015/1; "Miss Lathrop's visit to Poland," HIA PGS 57026/1; W. P. Fuller, Memorandum, HIA ARA 57007/706/2.
[115] Norman Davies, *White Eagle, Red Star: The Polish Soviet War 1919-1920 and "The Miracle on the Vistula,"* (London: Pimlico, 2003), 27.

leaders. The fact that Fuller, the director of a children's relief mission, would even ask how he should consult Polish leaders regarding their border conflicts speaks to the power the American humanitarian organization exerted to shape and direct the activities of the early Polish state. On February 6, 1920, Hoover told Fuller to instruct Paderewski to pursue peace immodestly, but later that day Hoover rescinded his order. Without a clear plan in place, Hoover and Fuller continued to worry about Poland's potential fall to communism.[116] On March 14, 1920, Fuller wrote about Poland's vulnerability:

> Her people are hungry and cold and ignorant; all they know is that there is a long, hard, uphill road ahead; and people in this condition and in this state of mind are more inclined to try anything once. I do not believe that Poland will go Bolshevik from internal combustion, but it is risky to throw her open to an aggressive propaganda.[117]

As the months wore on, it seemed that Fuller had more to fear than aggressive propaganda. In the winter of 1919-1920, the Red Army drew closer retaking territory from Kiev to Odessa. On April 21, 1920, Chief of State Piłsudski signed a hastily written treaty with Ataman Semyon Petlura that recognized him as the supreme authority of the Ukrainian People's Republic, defined boundaries between Polish and the Ukrainian republics, guaranteed protections for each other's citizens, and established commercial and economic agreements between the two polities. Four days later, Piłsudski launched a military offensive into Ukrainian territory and took Kiev from the Soviets on May 7, 1920, which marked the city's fifteenth regime change in three years.[118]

Despite Hoover's command to stay out of politics and border conflicts, ARA workers followed Piłsudski and his troops all the way to Kiev. Everywhere the army went, the Americans set up feeding stations, thereby providing social services even before the arrival of Polish civilian authorities. It was a collaboration with mutually reinforcing goals. Piłsudski, whose politics

---

[116] Matthew Lloyd Adams, "A Few Days in Kiev: The American Relief Administration During the Polish/Soviet War," *Polish Journal for American Studies*, 3, no. 3 (2009): 157.
[117] W. P. Fuller to friends in the USA, March 14, 192, HIA AWF 72015/1.
[118] Davies, *White Eagle, Red Star*, 103-104, 109.

actually aligned more with the Bolshevik Reds than the Whites, wanted to preserve non-Russian areas from Soviet control and restore the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of two centuries prior.[119] Meanwhile, ARA workers saw humanitarian aid as a way to shrink Bolshevism's specter of influence. By setting up kitchens, American aid workers not only fulfilled their own mission but also strengthened Polish claims over lands of the *kresy* and beyond.[120]

Once the Poles occupied Kiev, Fuller sent Gray Samaritan director Amy Pryor Tapping, a Polish army captain, and a couple of Russian-speaking Gray Samaritans to investigate the city's social welfare. The mission was later joined by John Gregg of the ARA, a British interpreter, a newspaper reporter, and two Polish representatives of the PKPD. As the westerners entered deep into Ukrainian territory, they moved "into the real east," as Tapping put it.[121] Standing on the edge of the Dnieper River, Tapping stared out into what she called "Russia the unexplainable." In an unpublished draft of her memoir, which she penned at Hoover's request in the 1960s, Tapping recalled this moment by misquoting the opening lines of Rudyard Kipling's 1898 poem, "The Explorer": "Tis the end of civilization/So they said, and I believed it. . ."[122] Besides feeling they were at the edge of civilization, the Americans also discovered that they were not the only ones keen to the political value of child welfare. In June 1920, John Gregg wrote to Fuller about the success of Bolshevik child aid efforts in Ukraine:

The Bolsheviks in Kieff did one piece of constructive work; they took good care of the

---

[119] Adams, "A Few Days in Kiev," 162; Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland*, vol. 2, *1795 to the Present* (New York: Columbia University, 1982), 396.
[120] American Relief Administration, *American Relief Administration European Children's Fund Mission to Poland*, 12.
[121] Amy Pryor Tapping, "Kiev June 1920," HIA PGS 57026/1.
[122] Kipling's actual opening lines to "The Explorer" are "There's no sense in going farther—it's the edge of cultivation/So they said, and I believed it." See Rudyard Kipling, *The Seven Seas Edition to the Worlds of Rudyard Kipling: The Five Nations and The Seven Seas,"* vol. 22 (Garden City, NY: Double Day, 1915), 45.

> children. The policy of the government is to catch them young and lead them in the right path; the result was excellent in somuch [sic.] as they lacked the personnel to do it all themselves and the same old teachers taught the same old stuff, with the addition that a Bolshevik teacher came to the schools and orphanages once a week and gave Marxian lectures which certainly didn't do much harm too. In the meantime the children had something to eat and a place to sleep. The children were healthy and fit in marked contrast to many of the adults, who were terribly under-nourished and in bad health."[123]

If ARA was to be successful in its mission, the aid workers knew they had to establish feeding and propaganda efforts to counteract Bolshevik influence in Polish-occupied territories.

However, Poland's hold of Kiev was short-lived. By June 10, 1920, a Bolshevik counter-offensive put Polish troops on the retreat. Three days later, Polish troops and Peltura's Ukrainian army completely abandoned Kiev, at which point Soviet troops advanced towards the Polish border at a rate of ten to twenty miles a day. On July 5, 1920, the Soviets launched another offensive from the north, and Fuller wrote in his diary, "Poles admit to losing Rowno. It begins to look as if anything might happen."[124] Tapping described Warsaw as feeling quite tense that summer. All anyone talked about was the probability of an invasion and the inability of Poland's own army to counter it. Soldiers flooded the streets while civilians packed the churches. Mourning became "the order of the day," and rumors circulated of a Jewish uprising against the Poles should the Bolsheviks take Warsaw, a detail that Tapping recorded without further comment.[125]

As Bolshevik troops rapidly advanced, American and Polish staff rushed to evacuate 9,200 tons of food and supplies in the east.[126] Sometimes they broke down kitchens as gunshots fired in the distance. At the same time, Polish groups like the RGO worked to evacuate children out of combat zones. By late July, American Ambassador to Poland Hugh Gibson told the Gray

---

[123] John Gregg to W. P. Fuller, June 25, 1920. HIA WPF 57007/1/1.
[124] Fuller referred here to the city of Równe in the Volhynia region. See William Parmer Fuller Diary, HIA WPF 57007/1.
[125] Tapping, "First American Peace Corp," 72.
[126] W. P. Fuller, "The Work in Poland," HIA WPF 57007/3.

Samaritans to prepare to evacuate Poland "when or if the Bolos crossed the Bug." He instructed them to do so with as little fanfare as possible so as not to look like they were betraying the Poles. Tapping admitted, "It was a bit difficult to keep a 'business as usual attitude' about one's job, when the country has only one thought, its salvation which was so precious."[127] The Bolsheviks did cross the Bug on August 1, 1920, and six days later, Tapping left Warsaw for Cracow with further plans to flee to Hungary should the situation grow worse. However, that month the Poles won a decisive victory in the Battle of Warsaw and sent the Red Army on its final retreat.[128]

Although Poland's capital was saved from a Bolshevik takeover, the invasion left the country in a serious state of disorganization. Schools were closed. Already crowded cities like Warsaw were filled with refugees and people returning from the army.[129] Bolshevik troops once again left a trail of destruction in communities as they retreated eastward. In the town of Ostrów Mazowiecka, located halfway between Warsaw and Białystok, the Bolsheviks arrested 180 people, shot sixteen including a priest, and left the local population of 15,000, "thoroughly stripped." The soldiers stole grain and potatoes, seventy-five percent of the district's horses, and were even said to take the shoes off people's feet.[130] The invasion, which forced the child-feeding program to reduce its efforts by about half, corresponded with a twenty-five percent rise in child mortality during the summer of 1920.

Until kitchens could resume activity, ARA workers temporarily distributed raw foodstuffs in certain districts.[131] The number of Polish Gray Samaritan workers in Poland dropped from

[127] Tapping, "First American Peace Corp," 77, HIA PGS 57026/1.
[128] Ibid., 77-81, HIA PGS 57026/1.
[129] Ibid., 77, HIA PGS 57026/1.
[130] Joseph W. Rice to George F. Howard, September 7, 1920, HIA ARA 23001/706/2.
[131] "Information received from some refugees returning to their homes in Bielsk district from Russia," HIA ARA 23001/706/2.

thirty to fourteen and other American and Polish inspectors fed refugees around Cracow until it was safe to return to their districts. Finally, the events of 1920 cost the ARA its leader, William Fuller, who fell gravely ill as a result of the stress of that summer. Soon after Bolsheviks left Warsaw, Fuller and his wife returned to America.[132] He had led the organization through its most harrowing period of crisis and reorganization, but now the time had come for him to hand the reins off to someone else.

The Ethnic Politics of Foreign Aid

As the PKPD resumed activity in eastern Poland, it did so under a new statute meant to formalize its legal standing with the Polish state. The PKPD's statute, accepted by the Polish Ministry of Health on August 15, 1920, bore the mark of American influence in two specific ways. First, Article One changed the organization's name from the Polish Children's Aid Committee to the Polish-American Children's Aid Committee (*Polsko-Amerykański Komitet Pomocy Dzieciom*, or PAKPD). According to ARA sources, this change came "at the request of the Poles," who believed the word "American" would garner more authority and respect.[133] Second, Article Three adopted the ARA's guiding principle that "the aim of the foundation is the promotion of the health and general welfare throughout the Republic of Poland of infants and children, expectant and nursing mothers, regardless of creed, citizenship and race. . . ."[134] By formalizing its commitment to helping any children or nursing mothers within Polish borders regardless of their religion, ethnicity, or citizenship, the PAKPD--an organization operating under the Polish Ministry of Health--signalled an expansion of definition of a deserving child beyond the RGO's prioritizing of mainly urban children from Polish families. However, the difference

[132] Fuller, "A Red Curse over Poland."
[133] "A Brief History of the PAKPD," April 1, 1921, HIA ARA 23001/96/2.
[134] "Statute of the Foundation under the name "Polsko Amerykański Komitet Pomocy Dzieciom," in abbreviation "P.A.K.P.D.," HIA ARA 23001/96/2.

between the discourse and practice of care under the ARA-PAKPD relief regime deserves further interrogation.

Broadly speaking, the ARA and the PKPD did take religious needs into account while feeding children of multiple backgrounds. From 1919 to 1922, the ARA and PAKD fed anywhere from 500,000 to 1.3 million children daily. About thirty-percent of those children were Jewish. To assure that Jewish children could eat American rations, the ARA allowed Jewish communities to run separate kitchens and use kosher fats provided by the Joint.[135] While conducting the feeding operation, some American relief workers believed that they were also forging new forms of ethnic cooperation in Poland. William Grove saw the ARA's mission as not only to practice strict impartiality, "but to break down racial and religious barriers."[136] The biggest religious barrier the Americans perceived was the one between Poles and Jews. William Fuller praised the ARA for being what he believed to be the first organization in Poland that ever brought together Jews and Gentiles, two groups that he said would "ordinarily. . . won't even sit in the same room." "We 'get away' with it," Fuller continued, "but only because our insistence is vigorous and is supported by such a valuable commodity as food."[137] If conflicts arose between members of different ethnic or religious identities, ARA workers were to remind locals that they shared a common goal of saving children, an approach Sidney Brooks called powerful enough to "help bring the beginning of that intramural cooperation so essential to recovery."[138] By Grove, Brooks, and Fuller's accounts, ARA workers did more than deliver meals to hungry mouths; they delivered ideals that soothed age-old tensions, fostered a spirit of communal activism, and made strides towards integrating Poland's diverse and deeply divided population.

[135] American Relief Administration, American Relief Administration European Children's Fund Mission to Poland, 12.
[136] Grove, *War's Aftermath*, 193.
[137] W. P. Fuller to friends in the USA, March 14, 1920, HIA AWF 72015/1.
[138] Brooks, *America and Poland, 1915-1925,* 33.

Despite these rosy reflections from top ARA officials, archival records from American relief missions reveal major setbacks to the enactment of nonsectarian aid, both on the parts of local residents and aid workers themselves. First, no matter how much aid workers formally preached the importance of "aid without distinction," they could not easily change how local groups felt about one another. In one Galician community, Ukrainians complained that a Polish PAKPD inspector announced in a public meeting that she did not care for the Ukrainian nation and only fed its children because the Americans made her.[139] And certainly, the Americans yielded tremendous power. When ARA units rolled up in their Ford trucks and Chevy Cadillacs, townsfolk swarmed the vehicles armed with a bevy of requests and complaints. "It's astonishing the faith they have in Americans," Christine Zduleczna wrote in January 1920. "They stop us for all kinds of help, feeling America can do everything."[140] However, the Americans did not always use their power to intervene in local conflicts. In Kaluszyn, a small town west of Warsaw, Martha Graczyk watched locals fight about whether or not the town's Jews, who constituted a majority of the population, had the right to oversee the distribution of the American food. Amid the uproar, loud talking, and hand waving, Graczyk and her colleagues felt they could do nothing more than sit back and watch the townspeople fight it out.[141]

Fights like the one Graczyk witnessed could often be resolved if each religious or ethnic group was allowed to feed and clothe their own children. However, when American Red Cross officials tried to establish an infant health center in Piotrków that would provide low-cost milk and medical care to children of all backgrounds, the idea disrupted long-standing charitable norms and local prejudcies. A Polish-Catholic doctor and his wife ran the station, but the community was thirty-five percent Jewish. On August 9, 1921, Dr. S. M. Schmidt, the Joint's

[139] Fisher, *America and the New Poland*, 226.
[140] Zduleczna, "Interesting Stories in Poland," January 31, 1920, HIA 57026/1.
[141] Martha Graczyk Gedgowd, "Pleasant Memories," HIA PGS 57026/3.

Medical Commissioner for Poland, alerted Dr. Rood M. Taylor, the ARC Medical Director in Poland, that the physician refused to serve Jewish children.[142] The doctor himself soon confirmed these allegations by telling an ARC inspector that before American intervention, he only served Catholic children, and he had no intention to alter that policy. Supplying a "Catholics only" station technically violated Hoover's rules, but Taylor recognized that forcing the doctor to do otherwise would likely prove impossible.[143] Therefore, he authorized a shipment of supplies to start a separate Jewish station run by a doctor from Piotrków's Jewish hospital.[144]

Although the Piotrków situation ended in compromise, ARC officials did not always respond so quickly to allegations of anti-Jewish descrimination. In January 1920, the Jewish community of Lachowicze, a town in Polesia, sent seven wagons to nearby Baranowicze to pick up clothing bundles for 650 Jewish children. According to the Lachowicze Jewish community's president, the bundles instead went to two Polish Catholic nuns who allowed a Polish laywoman to distribute them to Christian children. When delegates from the Jewish community visited the nuns, a soldier begin to beat one of the Jewish men, at which point the sisters closed the door and allegedly remarked, "You should file suit against us in America."[145] Soon after the incident, three Jewish community representatives, all of whom could speak and write in English, traveled to the ARC regional office in Baranowicze to file a formal complaint. They asked for either new clothing bundles to be delivered, or to be reimbursed the six-hundred marks spent on the seven-wagon transport. Nearly a year and a half later, it appeared that the ARC still had not addressed the complaint. In August 1921, the Club of Jewish Deputies to the Polish *Sejm* alerted ARC Director in Poland R. F. Allen of the problem. Allen responded by saying the ARC no

[142] S. M. Schmidt to R. M. Taylor, August 9, 1921, HIA ARC XX482/116.
[143] Taylor to Schmidt, August 22, 1921, HIA ARC XX482/116.
[144] John B. Voor to Schmidt, September 13, 1921, HIA ARC XX482/116.
[145] President of the Jewish Community in Lachowicze to the National Jewish Club of Members to the Diet at Warsaw, July 26, 1921, HIA ARC XX482/116.

longer conducted general relief work, the Baranowicze office had closed, and there was no way to investigate further.[146] In fact, the ARC was still distributing some clothing in tandem with its new children's health program, but Allen declined to fulfill the Lachowicze Jewish community's request.

During the same winter as the Lachowicze incident, representatives from Bialystok's Jewish community alleged that only Christians were notified of ARC clothing distributions. If Jews tried to join the distribution lines, they were supposedly denied access. Winter was always a time of high demand for clothing, but the need was especially acute in Białystok, which was still recovering from the Bolshevik's four-week occupation earlier that year. Only months prior, the Bolsheviks had raided shops, factories, and storehouses, and took with them two million yards of cloth.[147] The ARA's George Howard estimated in October 1920 that the consequences of the Bolshevik raids would leave between four and five thousand people out of work for the winter, with an additional 25,000 to 30,000 requiring material support.[148] Considering that Jews in Białystok made up 83.9 percent of the industrial workforce and eighty-eight percent of shop owners, it stands to reason that Jewish leaders felt a particular urgency to secure clothing aid for a vulnerable community struggling in the wake of the Bolshevik raids.[149] When Jewish community representatives spoke with F. Rice of the ARC, he said that although the clothing was already distributed, he would make sure the next shipment was shared with the Jewish community. A few days later, Rice did send the community two wagons filled with bandages and

[146] President of the Jewish Community in Lachowicze to the National Jewish Club of Members to the Diet at Warsaw, July 26, 1921; National Jewish Club of Members of the Diet at Warsaw to the Director of the ARC, August 16, 1921; R. F. Allen to the National Jewish Club of Members of the Diet, August 32, 1921, HIA ARC XX482/116.
[147] Joseph W. Rice to Howard, September 7, 1920, HIA ARA XX482/707/2.
[148] Howard to American Relief Administration Warehouses (London), October 5, 1920, HIA ARA XX482/707/2.
[149] Rebecca Kobrin, *Jewish Bialystok and Its Diaspora* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 30.

medicine, but no clothing. When a rabbi returned to Rice's office to ask again for clothes, the security guard denied him entrance, saying Rice was not in the office.[150]

According to Rice, he only found out about this issue from an article in a local Jewish newspaper. Rice said he immediately met with the rabbi and his assistant to go over his records to show him that the Jews received their portion of the supplies. "I also showed them where medical attention was being given to more Jews than Christians," Rice continued.[151] In Rice's retelling, it is hard to know exactly what he meant when he said that "Jews were receiving their portion of the supplies." Either he meant that the Jewish community, made up of 37,186 people who comprised 48.4 percent of the total population, was receiving its fair share of children's clothing sets, or that it received its portion of the total supplies including medicine, bandages, and supplemental food. When asked to weigh in on the matter, Ada Ayers, an American nurse who ran the ARC hospital in Bialystok from December 1, 1920 until February 28, 1921, also emphasized how much the ARC's medical program assisted the Jewish population. She maintained that two-thirds of the patients at her hospital were Jewish and that she had seen the ARC dentist and eye-doctor examine children at the Jewish orphanage. She added that her hospital employed both a Jewish overnight security guard and interpreter. On the topic of clothing, Ayers reported that children discharged from the hospital received "a certain amount of clothing," in addition to what a visiting nurse distributed to certain families on home visits.[152] By underscoring the good the ARC had done for the Jews of Białystok overall, Rice and Ayers implied that Jewish leaders had no reason to complain.

In fact, American aid workers from the ranks of the American Relief Administration, the

---

[150] John P. Caffey to Director of American Red Cross, Poland, November 24, 1921, HIA ARC XX482/116.
[151] F. Rice to Chas R. Barge, April 21, 1921, HIA ARC XX482/116.
[152] Ada S. Ayers to Taylor, November 28, 1921, HIA ARC XX482/116.

American Red Cross, the Grey Samaritans, and the Society of Friends frequently framed Jews who complained as ungrateful and untruthful. In October 1919, the ARA's Galician inspector William Gwynn said he found "no reason to suppose [t]hat they [the Jews] are receiving a bad deal." He wrote later in the report, "It is among the Jewish population, if anywhere, that children who are not actually needy go to the kitchen. Of course any attempt to cut down on them and to maintain or increase the amounts given out to Christian children would immediately turn loose alot [sic.] of pogrom and persecution talk. . . ."[153] Polish Gray Samaritan Martha Graczyk demonstrated even less patience when she had to field complaints from Jews. After staying the night at a small town inn, Graczyk was approached by three Jewish men who, in her words, "started to pour out a story about the terrible Poles prosecuting against them, of the terrible suffering of the Jews from the Poles, and among them the worse were the soldiers from America, always after them."[154] One of the men claimed to have just been chased by some American soldiers threatening to cut off his beard. Graczyk admitted in her notes that some American soldiers did harass Jews this way. However, she thought fault still lay with the Jewish men for trying to illegally purchase clothing off the soldiers in the first place. After describing her exchange with "the delegation" as she called them, Graczyk typed two-and-a-half pages with her personal thoughts on the Jews, whom she saw as a major threat to Poland:

> The Jews at the time certainly allowed their lot of ungratefulness, at a time when Poland was rising out of it's [sic.] oppression, having so many enemies surrounding her. Not enough that she had to put up with her outside enemies, she also had a very dangerous enemy inside of her country, this the Jews trying all sorts of ways to harm her. Enjoying more freedom than in any other country of Europe, they had the control of finances in their hands at the time. [155]

Graczyk believed there was a vast Jewish conspiracy to challenge Poland's burgeoning

[153] Gwynn, "Report Lt. Wm. Gwynn," October 15, 1919, HIA ARA 23001/705/10.
[154] Martha Graczyk Gedgowd, "A Variety of Happenings," HIA PGS 57026/3.
[155] Ibid.

prosperity, which she described as “a plain case of biting the hand thats [sic.] feeding you” since six hundred years prior King Casimir the Great had invited the Jews to safely settle in Poland.[156] While Graczyk’s brand of antisemitism, which presented Polish Jews as ungrateful, untrustworthy, and unclean internal enemy might have originated in her Polish immigrant family, the prejudices she displayed squared well with ideas prominent in wider American society. During World War I, despite American Jews enlisting at rates disproportionately to their population, the idea of Jews as cowards and draft dodgers persisted in the United States. In the decades after the war, America’s political and intellectual elite codified anti-Jewish ideas into immigration laws and exercised them through policies that excluded Jews from certain neighborhoods, hotels, country clubs, and medical schools. It was a time in American history, writes historian Robert Michael, when even the “[Ku Klux] Klan’s anti-Jewish attitudes corresponded to the anti-semitism in American culture.”[157]

As much as American aid workers touted the principle of impartiality, they were not free from prejudice against the people they encountered. American aid workers filtered their interactions with locals through different lenses depending on the person’s ethnic or religious identity. For example, many aid workers saw Poland and America as countries with shared values and history, which led them to identify more strongly with the plight of Christian Poles. In his memoir, Grove describes American feelings of goodwill and sympathy for Poles that stretched all the way back to the American Revolutionary War, “when liberty-loving Poland aided America.” He saw aid to Poland as not only a repayment for that favor but also an extension of “the natural desire of Americans to see people of other countries free.”[158]

---

[156] Ibid.
[157] Robert Michael, *A Concise History of American Antisemitism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 138.
[158] Grove, *War’s Aftermath*, 188.

Furthermore, Americans found Poland to have many respectable qualities. First, they saw Poland as a country that produced many heroic and cultured leaders such as world-famous concert pianist Paderewski and the "great leader of the Polish legions," Józef Piłsudski. Moreover, American aid workers often praised the Poles they encountered as enthusiastic, eager, and self-sacrificing in their embrace of child welfare work. Despite Fuller's critiques of their lacking business acumen, he found the Poles to be extremely polite and "delightful people socially"[159] The idea of Poland as a good Christian nation that had suffered long and hard at the hands of foreign forces with whom the United States was ideologically and militarily opposed was often repeated in aid workers' reports, letters, and recollections. Helping Christian Poles rebuild their country and serve their needy populations had a feel-good quality that appealed strongly to aid workers and played well with donors back home.

On the other hand, many aid workers neither recognized Jews as part of the Polish nation nor as a people with whom they could find any common ground. William Fuller told his friends in America that there was no such thing as Polish Gentiles and Polish Jews, but only Poles and Jews. He continued, "In Poland, the Jews are a race apart and are a far different kind of people than any we have ever known. . . ."[160] Eastern European Jews struck some aid workers as foreign and exotic. Grove felt amused to encounter "thousands of the same types of Jews we had occasionally seen on stage," by which he was referring to Orthodox men's long beards and black robes.[161] Other aid workers saw Jews as unclean and uncivilized counterparts to hardworking, civically-minded Poles. In Kaluszyn, Graczyk described a committee meeting as filled with a crowd of unwashed, greasy and bearded Jews punctuated by the occasional "Pole with a

[159] W. P. Fuller to friends in the USA, March 14, 1920, HIA AWF 72015/1.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Grove, *War's Aftermath*, 40.

clean-shaven face."[162] At a meeting in Pińsk, Christine Zduleczna described how the "big eyed priest" watched helplessly as the disgruntled Jew "nearly has a fit."[163] The correlation of Jews with dirt was not limited to the Gray Samaritans. After reading a newspaper article by the Jewish deputy to the *Sejm* who also promoted Hebrew-language education, Henry W. Hamilton, a Quaker relief worker from Missouri, told his family, "If you saw a hundred Kaftaned [sic.] Jews running around in one block in this city you would perhaps wonder why he doesnt [sic.] teach them the value of an occasional bath, sell them a few razors, and start a steam laundry and disinfecting plant for them." Hamilton said he had seen enough over there to know that while Jews may not be "the only ones to blame" for Poland's problems, they were certainly "the most guilty."[164]

Aid workers pointed to Jewish customs and poverty as reasons why they suffered. By Grove's assessment, so long as Poland's Jews refused to "discard the long black gowns and skull caps" and "continued to live by themselves" in Polish towns and cities, "they were bound to be targets for criticism." He did not believe Polish Jews were capable of improving their communities, for squalor was "all they had ever known."[165] Graczyk, who declared herself "not anti-Jewish, simply anti-dirt," said that "the Jews seemed to mind the least for even in our times they were plenty covered with. . . greasy dirt."[166] Like Grove, she read the state of Jewish neighborhoods to be a deliberate choice rather than the consequence of living in a poor, war-ravaged country. She believed that "in spite of the poverty at this time in Poland, it seems the Jews always had plenty of. . .money." However, when Polish families sold all their furniture,

---

[162] Martha Graczyk Gedgowd, "Pleasant Memories," HIA PGS 57026/3.
[163] Christine Zduleczna to Tapping, December 1, 1921, HIA PGS 57026/3.
[164] Henry W. Hamilton to family members, March 6, 1924, HIA Henry W. Hamilton Papers (HWH) 85072/1.
[165] Grove, *War's Aftermath,* 62-3.
[166] Martha Graczyk Gedgowd, "A Variety of Happenings," HIA PGS 57026/3.

Grove assessed that they did so "for want of bread, the Jews buying at very low prices."[167] ARC nurse Carrie Pickett perceived Jewish urban settlements to be a dirty blight on the otherwise picturesque canvas of the Polish countryside. One weekend, she took a long drive through Galicia, during which she enjoyed lovely country scenes including "quaint and pretty houses" with "thatched roofs and pretty little gardens all around" and peasants cutting the hay and "fixing it in little stacks." Pickett wrote that after driving through "many pretty little villages, very clean" she would "strike dirty Jewish villages and they would be awful" with "horribly old Jews everyplace [sic.] and pigs all over the streets." It puzzled Pickett that every "Jewish village" she rode through was also full of pigs. She reasoned that "perhaps the Poles that live where the Jews are get to be dirty and lazy and do not care."[168] Essentially she saw Jewish dirt as a contaminant strong enough to taint Poles otherwise disposed towards cleanliness.

American perceptions about dirt and sanitation factored into whom they classified as most deserving of aid. When aid workers described Christians' unkempt appearances, bare feet, and ragged clothing, they did so to emphasize their ranks among the deserving poor. For example, the Christian family of Michalina Smitek and her two daughters who lived in a dug-out on the former eastern front with a mule and several chickens were seen as innocent victims of circumstance. To aid in their recovery, a Polish Gray Samaritan gifted them three-hundred marks from her discretionary cash funds authorized by US Ambassador to Poland, Hugh Gibson.[169] By contrast, another Gray Samaritan called Jewish houses, "repulsively dirty" and then quipped, "I wonder they dont [sic.] all die of typhus and a few other diseases of the great unwashed." Americans saw the Poles--and other non-Polish Christians in the eastern borderlands--as quintessential and eternal victims, first of the partitions, then of the Central Powers, and, most

[167] Ibid.
[168] Carrie Pickett to Family, July 18, 1921, HIA Carrie Pickett Papers (CP) 73083.
[169] "Snapshots of Poland's Misery," HIA ARA 23001/702/2.

recently, of the Bolshevik invasion. As many problems as Fuller had with Polish organizational skills, he admitted it was not entirely Poles' fault considering they had been "knocked about by Russia, Austria, and Germany for so long."[170] Conversely, Fuller believed that Jews had actually profited from Poland's struggles. In February 1920, Fuller told the London Childfund office that deep Polish hatred for the Jews was "not entirely without reason." He then repeated a prominent belief from World War I that Jews had collaborated with enemy forces for their own benefit. "It is said that in certain parts of Galicia," Fuller wrote, "where most of the Poles lost everything as the battle swayed back and forward, the Jews came out with a real profit because the Jew was Russian when the Russians were in occupation, Austrian when the Austrians were victorious and so on, while the Pole was a Pole all the time."[171] If aid workers believed Jewish communities in Poland were suffering on par with Christians, which some even doubted they were, they still diminished those communities' status as victims of war and poverty by emphasizing their refusal to assimilate, modernize, and "clean up."

American aid workers' preference for the plight of Poles led them to support the authority of ethnic Poles in the developing welfare bureaucracy and privilege Polish charitable causes. Although the ARA required the PAKPD not discriminate based on race, religion, ethnicity, and nationality, the PAKPD could still hire exclusively Polish inspectors to monitor children's welfare work among non-majority Polish populations in the east. At the communal level, children's relief work was to be supervised by a "joint committee representing various religions and in the border districts, various national elements" however that representation was not necessarily proportional to the population.[172]

[170] W. P. Fuller to friends in the USA, March 14, 1920, HIA AWF 72015/1.
[171] Fuller to ARAECF, February 5, 1920, HIA WPF 57007/1.
[172] American Relief Administration, *American Relief Administration European Children's Fund Mission to Poland*, 12.

Inspection reports filed in October 1919 for kitchens in the part of Eastern Galicia now located in Ukraine's Ivan Franko oblast, revealed how no matter how many Poles lived in a town, they held the most seats on local welfare committees. In Dolina, where Poles, Jews, and "Ruthenians," as they were called in the report, each made up about one-third of the population, the local welfare committee consisted of seven Poles, two Ruthenians, and two Jews. In the town of Kosów, where Jews made up about fifty percent of the population, Jews still only held two seats on a council of seventeen. Despite comprising anywhere between twenty to fifty percent of the population in Dolina, Nadworna, Kosów, and Żydaczów, towns with five-thousand to nine-thousand residents, Jews only occupied two seats on each respective committee. By contrast, Poles always held the most seats, and Ruthenians, Ukrainians, and Greek Catholics (the designation differed from report to report) landed somewhere in the middle, with their representation still often falling below what was commensurate with their population.[173]

Inspector Gwynn believed that Poles deserved to occupy the majority of the seats on local welfare committees because no other group, regardless of their representation in the community, could be trusted with that responsibility. He argued that Jews only made up a very small portion of the intelligentsia and often had "other than philanthropic and humanitarian aims in life." Although Gwynn found Ruthenian peasants "very picturesque," he said they did "not strike one by their looks of intelligence." By contrast, Gwynn thought Galician Poles seemed "to have a corner on the intelligence in this part of the world." Gwynn theorized that it was Poles' years of experience as colonizers in this territory that taught them how to manage "less civilized" populations. Such skills he believed were absolutely necessary given recent acts of Ukrainian

---

[173] William Gwynn, "Dolina, Eastern Galicia," October 15, 1919; "Kobow [sic.], Eastern Galicia," October 11, 1919; "Nadworna, Eastern Galicia," October 10, 1919; "Stanislawow? [sic.] Eastern Galicia," October 12, 1919; "Zydaczow, Eastern Galicia," October 10, 1919, HIA ARA 23001/705/10.

and Ruthenian violence during the Polish-Ukrainian border disputes of 1918-1919. Even though he found Ukrainian and Ruthenian populations "docile enough for now," they had only recently, in Gwynn's words, locked up thousands of Poles, allowed them to die of typhus, and making "a fine performance of cutting off noses and poking out eyes." In Gwynn's report, he emphasized the generosity of the Poles towards the Ruthenians, saying they acted as "civilized men to those of a lower level of civilization." Gwynn concluded "And so it seems quite right that the Poles, in this matter of child feeding, as in other matters, should have a firm upper hand."[174] Gwynn's assessment of Poles both as victims and colonizers, Ukrainians as barbarians, and Jews as untrustworthy illustrates how even as "apolitical actors," American aid workers helped reinforce Polish rule over minority populations.

American tendencies to see Poles as righteous victims led aid workers to be more sympathetic to other Polish causes, especially in the eastern borderlands. The Polish Gray Samaritans occupied a special place in the ARA's operation because in addition to supervising children's kitchens and clothing distributions, they could devote time to side projects to serve communities as they saw fit. Not surprisingly, given that all the women were of Polish birth or heritage, most of their projects centered around helping the Polish minority in the Eastern Borderlands. While working in Pińsk, the city that had the second-highest percentage of Jews in the Russian Pale of Settlement, Christine Zduleczna supported the construction of a Polish-language school. Zduleczna complained that the city had over twenty different trade schools "to which no Christian child is admitted, as it could not understand what they teach since all the lessons are in Hebrew language."[175] She worked to open another school for Poles, and was angered by what she saw as Jewish obstinacy to the project. Further south in Stanisławów, two

[174] Gwynn, "Report Lt. Wm. Gwynn," October 15, 1919, HIA ARA 23001/705/10.
[175] These trade schools mostly likely operated in Yiddish. Zduleczna to Tapping, December 1, 1921, HIA PGS 57026/3.

other Polish Gray Samaritans, Anna Michalowska and Valentina Smentkowska, were dismayed to learn that "while there were Jewish, Russian, and even German orphanages, there was no home for Polish orphans."[176] They presented this fact to their director, Amy Pryor Tapping, as a great injustice and went to work securing foreign grants from Ambassador Gibson and their friends in St. Louis. The women eventually secured a house with a large garden, new appliances, window panes, beds from the ARC, and clothing and food from the ARA and local farmers. Although the Gray Samaritans were bound by the non-sectarian rule in their distribution of food and clothing, ARA officials lauded them for their devotion, and perseverance and sensitivity to communal needs, making them not only great heroes for the Polish nation but also the quintessential representatives of American humanitarian spirit and hard work.

Reduction of the Feeding Program

The goal of American intervention in Poland was to provide temporary, immediate relief and help build a permanent system that could last after American missions ended. By the second half of 1921, the ARA officials had announced it would depart in June 1922 and was thus reducing feeding to only the "poorest children in the poorest sections of the country."[177] In the regions of Łódź, Płock, Lublin, Masowsze, Radom, Częstochowa, Cracow, and partially in Lwów, the ARA limited feeding to include only children living in institutions, destroyed towns, industrial towns, and refugee children in extreme need.[178] As the ARA scaled back child feeding, letters began to flood its Warsaw office protesting the reduction and pleading for the feeding to continue.[179] One letter, which was signed by several Ukrainian mayors in the Cracow district,

[176] Brooks, "America and Poland, 1915-1925," 91.
[177] "American Activity in Poland," *Dziennik Chicagoski* (Chicago), December 8, 1921, https://flps.newberry.org/code/IID10/#filters/group/polish/year/1917-1929/keyword/orphan/.
[178] John P. Gregg, "Memorandum to Inspectors No. 38," August 11, 1921, HIA ARA 23001/706/2.
[179] "American Activity in Poland."

alleged that kitchens had unfairly stopped feeding Ukrainian children because the Polish inspector did not like the Ukrainian nation. When an ARA official met with the accused PAKPD supervisor and three of the Ukrainian mayors, the mayors admitted that they knew the kitchens were closed because the Americans were reducing the program. The Ukrainians recanted their allegations of Polish mistreatment and claimed that they only signed the letter because they believed it to be a simple request to reopen children's kitchens.[180] Regardless of their true intentions, the incident demonstrated the fragility of the so-called multi-ethnic cooperation forged under ARA's aid regime. As public feeding slowed and people once again mobilized identity politics to lobby for more aid, ARA officials wondered how well the PAKPD's programs would fare after the Americans' departure.

In fact, worry about what child welfare would look like after the Americans' departure weighed heavily on relief workers' minds. Philip S. Baldwin, the last director of the ARA's Polish mission, worked tirelessly in his final months in charge to set the PAKPD on what he saw as the path of success. Baldwin knew that he needed to staff the PAKPD's Executive Council with strong, inspirational leaders who could secure support from a Polish government, lest it "calmly sit back and wait until the problem is actually upon them before taking action."[181] Baldwin eventually chose Władysław Grabski, a man of some prestige who had recently served as the Minister of Finance and then as Prime Minister for one month in the summer of 1920. Grabski's appointment was a curious one. As a National Democrat he likely did not agree with the PAKPD's statutory promise of care for all children in need regardless of identity in the spirit that Hoover had intended. Furthermore, as an economist and historian, he did not have the credentials or experience with child welfare work like others in the organization, such as

[180] Fisher, *America and the New Poland,* 226-7.
[181] Brooks, "America and Poland, 1915-1925," 101.

Bronisław Krakowski or Władysław Szejnach. Nevertheless, based on Grabski's interest in the PAKPD and the warm cooperation he had always provided the Americans, Baldiwn believed him to be "the ideal man for the job."[182] In addition to selecting the PAKPD's first Polish leader since Tadeusz Gawlikowski's failed tenure two years earlier, Baldwin convinced leaders in the *Sejm* to pass a resolution that expanded the PAKPD's role from direct distribution of food and sanitary supplies to include organizing, supporting, and subsidizing institutions intended to improve the moral and physical development of children, such as feeding stations, hospitals, children's homes, daycares, sanatoria, shelters, gymnasia, public paths, and summer colonies.[183] The resolution also secured government funds to support those efforts. ARC officials gifted the PAKPD an additional $275,000 to continue funding the child feeding effort and $150,000 worth of medical supplies to help build a child-focused sanitary-medical program. ARC officials imagined this aid would last the Poles about five and a half years.[184] Before American missions withdrew in March and June of 1922, they tried to build the Poles a strong foundation on which to create a permanent national organization to direct and develop child welfare in Poland for many years to come.

* * *

The experience of extreme need combined with the presence of foreign humanitarian relief missions profoundly shaped the welfare landscape of independent Poland in just a matter of a few years. While the aristocracy, clergy, nobility, and the urban elite controlled prewar and wartime charity, postwar aid efforts were the domain of American servicemen, doctors, and nurses who occupied a range of roles including care providers, inspectors, social workers, and

[182] Ibid., 102.
[183] Ibid., 102.
[184] Brooks, "America and Poland, 1915-1925," 102; Grove, *War's Aftermath,* 78.

conflict mediators. Their efforts to create a domestic health and welfare service that would continue after their departure began to shift power away from the old philanthropic guard into the hands of expert-professionals who would dominate child welfare for the duration of the Second Republic.

Despite the stated intentions to make the relief effort a joint enterprise between Americans and Poles, Americans always maintained a strong upper hand. Hoover and ARA established the rules and systems for aid distribution, and sometimes even leveraged aid for political influence. From January 1920 to June 1922, Americans held the top leadership positions in the Polish children's welfare bureau, then named who would succeed them after departure. However, for all the power Americans were able to exert at the central level of organization, they had much less control in local communities. As aid workers navigated physically, linguistically, and culturally unfamiliar areas, they struggled to communicate the importance of American principles of rational aid distribution. In the context of open war, shifting military boundaries, profound devastation, and deep ethnic tension, local residents used whatever resources they could to survive and take care of their own the best way they knew, which often conflicted with American ideals and policies. As a result, the ARA and PAKPD never really brought rations abuse and misuse under control.

Per Hoover's instruction, American missions expanded the definition of the deserving Polish child to include any child in need within Polish borders. This policy change forced the PAKPD to serve more children, especially those who were not Polish-speaking or Roman Catholic, than the RGO did in years prior. However, the American relief missions also supported Polish territorial claims and control of minority populations. Despite repeated claims to provide aid for all children regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, American workers' implicit favoring

of Polish or Christian populations and their authority, bred resentment and mistreatment of Jewish populations and reinforced ethnic Poles' right to rule in the eastern territories. ARA officials may have formally promoted ethnic cooperation, but individual aid workers brought with them their own prejudices that held Jews to be dirty, untrustworthy, and ultimately to blame for their own suffering, and Ukrainians and Ruthenians to be violent, less civilized, and in need of domination. These prejudices ultimately worked in the Poles' favor as Americans allowed them greater control over local welfare committees and granted them better access to aid, especially clothing, individual subsidies, and other specialized projects.

American aid allowed the Polish state to make a public commitment to safeguarding the health of its new populace while also building on impulses to expand child-welfare activity to a national and state-sponsored level. The March 1921 constitution reflected the work of the last few years by declaring the state's duty to care for children deprived of sufficient parental care and education and its guarantee to provide for their "moral care and religious consolation."[185] This commitment did not just exist on paper. In three years the PAKPD built a structure of fifteen regional and 206 district offices that served 3,222 communities and coordinated the work of 20,000 Polish citizens. It would continue to be the preeminent organizer of child-welfare activity throughout the duration of the interwar period. On February 28, 1922, a full session of parliament unanimously approved maintaining government support of all PAKPD activity, including the feeding of 400,000 children after the ARA's June 1 departure. In a country infamous for its political infighting and government instability, the fact that anything received a unanimous vote of support spoke not only to the demonstrated success of the PAKPD's programs but also to the state's commitment to social welfare. Finally, on May 7, 1922, Prime Minister Antoni Ponikowski issued a proclamation praising the PAKPD for its efficient country-wide

[185] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland."

efforts, and implored the "entire population of the country," as well as district governments and communal authorities to support this organization so that it may continue to "reach the neediest children in every part of Poland, especially those children in the Eastern areas, the unfortunate victims of war and plague."[186]

Regardless of Polish leaders' eager embrace of the PAKPD in this moment of transition, local authorities remained reluctant to pick up the slack left by the Americans' departure. Twenty-five days after the ARA left Poland, the Ministry of the Interior (*Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych*) reported that some communities did not "sufficiently comprehend the advantage of this action" and thus refused to fund any further child feeding measures. Committees that refused either cited the poor financial shape of their community or claimed that further feeding was not necessary, which the report's author, Mr. Dunikowski, believed contradicted the needs and desires of the local populations. Dunikowski recognized that resistance to funding additional feeding efforts was most pronounced on Poland's eastern frontier, precisely the areas where the ARA had concentrated most heavily. Citing Ponikowski's May 7 decree, the Ministry of the Interior recommended district authorities and local welfare committees to support the PAKPD's actions as widely as possible and organize child welfare actions. While the Polish government and PAKPD had succeeded in building the skeletal structure of a nationwide child welfare network, it was clear that without American aid and influence the struggle to ensure local buy-in and support was not yet resolved.

[186] American Relief Administration, *American Relief Administration European Children's Fund Mission to Poland*, 4.

CHAPTER THREE
Nurturing Newborn Poland

A young generation, healthy morally and physically is the first condition of the power of a nation, which is a factor of first importance for the normal development of a newly rising state.

Witold Chodźko, Polish Minister of Health, 1920

And to the little white house hurry a large number of mothers
with their youngest children in their arms for medical advice and assistance.

Adamowa Krzyżanowska, Cracow, 1930

In 1930, a little white house sat nestled among trees on a grassy lot in Cracow's Czarna Wieś neighborhood, which was about a twenty-minute walk from the old town square. The structure, located at 17 Miechowska Street, housed a new infant welfare station sponsored by the Cracowian Society for the Protection of Children and Youth (*Towarzystwo Ochrony Dzieci i Młodzieży*, TOM). In 1918, TOM first opened an infant welfare station that provided medical care and advice to four-hundred infants and mothers. However, financial difficulties forced it to close a few years later. After a seven-year hiatus, Dr. Stefania Gogolewska-Löwenhoff began welcoming mothers to a makeshift station in a dark one-room basement. When not examining patients, Gogolewska-Löwenhoff trekked through the snow, wind, and frost to oversee the construction of her new station at 17 Miechowska Street. Meanwhile, her hygienist, Marja Kempnerówna, went door to door around the neighborhood hoping to draw "eager, yet uneducated mothers" to the station so that she could teach them how to feed, bathe, and raise their babies. Finally, in the spring of 1930, the new station was ready. Upon entering the little white house, Adamowa Krzyżanowska, a writer reporting on the station's opening, was struck by its bright, almost ceremonial whiteness. Equipped with electricity, running water, and sparkling exam tables, the facility was the modern face of social medicine, open and ready to serve a fresh

generation of newborn Poles.[1]

In the 1920s, improving the health and strength of infants and toddlers became synonymous with improving the strength of the nation-state. Consequently, infant welfare stations like those run by the TOM exploded in popularity as part of a nationwide movement to curb infant mortality and reform the practices of motherhood according to the mandates of modern medicine. In Poland, the movement to save infants and medicalize motherhood began with the rebirth of the state, which took place in the wake of war, famine, and economic collapse.[2] As a consequence, Polish leaders grafted their anxieties about the republic's newness and fragility onto the bodies of infants, society's newest and most fragile members. Furthermore, assuring infant health was meant to secure Poland's status as a "civilized" and "cultured" nation of the West.

Influencers in the infant health movement included a meld of state and non-state actors. Immediately after the war, foreign aid groups including the American Red Cross, the Society of Friends War Victims Relief Committee, and the Joint Distribution Committee initiated and funded infant health work. As the initial state of emergency waned by the summer of 1922, all foreign aid groups except the Joint withdrew, leaving Polish leaders to tend to their vulnerable populations alone. After aid groups departed, the Polish-American Children's Aid Committee , the children's welfare bureau founded and shaped by American officials in collaboration with

[1] Adamowa Krzyżanowska, "Stacja opieki nad niemowlętami TOM: Biały Domek," Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie (ANKr) Zachodnio-galicyjskie Towarzystwo ochrony dzieci i młodzieży (TOM) 29/1786/8.

[2] Medicalization is a process that started in the late-nineteenth century, whereby medical interpretations of social problems gained cultural legitimacy over other religious and moral frameworks. During the twentieth century, medical experts gained increasing authority over shaping and intervening in mothering practice, childbirth, child development, and a range of other social problems. For more see Jacquelyn S. Litt, *Medicalized Motherhood: Perspectives from the Lives of African-American and Jewish Women* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000); Rima D. Apple *Perfect Motherhood: Science and Childrearing in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006

Poles from 1918-1921, continued to work with the continued protection of the Polish government until 1939. Meanwhile, the Polish Ministry of Health (1918-1924) and later the Polish Ministry of Social Welfare (1924-1939) assumed control over child welfare activity. However, most of the on-the-ground work was carried out by municipal governments and thousands of local social aid organizations that operated under various political, religious, and social mandates.

A hybrid welfare structure meant there was no one coherent, unifying agenda that drove the development of infant welfare in interwar Poland. As foreign organizations pursued relief work to professionalize Poland's care force, popularize preventative medicine, and promote prenatal and early pediatric care, Polish state officials focused on lowering infant and child mortality levels to the rates seen in England and Germany. Prioritizing the welfare of infants and young children offered Polish leaders a chance to demonstrate a commitment to the well-being of their own people, build what they saw as a modern society, and align themselves with democratic nations of the West. By promoting infant health, Polish leaders saw themselves as strengthening Poland to face any potential economic competition or military confrontation. However, the decentralized nature of a child welfare system that relied so heavily on the funding and effort of municipalities, private organizations, and individual citizens, allowed for unlimited variations of method and mission at the local level.

Through targeted campaigns, propaganda, publications, media, posters, and public talks, governments and organizations expanded the definition of a needy infant beyond foundlings to include all infants and toddlers, especially those hidden away at home with their mothers. They redefined Polish motherhood as something not innately guaranteed or naturally achieved but rather honed through the guidance of medical professionals. Local governments and

organizations hired physicians, nurses, hygienists, and social workers to intervene early and often in the childrearing process and shape it according to a more rational, scientific model. This shift required a new class of infant caregivers, which provided women in Poland with new educational and employment opportunities. The focus on infant health endowed these women with a new status as expert-professional, which granted them the authority to intervene in previously private, domestic matters. As a result, the same watchful eye that granted mothers and babies access to better healthcare and social services opened them up to unprecedented criticism and intervention.

Foreign Aid, Social Medicine, and Eugenic Panic

In the early 1920s, the American Red Cross, in cooperation with the Polish Red Cross and the children's welfare bureau, published a series of pamphlets for mothers with infants and young children. One of these publications featured an illustration of a plump, bare-bottomed infant who stood pointing to a large map of the new Polish state. Below the image was the title, "What Will Make Poland Strong and Mighty." This cover communicated the perceived link between independent Poland's vitality and the health and wellness of its infant population. Inside, the pamphlet told readers that the future of Poland depended on the "physical and moral fitness of its future citizens."[3] In real life, Polish infants hardly resembled the roly-poly babe of the illustration. In the early 1920s, eighteen to twenty percent of all infants born in Poland died within the first year of life. They suffered from infectious diseases, malnourishment, digestive disturbances, and a host of other nutritional deficiencies. This booklet and others like it emphasized the importance of infant health for building a strong, independent nation-state after a century of foreign occupation and a devastating war. If Poland wanted to become "strong and

[3] American Red Cross, *Co uczyni Polskę silną i potężną* (Warsaw: Zakład Grafi "ARS," n.d.), 1.

mighty," it would have to start by strengthening its frail and weak infants.[4]

The variety of actors credited in this pamphlet, which included the American Red Cross, the PAKPD, the Polish Red Cross, and the Polish Ministry of Health, reflected the multiple agendas that shaped Poland's infant health movement. For instance, one of the main agendas influencing the Polish Ministry of Health was the Polish eugenics movement. Polish eugenics trace back to the founding of hygienic societies in the late-nineteenth century. During the partitions, members of such societies, the most active of which were located in Warsaw and Lublin, began discussing plans for a health service should Poland regain its independence. Guided by fears of degeneration--the theory that biological changes caused societal decline--Polish eugenicists focused on ways to eliminate venereal diseases, prostitution, alcoholism, mental illness, and physical disability to improve Poles' quality of life. After a century of partition, public health advocates were obsessed with maintaining Poland's existence. They believed any internal threats to the population's biological or social vitality, such as disease, poverty, or addiction, could leave the nation-state vulnerable to external geopolitical invaders. Thus, eugenics advocates, many of whom had some medical education, wanted to see the state modernize its infrastructure, political institutions, economic performance, and health policies to build a "healthy body politic" and a strong nation-state.[5]

---

[4] American Red Cross, Sanitary-Medical Section of the PAKPD, and Polish Red Cross, *Co uczyni Polskę silną i potężną*; E. M. Josephson, "Child Health in Europe" *Medical Record: A Weekly Journal of Medicine and Surgery* 101, no. 1 (January 7, 1922): 103; F. Elisabeth Crowell, "Memorandum re Study of Sick Nursing and Health Visiting in Poland," November 26-December 15, 1922, League of Nations Archives (LNA) 28794/12B/R883.

[5] Magdalena Gawin, "Progressivism and Eugenic Thinking in Poland, 1905-1925," in *Blood and Homeland: Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900-1940*, Marius Turda and Paul J. Weindling, eds. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007), 169-170; Marta Aleksandra Balińska, "The National Institute of Hygiene and Public Health in Poland, 1918-1939," *The Society for Social History of Medicine* 9, no. 3 (December 1996): 428; "Eugenics, Race and Nation in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900-1940: A Historiographic Overview," in *Blood and Homeland*, 7-9; Katrin Steffen, "Experts and the Modernization of the Nation: The Arena of Public Health in Poland in the First Half of the Twentieth Century,"

Eugenicists understood one of Poland's greatest internal threats to be infant mortality, which had plagued Polish territory for decades. From 1904 to 1916, one in four infants born in the Polish lands died before the age of one, with some communities such as Płock and Dąbrowa Górnicza losing 37.4 percent of children under age one. In 1906, Cracow's infant mortality rate of forty-percent ranked among the highest in Europe.[6] During the First World War, RGO members began discussing infant death as a threat to future independence. In 1916, Dr. Władysław Szenajch, speaking as the RGO's Chief Medical Officer, warned members of the RGO Commission on Child Welfare, that child and infant mortality, if left unaddressed, would depopulate Poland.[7] As regaining independence seemed more likely, Polish leaders erupted into a flurry of eugenic panic. Throughout 1917, conversations raged in the Polish medical press about the war's effect on the health and size of Poland's population as physicians and politicians worried that Poland's population was neither strong enough nor large enough to sustain independence.[8]

In November 1918—the very month that Poland returned to Europe's map—Leon Wernic, a venereologist and one of Poland's leading eugenicists, organized the First National Congress on the Country's Depopulation in Warsaw.[9] At this meeting, physicians, women's rights activists, and representatives from several governmental and non-governmental organizations met to discuss how the new state's healthcare and welfare systems could address the problems of infant mortality, illegitimate births, and care for orphaned, abandoned and

---

Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas 61, no. 4 (2013): 582.

[6] Josephson, "Child Health in Europe," 103; Crowell, "Memorandum," LNA 28794/12B/R883.

[7] "Posiedzenie Komisji Opieki nad dziećmi i młodzieżą w dn. 3 Lipca 1916 r.," 24, AAN RGO 52/40.

[8] Gawin, "Progressivism and Eugenic Thinking in Poland," 173.

[9] Kamila Uzarczyk, "Leon Wernic," *The History of East-Central European Eugenics, 1900-1945: Sources and Commentaries*, ed. Marius Turda (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015): 92.

neglected children. Numerical data further stoked fears that the population's national, racial, and social degeneration might threaten independent Poland's existence from the very start.[10]

Representatives from the Ministry of Health, who were also pioneers of Polish eugenics, linked children's health to state power. On July 9, 1920, Witold Chodźko, the psychiatrist and eugenicist appointed Poland's first Minister of Health, wrote a letter to Herbert Hoover asking him to extend the child feeding program. In his letter, Chodźko argued, "A young generation, healthy morally and physically is the first condition of the power of a nation, which is a factor of first importance for the normal development of a newly rising state."[11] Tomasz W. Janiszewski, Chodźko's colleague in the eugenics movement and his successor as Minister of Health, firmly believed that the fate of the entire nation depended on the population's health.[12] Therefore, he saw to it that many of the ministry's early measures focused on disease prevention, pronatalism, and strengthening the family.[13] Although the Ministry of Health disbanded in 1924 and its duties were divided among the Ministries of the Interior; Labor and Welfare; Religion and Education; Justice; Public Works; Railways; and Agriculture; the influence of eugenic thinking on interwar child health and welfare services remained strong.[14] After leaving the Ministry of Health, Chodźko chaired the children's welfare bureau from 1924-1926, ran the National School of Hygiene in Warsaw from 1926-1939, and oversaw the Committee of the Congress of the Child under the Ministry of Social Welfare in the late 1930s. As that committee's president, he directed plans for a public exhibit called "The Child in Poland," which ran in Warsaw from October 2 to 13, 1938. The final of the exhibit's seven theme booths was entitled "The Development of the

[10] Gawin, "Progressivism and Eugenic Thinking in Poland, 1905-1939," 173.
[11] Ministry of Public Health to Herbert Hoover, July 9, 1920, HIA W. P. Fuller Papers 57007/1.
[12] Steffen, "Experts and the Modernization of the Nation," 582.
[13] Aistis Žalnora, "Development of Public Health Science at the Stephen Bathory University and Public Health Conditions in the Vilnius Province in the Years of 1919-1939," (PhD diss., Vilnius University, 2015), 45.
[14] Balinska, "The National Institute of Hygiene and Public Health in Poland," 437.

Population as the Foundations of State Power*"* and it continued the discussion of a eugenist theme from twenty years prior. Even on the eve of destruction, some leaders of the Second Republic held child health as key to its survival.[15]

Social medicine provided the second influence that shaped the infant health movement. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, activities that would today fall under the guise of public health went by the names "public hygiene," "state medicine," and most broadly, "social medicine."[16] One of the early founders of social medicine was Rudolf Virchow, a German physician who developed an idea of "social epidemiology" while studying the 1848 typhus epidemic in Upper Silesia. As a socialist, Virchow believed that every citizen had a constitutional right to a healthy existence. Therefore, he thought it was medicine's role to protect public health. However, in the decades that followed, medical professionals focused much more on biological rather than social causes of diseases.[17]

Around the turn of the twentieth century, physicians began reconsidering social influences on health and illness. In 1898, a young Alfred Adler who was three years out of medical school at the University of Vienna, published his *Health Book for the Tailoring Trade.* In this volume, he emphasized how the health of human beings, in particular tailors, was affected by their environment. Adler, also a socialist, believed that medicine should better society. He demanded that the University of Vienna establish a chair for social medicine and begin investigating problems of poverty, ignorance, and poor hygiene.[18] The same year that Adler

---

[15] Ogólnopolski Kongres Dziecka, *Wystawa "Dziecko w Polsce": katalog: Warszawa 2-30 październik 1938 r.* (Warsaw, 1938).
[16] Christopher Hamlin, "Public Health," *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Medicine*, ed. Mark Jackson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 412.
[17] Dorothy Porter and Ray Porter, "What Was Social Medicine? A Historiographical Essay," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1, no. 1 (March 1988): 94-95.
[18] George Makari, *Revolution in Mind: The Creation of Psychoanalysis* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2008), 131.

released his book, Alfred Grotjahn, another recent graduate of medical school who became Germany's largest proponents of social hygiene and eugenics, published *Alcoholism: Its Nature, Influence and Distribution* in which he argued that medical problems could only be understood in their social contexts. As his work developed, Grotjahn shifted the focus of social medicine to social hygiene and introduced the degenerist theory of disease.[19]

The rise of Polish social medicine began in 1905 with the founding of the Polish Society of Social Medicine (*Polskie Towarzystwo Medycyny Społecznej,* PTMS).[20] However, Russian authorities soon dissolved the organization for being "too national and pro-social." In 1916, after German forces drove the Russians out of Congress Poland, the society reemerged.[21] As Dorothy and Roy Porter make clear in their examination of social medicine's historiography, there is no one clear definition of social medicine. Rather, it can only be understood in its distinct historical context.[22] Leaders of the PTMS used the term social medicine to signal their interest in organizing health care for the general population, specifically through encouraging authorities to combat tuberculosis, infectious disease, blindness, and organize care for children and the mentally ill.[23]

During the interwar period, the children's welfare bureau advocated for applying social

---

[19] Samuel W. Bloom, *The World as Scalpel: A History of Medical Sociology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 20; Pauline M. H. Mazumdar, *Eugenics, Human Genetics, and Human Failings: The Eugenics Society, its Sources and its Critics in Britain* (New York: Routledge), 147; Henry Friedlander, The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 10.
[20] Gawin, "Progressivism and Eugenic Thinking in Poland," 196.
[21] "Polskie Towarzystwo Medycyny Społecznej i Zdrowia Publicznego," Instytut Medycyny im. Witolda Chodźki w Lublinie, accessed November 24, 2019, http://www.dokumenty.imw.lublin.pl/konferencje/100_lat_PTMSiZP_program.pdf.
[22] Porter and Porter, "What Was Social Medicine?" 93.
[23] Karin Ohry-Kossoy and Avi Ohry, "Dedicated Physicians in the Face of Adversity: The Association of Jewish Physicians (ZLRP) and the Jewish Health Organization (TOZ) in Poland, 1921-1942," in *Jews in the Former Grand Duchy of Lithuania since 1772*, vol. 25, *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, ed. Šarūnas Liekis, Antony Polonsky, and ChaeRan Y. Freeze (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2013), 458-459.

medicine to child welfare. The organization's founding statute articulated its mission as "the promotion of the health and general welfare throughout the Republic of Poland of infants, children, expectant and nursing mothers, regardless of creed, citizenship, and race." It supported this mission by stimulating public interest in children's health and the social education of children and mothers, studying and alleviating the social conditions related to children's health and welfare, and the establishment of health centers where infants, children, and pregnant and nursing mothers could be placed under medical supervision, periodically examined, and provided with medical instruction on health and hygiene.[24]

During the 1920s and 30s, infant welfare stations formed a cornerstone of children's social medicine. Stations pursued work that was preventative, relational, rooted in modern science, and was as pedagogical as it was medical. Medical professionals served as the arbiter of all health information and advice, and their duty was to examine as well as teach. In order to transfer this knowledge to mother and eventually the child, the expert-professional had to establish a trusting relationship with mothers, which they cultivated through home visits that also deepened their research and regulation of a child's living conditions.

Although Porter and Porter warn not to confuse social medicine with socialist medicine, an agenda that seeks to prevent the causes of health and sickness by changing the economic relations of production and the political relations of power, advocates of social medicine in Poland often had a clear preference for leftist politics.[25] PTMS members included social democrats, socialists, and communists. The membership also featured many physicians with connections to the Polish eugenics movement. Chodźko was vice-president of the PTMS when

[24] "Statute of the Foundation under the name "Polsko Amerikanski Komitet Pomocy Dzieciom" in abbreviation "P.A.K.P.D.," HIA ARA 23001/96/2.
[25] Porter and Porter, "What Was Social Medicine?" 102; Ohry-Kossoy and Ohry, "Dedicated Physicians in the Face of Adversity," 456.

he became Minister of Health. Ludwik Hirszfeld, a microbiologist and co-founder of the PTMS's *Warsaw Medical Journal* (*Warszawski Czasopismo Lekarski*), and his wife Hanna, a physician and a frequent contributor to the journal, were also involved in the eugenics movement. Finally, Janiszewski, the former Minister of Health and one of interwar Poland's most strident proponents of eugenics, saw social medicine as an important contributor to a person's health.[26] However, not all left-leaning advocates of social medicine were also eugenists. As historian Magdalena Gawin writes, "Polish socialists coldly received eugenics, regarding it as yet another theory distracting the attention of the masses from more pressing problems."[27] Therefore, it is perhaps most accurate to think of the infant welfare station as an institution of social medicine that, in fighting infant mortality, also served a eugenic purpose.

Finally, Poland's infant welfare movement could not have gained traction without the influence of foreign aid missions, namely the American Red Cross, after the First World War. The ARC War Council had been interested in gaining access to Eastern Europe before the Armistice, but it was not until the winter of 1918-1919 that heads of the ARC European Commission began redirecting supplies and personnel into eastern Europe. They first went to Serbia, the Balkans, and Romania and eventually ARC missions spread to Austria, Czechoslovakia, Crimea, Hungary, the Baltic States, Siberia, Constantinople, and Poland.[28] Of all of these missions, Poland's was the largest. At first, ARC staff engaged in general relief efforts by providing institutions with clothing, blankets, and medicine, as well as supplementary food for the young, sick, and starving. Then in January 1921, The American Red Cross shifted to

---

[26] Steffen, "Experts and the Modernization of the Nation," 582-4; Žalnora, "Development of Public Health Science," 15.
[27] Gawin, "Progressivism and Eugenic Thinking in Poland," 179.
[28] Julia F. Irwin, *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 152.

focusing on the medical and social needs of children.[29]

From January 1, 1921 to June 1, 1922, the ARC employed small units of American doctors, nurses, and social workers who worked with local governments and organizations to implement a child health program. Over eighteen months, the ARC's Polish mission, which consisted of eight Red Cross doctors, thirteen nurses, and ten social workers, helped create sixty-nine health stations and 156 outpatient clinics. The ARC also helped the PAKPD purchase sixty-six dairy cows and continued to distribute clothing, medicine, blankets, and linens to orphanages and children's hospitals.[30] ARC nurses and social workers made home visits, founded clubs for mothers, and conducted classes on home hygiene and care for the sick.[31] Similar to the American Relief Administration workers, Red Cross representatives collaborated with local organizations to create a foundation for permanent work to continue after they left Poland.

American Red Cross staff in Europe understood their work as a new form of Manifest Destiny. By extending emergency medical aid and transferring America's intellectual and technical knowledge to Europeans, the ARC was able to support Wilsonian democracies, promote American volunteerism, and essentially make the world safe again after the war to end all wars had ripped it apart.[32] In some ways, the American Red Cross workers faced an even more complicated task than their colleagues in the American Relief Administration. While the ARA distributed free meals to children, the ARC tried to promote ideas about nursing, sanitation, and preventative medicine to care professionals and the wider population. For the first six

---

[29] Folks to Olds, "Review of Report on ARC work in Poland for April 1921" HIA ARC XX482/115.
[30] Joseph Bykofsky, "The History of the American National Red Cross, Volume XIX Foreign Relief in the Post-Armistice Period, 1918-1923," 1950, 85, HIA ARC XX482/200.
[31] Lavinia L. Dock, Sarah Elizabeth Pickett, Clara D. Noyes, Fannie F. Clement, Elizabeth G. Fox, and Anna R. Van Meter, *History of American Red Cross Nursing* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), 1133.
[32] Irwin, *Making the World Safe*, 1, 76.

months of their mission, ARC workers struggled to make any headway. The Bolshevik invasions in 1920 increased social need, so ARC units continued to provide children's institutions with supplies.[33] As ARC leadership forced its field staff to focus more on the child health program, the aid workers struggled to convince local populations to adopt American methods.[34] They found that ideas presented through interpreters carried "little or no weight."[35] To make any progress, the ARC mission had to adopt a more collaborative approach. In May 1921, Dr. A. C. Burnham of the ARC's Paris office ordered that the Polish mission begin working with "certain Polish doctors" of similar mindsets who could help package the ARC's message for other medical personnel and the general population. "Every workman is willing to be convinced," Burnham wrote, "providing the argument is put to him so that he can understand it." Burnham told Dr. Rood M. Taylor, Director of the ARC's mission in Poland, that ARC workers must present ideas as coming from "the best Polish authorities."[36] Only then, he believed, could they generate enough buy-in to make the ARC's child welfare program viable.

To build a sustainable child health program in Poland, the ARC needed Polish-language resources. To produce these texts, the ARC hired Dr. Marceli Gromski, a well-respected Polish physician based in Warsaw, to translate and "polonize" ARC literature for distribution across the country.[37] Gromski, who already practiced preventative medicine at his child welfare centers, directly translated some of the English texts, then supplemented them with his own advice written for a Polish audience. When reading English translations of Gromki's texts, Taylor wrote,

[33] Bykofsky, "The History of the American National Red Cross," 79-80, HIA ARC XX482/200.
[34] Ibid., 79, HIA ARC XX482/200.
[35] A. C. Burnham, "Report on Child Health Program in Poland," May 25, 1921, HIA ARC XX482/115.
[36] A. C. Burnham, "Memorandum to the Medical Director," HIA ARC XX482/115.
[37] Taylor to Burnham, September 7, 1921; Truby King, *Najważniejsze błędy w wychowaniu niemowlęcia*, trans. Marceli Gromski (Warsaw: American Red Cross, 1921), HIA ARC XX482/117.

"Some of the statements seem a little queer to us, but I think the Polish physician is better able to judge than are we as to what will appeal to the Polish mother."[38] With Gromski's help, the ARC mission gained the texts it so desperately needed to support its struggling child welfare program. When the ARC withdrew in March of 1922, it left behind these texts, physical supplies, $250,000 to support child welfare work for the next five years, and whatever knowledge and techniques it transferred to Polish health care workers.[39]

Despite the attention, resources, and energy devoted to children's health, child mortality rates remained high. The year after foreign aid groups withdrew, two out of every five Polish newborns did not live past their sixth week of life. According to Gromski, who in 1923 was vice-director of the children's welfare bureau, infants in Poland died at a higher rate than soldiers in the trenches of the Great War. Worried that this would lead to "colossal losses for all society," Gromski argued that it was time for the Polish government to take control of the situation.[40] Gone were the days of foreign occupation, wartime governments, and humanitarian aid missions. Therefore, if after 1922 the children of the Polish Republic were not saved from death, Polish leaders had no one to blame but themselves. Gromski maintained that if infant mortality rates could fall "in many countries that are by no means independent," then it was the duty of a newborn nation longing to distance itself from a legacy of foreign captivity to prove that it could one day become "strong and mighty" and save its youngest citizens from death.

Beyond Foundlings

In the nineteenth century, public discourse regarding infant welfare focused almost

---

[38] Ibid.
[39] Bykofsky, "The History of the American National Red Cross," 45 HIA ARC XX482/200; Crowell, "Memorandum," LNA 28794/12B/R883; R. M. Taylor to A. C. Burnham, June 2, 1921, HIA ARC XX482/115.
[40] Gromski, "Zasady organizacji," 9.

exclusively on the topic of foundlings, meaning infants surrendered or abandoned by their mothers. In the 1880s, the Polish press covered a series of scandals involving so-called "angel makers," or women who accepted poor women's babies for a fee, then either starved, strangled, smothered, or poisoned them. Rates of child murder in the late nineteenth-century rose in direct relation to contracting options for poor women who needed to surrender their children. As of 1873, Polish territory was home to only one foundling home (*dom podrzutków*) connected to the Infant Jesus Hospital (*Szpital Dzieciątka Jesus*) in Warsaw. Five years later, the Warsaw Welfare Council (*Rada Dobroczynności*) decided to only accept children born in Warsaw, which left women outside the city who needed to surrender an infant with no legal alternative.[41]

As public outcry raged over the Russian imperial government's lack of attention to foundling care, children who primarily remained with their mothers were not a public concern until the end of World War I. However, the 1920s brought an expansion of social care that included all infants, not just foundlings. During the immediate postwar period, relief groups targeted children in the most extreme states. As the PAKPD assumed more control of welfare activities initiated by foreign groups, it broadened the definitions of those in need to include all children. In 1923, Gromski outlined the two general categories of children in need: those who had natural guardians and those who did not. The first category, which included orphans and children of unwed mothers, lived mostly in "organized societies" such as orphanages or other care institutions. While these institutions certainly had problems to be addressed, they served only a small portion of the population and could be subjected to tight regulation and supervision. The bigger concern, Gromski argued, should be the children of the second group, those who remained "hidden at home" from their first days of life.[42] To better reach those children Gromski

[41] Keely Statuer-Halsted, *The Devil's Chain: Prostitution and Social Control in Partitioned Poland* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 99-101.
[42] Gromski, "Zasady organizacji," 11-12.

recommended that the state and society create a solid legal basis for child care, expand the category of children in need to include all infants born within Polish borders, and travel behind the closed doors of the home to educate and reform Polish citizens according to the principles of social hygiene.[43]

The interwar state made significant steps towards the goal of creating a firm legal basis for child care. In March 1921, the Polish parliament ratified a constitution, which in Article 103 officially articulated state responsibility for providing social care to children in the whole country and for safeguarding children's rights. Article 103 also stated that children deprived of sufficient parental care or otherwise neglected regarding their upbringing had the right to state protection and assistance. Then in 1923, parliament passed the Social Welfare Act, which provided a legislative basis for social welfare and further emphasized the children's rights to social welfare and protection of motherhood.[44] For the next two decades, the Ministry of Social Welfare continued to promote policies that ensured care before and after birth, offered financial assistance to nursing mothers, and provided for the care and education of orphaned, abandoned, or otherwise neglected children. In addition, the Ministry of Public Health and later the Ministry of Social Welfare, respectively continued their management of the PAKPD, the special children's bureau set up by the ARA, until the end of the interwar period.[45] On January 25, 1926, the organization finally dropped the "American" from the name and went back to being the Polish Committee for Children's Aid. Two years later it changed names for a final time to the Polish Committee for Children's Welfare (*Polski Komitet Opieki nad Dzieckiem*, PKOD), dropping the term for "aid" (*pomocy*) in favor of the more modern "child welfare" (*opieka nad dzieckiem*).[46]

---

[43] Ibid., 6-17.
[44] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960," 66.
[45] Crowell, "Memorandum," LNA 28794/12B/R883.
[46] Polski Komitet Opieki nad Dzieckiem, *Statut Polskiego Komitetu Opieki nad Dzieckiem*, 1.

While the dedication to child welfare encoded into the state's legal and administrative structure revealed not only the influence of eugenicist policies and social hygiene, it also matched global trends in the recognition of children's rights. In the early 1920s, the League of Nations worked to establish the first international legal standards related to children's rights. In September 1924, the League adopted the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child, a five-point set of guidelines to be used in guiding member states provision of "protection and care" of children. Poland's own Janusz Korczak, a pediatrician turned pedagogue, had submitted a draft of the declaration, but the final text came from an adaptation of the "Children's Charter" written in 1921 by Eglantyne Jebb, a social reformer and founder of Great Britain's Save the Children organization. The Geneva Declaration stated that "beyond and above all considerations of race, nationality, or creed" children had the right to have met their basic physical and emotional needs, while also being supported for good physical and spiritual development, protected from exploitation, and prepared to support themselves and one day use their talents for the service of others.[47]

The Geneva Declaration offered non-binding principles, which guided physicians and pedagogues throughout the interwar period. In 1926, Gromski and Lucjan Bartel, who had served the ARC's W. Leland Mitchell as Assistant Chief of PAKPD's Sanitary-Medical Department, began their comprehensive survey of infant welfare stations in Poland with the full text of the Geneva Declaration.[48] This was a practice repeated several times in state-sponsored texts on child welfare demonstrating how experts wanted to frame their work as supporting or fulfilling

[47] Susan J. Berger, "The Children's Advocate: Janusz Korczak," *American Educational History Journal* 33, no. 2 (2006): 13; Brian Milne, *The History and Theory of Children's Citizenship in Contemporary Societies* (Dordrecht: Springer Science + Business Media, 2013), 46.

[48] Gromski and Bartel, *Stacja opieki nad matką i dzieckiem: organizacja i prowadzenia*, vol. 2, *Opieka nad macierzyństwem, dziećmi i młodzieżą* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Polskiego Komitetu Pomocy Dzieciom "Opieka nad Dzieckiem," 1926), 10.

the tenets of the Geneva Declaration. A poster produced by the children's welfare bureau sometime after January1928 took this practice to the next level by presenting the declaration's principles in the context of an infant rally. The top of the poster featured an illustrated crowd of chanting infants and toddlers. On a platform stood another infant in a long smock with one arm raised and the other pointing towards the crowd. Members of the rally held signs numbered one through ten, each number correlating to the Geneva Declaration's ten principles, which were listed below the image.[49] Although the Geneva Declaration was based on a traditional, bourgeois concept of childhood that applied mostly to the responsibility of caretakers, this image shows the Polish children's welfare bureau playing with the idea that children, infants in particular, were public individuals who demanded the right to a safe and healthy childhood marked by proper care and respect.[50]

Matka Polka Reimagined

Getting behind the closed doors of the family home to reach the everyday infant required the state and private organizations to employ teams of expert-professionals who could access mothers. Doing so required a recasting of the relationship between mothers, family, and the nation. Under the partitions, women's role in Polish society was defined by the concept of the Mother Pole (*Matka Polka*). This trope defined women's service to the family and nation in terms of religious devotion, self-sacrifice, and moral strength. Although the idea might have existed before the nineteenth century, the experience of partition from 1795 to 1918 solidified the concept. In the absence of an independent Polish nation-state, Polishness needed to be promoted and protected. While men promoted the Polish nation as writers, resistance fighters, and political

[49] ANKr TOM 29/1786/8.
[50] Eva-Maria Metcalf, "Fostering Controlled Dissent: Democratic Values and Children's Literature," in *Change and Renewal in Children's Literature*, ed. Thomas Van der Walkt (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2004), 82.

exiles, women nurtured the national soul by educating children in Polish religion, language, and culture, and raising good sons to protect and fight for the fatherland.[51]

After 1918, when Poland regained a state to house its national soul, the *Matka Polka* role acquired a more corporal responsibility. As universal primary education took on the task of educating Polish children, the medical establishment demanded that Polish mothers take better care of their children's physical health. The consensus among medical professionals in the 1920s was that women, long seen as mothers or guardians of the Polish nation, were grossly ill-prepared for the task of raising healthy and properly developed future citizens. In May 1926, the inaugural issue of the women's magazine *Child and Mother* (*Dziecko i Matka*) opened with a letter from the editor that stated, "the majority of women are not prepared to fulfill their maternal responsibilities."[52] It was no longer enough to teach children Polish literature and Catholic traditions; one also now needed to tend to their medical and hygienic well-being. Doctors, nurses, and hygienists claimed that without proper education, Polish mothers were lost to a sea of erroneous advice that would lead them to commit frequent mistakes with often devastating, sometimes irreversible, effects on their children.[53] They argued that expert intervention was needed to educate the Mother Pole and thus save the infant population from death, disease, and degeneration.

The effort to reform Polish motherhood began with foreign relief efforts after the war. ARC officials used "well-directed publicity" to transform people's desire for health from passive to active.[54] These texts, many of which were translated and adapted by Gromski, included such

[51] Kathy Burrell, *Moving Lives: Narratives of Nation and Migration among Europeans in Post War* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2006), 80; Małgorzata Fidelis, *Women, Communism, and Industrialization in Postwar Poland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 24-5, Plach, *The Clash of Moral Nations*, 103-104.
[52] "Od Redakcji," *Dziecko i Matka* 1 no. 1 (May 1926): 1.
[53] Ibid., 1-2.
[54] Burnham, "Memorandum," HIA ARC XX482/115.

titles as *How to Raise a Healthy and Strong Child, The Most Serious Mistakes in Raising an Infant, What is Necessary to Know to Give Birth to a Strong and Healthy Child, About Breast Feeding and Feeding a Child During the First Year, What a Mother Should Know about Bottle Feeding, To Polish Mothers,* and *What Will Make Poland Strong and Healthy.* These pamphlets sent the message that medical professionals should replace conventional wisdom as a mother's primary source of information. *The Most Serious Mistakes in Raising an Infant*, originally written by New Zealand pediatrician Truby King and then later "polonized" by Gromski, began with the message: "If you care about the health of your child, try to forget all of the advice you have received from friends and neighbors."[55] If modern medicine was to replace the traditional and folk practices still in wide use, medical authorities needed to disrupt the chain of knowledge transmission from one woman to the next.[56]

Through advice literature physicians communicated that adults, the assumed protector of the child, could be very dangerous. Pamphlets instructed caretakers not to wipe the child's face by spitting on a handkerchief or with a rag dipped in water, not to sneeze or cough into the child's face, not to let a consumptive person care for the child, not to test a bottle with one's mouth, and not to stick a dirty finger in the child's mouth for comfort. The literature also included numerous references to violent swinging, rocking, or tossing practices that led to digestive disturbances and other physical injuries. Physicians advocated for children to have spaces and supplies that were separate, sanitary, and specially designed for them. These booklets advised that babies needed their own places to sleep, should be bathed more frequently than adults in separate basins with separate rags, and that they could not eat the same food as adults or

[55] *"The Most Important Mistakes Made in the Raising of Infants,"* HIA ARC XX482/115.
[56] In Eastern Europe, village healers used traditional and folk medical practices into the twentieth century. See Marius Turda, "History of Medicine in Eastern Europe, Including Russia," *A Global History of Medicine*, ed. Mark Jackson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 104.

even as other small children.[57]

Other advice focused on challenging deeply-held beliefs and myths about child rearing. For example, physicians asked parents to frequently expose their children to fresh air, which conventional wisdom held to be damaging to little ones' health. Physicians also challenged the widely held belief that babies needed tight swaddling to prevent "slipping," a condition believed to lead to spinal injury or groin rupture.[58] In the early twentieth century, swaddling was a well-established practice stemming from the belief that infants were extremely fragile and would break into two pieces without proper binding.[59] Gromski told mothers to never limit the body with tight swaddling and that to believe it can protect a child from harm "is a downright fable!"[60] Nevertheless, many women continued to blame "slipping" for different childhood diseases, while popular fears of air drafts persist in Poland to the present day.

Medical experts promoted a practice called "rational feeding," to curb malnourishment and digestive disturbances, leading causes of infant deaths. Advice literature emphasized that mothers should feed a child every three to four hours. However, infants were not to be fed as comfort, which experts maintained would lead to irregular and too-frequent feeding. Comfort feeding, King wrote, "usually ruins the child," and could lead to stomach diseases.[61] In general, doctors wanted to eliminate the practice of putting anything in children's mouths that would comfort them, such as candy, whiskey, poppy seeds, a bottle nipple dipped in sugar, or an empty

---

[57] American Red Cross, *Do Matek Polek* (Warsaw: B. Wierzbicki i S-ka, n.d.); Marceli Gromski, *Jak wychować zdrowe i silne dziecko* (Warsaw: "ARS," n.d.); King, *Najważniejsze błędy w wychowaniu niemowlęcia*.
[58] "Slipping" is the term provided for the Polish "usunąć się" in an American Red Cross's English translation of Gromski's "Polonized" text. See "The Most Important Mistakes Made in the Bringing Up of Infants," HIA ARC XX482/117.
[59] Ruth Benedict, "Child Rearing in Certain European Countries," in *The Manner Born: Birth Rites in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. Lauren Dundes (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003), 214.
[60] King, *Najważniejsze błędy w wychowaniu niemowlęcia*, 5-6.
[61] Ibid., 4.

bottle to suck.[62]

Although the literature for mothers acknowledged the availability of alternative food sources, breastfeeding emerged as medical professionals' clear preference. *The Most Important Mistakes Made in Raising Infants* told readers that "with mother's milk the child sucks its future health and the resistance qualities that will protect it from falling ill."[63] Other brochures listed frightening statistics, such as the one that twenty-five percent of all bottle-fed infants died within the first year of life. By comparison, it claimed that only six percent of breastfed infants died before age one.[64] *To Polish Mothers* listed breast milk's many virtues to include safety and convenience, as well as its ability to make the child happy, healthy, and strong. Its cover art, illustrated by famous interwar Polish artist Stefan Norblin, depicts a woman fulfilling her patriotic duty through the noble act of breastfeeding. In this illustration, Norblin recasts the familiar trio of the Madonna, the Christ child, and John the Baptist as a Polish mother, her infant, and her older son. Sitting prominently at the center of the composition is the mother-Madonna, infant at her breast, while the older son stands behind to her left. Their faces bear serene expressions and their eyes gaze downward at the babe. The older child has removed his feathered cap in reverence. Although the mother features prominently in the composition, the viewers' eyes are drawn to her bare breast and the infant she feeds. The baby boy is the future of Poland and she, through this most corporal act, is fulfilling her maternal duty to raise healthy sons for the fatherland. Behind the three figures, white clouds billow in celestial formation; vertical stripes of the mother's dress stream forth from the infant like rays of light. Clad in peasant folk costume—white blouse, beads, embroidered scarf and shawl, and a long multi-colored skirt—she is depicted not as gentry or intelligentsia, but as the Polish everywoman—an idealized model

[62] "The Most Important Mistakes Made in the Bringing Up of Infants," HIA ARC XX482/117.
[63] King, *Najważniejsze błędy w wychowaniu niemowlęcia*, 3.
[64] Marceli Gromski, *Jak wychować zdrowe i silne dziecko*, 8.

even those of the most modest of means could aspire to emulate.[65]

To forge this new Polish mother, expert-professionals needed to establish contact with women through infant welfare stations. Pamphlets told mothers that the station was at the center of the fight against infant mortality waged by "all of civilized society." Mothers who registered at a station were placing themselves on the moral side of the battle for infant life, for Poland, and its civilization.[66] However, the station had its limits. In 1926, Dr. Karol Jonscher, a pediatrician and University of Poznań professor, described how despite the phenomenal work performed by infant welfare stations, the stations could only reach women who sought them out. As a result, a large portion of the maternal population remained uneducated. Jonscher proposed forging medically-informed Mother Poles through compulsory training for all women "similar to how men must serve in the army." Emphasizing the link between children, women, family, and nation, Jonscher hoped to see the day when society would realize that "it is the elementary responsibility of every woman to prepare for the loftiest of her tasks, the task of motherhood."[67] Although Jonscher's plan never materialized in the Second Republic, his words illustrate the importance medical professionals attributed to the work of educating Polish mothers for determining the health of the new nation.

Using an idea that began in America, the "League of Little Mothers" in Warsaw did train adolescent girls for the task of motherhood.[68] At a small day nursery and clinic, Dr. Jadwiga Bukowska, a physician who had studied and trained in Berlin, Vienna, St. Petersburg, and Paris,

[65] American Red Cross, *Do Matek Polek*.
[66] "Stacja opieki nad niemowlęciem," *Dziecko i Matka,* 3, no 9 (September 1928): 25.
[67] Karol Jonscher, "Organizacja Opieki nad Matką i Niemowlęciem," *Opieka nad Dzieckiem* 4, no. 6-7 (November-December 1926): 260.
[68] Warsaw's "League of Little Mothers," closely resembled an initiative begun in 1908 by Dr. Sara Josephine Baker, Director of the Division of Child Hygiene for the New York City Department of Health. See Elizabeth Rennert, "League of Little Mothers," *The American Journal of Nursing* 16, no. 4 (January 1916): 306.

welcomed some one-hundred girls between the ages of twelve and sixteen who arrived two afternoons a week. Here Bukowska taught her "little mothers" the science and craft of motherhood with lessons on physiology, hygiene, food and nutrition, infant feeding, illness, home nursing, and basic infant care. The girls earned merit badges for completing certain tasks. Even though the girls were referred to as "little mothers," the program also primed them to pursue future careers as social workers, nurses, or hygienists. When a new baby came to the clinic or nursery, a "little mother" was assigned to take a case history. The teenage girl would later conduct interviews with the doctor in the mother's presence and write up a detailed description of the child. She made home visits, brought the infant to doctor's appointments, and kept a close eye on her assigned infant's treatment. After all infants had gone home for the night, the facility turned into an after-school club where the girls could do homework, receive tutoring, and play games. Many of the girls came from poverty themselves, so this program provided them with a safe, supportive environment, as well as some vocational training.[69] In fact, before American aid workers opened Polish nursing schools, Bukowksa's "League for Little Mothers" was one of the only training programs for young welfare workers that existed in Poland.[70]

Professionalizing the Female Care Force

In the early years of the Second Republic, Poland lacked the medical personnel to enact the child-welfare program imagined by the ARC and PAKPD. Before World War I, there were very few trained Polish nurses. Polish Grey Samaritan Martha Graczyk speculated that before the war, nursing was "not considered a ladylike profession."[71] Rather, the shortage of Polish nurses resulted directly from the lack of educational opportunities before the war. During the mid to

---

[69] Dorothy McConnell, "The League of Little Mothers," HIA FWVRC XX333/2;" Paul Ward, "Publicity-Poland," January 1921, HIA FWVRC XX333/2.
[70] Ward, "Publicity-Poland," HIA FWVRC XX333/2.
[71] Graczyk Gedgowd, "With the ARA Childfund," HIA PGS 57026/3.

late-nineteenth century, when nursing was undergoing professionalization in Europe and North America, Poland was under partition. As a result, the medical profession experienced what Keely Stauter-Halsted calls an "extended crisis" of underfunding and understaffing that crippled medical departments at Polish universities. Individuals wanting to study medicine typically had to travel abroad and faced limited employment opportunities once they returned.[72] Meanwhile, there was no Polish tradition of professional nursing. Historically, either nuns or laywomen had provided palliative care in hospitals, foundling homes, and orphanages, while midwives oversaw childbirth.

In 1911, Maria Epstein opened the first Polish nursing school in Cracow. Epstein, born the only child of a Jewish banker and a Christian mother from a prominent landowning family, grew up well-educated, multilingual, and profoundly patriotic. Since charity was one of the only forms of public life available to educated, upper-class women, Epstein became deeply involved with a poor-aid society called the Association of Women in Economics (*Stowarzyszenie Pań Ekonomek*). As a member of this group, Epstein began helping the Sisters of Mercy (*siostry miłosierdzia*) to fundraise and reform their small Cracow infirmary. Epstein and her team of women organized an operating room and a volunteer-staffed outpatient ward. From this experience, Epstein realized that women should be better trained to serve patients and the idea for the first Polish nursing school was born.[73]

On November 5, 1911, Poland's first school of professional nursing (*Szkoła Zawodowych Pielęgniarek*) opened in an old cowshed renovated by Epstein and her team. In the absence of any formal instructors, Epstein; her partner, Anna Rydłówna; and fourteen other individuals from

[72] Stauter-Halsted, *The Devil's Chain*, 238.
[73] Jadwiga Gnich, "Maria Epstein 1875-1930," Wirtualne Muzeum Pielęgniarstwa Polskiego, Polskie Towarzystwo Pielęgniarskie Zarząd Główny, accessed November 27, http://www.wmpp.org.pl/pl/wzorce-osobowe/maria-epstein.html.

the outpatient infirmary taught themselves as the school's first class. Epstein assumed the role of head teacher and she trained her fellow nurses to embody a spirit of "patriotism and [Christian] religiosity" in their work. Epstein was herself driven by a deep devotion to God, and after she retired from nursing, she spent the last sixteen years of her life as a Dominican nun. Despite the women's energetic efforts, the school experienced constant financial difficulties. In 1921, after Epstein lost her family's wealth and property during the war, she was forced to close the school.[74]

When American relief workers arrived in Poland, they were struck by what they found to be severely unprofessional medical care for children. In 1921, Quaker aid worker Dorothy McConnell expressed horror at what she perceived as the laziness of "so-called nurses" working in children's institutions. "Never having been trained," McConnell wrote, "they had weird ideas of what was their work, and quite evidently these did not include waiting on the doctor or cleaning the utensils, or the room in which he saw the children."[75] By McConnell's account, already sick and weak children suffered even further as a result of untrained nurses. Thus, she believed that a nursing program established with American or English standards "could do so much for these miserable children."[76] Since Poland's only nursing school had just closed, personnel from the American Red Cross began training locals as they moved around the country doing general relief, children's aid work, and anti-typhus missions. The rough conditions forced British and American aid workers to be flexible and creative with limited resources. In July 1920, at the height of the Bolshevik invasion, Doris Wartowski, a Polish-speaking nurse for the ARC, and her unit arrived in Białystok and visited an orphanage located in old Russian army barracks. The orphanage, which included a dispensary and a hundred-bed hospital, housed 783

[74] Ibid.
[75] McConnell, "Summer Colonies for Poor Children," January 6, 1921, HIA FWVRC XX333/2.
[76] Ibid.

children, most of whom were sick with tuberculosis, measles, mumps, malaria, whooping cough, pink-eye, and other maladies. Upon arrival, Wartowski began teaching the thirty Polish aids with her self-translated version of the English-language textbook *Home Hygiene and Care for the Sick*, written in 1913 by Jane Delano, founder of the American Red Cross Nursing Service. Meanwhile, Dr. Lalesk, the assistant medical chief at the hospital, supplemented Wartowski's text with his own lectures.[77]

Similar to the great services rendered by Polish Grey Samaritans in the ARA, Polish-American nurses working for the ARC proved indispensable for communicating medical information to locals in a culturally and linguistically appropriate fashion. While Wartowski trained folks in Białystok, Emily Skorupa, another Polish-American public health nurse, trained women in Zakopane at the same School for Home Economics for Polish Girls that she had attended before immigrating to the United States. Using her own translation of Delano's text, Skorupa hoped to train enough teachers to form a teaching faculty that could continue her work after the ARC's departure.[78]

As Polish-American nurses trained locals in the field, ARC officials worked to establish permanent nursing schools in Poland. At first, in November 1918, Alice Fitzgerald, chief nurse of the American Red Cross Commission in Europe, determined that "the country [was] not ready" for a formal nursing program because the Polish Red Cross lacked the supplies, money, and experienced personnel to support a school long term. Then, in the summer of 1920, the Bolshevik invasion consumed the ARC Commission's time as it fought typhus and distributed general relief.[79] Members of the ARC Commission were aware of Epstein's school in Cracow,

[77] Dock, Pickett, Noyes, Clement, Fox, and Van Meter, *History of American Red Cross Nursing,* 1094-5; 1161-1162.
[78] Ibid., 1096.
[79] McConnell, "Summer Colonies for Poor Children," HIA FWVRC XX333/2; Ward, "Publicity-Poland," HIA FWVRC XX333/2.

but they did not hold it in high regard. In May 1920, Helen Scott, an ARC nurse who had already started a nursing school in Sofia, Bulgaria, called the hospital attached to Espstein's school a place of "good and patient women. . .powerless to cope with the many difficulties." She witnessed overcrowded beds that "swarm[ed] with vermin," while a small group of student nurses "browse[d] about in search of whatever scraps of nursing knowledge they may chance to find." Meanwhile, the rest of the work was carried out by "domestics of the most slatternly and indifferent type."[80] Scott therefore determined such a site was no place for an American-sponsored nursing program.

Rather than work to revive Epstein's program, nurses of the ARC Commission decided to open an alternative school in Cracow on April 8, 1921. The day after it opened, Dr. A. C. Burnham, the Medical Director of ARC European Commission, visited the school and found the students to be "about average intelligence and. . . very interested in their work." There were no Polish-language nursing texts, so students furiously took notes to lectures delivered by physicians from local hospitals.[81] The Cracow school was the first of many to be started by foreign aid groups. On July 27, 1921, after nearly three years of negotiations, an ARC-sponsored school of nursing opened in Poznań. The newly furnished sixty-bed hospital included a dispensary supplied by the Director of Railways and a new teaching clinic with equipment gifted by the Dean of the University. The City of Poznań paid for lights and electricity, while the Railway Director supplied the coal. The original staff included Ita M. McDonnell as Director of the Department of Nursing; Augusta E. Mettel, a former Polish Grey Samaritan; Emily Skorupa; Mary Suchowska, Lena M. Johnson; and Martha M. Rhode. Except for McDonnell, all of the

---

[80] Dock, Pickett, Noyes, Clement, Fox, and Van Meter, *History of American Red Cross Nursing,* 1097.
[81] Burnham, "Report on Child Health Program in Poland," May 25, 1921, HIA ARC XX482/115; Burnham to Taylor, July 8, 192, HIA ARC XX482/115.

women were either Polish immigrants to America or Americans of Polish descent.[82]

Two months later, another ARC-sponsored school of nursing opened in Warsaw under the direction of Helen Bridge. Bridge, a former instructor for the Illinois Training School, had already cut her teeth on foreign service work as a member of the ARC Commission to Siberia in 1920. Assisting Bridge at the Warsaw school were three Polish-born women: Stella Tylksi, an intern at the Jane Adams Hull House in Chicago; Josephine Jokaitis, an American trained Polish nurse who had performed public health nursing for the Chicago Infant Welfare Society; and Alexandra Zarzycka, who had trained as a nurse in London.[83] Through an anonymous donation of $30,000, the ARC was able to provide the school with administration, teaching staff, transportation, equipment, textbooks, and interpreters for three years, while Polish authorities supplied buildings for the school and hospital.[84]

Two years later, on July 8, 1923, a third permanent nursing school funded by the Joint Distribution Committee opened in Warsaw. The Jewish Nurses Training School was attached to the Orthodox Hospital (*Szpital Starozakonnych w Warszawie*), one of Poland's largest and most modern medical facilities. Although the Jewish Nurses Training School sat on the hospital's campus, it operated autonomously. At the time, it was the only nursing school in Poland to accept Jewish students. Eventually, the school's management renamed it The Nursing School in Warsaw to send the message that it accepted all nursing students "regardless of religion."

During its first four years, the school was staffed by four English-speaking nurses and

---

[82] Clara D. Noyes, "The Schools of Nursing in the Old World: III. Poznań," *The American Journal of Nursing* 22, no. 9 (June 1922): 732; Dock, Pickett, Noyes, Clement, Fox, and Van Meter, *History of American Red Cross Nursing*, 1159-1160.
[83] Bykofsky, "The History of the American National Red Cross," 85, HIA ARC XX482/200; Clara Noyes, "The Schools of Nursing in the Old World: II. Warsaw," *The American Journal of Nursing* 22., no. 7. (April 1922): 539; Dock, Pickett, Noyes, Clement, Fox, and Van Meter,*History of American Red Cross Nursing,* 1085.
[84] Noyes, "The Schools of Nursing in the Old World: II. The Warsaw School," 539.

two Polish instructors with foreign training. It also relied on lectures from doctors at the Jewish hospital. At the helm was Amelia Greenwald, who arrived in Poland with already extensive experience founding and running hospitals. As a member of the American Expeditionary Forces during World War I, Greenwald, the American-born daughter of German-Jewish immigrants, had already served as chief nurse at a hospital in Verdun, France and helped establish the first American hospital in Coblenz, Germany. After the war, Greenwald came to Poland at the encouragement of Herbert Hoover and Dr. Bernard Flexner, chairman of the Joint Distribution Committee. Benefiting from state-of-the-art equipment, facilities, and instruction, Greenwald set the school up to become Poland's top nursing school, gaining respect at home and abroad.[85]

Poland's new nursing schools struggled to maintain adequate financing, supplies, and personnel. In the absence of Polish-language textbooks, students had to take notes based on the texts available in Russian, German, and French. Locations for clinical practice were sparse. For example, a nurse in Warsaw could only gain practical clinical experience at the Jewish hospital or the League for Little Mothers nursery. Finally, since all the schools were staffed by Americans, there was an urgent need to train faculty from the first graduating classes to continue teaching after the Americans left Poland.[86] The Rockefeller Foundation offered grants to fund construction of badly needed dormitories, as well as fellowships to train Polish nurses at Yale or

[85] Mayer, "Amelia Greenwald," *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia* 21 (February 2009), Jewish Women's Archive, accessed on April 7, 2018, https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/greenwald-amelia; Leo E. Turitz, "Amelia Greenwald: The Jewish Florence Nightingale," *American Jewish Archives*, 37, no. 2 (1985): 291-292; Iwona Kowalkowska, "The Nursing School at the Orthodox Jew Hospital at Czyste district in Warsaw," Wirtualne Muzeum Pielęgniarstwa Polskiego, Polskie Towarzystwo Pielęgniarskie Zarząd Główny, accessed April 7, 2018, http://www.wmpp.org.pl/en/nursing-schools/the-nursing-school-at-the-orthodox-jew-hospital-at-czyste-district-in-warsaw.html; Ellen Ben-Sefer and Linda Shields "Courage under Adversity: Luba Bielkicka-Blum (1906-1973) and the Nursing School of the Warsaw Ghetto," *Health and History* 18, no 2, (2016): 29.

[86] Ward, "Publicity-Poland," HIA FWVRC XX333/2.

the Massachusetts General School of Nursing.[87]

Eventually, other nursing programs cropped up around the country in Warsaw, Lwów, Cracow, Poznań, and Wilno.[88] Depending on the program, nursing students could pursue one of two tracks: they could either study to be a hospital nurse, or a polyvalent public health nurse (*opiekunka zdrowia).* This second type of nurse did not specialize in one particular field, but instead learned to perform a wide range of duties that blended aspects of nursing and social work.[89] The need for public health nurses in Poland was so high that some training courses focused only on producing this kind of nurse. For example, the nursing school in Wilno run by the Society for the Protection of Jewish Health (*Towarzystwo Ochrony Zdrowia Ludności Żydowskiej*, TOZ) prepared graduates for jobs caring for mothers and children; fighting tuberculosis, trachoma, internal diseases, alcoholism, and juvenile crime; and working as hygienic inspectors and educators.[90]

Despite the growth of schools and training programs, the number of nurses in Poland remained small. Each graduating class ranged from a dozen to sixty students, which did not produce enough graduates to staff the growing number of public health institutions. In 1922, there were only 184 total nurses graduated or in training.[91] Two years later, two-hundred health visitors had passed special training to work in infant welfare stations.[92] In 1932, the five main

---

[87] Dock, Pickett, Noyes, Clement, Fox, and Van Meter, *History of American Red Cross Nursing,* 1160.

[88] See Krystyna Wolska-Lipiec, "Nursing schools," *Wirtualne Muzeum Pielęgniarstwa Polskiego*, Polskie Towarzystwo Pielęgniarskie Zarząd Główny, accessed April 2, 2018, http://www.wmpp.org.pl/en/nursing-schools.html.

[89] F. R. Seymour, "League of Nations Collective Interchange in Poland, 1933," August 1933, LNA 1607/8B/6154; Crowell, "Memorandum," LNA 28794/12B/R883.

[90] TOZ office in Wilno to Ministry of Social Welfare, AAN Ministerstwo Opieki Społecznej (MOS) 15/557.

[91] Crowell, "Memorandum," LNA 28794/12B/R883.

[92] Stanisława Adamowicz, "Poland," *International Health Year-book, 1924: Reports on the Public Health Progress in Twenty-Two Countries* (Geneva: League of Nations, 1925), 401.

training centers for public health nurses had trained seven-hundred women. However, only 355 of them were working at health centers or infant welfare stations. That was not enough nurses to serve a population of thirty-two million with an infant mortality rate of fifteen percent. In 1933, a League of Nations report identified the lack of suitable nurses as one of Poland's main barriers to opening more child health and community clinics.[93] The next year, only 140 more nurses graduated from the country's top five schools.[94]

Despite a continuous lack of staff, the creation of a new professional female care force signaled important shifts in care work and women's public roles. First, the professional nursing force was gradually replacing traditional care authorities, mainly Catholic clergy, as the preferred caretakers for the sick. Second, professionalized nursing offered up yet another variation of the reimagined *Matka Polka*. During the partitions, the Mother Pole was an upper-class Catholic landholding or intelligentsia woman who fulfilled her duties as a mother, wife, and teacher behind closed doors. According to historian Eva Plach, the interwar Mother Pole differed from the partition-era version in two fundamental ways. First, she did not have to come from the gentry or intelligentsia. Second, her duties were not limited to the private sphere. Instead, she was called to step into public and political life "to participate in actively building a better tomorrow."[95] Although the rise of professional nursing was not directly linked to the *sanacja* revolution, *sanacja*-era language of "productive citizenry," "purification," "health," "moral responsibility," and "civic duty" found a concrete articulation in the practice of public health nursing.[96] The weight of the responsibilities placed on Poland's first generation of nurses was

[93] Seymour, "League of Nations Collective Interchange in Poland, 1933," LNA 1607/8B/6154.
[94] Maria Babicka-Zachertowa, "Rozwój nowoczesnego pielęgniarstwa w Polsce w okresie dziesięciolecia 1924-1934," *Pielęgniarka Polska* 7, no.1-2 (January-February 1935): 6.
[95] According to Eva Plach, Józef Piłsudski's 1926 May coup launched a political and cultural movement called *sanacja*, meaning "healing, rejuvenation, cleansing, or reform." See Plach, *Clash of Moral Nations*, 6-7, 102-104.
[96] Ibid., 6, 83, 103.

heard in the words of physician Dr. W. Meczkowski as he addressed the inaugural class of nursing students at the ARC's school in Warsaw on October 19, 1921:

> Poland is now like a bad housekeeper who, having an abundance of everything, wastes; many children are born, but the nation does not exert itself to keep them alive. Death takes them away as in no other country in the world, and the general mortality is much greater in Poland than anywhere else. There must come a time for us to open our eyes and see where we are going. We must begin a wise and planned war against illness. We must visit our ill people and examine the conditions of life of the healthy; we must enter the homes of the peasants and town dwellers, we must render popular the idea of real nursing, we must increase the means of preventing diseases, we must take care of women during pregnancy and after childbirth, we must provide the proper care for the sick people in their homes and in the Hospitals. This task can be carried out only by an intelligent and devoted nurse, such a nurse as graduates from the schools of North America and England. Our school has as its object the production of such nurses who must be pioneers. Its task is to produce the first nurse instructors to the medical institutions, and that is why, in accepting our first candidates, we have been so exacting in regard to their moral and educational qualifications."[97]

Meczkowski's sense of purpose was clear. The women he addressed had the opportunity to make a real difference in their country, to help Poland "get its house in order," save children's lives, and enlighten the adult population. By accepting work as a nurse, one could feel they were saving the future of Poland one person at a time.

The Little White House

In order to reshape motherhood, medical professionals had to increase contact with women who would normally not seek out their services. During the interwar period, infant welfare stations became the link between doctor, nurse, and mother that allowed for tighter medical control over the growth, health, and development of Poland's infants, as well as the systematic education of mothers on appropriate care and hygiene. The infant welfare station traces its roots back to institutions that emerged in late-nineteenth-century France. In 1892, obstetrician Pierre Budin created the first infant consultation center (*Consultation de Nourrisson*)

[97] Dock, Pickett, Noyes, Clement, Fox, and Van Meter, *History of American Red Cross Nursing*, 1161-2.

in Paris after discovering contaminated cow's milk could be blamed for cases of gastroenteritis that caused infant death. After women left maternity hospitals, they could return to Budin's center for consultations where he took infants' weights and measurements, encouraged mothers to breastfeed, and offered sterilized milk as needed. In 1894, Dr. Gaston Variot founded a similar institution in Normandy that he called the "Drop of Milk" (*Goutte de lait*). Soon, "Drops of Milk" and infant consultation centers spread rapidly across France and the rest of Europe.[98]

By the early 1900s, the institution reached certain Polish cities in the Austrian and Russian partitions, including Cracow, Łódź, and Płock.[99] However, the number of stations remained small. In 1916, only three infant welfare stations functioned in German-occupied Polish territory.[100] Although the impulse to provide more systematic infant care was growing, the resources to fund it simply did not exist during the war.

That much-needed influx of financial support, food, and equipment arrived after the war thanks to the efforts of the American Red Cross and other foreign aid groups. In July 1921 at least eighty-five infant welfare stations operated in Polish communities.[101] ARC workers not only supplied new stations, but they also worked to transform them from sites of milk distribution to "primary centers of medical examination, diagnosis, advice, home visitation, and assistance by public health nurses and social workers as well as the distribution of good quality milk."[102] ARC

---

[98] Paul L. Toubas, "Dr. Pierre Budin: Promoter of Breastfeeding in 19th century France," *Breastfeeding Medicine* 2 no. 1 (March 2007): 45-49.
[99] Maria Biegańska-Płonka, "'Kropla Mleka' w Łodzi w latach 1918-1939: Osiągnięcia w profilaktyce dziecięcej—sukces, ale jaki?" *Przegląd pediatryczny* 38, no. 4 (2008): 302-206; Stanisław Palczewski, "Pierwsza w Polsce "Kropla Mleka"—Dzieje Stacji Opieki nad Matką i Dzieckiem w Płocku" *Archiwum Historii Medycyny* 40 no. 4 (1977): 441-50; Stanisław Sterkowicz, "Krakowska Kropla Mleka," *Polski Tygodnik Lekarski* 7, no. 14 (1952): 413-415; Jerzy Supady, "Powstanie i Działalność Łódzkiej Kropli Mleka w Latach 1904-1914," *Zdrowie Publiczne* 88 (6) 1977: 411-415.
[100] "Posiedzenie komisji opieki nad dziećmi i młodzieżą," AAN RGO 52/40.
[101] "Map of Child Health Stations reported to July 1, 1921," HIA ARC XX482/115.
[102] Homer Folks to Robert M. Olds, April 1921, HIA ARC XX482.

officials wanted Polish women to see stations as a place to learn how to prevent illness and manage a child's health, not just a place to pick up free bottles of milk.

The growth of infant welfare stations in Poland continued well after the departure of foreign aid groups. Upon ARC withdrawal in March of 1922, the PAKPD assumed full control of the child welfare program and used $275,000 in ARC funds to continue developing infant welfare institutions across Poland. By 1926, the number of stations registered with the PAKPD had increased to 104. That number had nearly doubled two years later.[103]

In addition to the funds coming from foreign aid groups, the rebirth of the Polish state and the creation of the PAKPD offered welfare institutions unprecedented opportunities for public funds. In 1922, the PAKPD subsidized eighty of the 102 infant welfare centers and milk stations operating in Poland.[104] The child welfare bureau also paid salaries for seventy-one health visitors employed in forty-three of its stations. However, the PAKPD was not alone in funding these initiatives. Some stations received no PAKPD funding at all, but instead gathered funds from local governments, charities, and station patrons. Therefore, although the state offered symbolic and modest financial support, the management of individual stations as well as significant financial burden often remained concentrated in local hands.

During the interwar period, infant welfare stations focused on three main tasks: the supervision of infant growth and development, disease prevention and treatment, and the education of mothers. Unlike in the nineteenth century, when charity services focused on aiding the sick and downtrodden, welfare stations practiced preventative medicine to catch problems

---

[103] There were likely even more infant welfare stations and "Drops of Milk" operating in Poland, as figures only represent the stations registered with the PAKPD. See "Kronika Krajowa," *Opieka nad Dzieckiem* 1, no. 5, (September-October, 1923): 243-44; Gromski and Bartal, *Stacja*, 11-14, Rajmund Barański, "O samowystarczalności Stacji Opieki nad Matką i Dzieckiem," *Opieka nad Dzieckiem* 7, no. 5 (September-October, 1929): 188.
[104] Crowell, "Memorandum," LNA 28794/12B/R883.

before people became sick. At a time when many people in Poland saw hospital stays as a death sentence, medical staff had to convince mothers that welfare stations were a safe place to bring their babies.[105]

Station facilities represented modern, safe, and sanitary spaces that stood in stark contrast to the dark, dirty, and dangerous living conditions experienced by many station clientele. In her description of the TOM's original 1929 station, Adamowa Krzyżanowska emphasized how despite its "primitive conditions," the humble basement-turned-station looked as if it had been "touched by a magic wand" and transformed into a "small, but cozy, [and] white" location. It struck her as "some place mother and children wanted to visit, a place they could trust."[106] When the station relocated to the "Little White House" at 17 Miechowska Street, it offered several modern updates including running water, electricity, neatly arranged benches, and tables so clean that they sparkled. The new station was also quite spacious, with two large rooms to serve as a waiting room and as an examination room.[107]

Since the value of social medicine was not yet widely established among the general population, station managers had to find other ways to draw mothers to their facilities. After the war, American Red Cross stations attracted clientele by distributing children's clothing, underwear, kasha, sugar, pudding, soap, and milk.[108] However, once the handouts dried up, the women stopped attending. Some station managers worried that the infusion of philanthropic elements into station work compromised the institution's agenda and led to sporadic or discontinued attendance. In 1921, Dr. Gromski reported to the ARC that once mothers realized his Warsaw stations did not offer free or low-cost food, clothing, and supplies, they no longer

[105] Rajmund Barański, "Kilka słów o Stacji Opieki nad Matką i Dzieckiem," *Opieka nad Dzieckiem* 4, no. 6-7 (November-December, 1926): 270.
[106] "Stacja opieki niemowlętami: TOM Biały Domek," ANKr TOM 29/1786/8.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Gromski, "Zasady organizacji," 13-14.

wanted to attend. When asked why they would not bring their child to the station, they replied, "it does not pay."[109] Dr. Rajmund Barański, another prominent Warsaw physician, said that beginning his station's activity "under the banner of philanthropy" had attracted the wrong crowd. By offering layettes and soap to mothers who registered their infants, the station had drawn in women whose "sole purpose in joining the station was to get certain material advantages." Barański found these women difficult to work with because they did not understand the true purpose of the station's work. Similar to Gromski, Barański observed that once free handouts ended, the women often disappeared.[110] The challenge became figuring out how to draw women to the station in a way that honored the principles of modern social medicine.

By the mid to late-1920s, station personnel began using material items not as charity, but as rewards to reinforce attendance, rule compliance, and overall improvement of infant health. In 1929, the TOM station in Cracow honored fifteen mothers for diligent attendance and compliance with doctor's advice. The first, second, and third-place winners received the respective prizes of a white metal crib, a wash basin, and a bolt of linen. Dr. Stefania Gogolewska-Löwenhoff believed that such contests played an important role in convincing women that knowledge and behavior modification were more important for an infant's well-being than the acquisition of material goods.[111] She also found the contests incentivized "undiligent mothers" to attend the station more regularly. After Barański's station switched from charity to care contests, he found the mothers to be "one-hundred percent obedient" if only "fifty-percent intelligent."[112] The additional benefit was that by carrying out contests with "of

[109] Taylor to Burnham, June 2, 1921 HIA ARC XX482/115.
[110] Barański, "Kilka słów," 273.
[111] Stefanja Gogolewska-Löwenhoff, "Stacja Opieki nad Matką i Dzieckiem do lat 6 TOM przy ul. Miechowskiej 17 w Krakowie." *Opieka nad Dzieckiem* 8, no. 9-10 (September-October 1930): 460-465.
[112] Barański, "Kilka słów," 273.

course. . .lots of pomp," they succeeded in bringing more women to the station to register their infants.[113] By honoring mothers who demonstrated the best behavior, station doctors believed they were making mothers models for one another. Physicians hoped that the more mothers they converted to station methods of child-rearing, the more medical influence would diffuse through the community as women passed on advice to one another.

Gradually, medical personnel also transformed the station's image from a place of milk distribution to maternal education. According to Gromski, the care station was neither a charity, nor a clinic, but was "above all a school." Its main task, he argued, should be "without a doubt: educating mothers about the tasks of child hygiene, their needs, and the rationality of nursing and feeding."[114] In this school, mothers were the students, and doctors and nurses were the instructors. Barański recommended that the station staff—who he said should think of themselves not just as medical professionals but also as social pedagogues—were to view every interaction with mothers as a teachable moment. For example, doctors had to make sure that mothers saw them wash their hands before examining each infant. Barański also wanted stations to be a place where mothers learned from one another. When his staff encountered a mother whom they perceived to be particularly uncooperative, they would schedule her next appointment to coincide with the visits of other women who were not only "exemplary" in adherence to child hygiene, but all the more "pleasant" in demeanor. According to Barański, this little bit of social engineering proved very effective, as "after observing a few of these illustrative examples," disobedient mothers would soon raise the level of their performance.[115]

In 1930, the children's welfare bureau, by then calling itself the Polish Committee for the

---

[113] Ibid., 271.
[114] Marceli Gromski, "Działalność 77 Stacyj Opieki nad Niemowlętami w Polsce w ciągu 2-go pół-rocza 1922 roku," *Opieka nad Dzieckiem* 1, no. 2 (March-April, 1923): 78.
[115] Barański, "Kilka słów," 271.

Protection of Children (*Polski Komitet Ochrony Dzieci,* PKOD), took the practice of publicly recognizing mothers nationwide. During an annual nationwide event called "Week of the Child" (*Tydzień Dziecka*), the PKOD published a special booklet entitled *Honored Mothers* (*Matki Odznaczone*) that featured over thirty women from around the country recognized by their local stations for exemplary behavior. Each page featured a picture of a mother and her child, as well as the mother's name, her town, her voivodeship, and the address of her local care station. Below the photograph, a caption summarized each woman's accomplishment. Caption after caption emphasized the qualities of attendance, diligence, and obedience. Zofja Bieganowska of Moglino in the Poznań Voivodeship, "attended the station accurately and ardently fulfilled all the advice of the doctor and nurse." Helena Zielińska of Łowicz, "attended the station very diligently, complied with all the advice of the doctors and nurses, and kept her child and home very clean." These captions showed how even poor mothers could find success at the infant welfare station. In Łódź, Tekla Michalakowa and Gucia Hazenberg were honored because "despite very difficult material conditions, [and] working odd jobs outside the home," they "came to the station regularly, keeping the apartment and children in model cleanliness and fulfilling very ardently all advice of the doctor and nurse." Oddly, out of thirty entries in the booklet, only two specifically mentioned an improvement in a child's health.[116] Either mothers were not selected based on that criteria, or the PKOD wanted to emphasize the reform, compliance, and education of mothers as the station's most critical work. Through featuring these women, the PKOD and its affiliated stations sent the message that what made a mother most honorable was her ability to mother according to the advice of medical professionals.

[116] Polski Komitet Opieki nad Dzieckiem, *Matki Odznaczone na stacjach opieki nad matką i dzieckiem w r. 1930 w czasie "Tygodnia Dziecka"* (Warsaw: Polski Komitet Opieki nad Dzieckiem, 1930).

The Station's Reach: Class, Ethnicity, and Geography

Class

Infant welfare stations of the 1920s and 1930s tried to reform motherhood among the urban poor, as well as the more affluent classes. Marceli Gromski, vice-director of the children's welfare bureau in the early 1920s, did not believe that affluence assured a mother's ability to properly care for her child. He acknowledged that poverty increased the likelihood of children receiving improper medical care, but he had also witnessed families of good means who did not provide "appropriate preventative care."[117] In Cracow, Dr. Gogolewska-Löwenhoff saw plenty of middle-class mothers make mistakes with their infants and toddlers. In fact, she found that the mothers who best cared for their children were often those with the worst material conditions.[118] In order to attract more affluent mothers, station managers had to distinguish their services from anything resembling charity. Barański believed that removing the stigma of charity from stations would avoid demoralizing mothers while elevating the institution's value in the public eye.[119] For example, promotional pamphlets avoided labeling station services as "free" and instead advertised them as "low cost." At the same time, mothers needed to know that one's ability to pay should not determine access to medical care. Therefore, *To Polish Mothers* encouraged women who could not afford private doctors to come to the station for medical advice, while another pamphlet underscored that "in times of need" the station would provide milk at lower than market price.[120] As Gromski wrote, for social medicine to work, it had to "embrace all children of a given community."[121]

Finding ways to entice poor mothers to visit stations posed a serious philosophical

---

[117] Gromski, "Zasady," 11.
[118] Gogolewska-Löwenhoff, "Stacja Opieki nad Matką i Dzieckiem," 460.
[119] Barański, "Kilka słów," 273.
[120] American Red Cross, *Co uczyni Polskę silną i potężną*, 4.
[121] Gromski, "Zasady organizacji," 8.

challenge for station doctors who longed to purge the institution of its philanthropic past. Barański conceded that while he wanted to see the charitable model disappear, he could not deny that poor mothers who often required material aid constituted the majority of his station's clientele.[122] Quite often stations were located in poor neighborhoods and served working-class families struggling to make ends meet. In Cracow, the Miechowska Street station served the fifteenth and sixteenth districts, which Gogolewska-Löwenhoff described as "neighborhoods of gripping poverty."[123] Station managers developed various techniques to serve the needs of low-income families that maintained the stations' status as modern institutions of social medicine. In 1930, TOM began a nutritional consultant program to address the juvenile malnourishment, anemia, and rickets prevalent among registered children. At TOM stations, doctors prescribed dietary supplements such as cod-liver oil, lime, and iron, while visiting nurses signed up families for deliveries of fresh produce.[124] In Warsaw, Barański created an independent department to connect women with other social services so that mothers "would not see the station as an institution of giving."[125] Gromski took a similar approach by advising station staff to connect mothers with a wide variety of programs that included free legal services for unmarried women, day nurseries for working mothers, social welfare offices assisting unemployed families, city laboratories for women needing special examinations, and maternity institutions.[126] Such approaches integrated child welfare stations into a larger network of institutions and services that cared for the child from conception to adulthood.

Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationality

---

[122] Barański,"Kilka słów," 273.
[123] Gogolewska-Löwenhoff, "Stacja Opieki nad Matką i Dzieckiem," 462.
[124] Ibid., 462-463.
[125] Barański, "Kilka słów," 273.
[126] Gromski and Bartal, *Stacja,* 16.

In the Second Republic, childcare institutions fell under two classifications: closed care (*opieka zamknięta*) or open care (*opieka otwarta*). Closed-care institutions included residential facilities like orphanages, asylums, and shelters. The religious groups and voluntary societies that ran residential institutions served children of a specific religious, ethnic, or national group. Given the diversity of interwar Poland's population, one city or town might have several closed-care institutions that reflected the ethnic and religious diversity of its population. For example, in 1928 the different residential children's institutions in the medium-sized Galician city of Drohobycz included a home for orphaned boys run by a Polish children's charity, an orphanage for Greek-Catholic girls operated by the Basilian Sisters, a home for Ukrainian boys supported by the Ukrainian Society, an orphanage for Jewish children sponsored by the Jewish orphans' society, and a children's home for Catholic orphans maintained by the Roman-Catholic Serafitki Sisters.[127] Even though all of these institutions fulfilled a similar purpose, they each served children falling into specific religious, ethnic, or national categories.

As the guardians of orphaned, surrendered or abandoned children, residential childcare facilities were responsible for the cultural upbringing of a community's most vulnerable members. In a context where each religious, ethnic, or national community, however they chose to define themselves, traditionally cared for its own, it was important to certain community leaders that children not be "lost" to other groups. In the Bohemian lands, Czech and German nationalists developed segregated welfare systems that competed for children in order to turn them into good Czechs or Germans.[128] Before World War I, child care in Polish territory was also segregated especially between Poles and Jews. While Tara Zahra argues that the creation of a

[127] Komitet Polski Międzynarodowego Kongresu Opieki nad Dzieckiem, *Opieka nad Macierzyństwem, Dziećmi, i Młodzieżą w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (Warsaw: Wł. Łazarskiego, 1928), 292.
[128] Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 79-105.

nationally segregated welfare system in the Bohemian lands did not reflect meaningful social differences among the people it served, in the Polish lands, historian Sean Martin writes, "The social, cultural, and religious differences between Poles and Jews (and other groups as well) necessitated the development of separate institutional frameworks to solve what were, after all, similar problems of abandoned or orphaned children and poverty."[129] Even though Catholic welfare networks did not consciously compete for Jewish children, Polish Jews nevertheless worried about losing orphaned children to Catholic institutions. During the interwar years, Jewish leaders in Cracow argued that they needed to invest in residential care for Jewish children, lest those children be baptized in Catholic nurseries and orphanages.[130] Martin finds that regardless of political ideologies, Jewish welfare workers in interwar Poland generally agreed on the need to maintain segregated institutions for Jewish children.[131]

While residential facilities cared for the whole child in body, mind, and soul, infant welfare stations, a type of open-care institution, primarily cared for a child's physical body, leaving all other tasks of upbringing to the mother and larger family. This important distinction raises the question of whether or not infant welfare networks and the communities they served were as concerned with maintaining segregated welfare stations for Christian and Jewish children. Answering that question has proved a formidable challenge for this historian. For instance, the names of infant welfare stations and the organizations that ran them did not indicate the target population as readily as residential care facilities. Eighty-five kilometers northeast of Drohobycz, the small Galician city referenced earlier with five orphanages, the city of Lwów had infant welfare stations run by three organizations: the Pediatric Clinic at the University of Jan

[129] Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 67; Sean Martin, "Future Generations: Association for Jewish Children in Krakow, 1918-1939," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry Volume 23: Jews in Kraków*, Michał Galas and Antony Polonsky (Oxford, 2011): 294.
[130] Martin, "Future Generations," 294.
[131] Martin, "Future Generations," f5.

Kazimierz, the Lwów municipal government, and the Eastern Lesser Poland United Society for the Protection of Children and Youth (TOM). Despite the differences in their management, all three stations bore the same name: Welfare Station for Mother and Child (*Stacja Opieki nad Matką i Dzieckiem*), which makes it impossible to tell from the name the identity of the mothers and children served at these stations.

Not only do the station names hide the intended ethnic, religious, or national identities of their clientele, they also often obscure the complex array of actors involved in a specific station's development. A 1928 source indicates that the municipal government of Lwów ran two of the city's three stations: those located on 22 Chorążczyzna Street and 31 Szpitalna Street. However, according to Ella Stoffowa, the Jewish social worker in charge of these two stations, that had only been the case since 1926. The station on 22 Chorążczyzna had existed since 1919 as part of the Municipal Office of General Welfare and Legal Protection of the Child, the first municipal office of this type in Poland. Towards the end of 1921, the PAKPD assumed control of the station and organized it according to new American rules and standards imported by the American Red Cross.[132]

In April 1922, one month after the ARC's withdrawal from Poland, Ms. E. Schoenberger, a representative of the PAKPD, approached Ella Stoffowa about collaborating with the children's welfare bureau to establish another station to serve Lwów's Halickie and Krakowskie neighborhoods, respectively known as districts I and II. These neighborhoods, located to the west and south of the city center, were home to many of Lwów's Jews, who in 1921 comprised

[132] Ella Stoffowa, "Powstanie, organizacja i praca Stacji Opieki nad matką i dzieckiem we Lwowie," *Przegląd Społeczny* 3, no. 11 (November 1929): 420; Mirosław Łapot, "Studium Pracy Społecznej we Lwowie (1935-1939)," *Pedagogika społeczna w Polsce i na świecie* 68, no. 2 (2018): 86.

thirty-five percent of the city's population.[133] Schoenberger's request launched a collaboration between the PAKPD, the Joint, and Lwów's Jewish communal authorities, known by the Hebrew word *kehila* or the Polish term *gmina wyznaniowa*. The parties agreed that Jewish communal authorities would provide the building and utilities, the Joint would provide monetary subventions, and the PAKPD would take on, in Stoffowa's words, "the most important task of administration" and "the very complicated tasks of bookkeeping." The children's welfare bureau also paid for two social nurses to learn the Pirquet method at a pediatric clinic in Vienna and secured ARC donations of condensed milk, layettes for newborns, soap, cod liver oil, bath basins, wool, Lysol, and any other supplies needed to equip a modern station.[134]

Originally, the station occupied a room in the Jewish hospital, a monumental structure in the Neo-Moorish style located on 8 Rappaport Street at the southern edge of Lwów's Old Jewish Cemetery. In response to concerns that asking mothers to bring healthy children to a hospital would give them "the wrong idea" and possibly endanger children's health, Stoffowa eventually moved this station down the road to 31 Szpitlana Street to a location secured with the help of the Jewish community and the PAKPD. A month after opening the original station in the Jewish Hospital, Stoffowa also became the director of the municipal infant welfare station on 22 Chorążczyzna Street, which despite being located in the city center was in close enough proximity to Halickie, Lwów's Jewish district, that it could serve that community. In 1926, when the children's welfare bureau committee that established well-baby stations in the area began to liquidate, the Lwów municipal government assumed support of both stations, placing them under

[133] Christoph Mick, Lemberg, Lwów, L'viv, 1914-1947: Violence and Ethnicity in a Contested City (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2016), 211; Stoffowa, "Powstanie, organizacja i praca," 420; "Plan of Lwów," 1922, Center for Urban History of East Central Europe, accessed May 8, 2020, https://www.lvivcenter.org/en/umd/mapdetails/plan-miasta-lwowa-1922/.
[134] Stoffowa, "Powstanie, organizacja i praca," 420-421.

the authority of the Department of Social Welfare (*Wydział Opieki Społecznej)*, which ran them in collaboration with the City Health Office (*Miejski Urzędem Zdrowia*).[135]

Tracing the history of Lwów's stations demonstrates how after the war, infant health initiatives seized the interest of many parties with distinct but overlapping interests. As a result, the city's infant welfare stations, rather than being founded and continuously run by one charitable or philanthropic group, instead resulted from a new hybrid welfare structure. In two welfare stations we see the convergence of efforts by the municipal government; the state children's welfare bureau, founded by American Relief Administration; the American Red Cross; the Joint Distribution Committee; and the traditional Jewish *kehila*. The stations represented a coming together of forces traditional and modern, foreign and local, federal and municipal.

The history of the Lwów stations also reveals the commitment of a non-Jewish organization to provide care for urban, Jewish children as part of a wider public health initiative. According to Ella Stoffowa, a representative from PAKPD approached her about creating stations to reach Lwów's Jewish population, and Stoffowa assumed control of two stations positioned to do so. In her report, Stoffowa also gives special thanks to Julian Obirek, vice-president of Lwów from 1919-1927, for securing municipal funding for the stations. Although he was not Jewish, Obierek's political memberships, which included the Polish Social Democrat Party of Galicia (*Polska Partia Socjalno-Demokratyczna Galicji*) and then the Polish Socialist Party (*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna,* PPS), aligned with interests in spreading social medicine to all children in Poland, regardless of religion, ethnicity, or nationality.[136] Further research is needed to determine if this phenomenon is specific to Lwów or occurred in other Polish cities as well.

[135] Stoffowa, "Powstanie, organizacja i praca," 420-421; Plan miasta Lwowa, 1922.
[136] Stoffowa, "Powstanie, organizacja i praca," 422; Władysław Leopold Jaworski, *Diariusz, 1914-1918* (Warsaw, Oficyna Naukowa, 1997), 326.

When written records do comment on the ethnic, national, or religious identities of a station's clientele, they indicate that the main distinction in station care was between those that served Jews and those that served Christians. In 1926, Gromski and Bartel published a book on station care for the Ministry of Social Welfare that listed all stations registered with the children's welfare bureau. Out of the 104 stations, Gromski and Bartel listed ten of them as "Jewish."[137] Two years later, the Polish Committee of the International Congress of Child Welfare published the name of every child welfare institution registered in Poland at that time. Quite often, there was no ethnic, national, or religious distinction indicated in an individual station's name or managing body; in cases where it was listed, the designation was Jewish. The community with the most specifically Jewish stations listed was Warsaw. In Poland's capital city, the Society of Care for Infants of the Jewish Faith (*Towarzystwo Opieki nad Niemowlętami Wyznania Mojżeszowego*) ran three "Drops of Milk," while the city's fourth drop of milk was listed as a "Polish milk station" operated by the "Drop of Milk" Society and subsidized by Warsaw's municipal government.[138] One should assume that the term "Polish" here indicated service to Christans, since all the other "Drops of Milk" were listed as "Jewish." In the heart of Warsaw's Jewish community, The Society of Children's Friends (*Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzieci*), a Jewish children's charity founded in 1916 by pediatrician Anna Braude Heller, ran two other welfare stations on Krochmalna and Bonifraterska streets.[139] Outside of Warsaw, TOZ, the Jewish health organization, ran the majority of Jewish infant welfare stations, especially in Poland's eastern border districts. By contrast, save for the one example in Warsaw, the 1928 publication did not

---

[137] Gromski and Bartal, *Stacja*, 11-13.
[138] Komitet Polski Międzynarodowego Kongresu Opieki nad Dzieckiem, *Opieka nad Macierzyństwem, Dziećmi, i Młodzieżą w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 41-42.
[139] The Society of Children's Friends (*Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzieci)* should not be confused with The Workers Society of Children's Friends (*Robotnicze Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzieci*), which was a socialist children's aid organization.

list any stations whose name or organizing body specifically indicated that they served exclusively Catholics, Protestants, Greek Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Ukrainians, Ruthenians, Poles or any of the other typical ethnic, national, or religious designations that were prevalent among closed-care institutions at the time.[140]

In some communities, stations welcomed Jewish and Christian mothers and children at the same location. In 1929, a TOM station in the poor Cracovian neighborhood of Podgórze served 257 Jewish children, 154 Roman-Catholic children, and one Protestant child. On the other side of town, the TOM's "Little White House" served 250 Catholic children and eighteen Jewish children in the Czarna Wieś neighborhood.[141] A similar trend occurred further north in Łódź where in one year the "Drop of Milk" Society served 4850 Christian children and 1551 Jewish children. In fact, throughout the interwar period about twenty-four percent of the Łódź "Drop of Milk's" clients were Jewish.[142] This trend is worth noting since neither the Łódź "Drop of Milk" nor Cracow's TOM were Jewish aid organizations.

Why then did these organizations serve Christians and Jews together at the same stations if the tradition established by "closed" childcare institutions was for each community to care for its own? One answer can be found by looking at the medical professionals active in the infant health movement. In general, Polish physicians interested in eugenics and social medicine embraced liberal and left-wing political orientations and joined social democratic, socialist, and even communist political parties. Members of the Polish eugenics movement, which included many physicians of Jewish origin, tended to avoid antisemitic rhetoric or practices, and

---

[140] See Komitet Polski Międzynarodowego Kongresu Opieki nad Dzieckiem, *Opieka nad Macierzyństwem, Dziećmi, i Młodzieżą w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*.
[141] "Sprawozdanie roczne z działalności Stacji Opieki nad matką i dzieckiem T.O.M w Podgórze za czas od 1 lipca 1929 do 30 czerwca, 11930" and "Sprawozdanie półroczne przy ul. Miechowskiej 17 za czas od 1 styczeń do 30 czerwcu 1932," ANKr TOM 29/1786/8.
[142] Joanna Podolska, "Kropla mleka w parku," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, June 4, 2004, accessed August 1, 2014, http://lodz.gazeta.pl/lodz/1,35155,2008889.html.

physicians practicing social medicine tended to be more interested in issues of class than race.[143] They saw social medicine as a means to improve the lives and health status of the urban poor, be they Christian or Jewish, rather than strengthening any one biologically-determined race.[144]

Even though physicians of Jewish background suffered strict restrictions in the Second Republic, social medicine constituted one field where collaboration between Jewish and Gentile doctors flourished. As Jewish medical schools restrict Jewish students, medical societies rejected Jewish applicants, and state hospitals banned Jewish doctors from their service, the Polish Society for Social Medicine welcomed Jewish applications.[145] Founders of the society's *Warsaw Medical Journal* (*Warszawskie Czasopismo Lekarskie*) included Edward Flatau, the father of Polish neurology and an assimilated Polish Jew, and Ludwik Hirszfeld, "an agnostic intellectual" of Jewish birth.[146] In addition, the PTMS maintained close ties with the Association of Physicians of the Polish Republic (*Zrzeszenie Lekarzy Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej,* ZLRP), a society founded in 1923 by a group of prominent Jewish doctors who wanted to provide Jewish physicians with access to research libraries, journals, scholarships, and lectures. The organizations shared a co-founder, Wilhelm Knappe, much of their membership, and a professional journal.[147] Together, these societies formed a network of Polish-Gentile and

---

[143] One notable exception is Karol Stojanowski, a journalist who advocated for an ethnically Polish nation-state that would deny civil rights to Jews and other national minorities. See Gawin, "Progressivism and Eugenic Thinking in Poland," 177.

[144] Gawin, "Progressivism and Eugenic Thinking in Poland, 176-7; Kamila Uzarczyk, "'Moses als Eugeniker"? The Reception of Eugenic Ideas in Jewish Medical Circles in Interwar Poland," in *Blood and Homeland*, 284-285; Ohry-Kossoy and Ohry, "Dedicated Physicians in the Face of Adversity," 456; Gawin, "Progressivism and Eugenic Thinking in Poland, 176-177.

[145] Joanna Beata Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jews from 1880 to the Present* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 103-104.

[146] Ludwik Hirszfeld, *Ludwik Hirszfeld: The Story of One Life*, ed. Marta A. Balińska and William H. Schneider, trans. Balińska (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2010), 325.

[147] The PTMS's *Warsaw Medical Journal* served as the ZLRP's unofficial publication. See Ohry-Kossoy and Ohry, "Dedicated Physicians in the Face of Adversity," 456.

Polish-Jewish doctors working to promote positive eugenics, practice social medicine, and modernize care for vulnerable populations, including mothers and children.

The histories of station care in Cracow and Łódź demonstrate how the identities and ideologies of individual physicians contributed to the formation of stations that served Jewish and Christian women and children together in the same space. In Cracow, the first infant welfare stations were founded in the early twentieth century by Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński, a physician and activist born to a father from a noble Polish family that practiced Calvinism and to a middle-class mother whose family had converted to Judaism in the eighteenth century. Both sides of his family had cultivated Polish patriotic traditions and Boy-Żeleński grew up with a strong social conscience.[148] In 1892, he began training as a pediatrician and gynecologist at the Jagiellonian University medical school in Cracow. While traveling in France, Boy-Żeleński encountered "Drops of Milk" and infant consultation centers, and decided to bring them back to his home city of Cracow, which had some of Europe's highest infant mortality rates. In July 1905, Boy-Żeleński opened a facility in Cracow's main square that offered daily bottles of pasteurized cow's milk for free or at a low cost. Mothers who wanted to receive the milk had to bring their infants in once a week to be weighed and measured. For one hour each day, Boy-Żeleński offered women free medical consultations. The clinic served at least one-hundred mothers on the first day and its popularity soared. Boy-Żeleński soon discovered that the majority of women traveled from Kazimierz, one of the city's Jewish districts, which made it difficult for them to visit the station daily. To better serve this population, Boy-Żeleński organized a second "Drop of Milk" at a Kazimierz pharmacy.[149]

[148] Katarzyna Pabijanek, "Żeleński, Tadeusz Kamil Marcjan (Boy) (1874-1941)," *Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Francisca de Haan, Krassimira Daskalova, and Anna Loutfi (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), 616.
[149] Grazyna Jasienska, *The Fragile Wisdom: An Evolutionary View on Women's Biology and*

In 1906, Boy-Żeleński opened a third facility called the Office of Advice for Mothers and Children (*Biuro Porady dla Matek i Dzieci)*, which focused solely on educating mothers about child care. Countess Teresa Lubomirska, a Polish noblewoman struggling with infertility, funded the center in hopes that God would reward her with a child. After giving birth to a healthy son in 1907, Lubomirska lost interest in philanthropy, which cost Cracow's first infant health center its primary benefactor. Around the same time, Żeleński ended his pediatric career and left Jagiellonian University to pursue art and activism.[150] Without its patron and founding physician, the "Drops of Milk" and infant consultation center closed in 1908. Nevertheless, Boy-Żeleński, whom historian Antony Polonsky calls "a bitter foe of ethnic nationalism and provincialism," established two important practices. He welcomed Jewish and Christian mothers and infants to the same consultation center and he opened a "Drop of Milk" in a Jewish neighborhood.[151]

Over the next twenty years, infant welfare stations in Cracow had a hard time sustaining themselves. Ten years after Boy-Żeleński's "Drop of Milk" closed, TOM opened an infant welfare station in Cracow. However, financial difficulties forced the station to close within a few years. In 1921, Boy-Żeleński and his colleague Dr. Antoni Otaszewski opened another station, but their project was likewise short-lived. By 1925, all of Cracow's stations had closed.[152] It was not until the late 1920s that TOM opened a network of stations that functioned until at least the end of the 1930s. At these stations, Dr. Stefania Gogolewska-Löwenhoff and her colleagues running the infant welfare stations continued Boy-Żelesński's practice of offering social

---

Health (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013): 97-98.
[150] Pabijanek, "Żeleński, Tadeusz Kamil Marcjan (Boy) (1874-1941)," 617;
Jasienska, *The Fragile Wisdom*, 95-98.
[151] Antony Polonsky, "'Why Did They Hate Tuwim and Boy So Much?' Jews and 'Artificial Jews' in the Literary Polemics of the Second Republic," in *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland*, ed. Robert Blobaum (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 205.
[152] Barbara Ostaszewska-Chrzanowska, "Antoni Ostaszewski (1896-1946)-Lekarz, żołnierz, społecznik," Towarzystwo Lekarskie Warszawskie, accessed March 29, 2019, http://www.tlw.waw.pl/index.php?id=21&newsy_id=110; Gromski and Bartal, *Stacja*, 11.

medicine to people of all faiths and establishing stations in Jewish and Christian neighborhoods.[153]

Infant welfare stations in Łódź developed with fewer interruptions. In May 1904, two physicians, Józef Maybaum, who was Jewish, and his wife Stefania Marzyńska, a Christian, founded the city's first "Drop of Milk." They did so as members of the Łódź branch of the Warsaw Hygienic Society, one of the societies most active in the late-nineteenth-century Polish eugenics movement.[154] From the first moment of its founding, Łódź's "Drop of Milk" focused on serving the city's poor mothers and children under age two "without difference of faith and nationality." Both the organization's donors and recipients included Catholics, Lutherans, and Jews. Despite encountering serious financial difficulties during the First World War, the "Drop of Milk" Society continued operating institutions according to its original mandate until at least 1939.[155]

At the same time that Jewish and Christian mothers attended infant welfare stations in Cracow and Łódź, there were stations in other towns that never opened their doors to Jews. A "Drop of Milk" in Płock, which dated back as early as those in Cracow and Łódź, cared for seventy-five percent of the town's infant population "not including Jewish infants."[156] In a 1984 interview, Krystyna Mazowiecka, the daughter of the station's doctor for most of the interwar period, said she "never heard if there existed some sort of separate 'Drop of Milk' for the Jewish

---

[153] Józef Serkowski, *Dzieje T.O.M.* 1916 (Lwów: Kwiążnica-Atlas, 1931).
[154] Kenshi Fukumoto, "Polyphonic Solidarity in Poland: The Milk Drop Society in Łódź," in *IGK Work and Human Lifecycle in Global History* (a collection of papers presented at the Summer Academy: Work and Non-Work in Global Perspective. Resonances, Connections, and Contradictions, Soang University, Soel, South Korea, August 9-16, 2015): 21-25, https://rework.hu-berlin.de/en/summer-academy.html.
[155] Towarzystwo Opieki nad Matką i Dzieckiem zbiór szczątków zespołow, 1916-1939, Archiwum Państwowy w Łodzi (APŁ) 299/2.
[156] Palczewski, "Pierwsza w Polsce 'Kropla Mleka,'" 445.

population. Maybe??"[157] In fact, the Jewish Charitable Society (*Żydowskie Towarzystwo Dobroczynności*) did open a "Drop of Milk" the same year as the Christian station, although it is unclear how long the effort lasted. In 1920, the Jewish society served 23 mothers and 987 infants, but this station did not appear in either of the 1926 or 1928 lists of child welfare institutions, most likely indicating that it closed in the early 1920s.[158] Meanwhile, as discussed in the previous chapter, when the ARC tried to open a welfare station in Piotrków, the attending doctor refused to serve Jews at the station, forcing the Joint to intervene and advocate for the ARC to fund a second station.[159]

When doctors such as the ones in Płock and Piotrków chose to run "Christian only" stations, it necessitated the founding of Jewish stations, lest those infants and mothers go without health services. However, in the eastern borderlands, TOZ, interwar Poland's Jewish health organization, not only ran the majority of Jewish children's welfare institutions, but also sometimes ran a town's only child welfare station. TOZ, established in Warsaw in 1921, developed out of the Polish branch of the Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population (*Obshchestvo okhraneniia zdorov'ia evreiskogo naseleniia*), which was a relief, preventative medicine, and health organization founded by Jewish physicians in St. Petersburg in 1912. Like other Jewish organizations developing at the time, TOZ responded to two needs: lack

---

[157] Krystyna Mazowiecka ad Jolanta Załęczny, "Korespondencje," *Notatki Płockie* 29, no. 1-2 (1984): 63.
[158] Jolanta Załęczny, "Kilka uwag na temat płockiej gminy żydowskiej w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym," *Notatki Płockie* 29, no. 1-2 (1984): 24–28; Gromski and Bartel, *Stacja*, 12; Komitet Polski Międzynarodowego Kongresu Opieki nad Dzieckiem, *Opieka nad Macierzyństwem, Dziećmi, i Młodzieżą w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 81-82; "Organizacje i stowarzyszenia społeczne--informacje ogólne," *Wirtualny Sztetl*, Polin: Museum of History of Polish Jews, accessed March 29, 2019, https://sztetl.org.pl/pl/miejscowosci/p/414-plock/101-organizacje-i-stowarzyszenia/81495-organizacje-i-stowarzyszenia-spoleczne-informacje-ogolne; Szczepański J., Społeczność żydowska Mazowsza w XIX–XX wieku, Pułtusk 2005.
[159] John B. Voor to Schmidt, September 13, 1921, HIA ARC XX482/116.

of traditional charitable efforts within the Jewish communities to address the growing health and welfare needs of poor Jewish populations and the end of American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee medical activities in Poland. Many members of TOZ were also active in Polish Society of Social Medicine and Association of Physicians of the Polish Republic, and the three organizations shared several of the same goals regarding the promotion of preventive medicine in Poland.[160] Even though TOZ's mission was to strengthen the biological status of Poland's Jewish population, it appears the TOZ station in Wilno did not turn away Christian mothers and their children. In 1920, 7.6 percent of all children served at the TOZ station were Christian, 1921 the 3.8 percent of the station's children were Christian. This phenomenon, however, only lasted until 1922, when another station opened up to serve Christian children, and Christians stopped attending the TOZ station.[161]

As the previous examples show, in certain cities, Jewish women attended stations run by non-Jewish organizations, however, certain forces in the Second Republic might have tried to keep Christian women from attending Jewish-run medical institutions. Historian Joanna Michlic writes that one of the slogans of the interwar ethno-nationalist movements was "Jewish doctors for Jewish patients," which implied therefore that Polish doctors should likewise treat Polish patients.[162] In 1928, Dr. Malinowski, the county physician for Słominski county in the Nowogródek province, advocated for more consistent public funding of an infant welfare station recently founded thanks to a 1400 złoty grant from the Ministry of Social Welfare. However, after only a few months, the station ran into funding trouble. Besides lack of consistent monthly funding from the ministry, Malinowski argued that:

[160] Ohry-Kossoy and Ohry, "Dedicated Physicians in the Face of Adversity,"458-9.
[161] "Sprawozdania z działalności Stacji Opieki nad Matką i Dzieckiem T-wa "TOZ" w Wilnie za okres czasu od 1920 do 1927 roku," *Opieka nad Dzieckiem* 6, no. 1 (January-February): 20-12.
[162] Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other*, 103.

> The existence of this extremely beneficial institution is hindered further by the strange practices of private Jewish organization, to which the municipal government gives funds because of the vast majority of Israelites sitting on the city council, this approach is not rational because health centers, like the Station of Care for Mother and Child, supported by the local government, is rationally run, well-controlled, and follows established patterns, whereas private institutions, which have many overseers, especially on a ritual basis, leaves much to be desired.[163]

Malinowski claimed that given the inconsistent and poor work of private institutions, "it is no wonder that people of other faiths do not wish to attend the 'Jewish station.'"[164]

Although it is not exactly clear which "Jewish station" Malinowski was referring to—the nearest Jewish infant welfare stations on record with the children's welfare bureau were a respective seventy-three and 121 kilometers away in Nowogródek and Lida—his critique is consistent with two trends prominent among Polish-Christians living or working in the interwar *kresy.* The first was a tendency of Christians to complain that Jews had too much control over city councils.[165] The second was the trend of Poles, especially those employed by the state, to use tropes of Jewish backwardness to position themselves as modernizers in the *kresy*, especially among non-Catholic, non-Polish, Slavic minorities. In her study of interwar Volhynia, Kathryn Ciancia writes how *Sanacja* and *Endecja* sympathizers would leverage these ideas to show how Jewish backwardness threatened the project of Polish modernity in the underdeveloped "wild east" of the *kresy*.[166] In Słominski county, Nowogródek--two provinces north of where Ciancia's study takes place--Malinowski argued that the area needed a rationally run Station of Mother and Child subject to state inspection and control, as opposed to the backward and ritualistic Jewish institutions whose work "leaves much to be desired."[167]

---

[163] Dr. Malinowski, "Annual report from the field of social hygiene, matters of sanitary order, and fight with infectious disease for Powiat Słonimski for 1928," MOS 15/491.
[164] Malinowski "Annual report," MOS 15/491.
[165] Kathryn Ciancia, "Borderland Modernity: Poles, Jews, and Urban Spaces in Interwar Eastern Poland," *The Journal of Modern History* 89, no. 3 (September 2017): 541.
[166] Ibid., 535.
[167] Malinowski "Annual report," MOS 15/491.

Malinowski's report, like many other documents filed with the State Ministry of Social Welfare, was noticeably silent on the topic of social welfare work among ethnic and religious minorities. However, the report did state that Słonim's station doctor, Dr. Jeśmanowa, and her assisting hygienist consciously tried to expand the stations' reach to people outside the city. They hosted visitors in Słonim from sometimes as far as twenty kilometers away, while also traveling out into the countryside to deliver talks and consultations on hygiene and breastfeeding. Working in the countryside outside Słonim would have most certainly involved working with populations who identified neither as Polish nor Catholic. According to the 1931 census, only thirty percent of Słonim's population of 16,510 identified as Roman-Catholic. The remainder was fifty-two percent Jewish and fourteen percent Orthodox Christian. In the countryside, however, the population was seventy-eight percent Belorussian-speaking, Orthodox Christian peasants. Only 17.16 percent of the rural population identified as Roman Catholic, and these would have been most often elite landholders, who were not the primary target population for station work.[168] Therefore, any work done to modernize and enlighten mothers from rural populations in this area would have involved working with a non-Polish speaking or identifying population. The message implied by Malinowski's advocacy for a Polish-run infant welfare center was that non-Polish Slavic minorities of the region would be better delivered modern health care services by initiatives funded, supported, and controlled by the Polish state instead of by local Jews. Fostering rural development and prosperity could therefore be leveraged to promote positive attachments to the Polish state.[169]

---

[168] Główny urząd statystyczny rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, *Drugi Powszechny Spis Ludności z dn. 9.XII 1931 r.: mieszkania i gospodarstwa domowe, ludność, stosunki zawodowe: Województwo Nowogródzkie* (Warsaw: Ładem Głównego Urzędu Statystycznego, 1938) 23.
[169] Kathryn Clare Ciancia, "Poland's Wild East: Imagined Landscapes and Everyday Life in the Volhynian Borderlands, 1918-1939" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2011), 164.

Geography

Despite some efforts to reach rural populations, especially in the eastern borderlands, infant welfare stations were most often found in urban communities in central and western Poland. According to an American Red Cross map dated July 1, 1921, the majority of children's dispensaries and milk stations were located in central Poland, with very few found in the most western district of Poznań. Although there were twenty-five stations in the eastern districts, that number fell to thirteen following the departure of foreign aid groups in the middle of 1922. In fact, the departure of foreign aid missions correlated with a nationwide drop in the number of health stations from 103 in 1921 to seventy-three two years later. The number of PAKPD supported stations in Poland did not reach its 1921 totals again until 1926, however, very few of those stations were located in the *kresy.* As of 1925, Nowogródek had zero, Polesia had one, and the remaining provinces of Wilno, Volhynia, Tarnopol, and Stanisławów each had three. Instead, the 1920s saw the bulk of new stations developed in cities and large towns of central and western Poland, specifically in the Poznań, Pomeranian, and Silesian districts. In 1925, the district of Poznań had twelve active stations, of which nine had been opened in the previous two years. The city of Warsaw itself had twelve stations, with an additional thirteen others scattered in towns around the Masovian district. Meanwhile, the districts of Lwów, Stanisławów, Tarnopol, Volhynia, Brześć, Nowogródek, Wilno, and Białystok, had only three new stations founded from 1924 to 1925.[170]

The practice of establishing stations in urban areas in central and western Poland began with the Americans. While ARA officials' emergency efforts to feed Poland's most needy children led them to the eastern borderlands, ARC leadership wanted to build a more sustainable

[170] "Map of Child Health Stations reported to July 1, 1921," HIA ARC XX482/115; Gromski and Bartal, *Stacja*, 1-14.

network of public health institutions. ARC officials worried that the lack of local funds, facilities, and administration in the east, combined with the instability caused by epidemics and invasions, would diminish their success. Instead, they focused on establishing infant welfare stations in more stable regions of western and central Poland. Furthermore, the ARC only created stations in cities and towns with over 10,000 inhabitants, which left out smaller and more rural communities. ARA officials did so operating under the widely-held assumption that rural lifestyles were healthier than those in cities. Marceli Gromski, the ARC's most trusted Polish collaborator, confirmed this assumption by telling ARC leadership that despite a low standard of cleanliness and lack of hygienic education in the countryside, rural areas had better air, better access to quality milk and food, and mothers who breastfeed more frequently.[171]

Nearly a decade and a half later, the Polish health care establishment continued to overlook the needs of rural children. In 1934, Dr. Czesław Piekarski, director of a county station in the Poznań district, wrote that in rural areas, "a completely healthy infant is the exception."[172] He pointed out that regardless of the tremendous growth of station work in urban Poland, rural areas, inhabited by anywhere from seventy to eighty percent of Poland's population, remained grossly neglected. Despite persistent beliefs to the contrary, evidence suggested that rural children were not healthier than their city-dwelling peers. Infant mortality in rural areas was, in fact, forty percent higher than in urban areas.[173] When Sylwia Bujak-Boguska, a prominent member of the pro-Piłsudksi Women's Union for Citizenship Work (*Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet*), wrote about her travels around the Polish countryside for the Polish

---

[171] Sylwia Kuźma-Markowska, "W trosce o 'dzieci jutra': amerykańskie inicjatywy opieki nad niemowlętami w II Rzeczypospolitej," *Medycyna Nowożytna* 23, no. 1 (2017): 121-122.
[172] Czesław Piekarski, "Opieka społeczna nad matką i dzieckiem na wsi," *Życie Dziecka* 3, no. 12 (December 1934), 171.
[173] Joseph Marcus, *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland, 1919-1939* (Berlin: New Babylon, 1983), 193.

Pediatric Society's magazine *Young Mother* (*Młoda Matka*), she observed,"The village is a thing of great harm even much more than in the city." She claimed that despite villagers' high opinions of their health, "Overworked women of the village are absolutely ignorant about the hygiene of pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period." "And the children!" she continued. "My lord, is it possible to count the serious harms these little things are experiencing?" Bujak-Boguska went on to describe them as horribly fed, riddled with cradle cap, "rocked with abandon," and shielded from light and air. She visited villages across Poland where scrofula, a glandular infection caused by tuberculosis, and tooth diseases, which killed many children, were considered normal.[174] She also found that people in rural areas had deeply entrenched opinions about child-rearing and thus often resisted the ideas of outsiders. When children died, villagers understood it to be "God's will." Conventional wisdom said that infants should only go outside to be baptized, and should otherwise remain indoors. Bujak-Boguska met one woman who believed if she took her baby outside, the neighbors would call her a murderer. "And an opinion in the village--" Bujak-Boguska wrote, "that's a more dangerous thing than in the city."[175] Such suspicion and entrenched opinions made it difficult for healthcare professionals to promote social medicine in rural areas.

Distance and isolation posed additional challenges. With villages located fifteen, twenty, or thirty kilometers from the nearest doctor, physicians traveled infrequently to rural areas. In Volhynia, where there was only one physician per 47,000 residents, physicians employed by the state did not like traveling on the region's bad roads.[176] Jewish doctors, who comprised fifty-six percent of all of Poland's private physicians, tended to avoid visits to the countryside for fear of

[174] Sylwia Bujak-Boguska, "Z moich wędrówek po wsi," *Młoda Matka* 1, no. 5 (June 1927): 1-2.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ciancia, "Poland's Wild East," 155.

rural antisemitism.[177] To fill this void, organizations like the Women' created "flying stations" (*lotne stacji*), which traveled around rural areas offering women medical consultations. A flying station would visit each community for about three to four days, three times a year offering instruction on pregnancy, postpartum care, infant care, school hygiene, first aid, adult health, and village hygiene. Women's Union stations were quite efficient. In the third quarter of 1935, a Women's Union "Flying Clinic for Mother and Child," operating out of Krzemieniec consulted 152 children, two pregnant women, gave ten public talks, and made ninety-three hygienic nursing visits.[178] By 1937, the traveling nurses who ran this operation could visit about thirty communities in a given year. But the work was not easy. Traveling nurses often faced rural mistrust and resistance, and lacked suitable rooms for clinical visits and lectures.[179] They considered their work a success if only two or three peasant women arrived for a lecture.[180]

Overall, the reach of infant welfare stations in terms of geography, class, and ethnicity was ambitious but limited. A cohort of doctors, nurses, and hygienists--many driven by leftist politics and a dedication to social medicine and positive eugenics--established care networks for women and infants and toddlers of many walks of life. Some stations targeted a specific population of women and children, others served women of multiple class backgrounds, faiths, and ethnicities. Whether or not Jewish and Christian women attended the same stations depended on the individual doctors and organizations managing the institutions. Expansion of infant welfare into rural areas, especially in eastern Poland, proved to be a much lower priority, which was a precedent established by the American Red Cross and continued after the departure of foreign aid groups. By the end of the 1920s, some organizations and individuals tried to spread

[177] Michlich, *Poland's Threatening Other*, 103.
[178] AAN Urząd Wojewódzki w Łucku (UWŁ) 1181/20.
[179] Zrzeszenie Powiatowe Związku Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet, "Plan Pracy Lotnej Poradni Matki i Dziecka Z.P.O.K. na powiat Krzemieniecki na rok budż. 1937/38," AAN MOS 15/728.
[180] Ciancia, "Poland's Wild East," 170.

ideas of modern motherhood to rural populations, but physical distance, local suspicion, and entrenched rural beliefs made it a challenging and slow-moving process.

Home Invasions

Home visits offered another way to expand the station's reach. Doctors believed the techniques they introduced to mothers during station consultations would have little impact unless their advice was conscientiously applied between appointments at the station. The goal was not only to increase contact between physician and child but to reform the practice of motherhood itself.

During home visits, a nurse, hygienist, or social worker would visit the homes of children registered at stations. Pierre Budin, the founder of an early infant consultation center in Paris, began promoting home visits in the 1890s and soon after, social workers and public health nurses in the United States began traveling to private homes to educate women, usually living in poor, urban environments, about breastfeeding, child-rearing, and hygiene. During the early twentieth century, the NYC Health Department implemented a home nursing visitor program as a way to lower infant mortality.[181] When Americans began building child health centers and professional nursing schools in Poland, they imported the idea of home visits.[182] Eventually, multiple types of institutions utilized home visits, including child welfare stations, health centers, school clinics, and anti-tuberculosis dispensaries.

The professionals who conducted home visits went by many titles, depending on the institution. F. R. Seymour, a representative from the League of Nations who visited Poland in 1933, wrote of the "polyvalent nurses" employed by public health centers and tasked with

[181] American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Child and Adolescent Health, "The Role of Home Visitation Programs," *Pediatrics* 101 (March 1998): 486.
[182] Taylor, "Memo to All A.R.C. Inspectors," HIA ARC XX482/115.

visiting homes and forging intimate contact with families. He described these women as nurses who were not specialists in one field but instead performed "many social duties beyond mere health visiting."[183] Other Polish-language sources refer to these women by the terms "social nurse" (*pielęgniarka społeczna*) or "social hygienist" (*hygienist społeczna*), while Yiddish sources use the term nurse-hygienist *(shwester-hygienist).*[184] In general, these titles referred to a professional woman, trained either at a school of nursing or social work, who assisted the station doctor and periodically visited homes to check on the health of infants or toddlers and monitor households social and material conditions. During a visit, a nurse would interview family members, advise mothers on childcare and housekeeping, and make sure that mothers implemented the doctor's instructions.[185] If one of the main goals of station work was, as Gromski said, to access the average baby "hidden away at home with family," social nurses reinforced that mission by penetrating the domestic realm and bringing the principles of sanitation, hygiene, modern medicine, and scientifically informed childrearing inside the family home.

According to practitioners of social-medicine, visiting nurses were essential to forging a strong and healthy Poland. In 1923, Gromski wrote, "The secret of national health is hiding in the dwellings of the people." The social nurse "by today's understanding is the one who seeks and discovers these secrets. After finishing nursing school she becomes the most useful worker of the nation, the state or the community, fulfilling her own work under the Bureaus of Health

---

[183] Seymour, "League of Nations Collective Interchange in Poland, 1933."
[184] "Stacja opieki nad niemowlęciem;" "Sprawozdanie higjenistki P. Marji Kempnerówny z opieki nad małoletnimi Zubalewiczami, względnie Hałatkami, wykonywaną z ramienia Stacji opieki n/ matką i dzieckiem T.O.M." November 26, 1930, ANKr TOM 29/1786/8; Leon Wulman, *5 yor tetikeyt fun "TOZ"* (Warsaw: Towarzystwo Ochrony Zdrowia Ludności Żydowskiej w Polsce, 1927).
[185] "Stacja opieki nad niemowlęciem."

and Social Welfare."[186] By forming close, intimate bonds with everyday women, a visiting nurse could, experts believed, "by personal influence and good advice" minimize negative influences on the health and livelihood of the families she visited.[187]

Physicians, foreign aid workers, and social welfare organizations framed social nurses' work as essential, positive, and highly effective. For example, film footage from 1937 showed two TOZ nurses, armed with apothecary bags and smartly clad in long skirts, black coats, entering a "typical" poor Jewish neighborhood in some unnamed Polish city. As they stepped inside a small, one-room dwelling, they saw the father, a cobbler, hunched over a workbench, and the mother scrubbing laundry in a large wash bin. At her feet, three small children played on a dirt floor. The children were dirty and complained of stomach and toothaches. The mother, who worked long hours, had very little time to take them outside. One of the nurses bent down, tousled the kids' hair, and showed them a booklet that featured big pictures and a small amount of text. As she opened her books of "health cards," she began asking the mother questions: How many beds were in the home? What did the children eat? Did they appear to be in good health? The mother dried her hands with a dish towel and smiled as she replied; the father continued to work in the background. The whole encounter, obviously staged for the camera, appeared to be peaceful, friendly, and collaborative.[188]

What did encounters between social nurses and families look like in real life? Were they in fact as friendly and collaborative as social aid organizations claimed? Archival records from Cracow's TOM society reveal one real-life encounter between a station hygienist and a mother to

---

[186] Gromski, "Zasady organizacji," 10.
[187] "Stacja opieki nad niemowlęciem," 26.
[188] "Troska o Zdrowia, 1937" in *Żydzi Polscy*, a compilation of archive films documenting the Jews of Poland (Wytwórnia Filmów Dokumentalnych i Fabularnych, 1990), Yad Vashem Archives.

have been fraught with anger, deception, and even threats of violence. The story began in 1930 when Wanda Hałatek, a thirty-two-year-old mother of five registered her four-year-old son at the Miechowska Street station. A few months later, Hałatek wrote to the TOM president and asked that Marja Kempnerówna, the station's hygienist, be removed from her case. In this letter, Hałatek appealed to the TOM president as a struggling single mother. She recounted how fifteen years prior, as a seventeen-year-old orphan "without a father or life experience," she married Austrian Army Lieutenant Zygmunt Zubalewicza. After he squandered all her wealth and property, Zubalewicza was confined to a mental institution. To add insult to injury, Hałatek found out her husband was still married to someone else from before she met him. In light of her newly acquired destitution, Hałatak, who claimed to hail from a once-prosperous Cracowian family, reluctantly turned to social welfare organizations to help support her children.

Hałatek came to the "little white house," hoping someone could treat her sick son. All she claimed to receive in return was "merciless nagging and moral humiliation." According to Hałatek, the station's hygienist Marja Kempnerówna, slandered her name around town, calling her the " worst and cruelest mother possible." Kempnerówna, Hałatek alleged, marched into her workplace and accused her of sleeping with her boss, galavanting around town in fancy clothes, and pawning her children off on public charity. The only social work Hałatek saw Kempnerówna engaged in was "raising the significance of her own service as a philanthropic lady."[189]

Kempnerówna presented a much different account of her interactions with the Hałatek family. She claimed that when she first arrived at the family's apartment, she found the five children--ranging from twenty-two months to fourteen years old--alone, hungry, nearly naked, and "in a complete state of neglect." The four-year-old boy, Marjan, lay in bed lethargic with a 104-degree fever. The eldest boy, Karol, appeared to be mentally handicapped and thus unfit to

[189] Wanda Hałatek to President of TOM, ANKr TOM 29/1786/8.

care for the younger children. Desperate to speak with the mother, Kempnerówna alleged to have stayed at the apartment until 11:00 pm. When Hałatek did not return, Kempnerówna left the apartment with young Marjan in her arms "per the station doctor's orders." For several days, Kempnerówna and her colleague, Marja Wielhorska, another hygienist at the Słoneczna Street station, took turns stopping by the apartment to feed and check on the children. They claimed to never once see the mother. "It is shameful," Kempnerówna wrote in her report to the TOM president, "that the care of the mother is insufficient and that the children are physically and morally wasted." After several failed attempts to speak with Hałatek, Kempnerówna, allegedly, with the approval of TOM and the Cracow Municipal Department of Social Welfare, took steps to remove the children from the home and place them in institutions. She secured spots for Karol, age fourteen, and Zdzisław, age nine, at the Father Siemiaszki Home for Poor and Orphaned Boys (*Zakład im. Ks. Kazimierza Siemaszki dla biednych i osieroconych chłopców w Czernej*) in Czerna, a village sixteen miles northwest of Cracow. Meanwhile, she found twenty-two-month-old Krysia a spot in the city nursery on Kołotek Street. Finally, she sent four-year-old Marjan for treatment of severe bronchitis and possible tuberculosis to the TOM Summer Colony in Rabka-Zdrój, a spa town located between Cracow and Zakopane.[190]

From the two women's accounts, it is difficult to tell whether these events unfolded over a series of days, weeks, or even months. It is also unclear to what extent Marja Kempnerówna and Wanda Hałatek agreed on the placement of Hałatek's children in various institutions. According to Kempnerówna, Hałatek originally signed off on the placement of three of her five children. However, she refused to release Zosia, age eight, and Zdzisław, age nine, from her care. Kempnerówna believed that Hałatek later sold her son to a film company for his acting talent, but Hałatek called this accusation utterly ridiculous. Hałatek did admit that she pursued some

[190] "Sprawozdanie higienistki P. Marji Kempnerówny," ANKr TOM 29/1786/8.

sort of institutional care for her children in order to gain "freedom of movement [so that she] would be able to take any kind of work."[191] She emphasized, however, that this was supposed to be temporary, and promised to repay the TOM society all of its expenses as soon as she "regained even a portion of [her] lost assets." At some point, Hałatek was evicted from her apartment for being six months behind on rent. Not long after, Kempnerówna claimed that Hałatek ran off with Zdzisław and threw Zosia out into the street during torrential rain. Zosia, wearing only a ripped dress, tattered smock, and torn shoes, stayed with Kempnerówna for a night, before being sent out to the TOM Orphanage in Jeleśnia, a village fifty-two miles south-east of Cracow.[192]

Kempnerówna's intervention in Hałatek's family matters did not end there. In October 1930, Mr. Wielgus, the vice-president of the TOM society, approached Kempnerówa because one of his good acquaintances wanted to adopt Krysia from the city nursery. Compared with a nursery full of two-hundred screaming infants and toddlers, Kempnerówna thought life with an "earnest, affluent, private household" with two loving parents would be much better for young Krysia. After negotiating with the chairman of the city council, Kempnerówna tracked down Hałatek for her approval. Hałatek hesitated at first, but then allegedly agreed to the adoption if the family could pay her a couple of thousand złoty. Kempnerówna made it clear that she "did not want to be involved in the 'sale of a child," but when the prospective adoptive parents persisted, she suggested that they instead pay for Marjan's treatment in Rabka. According to Kempnerówna, Hałatek liked the idea, but soon after the family backed out. Before long, a second family, the Sławińskis from Chorzów near Katowice, applied to adopt Krysia. After encountering "some difficulty at the Department [of Social Welfare]," Kempnerówna was able to

[191] Wanda Hałatek to President of TOM, ANKr TOM 29/1786/8.
[192] "Sprawozdanie higienistki P. Marji Kempnerówny," ANKr TOM 29/1786/8.

remove Krysia from the city nursery and sent her to live with her new family in Chorzów. As of November 26, 1930, Krysia was receiving excellent care with her new adoptive parents.[193]

Hałatek's account of these events differed significantly. She claimed that Kempnerówna had essentially stolen her Krysia and given her to a new family. She maintained that Kempnerówna refused to provide the adoptive family's name, address and that all information about her daughter's whereabouts were "enshrouded in some kind of strange secret." Hałatek asserted that as the child's mother, she had "the right and responsibility to know what happened with [her] child and what fate awaits her." She told the TOM president she had filed a claim in family court (*Sąd nadopiekuńczego*) to regain custody of her daughter and asked that he remove Kempnerówna from any further interactions with her family.[194]

From here, the story takes an even more dramatic twist. While Hałatek claimed to be pursuing legal action to reclaim her child, Kempnerówna implied to her boss at TOM that Hałatek had resorted to intimidation tactics. Since her conflict with Hałatek began, Kempnerówna claimed to have been twice brutally attacked at home late at night by a group of strangers. They told her if she dared to remove the Hałatak children from their institutions and send them back to their mother, they would return and "shatter her head with a Browning." Kempnerówna admitted that she threatened to send Hałatek's children back to her if she did not behave appropriately, but claimed she found this threat completely justified given the circumstances.[195]

Unfortunately, the paper trail in TOM records ends there. Did Wanda Hałatek ever win her case against Marja Kempnerówna? Were any of the children reunited with their mother? Did Kempnerówna or other TOM hygienists clash so dramatically with other mothers over the

[193] Ibid.
[194] Wanda Hałatek to President of TOM, ANKr TOM 29/1786/8.
[195] "Sprawozdanie higienistki P. Marji Kempnerówny," ANKr TOM 29/1786/8.

welfare of their children? Marja Kempnerówna's name did appear a few months later in the pages of Cracow's anti-Jewish press. In the spring of 1931, the sensationalized, antisemitic Cracowian newspaper *Password Under Wawel: An Unpartisan Weekly* (*Hasło Podwawelski: Tygodnik Bezpartyjy*) reported that Kempnerówna, who likely had Jewish background, had been arrested on suspicion of communist agitation.[196] Staying true to its anti-Jewish nature, the article's author described Kempnerówna as "the daughter of rich parents, and of high intelligence and even greater cunning." The author also hinted that Kempnerówna may have come from an assimilated Jewish family and described her as someone who "depending on the atmosphere…pretended to be a zealous Catholic, or in another context, a relentless Jewess."[197] The following August, Kempnerówna was released from jail, sick with suspected tuberculosis of the kidneys. According to the antisemitic press, the investigation into her alleged communist agitation was ongoing as of August 30, 1931.[198]

The conflict detailed here between mother and station hygienist illustrates the real-life implications of a burgeoning medical establishment that criticized mothers and invited itself into the private lives of Polish citizens. During the interwar period, physicians and other child-experts created a discourse whereby mothers could not be fully trusted either due to their indifference, carelessness, or even stupidity. Instead, a new class of professional women was forged to assume some of that authority in the private sphere and to oversee and direct the implementation of medicalized motherhood. Praise for the abilities of a social nurse to gain personal trust and exert this level of influence relied on the faulty and simplified assumption that mothers were passive

[196] *Hasło Podwawelskie: tygodni bezpartyjy* was sensationalized antisemetic newspaper with articles about anti-Jewish protests and demonstrations, as well as lists of Jewish-owned stores to encourage readers to boycott, see G. Wrona "Press Seizures in Kraków in 1932-1939," *Rocznik historii pracy polskiej.* (Cracow: The Cracow Branch of the Polish Academy of Sciences, 2007), 72.
[197] *Hasło Podwawelskie*, May 31, 1931.
[198] *Hasło Podwawelskie*, August 30, 1931.

and obedient figures, completely willing to let a visitor invade their homes and tell them what to do with their children. Kempnerówna, as a social hygienist and a station employee, felt a moral and professional duty to assure that the children's basic needs were being met. Meanwhile, Hałatek, as the children's mother, assumed she still had control over her children's whereabouts. She believed if she surrendered them temporarily to residential care institutions, she would have the chance to retrieve her children once she regained some financial stability.

In some sense, both women were correct. According to Article 103 of the Polish Constitution, "children deprived of sufficient parental care, neglected with respect to their upbringing have the right to protection and assistance of the State within the limits specified by the Act of Parliament." This article assured children access to forms of public assistance. However, Article 103 further stated that "parental power over the child can be taken away only by an act of the court."[199] Even though Hałatek seemed to express some interest in surrendering her daughter Krysia to the first family, neither she nor Kempnerówna indicated that she was aware of agreements that resulted in the actual adoption of her youngest child to the second family in Chorzów. Although Kempnerówna seemed to have secured some sort of approval from the Department of Child Welfare in Cracow, she did not appear to have acquired any sort of court order.[200]

Officially, infant welfare stations were supposed to work towards maternal education not family separation. The whole mission of station work was to help women become better mothers and improve infant and toddler health. Even the experts who virulently criticized mothers for their mistakes still saw value in keeping mothers and babies together. For example, Dr. Karol Jonscher, the pediatrician who thought all women should be required by the state to attend a

[199] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland," 13.
[200] Wanda Hałatek to President of TOM, ANKr TOM 29/1786/8; "Sprawozdanie higienistki P. Marji Kempnerówny," ANKr TOM 29/1786/8.

course on motherhood, wrote, "Everyone, without exception, who works in infant welfare has seen time and time again the conclusion that we get better results in general when we try to keep the baby in a family atmosphere, leaving them in the care of a loving mother with some training of her rather than in the care of an institution."[201] Jonascher understood that despite their ignorance, most mothers loved their children and he found that children thrived better in the loving, medically-guided care of a mother.

Kempnerówna, however, did not share this sentiment, at least when it came to Wanda Hałatek. In her expert eyes, the children's situation was so desperate that she overstepped her role as a hygienic practitioner to remove four out of the five children from their home. She justified her decision by emphasizing their state of neglect. Even if her actions were not in line with the ethos of station work, or the legal code of the Polish Republic, she believed it needed to be done for the good of the children. The conflict between Kempnerówna and Hałatek demonstrates how the anti-maternal discourse of physicians had manifested itself deep into practice, pitting two women—a social nurse and a mother—against each other in a heated battle for authority over sick and needy children.

* * *

At the dawn of its independence, Poland was thrust into the spotlight, first for its wartime damages, and then as the site of international relief efforts. Foreign relief missions after World War I spent more money in Poland than in any other Eastern European country outside of the Soviet Union, but their departure in 1922 left Poland to manage on its own. As the dust settled, the PAKPD assumed control over child welfare activity in Poland and elevated infants as a social priority in an unprecedented way. The fight for infant health became the fight for Poland's

[201] Jonscher, "Organizacja Opieki nad Matką i Niemowlęciem," 258.

strength, vitality, demographic survival, and its place among the “civilized nations” of the West. Polish leaders shifted away from a narrative that focused on victimization by war and foreign occupations, to the internal management of social problems and the medical improvement of Poland’s population.

During the interwar period, efforts to standardize and modernize infant healthcare and reform Polish motherhood according to the rules of social hygiene were driven by three intersecting agendas: positive eugenics, social medicine, and an American progressive-era approach to rational and medicalized motherhood. The technical, material, and financial influence of this third force cannot be overstated. The rise of Poland’s infant welfare movement and the creation of a professionalized female care force would not have happened at the same scale without American intervention.

The expert-professionals driving the infant health movement constructed infancy as a separate stage of life that required special care and protection. During the nineteenth century, orphaned and abandoned children were considered society’s most vulnerable children. By the 1920s, physicians, nurses, and other social actors targeted infants and toddlers with families for widespread intervention. With the rise of social responsibility for children came the vilification of mothers as “ignorant” and “careless” threats to both child and country. Medical professionals wanted to disrupt the transmission of child-rearing knowledge among female social networks, and position themselves as the primary arbiters of proper mothering practices. The infant welfare station became the main arena of interaction between mother and medical professional, and it was constructed as both a school and an orderly and hygienic counterpart to the dirty and overcrowded Polish home. Here women could properly learn the practice of motherhood, and be trained as ideal caretakers for Poland’s infant population.

The rise in concern over infant welfare forced a reimagining of the "Mother Pole," a partition-era trope that defined women's service to the family and nation in terms of religious devotion, self-sacrifice, and moral strength. After the war, the Polish everywoman, whether she be a mother, nurse, or social worker, could, through an active embrace of social medicine, consciously work to build a better future for Polish society by saving children from death and forging a new form of Polish motherhood according to a modern agenda of health, hygiene, and sanitation.

The infant welfare movement also represented an emerging sector of child welfare networks that was not as segregated as traditional closed-care systems. During the 1920s and 1930s, the definition of deserving child shifted from foundling to any infant, and, to some extent, from Polish-Catholic child to "any child regardless of race, class, ethnicity, or religion." This latter tenant, although formally articulated in many places including the Geneva Declaration, and the child welfare bureau's statute, was difficult to enact given the decentralized and hybrid nature of the welfare system. It, therefore, remained highly contingent on the community, founding organizations, or the individual health care workers involved. In Lwów, for example, the PAKPD established welfare centers to reach the urban Jewish population, and in Cracow and Łódź, locally-run station networks brought social medicine to the Jewish and Christian poor. In the eastern *kresy*, state-funded and Women's Union stations engaged in public health work among non-Polish speaking Slavic minorities. However, they did so with the additional goal of modernizing and endearing rural non-Polish identifying populations to the Polish state.

Finally, the infant health movement brought with it an expansion of professional care workers and the medical authorities into family life, as expert-professionals worked to promote ideal and safe environments for children in and outside the family home. The battle between

mother, Wanda Hałatek, and station hygienist, Majra Kempnerówna, demonstrates how quickly this authority could expand to matters far beyond the services of a typical home visit and erode parental agency.

The interwar period saw tremendous growth in the popularity of infant welfare stations. During the First World War I, there were less than a dozen stations in what would become the Second Republic. By 1936 that number had grown to 432 care stations run by local governments and social organizations, as well as ninety-seven stations located at factories that employed women.[202] Children who attended these stations regularly posted significant weight gains and lower rates of mortality. In the first decade of independence, infant mortality in Poland dropped from about twenty percent to 14.3 percent.[203] However, that rate still ranked higher than rates in most western European countries, which also lowered infant mortality rates after 1920. At the end of the 1930s, Poland would have been classified as a "developing country" by today's terms. One-fifth of all children still died before reaching age five, the average life expectancy was 49.8 years old, and there were only 3.7 physicians per 10,000 inhabitants.[204] Despite the gains made by the infant health movement in terms of beter social organization, public health education, and widespread embrace of mother and child, broad enactment of medicalized motherhood at all levels of Polish society and the pursuit of infant mortality rates on par with Western Europe remained an elusive goal.

---

[202] Leon Dydusiak, "Opieka Publiczno-Prawna nad Dzieckiem w Polsce," (PhD diss., Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów, 1938), 73.
[203] Béla Tomka, *A Social History of Twentieth-Century Europe*, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 28.
[204] That rate compared with 7.4 physicians per 10,000 inhabitants in neighboring Czechoslovakia. See Balińska, "The National Institute of Hygiene and Public Health in Poland," 443.

CHAPTER FOUR
Educating Hygienic Agents of Change

Doctors examining school children should have the primary goal of disseminating hygienic principles because we realize that elementary school ranks among the most important health promotion centers due to the fact that it is the only institution through which every citizen must pass [and] that the school child, who does not yet have deeply-rooted habits, has the easiest time incorporating hygienic habits, which are most likely to infiltrate the family and surroundings through school.

Dr. Bogumił Krippendorf, 1936

In 1927, a girl named Ima wrote to the Jewish children's newspaper *Little Review* (*Mały Przegląd*) to comment on children's role in Poland's public health crisis.[1] To Ima, children were not society's victims but rather its potential saviors. Children demonstrated a greater willingness to embrace hygiene practices, whereas "with older people," she said, "it's a little harder." With the help of teachers and school hygiene programs, Ima hoped that her peers would soon feel a "sense of duty" to strive for cleanliness at school, on the streets, and at home.[2]

Ima spoke as a product of the school hygiene program implemented across the Second Republic. There had been some school medical care available during the late-nineteenth century, but only at secondary institutions in a few large cities.[3] After World War I, the architects of school hygiene—a cohort of physicians employed by various state ministries—seized upon the opportunity presented by universal, compulsory education and worked to bring medical observation and hygienic education to millions of school children ages seven to fourteen. At first, the state sent doctors into schools to curb the spread of infectious diseases. Eventually, promoters

---

[1] *Mały Przegląd* was a weekly children's newspaper edited by Janusz Korczak that ran every Friday with the Polish-language Jewish newspaper *Our Review* (*Nasz Przegląd*) from 1926 to 1939.

[2] "Youth and Hygiene," *Mały Przegląd*, May 27, 1927.

[3] Dydusiak, "Opieka Publiczno-Prawna nad Dzieckiem w Polsce," 177; Stanisław Kopczyński, *Opieka higjeniczno-lekarska nad dzieckiem normalnem w szkole*, vol. 1, *Zagadnienia opieka nad macierzyństwem, dziećmi i młodzieżą w Polsce* (Warsaw, 1929), 5-7; Jaroslav Vaculik, "Views of School Hygiene in Poland Between the Wars," *School and Health*, 21 (2009): 53.

of school hygiene worked to transform Poland's schoolchildren into health-conscious individuals whose bodies and hygienic habits were stronger than those of their parents.

Since the start of World War I, child-saving missions had gradually increased children's contact with medical professionals outside of the home. During the war, physicians examined children bound for transport to the countryside. Then, doctors served as the gatekeepers for admission into ARA children's kitchens amid the postwar hunger crisis. In the 1920s, mothers brought their babies to infant welfare stations for monthly examinations. With the introduction of school hygiene measures, the process of weighing, measuring, and screening children for deformity or illness expanded to the public school system. It was part of an ongoing process during the interwar years whereby medical authorities tried to counteract the influence of parents and the family home on a child's development and upbringing.

Like the infant welfare movement, positive eugenics, social medicine, and fears of societal degeneration drove the development of interwar school hygiene. In the early years of independence, Poland experienced continued military conflicts, the movement of troops and millions of refugees, famine, poverty, and disorganized or non-existent social services. These factors contributed to the epidemic spread of diphtheria, dysentery, measles, scarlet fever, typhoid fever, and typhus, especially in the eastern borderlands. Therefore, from 1921-1925, the most critical task of the new Polish health care system, and thus the school hygiene program, was to fight the epidemics. Eventually, shapers of health policy expanded their focus to include social diseases like alcoholism, tuberculosis, venereal infections, and psychiatric disorders.[4] Medical experts worried that young people in Poland were growing up in an environment so threatening to their physical development that it would result in a generation of adults too weak to serve as good workers, citizens, and soldiers. With the population's health and independent Poland's

[4] Žalnora, "Development of Public Health Science," 7, 15.

survival at stake, the state developed an ambitious school hygiene program that examined students' health, implemented a curriculum that promoted a culture of health and hygiene, and sought to improve the overall sanitary state of school buildings.

School hygiene was a notable outlier in interwar Polish child-care networks in three key ways. First, it was a health initiative that framed flesh and blood children as agents of change. The previous three chapters examined wartime rescue efforts that leveraged the symbolic child to unite rural and urban communities around a common national cause, American relief workers' attempts teach the infant Polish state how to manage its child welfare apparatus, and the work of expert-professionals to reform mothers to better care for their infants and toddlers. By contrast, when hygiene educators taught school-aged children how to care for their bodies and surroundings, they sought to transform the children from passive recipients of information into active participants in the fight for public health. This arrangement placed a heavy burden on children who lacked the power to change their home lives and sparked conflicts between teachers, doctors, children, and parents. School hygiene also differed from other types of child-saving measures by being a program driven primarily by Polish actors, with some influence coming by way of the American Red Cross materials used in schools. Finally, it was one of the only child-welfare measures run almost entirely, with one notable exception, by government actors that included various state ministries, the voivodeships, and local communes and municipalities. The absence of non-state providers for school hygiene meant a lack of funding and personnel, ultimately leaving the program unable to provide universal medical-hygienic care envisioned by its designers.

School Hygiene: Origins and Administration

Although the deaths and disease brought by the First World War drove the Second Republic's intensive focus on school health, significant influence also stemmed from the achievements of physicians during the partitions.[5] In 1805, the first Polish example of a school doctor appeared at a secondary school in the Volhynian city of Krzemieniec. By the late-nineteenth century, medical care existed for pupils at a handful of secondary schools in a few large cities.[6] In the early twentieth century, school hygiene gained momentum thanks to Stanisław Kopczyński, a physician trained in neurology and internal medicine who many consider to be the father of school medicine in Poland. Kopczyński graduated from school in Płock in 1892, then five years later finished his diploma from Warsaw University. In 1900, he began work to popularize school hygiene by writing lectures, articles, and books on the topic while also working as a school physician in Warsaw's Merchants Trade School, a job he held for almost twenty years. Kopczyński, who was said to be inspired by the poor sanitary state of his own grammar school, believed the future Polish state should play some role in hygienic education. Once the Russian army left the Polish lands in 1915, Kopczyński began organizing medical and sanitary care in Warsaw schools.[7]

The cataclysmic loss of life caused by the First World War led many European leaders to recognize the value of preventative medicine as a way to care for the health of their remaining populations. In the years immediately following the war, many European countries, including Poland, began establishing administrative institutions dedicated to health and hygiene. On

---

[5] Beata Szczepańska, "Work of Jewish Medical Community and the Health Culture at School in the Second Republic of Poland (1918-1939)," in *Jewish Medicine and Healthcare in Central Eastern Europe: Shared Identities, Entangled Histories*, ed. Marcin Moskalewicz, Ute Caumanns, and Fritz Dross (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2019): 98.
[6] Dydusiak, "Opieka Publiczno-Prawna nad Dzieckiem w Polsce," 177; Kopczyński, *Opieka hygjeniczno-lekarska,* 5-7; Vaculik, "Views of School Hygiene in Poland Between the Wars," 53.
[7] Anna Cisińska, "Stanisław Kopczyński: A Specialist in Internal Medicine and Neurology—Pioneer of School Sanitary Sciences in Poland," *Polskie Archiwum Medycyny Wewnętrznej* 117, no. 10 (2007): 1-2, https://www.mp.pl/paim/en/node/230/pdf.

October 30, 1918, a dozen days before Poland officially regained independence, a decree by the Regency Council (*Rada Regencyjna*), the semi-independent Polish authority formed in 1917 by Imperial Germany and Austria-Hungary in the historically Polish lands, created the Ministry of Public Health and Social Care (*Ministerstwo Zdrowia Publicznego i Opieki Społecznej*), which later became the Ministry of Public Health (*Ministerstwo Zdrowia Publicznego*).[8] The physician Tomasz Janiszewski played a significant role in shaping Poland's health ministry. As a eugenicist, he thought the ministry should have the right to control the composition of Poland's population and that medical doctors deserved administrative power over health policy.[9] Janiszewski and like-minded colleagues elevated the priority of social hygiene—a field that analyzed how social factors impacted a person's health—which led to several new health laws on municipal sanitary engineering, control of infectious diseases, maternal and infant care, care for the mentally ill and physically disabled, the fight against alcoholism and prostitution, and school hygiene.[10]

Throughout the Second Republic, school hygiene found its home in a few different administrative bodies. In the early years of independence, Stanisław Kopczyński ran the Department of School Hygiene (*Wydział Higieny Szkolnej*) for the Ministry of Public Health. However, in 1918, the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment (*Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego,* MWRiOP) also issued rules regulating school doctors in secondary institutions.[11] After the liquidation of the Ministry of Public Health on November 28, 1923, tasks related to school hygiene were transferred to the MWRiOP, where Kopczyński continued his leadership role as head of the Department of School

[8] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960," 13.
[9] Žalnora, "Development of Public Health Science," 13, 16.
[10] Ibid., 15-16.
[11] Dydusiak, "Opieka Publiczno-Prawna nad Dzieckiem w Polsce," 180.

Hygiene and Physical Education (*Wydział Higieny Szkolnej i Wychowania Fizycznego*). In these roles, Kopczyński shaped school hygiene to include school pupils medical and hygienic care, hygiene education, health and hygiene propaganda, medical pedagogy, social assistance for students, and improving schools' physical environments.[12]

When it came to education, interwar Poland was divided into twenty-two administrative districts called curatoria. There was a school medical officer in charge of each curatorium, and part-time medical officers were locally recruited to work as school doctors. School doctors answered first to their district's school doctor-in-chief, then to the inspectors of school hygiene for each curatorium, and finally to the Department of School Hygiene and Physical Education at the MWRiOP.[13] In national secondary schools (*państwowych szkołach średnich*), the state paid the school doctors, but in public primary schools, hiring school doctors fell to the municipalities or communes. In private schools, school management or independent organizations had to provide medical-hygienic care.[14]

The Tasks of a School Doctor

The school hygiene program turned physicians who might have previously had minimal contact with schools or school-aged children into a burgeoning civil health service. According to Kopczyński, a school doctor had three main tasks: to supervise students' health status, oversee hygiene education, and monitor the sanitary state of school locations. At least once a year, school physicians were supposed to examine students; measure their heights and weights; check vision and hearing; and look for signs of malnourishment, stunted growth, spinal injury, respiratory illness (especially tuberculosis), scabies, lice, and trachoma. Doctors sometimes also

[12] Cisińska, "Stanisław Kopczyński," 1-2.
[13] Kopczyński, *Opieka hygjeniczno-lekarska,* 7.
[14] "Public Health Services," 4 LNA 1607/8B/R6154.

administered vaccinations for measles and smallpox. Each child was issued a health card (*karta zdrowia*) to serve as a record for all future examinations and treatment information. Children showing stunted growth or low weight were labeled "weak" and slated for monthly weigh-ins, supplemental on-site feeding, or recommended for stays at summer camps. In addition, physicians walked the grounds inspecting rooms, lighting, wells, ventilation, toilets, playgrounds and noting any area for improvement and repair.[15]

A school doctor's job was more about observation, diagnosis, and referral than actual treatment. Physicians determined which children needed to isolate at home and for how long. They also recommended children for stays at day camps and sleep-away camps. In cases of serious illness or injury, school doctors referred children to special clinics, schools, or hospitals organized by the local Sickness Insurance (*Kasa Chorych*) or private organizations. If a doctor realized that a child did not have access to health care, Kopczyński wrote that they were morally obligated to find that child access to proper medical treatment. In the case of epidemic outbreaks, school doctors were also expected to coordinate with local public health officials to contain the disease. The MWRiOP required that physicians work closely with school administrators and teachers to fulfill all state-wide requirements and keep in close contact with that state-appointed school inspectors and county doctors who oversaw their districts' general hygienic medical care. The ministry asked doctors to file annual reports on the state of child health in every Polish community with the local school inspector and each voivodeship's Department of Child Welfare.[16]

Aside from the tasks of curbing infectious disease spread, isolating children for treatment, and promoting hygiene education, the school doctor's role eventually took on a fourth

---

[15] Kopczyński, *Opieka higjeniczno-lekarska,* 6-8.
[16] Ibid., 15, 18-19; "Project: Instrukcja w sprawie higjeny szkolnej," AAN MOS 15/774.

dimension: advising on children's vocational choices. It was the MWRiOP's response to the fact that ninety percent of Polish children would enter working life immediately upon leaving elementary school. Through personal examination or referral to a psychological clinic, school doctors provided teachers and children with advice on jobs that would best suit an individual child's physical condition. For example, if a child demonstrated small growth, they were to be discouraged from entering jobs that required a minimum physical stature, such as carpentry, bricklaying, glazing, or upholstering. Instead, children of small stature were recommended to seek more sedentary jobs like shoemaking, tailoring, or glove making. If children were frail from lack of food and poor nutrition, they were discouraged from entering work that included a certain level of toxin exposure, such as work in factories, agriculture, or gardening. School doctors also recommended that they avoid strenuous career choices, including blacksmith, locksmith, bricklayer, baker, cooper, dyer, or tanner. The school physician's recommendations even took into account physical appearance. If the child exhibited a "strikingly unaesthetic appearance," they were discouraged from taking any job that required extensive contact with the public, such as food service or sales clerk.[17]

In larger cities like Warsaw, Łódź, Lwów, and Wilno, the work of school doctors was supported by school hygienists, who were usually recent female graduates from nursing or social work programs. These women presented lectures for children and their parents, cut the children's hair, especially in schools with frequent lice infestations, and conducted home visits, similar to those conducted by hygienists associated with infant welfare stations. The benefit of having a school hygienist was that she could visit a school more frequently and become well-acquainted with individual children and their families. According to Kopczyński, one of the primary responsibilities of the school hygienist was to "gain the trust of school children through dealing

[17] Kopczyński, *Opieka higjeniczno-lekarska*, 14, appendix 9.

with them in a serious but cordial and pleasant manner."[18] Gaining trust was, no doubt, a tricky task considering that the very nature of hygienic work could upset children. One girl named Salusia told *Little Review* that upon hearing the school hygienist say she would be cutting Salusia's hair, the girl cried so hard she made herself sick.[19] In addition to winning over the children, a hygienist had to find ways to bond with the adult guardians. Kopczyński wrote that it was a school hygienist's job to "maintain contact with the home guardian and try several ways to gain her trust."[20] The use of the female pronoun "her" in Kopczyński's instructions reveals how, much like the infant welfare movement, school hygiene efforts focused almost exclusively on the roles played by mothers and other female caretakers as opposed to fathers.

Hygienic Care in Jewish Schools

As a result of the Versaille Agreement, the Second Republic granted its minority populations the right to educate children according to their traditions and values and in languages other than Polish. In response, Jews, Germans, and Ukrainians established vast private school networks. The pluralistic character of Polish Jewry was reflected in its many educational networks, which were separated along secular and religious lines. Jewish secular school networks included Tarbut, a Hebrew-language Zionist school system focused on preparing students for good citizenship and productive work in Israel; Shul-Kult, a network affiliated with the right-wing Poalei Tzion Zionist party that offered Yiddish and Hebrew instruction and prepared students to be productive citizens that could integrate into Polish economic life; and Tzisho, the Bund's Yiddish-language school network that despite not teaching Jewish traditions,

[18] Kopczyński, *Opieka higjeniczno-lekarska*, appendix 10.
[19] "Wiadomości bieżące," *Mały Przegląd*, March 4, 1927.
[20] Kopczyński, *Opieka higjeniczno-lekarska*, appendix 10.

religions, or customs, wanted students to become proud Jews and productive workers within Polish society.[21]

Religious Jewish educational networks were affiliated with either Agudat Yisrael, the anti-Zionist orthodox political movement, or Mizrachi, the religious Zionist organization. The religious Zionist movement ran Yavneh schools, where classes were held in Hebrew and Yiddish.[22] Meanwhile, the Agudat Yisrael party supervised a broad network of schools including Horev, an orthodox schools for boys; Beit Ya'akov, an orthodox schools for girls; and Talmud Torah, which were religious nurseries and primary schools located in nearly every Polish town where Jews lived. Cheders, or traditional schools located in teachers' homes, also offered a strict orthodox education for children as young as three. While Talmud Torah were controlled either by the Jewish community and or the Agudat Yisrael, cheders were most often private enterprises owned by the teachers themselves.[23]

In private Jewish schools, both religious and secular, the Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population in Poland (TOZ) provided hygienic care. TOZ was an extensive, independent social organization founded by Jewish doctors and philanthropists with the goal of "transforming the physical fitness and biological value of the Jewish masses in Poland."[24] TOZ leaders comprised the same intellectual milieu as many of the physicians active in state ministries and the children's welfare bureau. Therefore TOZ members shared many of the state's interests in preventative medicine and positive eugenics. Although Gershon Lewin and TOZ's

---

[21] Dalia Ofer, "The Education of Jewish Children in Warsaw during the Nazi Occupation," in *Remembering for the Future: The Holocaust in an Age of Genoice*, ed. John K. Roth, Elisabeth Maxwell, Margot Levy, and Wendy Whitworth (London: Macmillan, 2001): 289-290.
[22] Ibid., 289-291.
[23] Joseph Marcus, *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland, 1919-1939* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1983): 153.
[24] "Gerszon Gabriel Lewin," in *The History of East-Central European Eugenics, 1900-1945: Sources and Commentaries*, ed. Marius Turda (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 115.

other founders believed that the Polish state should manage public health, they also believed that the fulfillment of TOZ's mission required convincing the Jewish masses to conduct private life with an awareness of health threats and eugenic guidelines. Early on, Polish authorities supported TOZ's campaigns to improve public health among Jews. In fact, before the economic depression of the 1930s, Polish municipalities funded significant portions of TOZ chapters' annual budgets. During the 1930s, however, much of the organization's activities had to be financed by Jewish communities (*kehilot*), Jewish charities, the JDC, and dues from the organization's twelve-thousand members across Poland.[25]

Polish authorities promoted hygiene among public school children to produce healthy and productive citizens of the Second Republic. TOZ's mission differed because it was a non-state actor dedicated to helping one particular ethnic or religious group. When the Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population started in St. Petersburg in 1912, it was created based on the founders' belief that Jews constituted an "exceptional demographic, biological, and psychological qualities because of their past as a religious group."[26] The organization's goal to promote health, hygiene, and child care among Jews--which TOZ, the organization's Polish branch--was intended to make up for the social and legal discrimination Jews faced by addressing issues of inherited diseases, health conditions, and helping them cultivate new habits and traditions.[27] At TOZ's "First Common Meeting" held in 1928, members decided that addressing "physical recovery" among Jews had to begin with the youngest generations. Therefore, attending to the health of school-aged children became critical to this mission. After a decade and a half of work to support Jewish life in Poland, TOZ became more focused on preparing people for emigration from Poland. In 1935, TOZ secretary Leo Wulman said, "If life

[25] Marcus, *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland,* 142.
[26] Szczepańska, "Work of Jewish Medical Community and the Health Culture at School," 102.
[27] Ibid., 101-102.

in the future does not pan out in this country, the issue of emigration will be a reasonable choice if longer life to be attained. The immigration countries will require people who are physically healthy and adjusted to productive work in these countries."[28]

Throughout the interwar period, TOZ operated on a somewhat parallel plane to state-sponsored welfare initiatives, offering many of the same services but tailoring them to the needs and interests of Poland's Jewish population. TOZ's three main fields of activity were supplementary feeding of children at Jewish schools, organizing summer colonies for Jewish children, and providing medical services, which included the sanitary supervision of over three-hundred Jewish schools.[29] TOZ established a section of "School Medical and Hygienic Section" at its headquarters in Warsaw and equipped doctors of school hygiene to research in schools. In 1925, TOZ inspectors in Warsaw weighed school children in religious schools twice a year and in secular schools once a month. Many children also received free baths and dental care at school. TOZ reported the health conditions of pupils in Jewish schools to MWRiOP, and starting in the 1930s, these figures were published in official magazines.[30]

TOZ convened regular meetings of physicians employed in Jewish schools and introduced standards of hygienic supervision in several schools to provide "an example for hygienic and medical school staff and for school authorities."[31] TOZ's hygienic recommendations to schools were as follows: that there be proper breaks between lessons and holidays; that school rooms be separated from teachers' private workspaces; that teachers sick with contagious diseases be isolated from school; that classrooms be created for pupils of similar

---

[28] Leon Wulman, "Ideologiczne podstawy pracy zdrowotnej wśród Żydów w Polsce," *Medycyna Społeczna* no. 3-4 (March-April, 1935): 17-18, quoted in Szczepańska, "Work of Jewish Medical Community and the Health Culture at School," 102.
[29] Marcus, *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland,* 142.
[30] Szczepańska, "Work of Jewish Medical Community and the Health Culture at School," 104.
[31] Ibid., 101.

ages; that schools avoid aggregating children with too wide of age differences; that lessons involve physical education and field trips, that "weak" children referred to summer camps; that a pupil's physical development be systematically observed; and that special attention was paid to children who are weak and ill. To help facilitate cooperation between schools and children's families, TOZ established parent committees to work at schools. In addition, TOZ promoted cleanliness campaigns, such as "weeks of cleanliness," during which it awarded poor children diplomas and toiletries as rewards for keeping hygienic rules at home and promoted physical education and hygiene in Yiddish and Hebrew magazines.[32]

As the economic crisis of the 1930s worsened and living standards deteriorated, it became even more important for doctors and schools to provide social and medical assistance for children and adolescents. TOZ noted a growing number of sick, weak, and ill children, especially in voivodeships of northern and eastern Poland. At the beginning of 1930, TOZ cared for about six-thousand school children. By the end of 1931, the organization had expanded its work to include thirty-thousand students.[33] However, TOZ was only ever able to reach a fraction of Jewish children. Historian Joseph Marcus estimates that TOZ was active in over three-hundred Jewish schools, which meant that they served a little over twenty percent of Jewish schools in Poland.[34] Even then, of interwar Poland's half-million Jewish children and adolescents, eighty percent of them attended the public school system, where they would have received state-sponsored medical-hygienic care.[35]

---

[32] Ibid., 101-102, 106.
[33] Szczepańska, "Work of Jewish Medical Community and the Health Culture at School," 102-103.
[34] In 1934-1935, there were at least 1,368 private Jewish schools in Poland, as well as a number of cheders, which were often run under private or community auspices and served forty-thousand to fifty-thousand children. Ofer, "The Education of Jewish Children," 290-293.
[35] Ibid., 291.

Beyond the work of TOZ, Jewish doctors had a profound impact on the medical community in Poland broadly and on school hygiene in particular. One of the most prominent Jewish figures in school health was Bronisław Handelsman, a doctor, pedagogue, and social worker, who established and managed medical outpatient clinics for children from public schools and clinics for children with trachoma. He was active in many societies dedicated to education, children, and healthcare and wrote and translated scholarly works on school hygiene. In fact, in 1906, he co-authored one of the first Polish manuals on school hygiene with Stanisław Kopczyński and Otto G. F. Janke.[36]

Jewish influence in the school health movement did not end with individuals like Handelsman. Out of Poland's sixteen voivodeships, most doctors in seven of the central and eastern voivodeships were Jewish. Jewish doctors across Poland, especially in central and eastern regions, worked in public and private schools.[37] In Łódź, for example, where eighty-three percent of doctors were Jewish, the city's head school medical officer, Stansiław Gutentag, was Jewish as were many of the physicians that inspected and taught in the city's public and private schools. Further east, records from the voivodeship of Nowogródek include regional physicians with the surnames of Abramowicz, Blaustein, Grynberg, Lejmbach, Lejmbachówna, and Merjerówna who oversaw public health matters including school hygiene in Wiszniew, Nowogródek county, Stolpce, the areas around Lachowicze, Wolna, and Lida. Jewish doctors played quite remarkable roles in school health considering that during the interwar period Jews were increasingly limited from employment in public service. Ralph Mahler writes that the few Jews employed by municipal governments were most often in professions requiring "special technical knowledge."

[36] See Otto G. F. Janke, Stanisław Kopczyński, and Bronisław Handelsman, *Zasady higjeny szkolnej: podręcznik przeznaczony do użytku nauczycieli, kierowników szkół i lekarzy szkolnych* (Warsaw: Księgarnia Naukowa, 1906).
[37] Szczepańska, "Work of Jewish Medical Community and the Health Culture at School," 98-102.

In former Galician provinces, for example, that was almost exclusively limited to physicians.[38] Even in 1938, after a decade of intensifying antisemitic actions, many directed at Jewish physicians and medical students, the World Meeting of Jewish Doctors emphasized that because of their strong organizational bond, Jewish doctors in Poland, unlike in other countries, had "a significant impact on the outside."[39]

Children as Agents of Social Change

Children in interwar Poland were no strangers to sickness and death. From very young ages, they experienced illness and watched family members fall sick and sometimes die. Not surprisingly, death and disease consumed much of their private thoughts. Children filled the pages of Janusz Korczak's *Little Review* with their reflections on hospital stays, sick days away from school, separation from family and friends, outbreaks of scarlet fever, and the emotional and financial hardship that illness and death brought to their families. Kasi told readers that her doll spiked a fever, so she sewed it a warm hat and sweater. Doriś recounted a dream that she was orphaned but, thank goodness, found care with a nice woman. Moszek wrote that he believed every person died twice: once from illness and once free from suffering.[40] The social realities caused by war, famine, epidemics, and economic depression, meant that many children in interwar Poland had intimate knowledge of human mortality. In 1927, Josek wrote a cover story that described how each afternoon he delivered food to his uncle, who lay sick, swollen, and fighting for breath. Shortly after one of his visits, a woman arrived at Josek's house to say

[38] Ralph Mahler, "Jews in Public Service and the Liberal Professions in Poland, 1918-1939," *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 4 (October 1944): 307-308.
[39] Szczepańska, "Work of Jewish Medical Community and the Health Culture at School," 102. For more information on antisemitic actions directed at Jewish physicians and medical students see Natalia Aleksiun, "Jewish Students and Christian Corpses: Playing with the Language of Blood Libel," *Jewish History* 26 (2012): 327-342; Mahler, "Jews in Public Service and the Liberal Professions in Poland, 1918-1939," 323-335.
[40] "Z kraju," *Mały Przegląd,* December 10, 1926; January 7, 1927; March 4, 1927.

that the uncle had passed. As his mother erupted in tears, Josek ran into the hallway and cried alone. "I think a lot about illness and death," he confessed, "but I do not know how to make sense of it."[41] The harsh reality of everyday life presented children with frightening and often traumatizing situations that they could not fully process or comprehend.

School health and hygiene instructors did not help children emotionally process their grief or anxieties but instead offered scientific liberation from suffering. If illness was, as one ARC pamphlet put it, one of "life's worst evils," then hygienic instruction offered children what they needed to protect life's "most precious treasure:" their health.[42] Hygiene education came in the form of coursework, special lectures, and printed health propaganda. For two hours a week, teachers, school doctors, or hygienists covered breathing, circulation, movement, physical exercises, food safety, first aid, household cleanliness, tuberculosis and other diseases prevention, and the dangers of alcoholism. For female students, they offered special lessons on infant care. As children grew older, the instruction intensified. By sixth grade, students heard eight additional lectures on hygiene each year, and in seventh grade, they worked twice a week with a health textbook. Additionally, school doctors and hygienists guided children in upper grades on a series of field trips to local healthcare institutions and sanitary facilities. In select cities, the Junior Red Cross sponsored health contests for which students drew pictures, wrote essays, and competed for who best implemented hygienic measures.[43] By the mid-1920s, ten Warsaw high schools had assembled student governments to address health and hygiene concerns and appointed "student hygienists" to oversee classroom cleanliness and ventilation.[44] By teaching children how to care for their bodies and surroundings, hygiene educators sought to

[41] "Śmierć mojego wujaszka," *Mały Przegląd*, March 4, 1927.
[42] American Red Cross, *Do Dzieci Polskich* (Warsaw: "Jan Cotty," n.d.), 1.
[43] Kopczyński, *Opieka hygjeniczno-lekarska*, 17.
[44] "Study of Public Health Administration," 1925, AAN MOS 15/537.

transform children from passive recipients of information into active participants in the fight for public health and prepare them to be good, health-conscious adult citizens.

Hygiene educators told children that they must adopt a regulated, vigilant, and sober lifestyle to protect good health. Materials distributed by the Ministries of Public Health, Social Welfare, and Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment provided children with detailed instructions on how to wash, brush, sleep, sit, eat, drink, read, and even breathe so as not to compromise physical development. At the MWRiOP's request, the American Red Cross condensed its advice into a list of twenty "Most Important Hygienic Rules," which students could paste in their notebook as a reminder. This list warned children against the dangers of strong coffee, dirty air, poor lighting, and improper ventilation. It told them not to slouch, spit, kick up dust, eat food off the ground, or visit people sick with infectious diseases.[45] ARC texts also adopted a moralistic tone, telling children that most of the illness and suffering they saw around them resulted from imprudence and indiscretion. The booklet *To the Children of Poland* (*Do Dzieci Polskich*), co-authored by the ARC and the Polish-American Children's Aid Committee, said that "many diseases are produced by dirt and sloppiness" and that a dirty person was "more likely to fall ill" and "arouse[d] disgust and repulsion."[46] Health educators wanted children to know that much of the illness and suffering they saw around them could be prevented. If children wanted to direct their lives along a more healthful path, they needed to despise dirt and fully adopt prescribed hygienic practices.

In contrast to the adult-focused literature distributed at infant welfare stations, health professionals and teachers delivered information at schools that focused specifically on what

[45] "Most Important Mistakes Made in the Bringing Up of Infants," HIA ARC XX482/117; League of Nations, "Study of Public Health Administration," AAN MOS 15/537; R. M. Taylor to A. C. Burnham, Sept 2, 1921, HIA ARC XX482/117.
[46] American Red Cross, *Do Dzieci Polskich*, 4-5.

children could do achieve a hygienic lifestyle. The sources mentioned above did not reference adults in the text, pictures, or captions save for one instance where a pamphlet instructed children to alert their parents about toothaches. Authors of this prescriptive literature told children to seize control of their bodies and environment when and where they could. "To the Children of Poland" instructed children, "Remember health everywhere, anywhere you are—in your apartment, on the street, during work at school."[47] Given the challenges encountered in adult education, many public health reformers looked to children as their best hope. In October 1936, Dr. Bogumił Krippendorf told a conference of county doctors in Toruń that "elementary school ranks among the most important health promotion centers due to the fact that it is the only institution through which every citizen must pass [and] that the school child, who does not yet have deeply-rooted habits, has the easiest time incorporating hygienic habits, which are most likely to infiltrate the family and surroundings through school."[48] By virtue of children's age, impressionability, and perceived enthusiasm for hygiene knowledge and practice, reformers saw children as indispensable figures to embody health reform among their parents and peers.

Fostering a Generational Divide

As school hygiene programs worked to empower children, they also seemed to be engineering a generational divide between children and adults. As more children entered the school system, teachers became a new source of authority for shaping children's lives. In *Little Review*, child-reporter Stella observed how children often respected their teachers more than their parents. With teachers, children remembered to say "please" and "thank you," she reported. They discussed dreams and aspirations that they were never brave enough to share with their

---

[47] American Red Cross, *Do Dzieci Polskich*, 10-11.

[48] Bogumił Krippendorf, "Rejonowe Ośrodki Zdrowia jako podstawe terytorialnej akcji zdrowotnej," October 1936, AAN MOS 15/494.

parents. By contrast, Stella continued, "parents are [only] loved, not always respected."[49] Ima, the girl who criticized adults for not appreciating the value of health and hygiene, wrote of her gratitude to teachers helping children understand good and bad, and for guiding them on the path to a righteous and healthful life. Children, Ima said, craved knowledge from their teachers to apply in their life.[50] The message coming from health and hygiene advocates was that children could and should take control of their health as directed by teachers, counselors, doctors, nurses, and hygienists, even if it flew in the face of what they heard at home.

Post-war social initiatives had transformed schools into sites of medical intervention. In doing so, they brought to the field of education the medical discourses that criticized and vilified parents for "capricious neglect," "poor observation," and an active or passive contribution to their children's health problems. Through public admonishment and other threats, teachers joined forces with other medical authorities to present a united front against what they perceived as parents' egregious neglect of children. In 1932, Adolf Klęsk, a neurologist who also worked as a school doctor in Cracow, wrote an article for the children's welfare bureau's journal *Child Care* (*Opieka nad Dzieckiem)* entitled "Do parents observe their children well?" In this article, he noted that when asked for the child's medical history, "Too often, the mother does not remember when or how the child became sick."[51] Then, upon receiving a diagnosis and treatment plan, mothers might hurl insults, make excuses, or even lie about a child's current state. If a doctor said the child was underweight, the mother would respond that her daughter was "just small-framed." If he pointed out a curved spine, the mother would scoff and say it was no wonder, his father is poorly built too. Physicians trying to combat childhood ailments like rickets, undernourishment, tuberculosis, and trachoma butted heads with parents who understood these

[49] "Rodzice i dzieci," *Mały Przegląd*, June 17, 1927.
[50] "Młodzież i higiena," *Mały Przegląd*, May 27 1927.
[51] Klęsk, "Czy rodzice dobrze obserwują swoje dziecko?" 253.

conditions as genetic inheritance or happenstance rather than social diseases that could be corrected. Klęsk believed that ignorant and stubborn mothers often posed the greatest risk to a child's health, necessitating the intervention of trained medical professionals in a child's upbringing.[52]

School hygiene constituted a vital link in that chain. Klęsk believed that the school doctor embodied a new type of authority, one "foreign to the family, neutral to their circumstances, and un-swayed or affected by a certain belief system or set of biases."[53] What Klęsk left out was that the school doctor was not a private professional but an agent of the state, who collaborated with teachers, hygienists, and school administrators to see that children received the care they deserved. State regulations did allow parents to attend their child's appointment, but work, childcare, illness, and lack of advanced notification, prevented most from attending. In the mid-1920s, parental attendance during school medical exams for children in Warsaw hovered around twelve percent.[54] Because so few parents attended school medical exams, third parties often delivered the news about their child's health. One child witnessed this exchange, reporting how he saw a teacher scold parents for dirty children and threaten to send the children home and fine their parents if the problem continued. One mother reportedly blushed with shame, while another tried to hold back her tears.[55]

The encounters between parents and teachers represented a fundamental clash in understanding the role of medicine in daily life. Stella of *Little Review* picked up on parents' reluctance to accept advancements in modern medicine when she wrote, "How many are those who grow angry now were not vaccinated in childhood, they were not raised with a sense of

---

[52] Klęsk, "Czy rodzice dobrze obserwują swoje dziecko?" 257.
[53] Ibid.
[54] "Study of Public Health Administration," AAN MOS 15/537.
[55] "Wiadomości bieżące," *Mały Przegląd*, November 12, 1926.

obligation, and they only say, 'as one grows, whatever will be will be.'"[56] In 1922, Władysław Grabski, director of the children's welfare bureau, told League of Nations health visitor F. Elisabeth Cowell that preventative medicine had still not taken root in Poland among medical professionals or laypeople. The idea that people could prevent tuberculosis infections remained unrecognized by many practicing physicians and was completely lost upon the uneducated working class and peasantry.[57] According to Grabski, the average person still saw tuberculosis as a "visitation of God," and thought the only course of action was palliative care until death. When Dr. F. R. Seymour of the British Ministry of Health visited Poland in 1933, he said that although hygiene education was "of great national value. . . it will take at least a generation before its beneficial effects can be fully manifested."[58] Nevertheless, Kopczyński remained steadfast to investing in Poland's future generation's health and physical development. He believed that broader societal change would come only by educating the younger generations to embrace preventative medicine.

Limits to Children's Agency

Doctors and teachers saddled children with a lot of responsibility. Sociologist Daniel Thomas Cook writes that while children have agency, they are not usually great motivators of political or social change. That is because, for most of history, children have possessed very little power to effect change in an adult-run world.[59] Children in interwar Poland faced all sorts of barriers that prevented them from fully implementing the hygiene practices they learned at school. Prescriptive literature told children to sleep in their own beds near open windows, do

[56] "Rodzice i dzieci," *Mały Przegląd*, June 17, 1927.
[57] Crowell, "Memorandum," LNA 28794/12B/R883.
[58] Seymour, "League of Nations Collective Interchange in Poland, 1933," LNA 1607/8B/6154.
[59] Daniel Thomas Cook, "Interrogating Symbolic Childhood," in *Symbolic Childhood*, ed. Daniel Thomas Cook (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 6.

their homework at a table with good lighting, bathe and wash frequently, change their clothes daily, and not cohabitate or visit sick adults or children. Living by these principles would have been very difficult given the overcrowding and poverty of many Polish households.

Poland's living conditions were already tight in the nineteenth century, but the country faced an even worse housing shortage after the war.[60] The fighting had destroyed nearly two million homes, which, when combined with a natural increase of one million people between 1921 and 1931, meant that the emerging country needed new housing for thirteen million people. When Seymour toured Poland on behalf of the League of Nations, he found that one or two-room dwellings were typical among Warsaw's unemployed, working-class, and civil servant class alike. With such a lack of housing, it was not hard to find one-room apartments accommodating upwards of a dozen people. Seymour encountered the worst case in Lwów, where he visited a six-by-twelve-foot room that housed fourteen people and lacked a working window. The following year, the League of Nations estimated that one-room dwellings comprised forty percent of Polish homes, excluding those in the westernmost provinces. In Łódź, that rate was closer to sixty percent.[61]

The housing crisis only worsened with the economic depression of the 1930s. By 1932, a worker's wage was worth fifty-eight percent of what it had been in 1929. By the end of that year, the real value of an industrial wage had fallen by almost fifty percent, reducing an already low standard of living even further. Between falling wages and layoffs, families fell behind on their rent. In the early 1930s, sociologists Halina Krahelska and Stephan Prus gathered data from upwards of one thousand out-of-work families in various industrial cities around Poland. Of the families surveyed, 869 owed their landlords a combined 539.5 years' worth of rent. On top of a

[60] Dydusiak, "Opieka Publiczno-Prawna nad Dzieckiem w Polsce," 169.
[61] "Public Health Services in Poland," LNA 1607/8B/6154; Seymour, "League of Nations Collective Interchange in Poland, 1933," LNA 1607/8B/6154.

housing shortage, worsening economic conditions forced many families to move in with each other or search for additional tenants. Krahelska and Prus found it common among the working classes to either take in unemployed families in support and solidarity or accept single or multiple lodgers to help pay the rent.[62]

Within this context of crowded apartments and low employment, physicians, teachers, and hygienists told children to challenge norms over which they had very little control. They told children to sleep in their own beds, but separate beds were a rare luxury. Krahelska and Prus found that of 312 working-class families, only twenty-nine had a bed for every family member. Instead, family members usually slept two to five per bed.[63] On his countrywide tour, Seymour only met one family of four living in a twenty-by-twelve-foot room who could afford separate beds for each child.[64] Teachers told children to wash and change clothes several times a week, but spare clothes were as rare as open beds. Out of 432 families who discussed clothing with Krahelska and Prus's surveyors, 131 had just one set of clothes, while only two hundred could afford an extra set. Among the mining families surveyed, 37.76 percent washed their clothes with only water because they could not afford soap.[65] In a study of 383 mining families in Ruda, a Silesian city, and weaving families in Łódź, Krahelska and Prus found that 81.4 percent of children did not regularly attend school for lack of clothes and adequate nutrition.

The study by Krahelska and Prus illustrates how hygienic prescriptions, in part shaped by western and American progressive values imported during postwar relief, were totally out of sync with the daily practices and possibilities of Polish children living in such poor conditions.

[62] Halina Krahelska and Stephan Prus, *The Influence of Unemployment on the Life of Children and Juveniles of the Working Classes in Poland*, reprinted from *Children, Young People and Unemployment: A Series of Enquiries into the Effects of Unemployment on Children and Youth People Part II* (Geneva: The Save The Children International Union, 1933), 7.
[63] Krahelska and Prus, *The Influence of Unemployment*, 8.
[64] Seymour, "League of Nations Collective Interchange in Poland, 1933," LNA 1607/8B/6154.
[65] Krahelska and Prus, *The Influence of Unemployment*, 11.

The topic for which this became most apparent was food. While prescriptive literature recommended a healthy diet rich in fruits and vegetables, research on school-aged children found that most working-class homes were either malnourished or near starvation. Out of 15,295 children questioned at elementary schools in Warsaw, Łódź, Kielce, Brześć, Grodno, and Białystok, a quarter regularly went to school with no breakfast, one-fifth ate no supper, and one-tenth did not regularly consume a midday meal. Of those who did eat breakfast or supper, that meal for forty-five to fifty percent of them involved little more than a dry piece of bread with black tea. Many families could not afford enough food. In 1932, the Institute of Social Economy examined working-class family budgets and found that food purchases accounted for 56.6 percent of all expenditures. Even by spending over half of their income on food, people found it difficult, if not impossible, to purchase enough to keep their families well-nourished.[66]

The hygienic instruction children received at school or camp could even become a source of stress, tension, or ridicule at home. When Bronisława Bobrowska, a seasoned camp counselor and president of the Cracow Society for Children's Friends, reminded a girl leaving for home "to wash every day like she did at camp," the girl replied, "But ma'am, how can I? We have two extra tenants and there is nowhere to wash."[67] Another of Bobrowska's campers reported being scolded and teased by his father when he tried to resume daily hygiene practices at home. With these examples, Bobrowska illustrated the educator's dilemma. Regardless of how well one trained a child, if conditions at home did not support good health and hygiene, those elements of the child's life would continue to be compromised.

While the state, social organizations, and private individuals did what they could to bolster the health of school-aged children, they could not fix many of the structural issues that

[66] Krahelska and Prus, *The Influence of Unemployment*, 8-10.
[67] Bronisława Bobrowska, "Wychowanie zakładowe czy w rodzinie przybranej?" *Życie Dziecka* 4, no. 7-8 (July-August, 1935): 186.

threatened children's health. They could not quickly resolve the housing shortage, raise wages, or stop people from taking in tenants and sleeping together in single beds. Nor could they swiftly change parents' minds. In light of these limits, school hygiene programs made modest attempts to provide children at school with a healthy and hygienic environment they did not get at home. By the mid-1920s, schools in Warsaw, Łódź, and Wilna began offering free baths for children.[68] If parents did not keep their children's hair short for lice prevention, school hygienists would cut it for them. When children came to school hungry or unclothed, social organizations and municipal governments tried to make up the difference with free meals and clothing donations.[69] Of the children surveyed by Krahelska and Prus, seventy percent received some free nutritional supplement at school, either in the form of milk, bread rolls, or both. As many as thirty percent of children received one-hundred percent of their meals at school in some areas.[70] By the 1937-38 school year, mass feeding actions in Poland embraced 750,000 children.[71] However vital these webs of social assistance were, they still fell short of providing for all of the children's needs.

Limits to the School Hygiene Program

Although the Polish government wanted to create a universal medical service that embraced all children from preschool to secondary school, there never seemed to be enough time, money, or personnel to make that happen. In 1922, the ratio of school physicians and nurses to children was one to three thousand, but the gap only widened as urban populations continued to grow and the number of school doctors declined.[72] In 1929, Poland had less than

[68] Kopczyński, *Opieka hygjeniczno-lekarska,* 16.
[69] Dydusiak, "Opieka Publiczno-Prawna nad Dzieckiem w Polsce," 168.
[70] Krahelska and Prus, *The Influence of Unemployment,* 10-11.
[71] Stanisław Łopatto, "Kolonie i półkolonie, jako problem zdrowotny i kulturalno-wychowawczy," in *Kolonie i półkolonie dla dzieci i młodzieży*, vol. 1, *Biblioteczka Zagadnień Kulturalno-Wychowawczych*, ed. Stołeczny Komitet Pomocy Dzieciom i Młodzieży, no. 1 (Warsaw: Drukarnia Państwowe, Instytutu Głuchoniemych i Ociemniałych, 1938): 12.
[72] Crowell, "Memorandum," LNA 28794/12B/R883.

one-thousand full-time school doctors. By the end of the 1930s that number had decreased to approximately 250 school doctors and 150 hygienists compared to a population of five million elementary school children. Even in Warsaw, the city with the best school hygiene work, each school doctor was responsible for examining four to five-thousand children.[73]

The decline in school doctors could largely be blamed on the lack of funds to support full-time positions. The state dedicated funds to support full-time physicians in state gymnasia, but local governments had to pay for medical care in public elementary schools. Instead of hiring physicians to serve solely as school doctors, many communities could only afford to add school hygiene to the list of existing responsibilities of city, county, or regional doctors.[74] In addition to examining elementary school children, municipal doctors might have to supervise all food products and stores, oversee the fight against infectious disease, keep watch over the city's sanitary state, provide city workers with medical consultations, and advise the city council on hygienic measures.[75] With such a long list of responsibilities, all that many doctors could manage was to show up at schools once in a while, examine the students and facilities for a few hours, then bid farewell for another year.[76] Often, physicians could not manage to make it to schools at all. During the 1935-36 school year, no physician visited seventy percent of the Poznań voivodeship's 3,355 elementary schools.[77] In 1932, the Cracow Voivodeship's Labor, Welfare, and Health office, likewise received several complaints that physicians' failed to visit schools. The vice-director for that province asked all county health services to please renew their

[73] Dydusiak, "Opieka Publiczno-Prawna nad Dzieckiem w Polsce," 180; "Opieka higieniczno-lekarska w szkole i możliwości jej rozwiązania," AAN MOS 15/774.
[74] "Study of Public Health Administration," AAN MOS 15/537.
[75] "Sprawozdanie ze zjazdu lekarzy powiatowych," AAN MOS 15/491.
[76] "Instrukcja dla lekarzy szkolnych szkół powszechnych z opieką lekarską niestała," AAN, MOS 15/6; "Opieka higieniczno-lekarska w szkole i możliwości jej rozwiązania," AAN MOS 15/774; Seymour, "League of Nations Collective Interchange in Poland, 1933," LNA 1607/8B/6154.
[77] "Opieka higieniczno-lekarska w szkole i możliwości jej rozwiązania," AAN MOS 15/774.

commitments to children's health and hold school hygiene in higher regard. Still, his comments likely had little impact considering how overworked many county doctors were.[78]

The Polish state imagined a one-size-fits-all plan to bring hygienic medical care to all public school children, yet stark regional differences in care soon emerged. As was the case with other child welfare initiatives, the best school hygiene activity was available in the cities of western and central Poland. Warsaw had the highest number of full-time school doctors, fifty-five, and Łódź ranked second with thirty. Other major cities like Poznań and Cracow had fewer than ten doctors visiting city schools. East of Warsaw, the only communities with full-time school physicians were Białystok, Lublin, Lwów, and Wilno. Of Poland's 623 cities and towns, only 178 offered regular medical service for elementary school children in 1929, which meant that after its first decade, the country was far behind projected comprehensive, universal care plans.[79]

Even with a relatively high number of school doctors available in cities compared to other parts of the country, the frequency of examination, a doctor's diligence of notifying families of a child's health problems, and treatment for children options were still quite limited. Poland did not have enough special school clinics where the children could receive the treatments recommended by school physicians, and many kids did not have access to social insurance benefits. In communities that conducted home visits, the visitors did not always

---

[78] M. Bilck to Wszystkich Panów Przewodniczących Tymczasowych Wydziałów Powiatowych na obszarze Województwa Krakowskiego, "Nadzór lekarski nad szkołami i dziatwą szkolną," December 20, 1932, AAN MOS 15/773; "Instrukcja dla lekarzy szkolnych szkół powszechnych z opieką lekarską niestałą," AAN MOS 15/6; "Opieka higieniczno-lekarska w szkole i możliwości jej rozwiązania," AAN MOS 15/774; Seymour, "League of Nations Collective Interchange in Poland, 1933," LNA 1607/8B/6154.
[79] Kopczyński, *Opieka hygjeniczno-lekarska*, 6.

coordinate with local health centers or sickness insurance, which meant care was not streamlined.[80]

While hygienic care in city schools left a lot to be desired, medical service for rural schools practically did not exist in certain areas. In the late 1920s, only sixty of Poland's 275 counties had organized medical care for rural schools. Even then, Stanisław Kopczyński called that care "casual, inconsistent and, in many cases, very insufficient."[81] In 1933, Seymour found that although eighty-percent of municipal schools had "fairly adequate" medical inspection, only twenty-five percent of rural districts had medical officers at their disposal.[82] Problems of poor school hygiene in rural areas only intensified in the eastern border districts where most of the population lived in remote, impoverished areas where people knew little to nothing about modern hygiene.

Regional or county doctors working in rural areas, especially in the east, faced long distances and few transportation options to get to their districts' schools. In September of 1925, at a gathering of forty doctors from all counties in Nowogródek, the head of the voivodeship's Health Department, Dr. Z. Domański, concluded that the state of primary schools in the province was quite bad, if even unsatisfactory. Some schools were located so far from major towns or cities that they received no medical inspection whatsoever. He blamed this not only on the lack of funding that prevented schools from hiring doctors and left inspections to regional doctors but also on time wasted trying to get to the schools. The physician from Wołożyński county added that the state of roads made reaching some areas nearly impossible, especially considering how difficult it was to acquire horses from any public authorities.[83]

---

[80] "Opieka higieniczno-lekarska w szkole i możliwości jej rozwiązania," AAN MOS 15/774.
[81] Kopczyński, *Opieka hygjeniczno-lekarska*, 5.
[82] Seymour, "League of Nations Collective Interchange in Poland, 1933," LNA 1607/8B/6154.
[83] "Sprawozdanie ze zjazdu lekarzy powiatowych," Zjazd lekarzy powiatowych Województwa Nowogródzkiego, September 1925, AAN MOS 15/491.

The unsatisfactory state of school buildings posed a significant challenge to school hygiene, especially in the eastern districts. During the partitions, occupying authorities had neglected elementary education, Poland lacked appropriate buildings for the nearly one million children that entered the school system when Second Republic legislation mandated universal education. As a result, schooling took place in overcrowded rooms with poor heating, lighting, ventilation, and sanitation.[84] In 1930, the doctor for Szczuczyński county in the Nowogródek Voivodeship reported that of 107 primary schools in the county, only ten percent were housed in modern locations. The remaining ninety percent were located in facilities with poor sanitation.[85] In his paper on the regulation of sanitary care for elementary schools at the Nowogródek convention of county doctors, Dr. Karol Soroka agreed, maintaining that too many of the voivodeship's schools remained located in cottages and huts. For example, in Święciański county, where there were 316 schools (221 of them public, fifteen run by the Polish education society *Macierz Szkolna*, eight "Yiddish and Hebrew" schools, and seventy managed by the Lithuanian Society "Rytas"), only twenty-five had their own building. The rest were scattered about in various shanties (*chałupy*). In Ozmiański county, most of the area's three-hundred elementary schools were housed in village huts (*chaty)*, and about seventy-five percent of them "absolutely did not meet sanitary standards."[86] TOZ representatives likewise expressed concerns that buildings housing Jewish religious schools did not meet the proper hygienic standards.[87]

Advocates for school hygiene imagined teachers would act as enforcers of hygienic principles between doctors' visits.[88] In the absence of a permanent hygienist or doctor on staff, it

[84] "Opieka higieniczno-lekarska w szkole i możliwości jej rozwiązania," AAN MOS 15/774.
[85] "Roczne sprawozdanie lekarza powiatowy z Powiatu Szczuczyńskiego r. 1930," AAN MOS 15/492.
[86] Karol Soroka, "Uregulowanie opieki sanitarnej nad szkołami powszczechnemi," AAN MOS 15/491.
[87] Szczepańska, "Work of Jewish Medical Community and the Health Culture at School," 104.
[88] Ibid., Soroka, "Uregulowanie opieki sanitarnej nad szkołami powszczechnemi," AAN MOS

was up to the teacher to send kids showing signs of infections such as trachoma, scabies, or tuberculosis home so that they would not infect other children. However, physicians visiting schools discovered that many teachers did not follow the rules of hygiene themselves, and therefore could not effectively teach them to children. As a result, high infection rates among school children continued to be an ongoing problem in rural and *kresy* schools. County doctors from the Nowogródek voivodeship found that school infectious rates of trachoma, an infectious eye disease that could lead to blindness, lingered between one and eight percent. However, William Blaustejn, a regional doctor in Nowogódzki county, reported that trachoma infection rates at his schools sometimes reached as high as twenty percent.[89] Considering the poor medical-hygienic care available to children in central and eastern Poland, someone writing for the Ministry of Social Welfare in the late 1930s said it was "no surprise" that 14.4 percent of children in Polesia were sick with bloody diarrhea, typhus, trachoma, and scabies. The spread of infectious diseases was so prominent during one year in the late 1930s that it forced 130 Polesian schools to close.[90] Combating contagious disease in schools required training teachers to recognize signs of infection, more out-patient treatment clinics, and more educational institutions for children sick with tuberculosis and trachoma to continue their education while receiving necessary treatment.[91]

* * *

School hygiene sprang from postwar fears of infectious diseases and societal degeneration. It responded with attempts to control diseases and transform children into citizens

15/491.

[89] "Sprawozdanie ze zjazdu lekarzy powiatowych," AAN MOS 15/491.

[90] This report references events from 1935-1937, although it does not contain an exact date. See "Opieka higieniczno-lekarska w szkole i możliwości jej rozwiązania," AAN MOS 15/774.

[91] Zjazd lekarzy powiatowych z terenu województwa nowogródzkiego, AAN MOS 15/491.

with strong bodies and hygienically-inclined minds. The rise of school hygiene programs was part of a larger story of medical professionals exacting increasing influence in children's lives and further eroding parental authority in certain realms of childrearing. It was an initiative intentionally child-focused to empower children to encourage their parents and family members to embrace hygienic principles. Although children had limited agency to impact the adult-run world around them, the words of Stella, Ima, and other child contributors to *Little Review* indicate that the messages of school hygiene were penetrating and shaping the minds of Polish school children. However, we must also remember that their voices are coming to us through the editorial lens of Janusz Korczak, himself a trained pediatrician.

But despite the inroads made into some children's habits of body and mind, as the interwar period came to a close, school medical service left a lot to be desired. The intention was to bring medical professionals into schools who could consult teachers, identify sick children, communicate with parents, and report back to the state. In reality, medical inspections in many areas amounted to little more than a mere "march past." Doctors quickly surveyed the children and the grounds and then moved on for another year. Despite the school hygiene program's shortcomings, when a League of Nations representative visited Poland in 1933, he said he trusted that "the Polish government has a perfectly sound appreciation of the idea to be aimed at and will, if circumstances permit, ultimately attain that ideal."[92] It seems, however, that those circumstances never did permit the ideal to happen.

A report from the Ministry of Social Welfare published some time in 1937 or after, said that school hygiene and medical care still required "immediate and radical attention" despite the efforts of the last dozen years. After almost two decades of rule, the state was still failing to reach the majority of school-aged children or resolve inequities in medical service between the

[92] Seymour, "League of Nations Collective Interchange in Poland, 1933," LNA 1607/8B/6154.

city and countryside, and west and east. The lack of non-state actors involved in this movement, except the notable TOZ, meant that there were no other institutions or organizations working to fill the void in the absence of public funds, resources, or personnel.

The state official who authored that report in the late 1930s found the enactment of universal education without provision of universal children's healthcare at public schools to be a short-sighted moral failing of state policy. "It is not possible," he wrote, "to spend money on lessons to prepare citizens for the fight for existence and then at the same time worsen their health, which is the most indispensable and most important part of this fight." He argued that despite all investment in the "value of that child matter," they would never grow up to lead productive social, cultural, and work lives if their bodies could not sustain them.[93] If state leaders were to fulfill the responsibilities of democracy, they had to look to the health of the child-citizen as a fundamental task of that process.

[93] "Opieka higieniczno-lekarska w szkole i możliwości jej rozwiązania," AAN MOS 15/774.

CHAPTER FIVE
From Summer Orphan to Child Citizen

Every center of upbringing should be built for *tomorrow*. It is supposed to be a beautiful utopia *for today*—which can embody in normal life *tomorrow* for our children.

Bronisława Bobrowska, 1935

In 1929, a Warsaw sixth-grader named Salomea Jerozolimska entered an essay contest sponsored by the Hipolit Wawelberg Society of Summer Colonies *(Towarzystwo Kolonji Letnich im. H. Wawelberga*). In her essay "What do I think about summer colonies?" Jerozolimska reflected on the role that summer camp played in the lives of urban children. "When the end of the year arrives," she began, "children who have bad home conditions do not have the strength to learn. They are pale, can barely walk, and are always in pain. . . everything is difficult for them. They demand tranquility. For these children the colony is salvation." That salvation included not only physical but also moral redemption. Jerozolimska recalled how many fellow campers, regardless of background, suffered from various physical ailments and neglect by their adult caretakers. "So many are the children," she exclaimed, "who have bad surroundings, or who are unskillfully raised by their guardians! So many are the children who are mentally underdeveloped, locked within themselves, wild from seclusion, unordered egoists!" In contemplating what would put children back on the right path, Jerozolimska asked: "Is it not when they are removed from the bad surroundings, when they go to the colony, and are still young?"[1]

Like Ima from the previous chapter, Salomea Jerozolimska spoke as the product of adult efforts to transform children's spaces of leisure and education into sites of prophylactic

[1] Salomea Jerozolimska, "Co myślę o kolonjach?" in *Dzieci o Wakacjach: Jednodniówka wydana staraniem Tow. Kolonji Letnich im. H. Wawelberga dla Dzieci Polskich bez Różnicy Wyznania*, ed. Towarzystwo Kolonji Letnich im. H. Wawelberga dla Dzieci Polskich bez Różnicy Wyznania (Warsaw, 1929), 8-9.

intervention and social-citizen upbringing. Her words reflected child welfare activists' growing skepticism about the ability of urban parents and environments to properly raise good citizens of the Polish Republic. Child activists worried that poverty, unemployment, and immoral upbringings would create a generation of children programmed only to fight for their own survival. Therefore, they targeted children from working-class families for intervention to ensure they would become physically, mentally, and socially capable of productive work and civic engagement. School hygiene programs offered one form of intervention, but they were not sufficient. With the summer recess from school came an end to free meals, medical exams, and teacher supervision over children's well-being. Summer also marked the year's most intense period of seasonal farm labor, which caused many urban underemployed parents to leave their homes and possibly even their children for several days or weeks at a time while seeking work in the countryside. Interwar child welfare advocates, who labeled this seasonal separation of parent and child as "summer orphanhood," drew public attention to the need for childcare services to fill this seasonal gap.[2]

The result was the so-called "summer action" (*akcja letnia),* a movement to rescue the "orphans of summer" from inactivity, starvation, lack of supervision, and social diseases by sending them to summer camps or "summer colonies" (*kolonji letnie)* as they were called in Polish. For about twenty to sixty days, camps welcomed beleaguered urban children and youth ranging from ages five to eighteen, offering them abundant food and fresh air, clean and separate beds, and opportunities to explore nearby forests and meadows. It was a temporary utopian existence sponsored by thousands of private institutions and public authorities.

Like most social welfare activities in Poland, the summer action resulted from the efforts of national and local governments, voluntary societies, foreign aid groups, schools, individual

[2] Marja Roszkowska, "Półkolonje letnie," *Życie Dziecka* 4, no. 5-6 (1935): 136-145.

doctors, activists, social workers, and philanthropists. While the state held camps to certain national standards of health, sanitation, and staff certification, the decentralized and hybrid nature of Poland's child welfare system afforded each organization the power to define its own target child population. Therefore, summer camps served children from families of various religious, ethnic, class, political, and health profiles.

In the late-nineteenth century, camps arose to save children from physical deterioration in urban environments. Camp initiators hoped that an annual application of rest and nutrition in the countryside would compensate for children's poor health, increase their strength and resistance, and prepare them for future life and work in the adverse conditions of Polish cities. While concerns about social hygiene sparked the summer action's initial growth, by the 1930s, social activists, camp managers, and counselors also saw themselves engaged in a multi-layered cultural mission to reform the consciences of Polish youth. Increasingly, the state and experts in medicine and the social sciences trusted professional caregivers over parents with the task of cultivating Poland's youth. By extracting children from a world ruled by dirt, hunger, overcrowding, conflict, and neglect, and immersing them in the structured, sanitary, peaceful world of child-centered environments, professional caregivers believed that they could substantially reform children's approach to hygiene and social-civic life with long-lasting effects.

One emerging discourse central to this mission imagined children not just as future but current citizens. During the 1920s, child activists around the globe grew increasingly insistent that childhood comprised a separate stage of human life. Janusz Korczak worked to frame the child as a conscious being worthy of certain rights and protections. He pushed people to think of children's reality as distinct from adults' and encouraged building environments that acknowledged and supported those differences. Korczak believed that children had a right to free

expression and active participation in matters that concern them and that the task of adults was not to discipline or drive children toward conformity but guide them on the path of self-discovery.[3]

During the interwar period, progressive social activists in Poland envisioned camps not just as forms of child-protection but as child-centered schools of citizenship and self-government. At the alternative homescapes of camps and some orphanages, counselor-educators worked to forge a class of children who valued good hygiene in their daily lives, and were also polite, self-disciplined, courteous, helpful, and held deep appreciation for communal life and social responsibility. Educators often referred to these places as "children's republics," where the young inhabitants participated in all parts of camp or home life.

Depending on the organizing body's particular political and cultural objectives, some summer camps also engaged in nation-building projects for which children were both the tools and the objects. Leaders of the summer action desired to foster in children a strong connection with the Polish countryside. Natural immersion, some pedagogues believed, would forge colony children into an embedded citizenry that intimately knew its country in terrain and population. Endowing children with intimate knowledge and love of a country's landscape had many perceived benefits. On the one hand, it could be helpful should a need to defend the fatherland from enemy invaders arise again. Additionally, many progressive educators envisioned camps as a positive force in fighting inequality, flattening class differences, and building solidarity between people of different backgrounds. That could mean leveraging urban children as cultural missionaries among the peasantry or blending children of different genders and age groups or even different class or ethnic backgrounds. In western and southern border regions, some

[3] Janusz Korczak, "How to Love a Child," in *The Selected Works of Janusz Korczak*, ed. Martin Wolins, trans. Jerzy Bachrach (Warsaw: Scientific Publications Foreign Cooperation Center, 1967), 93-354.

organizations utilized children from Polish cities to spread and awaken "Polishness" among local inhabitants, while children native to borderlands were sent to other parts of Poland as a way to strengthen their "Polish identity." In the eastern borderlands, a pro-Sanacja women's organization ran camps and kindergarten to promote Polish state loyalty among non-Polish speaking children who, state officials feared, might otherwise be indoctrinated with anti-Polish feelings at Ukrainian facilities. Overall, even considering the nationalizing tendencies present in branches of the summer action, it represented a progressive and hopeful vision of the relationship between child, family, and nation-state.

Summer Camps as Liberation from Urban Prisons

The institution of the summer colony traces back to the 1870s when Swiss pastor Wilhelm Bion took sixty-eight children to the mountains outside Zurich for a three-week stay. Six years later, Stanisław Markiewicz, a Polish physician and progressive social activist, brought Bion's idea to Polish territory. In Warsaw, he founded the Society of Summer Colonies (*Towarzystwo Kolonii Letnich)* and opened a camp for children of the city's poor. Soon after, the movement spread to other large cities of the Congress Kingdom, Galicia, and the Prussian partition. Despite summer camps' growing popularity, political conditions under the partitions prevented the movement from gaining widespread public support until Polish independence.[4]

What began in the nineteenth century as a limited philanthropic pursuit developed after the war into a nationwide effort with full state support. In May 1921, the Ministry of Health

[4] Stanisław Łopatto, "Kolonie i półkolonie, jako problem zdrowotny i kulturalno-wychowawczy," in *Kolonie i półkolonie dla dzieci i młodzieży*, ed. Stołeczny Komitet Pomocy Dzieciom i Młodzieży, Biblioteczka Zagadnień Kulturalno-Wychowawczych; nr. 1 (Warsaw: Stołeczny Komitet Pomocy Dzieciom i Młodzieży, 1938): 7-9; Dydusiak, "Opieka Publiczno-Prawna nad Dzieckiem w Polsce," 171; Jadwiga Suchmiel, "Idea i organizacja galicyjskiej akcji, 'Dzieci na wieś,'" *Pedagogika* 22 (2013): 399-408.

began regulating all camps on Polish territory and collecting annual attendance data. Two years later, the newly formed Ministry of Social Welfare assumed oversight of funding and regulations and delegated direct inspection to regional and district welfare committees. Finally, in 1929 the Ministry of Social Welfare further coordinated summer camp activities by creating the Polish Association of Summer Colony Societies and Related Institutions *(Polski Związek Towarzystwo Kolonji Letnich i Pokrewnych Instytucji*).[5]

Although summer camps functioned as the projects of various institutions and associations, state involvement initiated a system of oversight, standardization, expansion, resource sharing, professionalization, and nominal sources of funding. Increased state support resulted in the rapid growth in the number of Polish summer camps after independence. The years 1922 to 1930 saw the number of camps grow from 224 to 1,016. Meanwhile, the number of children served increased from 39,312 to 129,478. By 1937, Polish camps served approximately 417,000 children, marking another three-fold increase in attendance over seven years.[6] Near the end of the interwar period, the social activist Stanisław Łopatto credited the Ministry of Social Welfare for its "strong emphasis on the development of the [summer] action" and for "surrounding it not only with kindness but also useful instruction and material."[7]

On the ground, physicians qualified children to attend summer camp according to who displayed the most significant health risk. Physicians often reccomended children for camp during school visits, but children were also qualified through community health centers or their parents' sickness insurance. A doctor's recommendation alone did not guarantee attendance

[5] Elżbieta Mazur, "W Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej: wspólnymi siłami społeczników, prywatnych darczyńców i państwa," in *Wypoczynek zorganizowany dzieci i młodzieży w Polsce w XX wieku,* ed. Dariusz Jarosza (Wrocław: GAJT, 2012): 11; Łopatto, "Kolonie i półkolonie," 7-10.
[6] "Public Health Services," 5 LNA 1607/8B/R6154; Łopatto, "Kolonie i półkolonie," 10-11.
[7] Łopatto, "Kolonie i półkolonie," 16.

because there were still fees to pay. Although most organizations tried to keep enrollment costs low, they still often had to charge something. In 1921, a consortium of summer camps in Cracow reported that it could only offer free attendance in the most exceptional cases.[8] If a child did not qualify for free attendance, they might have to stay at home for the summer. In 1927, Syma, a third-grader in Warsaw, lamented how even though the doctor recommended her for camp, her unemployed father could not afford the fees. She watched with tears in her eyes as other girls from her grade left for camp and wondered to herself if next summer would be the same.[9] A year earlier, a school physician writing only under the initials M. L. recounted the difficulty of qualifying children for summer camp. In 1925, the Warsaw municipal School Hygiene Section allowed her to qualify only two children per grade while visiting a school. The following year, on account of a lack of funds, that number dropped to one student per grade. As she looked out into a class of fifty emaciated children, she saw several that could benefit from "a blessed four weeks in the countryside." Instead, she faced the heartbreaking work of deciding which child would go while the others stayed.[10]

Like elsewhere in Europe, Polish summer camps developed as a reaction to urbanization, industrialization, and the pauperization of the masses.[11] Medical and social pedagogy experts

---

[8] "Sprawozdanie Związku Kolonij letnich w Krakowie, za rok 1921," 4, AAN MOS 15/462.
[9] "Lato: Nie wyjechali," *Mały Przegląd*, April 22, 1927.
[10] "Kolonje letnie dla dzieci," *Dziecko i Matka*, 1-2.
[11] See Laura Lee Downs, *Childhood in the Promised Land: Working Class Movements and the Colonies de Vacances in France, 1880-1960* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); Brian J. Els, "'Creating Free and Good People: Idealization of the Countryside in the Berlin Orphan Administration, 1890-1914,'" *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2010): 411-426; Friederike Kind-Kovács, "Transatlantic Humanitarianism: Jewish Child Relief in Budapest after the Great War," in *From the Midwife's Bag to the Patient's File: Public Health in Eastern and Southeastern Europe*, ed. Heike Karge and Friederike Kind-Kovács and Sara Bernasconi (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2017): 162-3; Owain Jones, "Natural Not! Childhood, the Urban and Romanticism," *Human Ecology Review* 9, no. 2 (December 2002): 17-30.

harshly critiqued city life for the damages inflicted on the Polish social body. They blamed cars, trams, dirt, and bacteria for threatening young bodies and "street upbringing" for children's moral decay. Meanwhile, they regarded city apartments as prisons for the youth and sought to liberate children from the stifling city walls, basements, and attics.[12] Anti-urban discourse appeared even in the pages of *Little Review*, where a girl named Judyta labeled city streets and courtyards "the worst place for children to spend time." She maintained that playing in urban spaces destroyed children inside and out and warned that to send children outside "was to lose them."[13] Judyta's words reflected adult anxieties over the postwar generation. Many experts feared that without intense intervention into the physical and moral health of the urban child population, Poland's citizenry would soon become physically, mentally, and socially incapable of productive work and civic engagement.[14]

Urban environments were only half of the perceived problem. In addition to the threats posed by low food supply, overcrowding, and poor hygiene, child experts believed that most working-class families did not know how to properly raise their children.[15] Józef Czesław Babicki, an educator in children's homes and advisor to the Ministry of Social Welfare from 1928 to 1939, called the working-class apartment a nest of hunger, overcrowding, bickering, and abuse that compromised children's health and exposed them to the stress and negative influences

---

[12] M. L., "Kolonje letnie dla dzieci," *Dziecko i Matka* 1, no. 14 (November 1926): 1-2; Janusz Korczak, "The Selected Works of Janusz Korczak," ed. Martin Wolins, trans. Jerzy Bachrach (Warsaw: Scientific Publications Foreign Cooperation Center of the Central Institute for Scientific, Technical, and Economic Information, 1967): 287, http://www.januszkorczak.ca/legacy/CombinedMaterials.pdf.
[13] "O wychowaniu ulicznym i skwerach dla dzieci," *Mały Przegląd*, June 25, 1927.
[14] Franciszek Ksawery Cieszyński, "Tryb Życia w Mieście," *Dziecko i Matka* 3, no. 17 (September 1928): 11-14.
[15] Cieszyński, "Tryb Życia w Mieście," 11-14.

of the adult world.[16] Babicki wrote that working-class home life bombarded children with "brutal and tragic occurrence," the "bitterness and hopelessness" of a home filled with parental conflict, and "the nervous bustle of adults fighting for existence and work." He also argued that this environment stifled children's development and promoted poor intellectual growth.[17] Marja Roszkowska, a member of the Women's Union for Citizenship Work, warned that with low wages and unemployment came "starvation diets" and the "loosening of family ties," which left children's bodies weak and their minds subject to the "exclusive influence of the streets." For activists like Roszkowska, it was clear that although the fight against poverty was a year-round struggle, the issue of summer child care demanded immediate attention.[18]

If city and family life were the perceived problems, then the imagined solution was an annual dose of country living far away from home. Physicians and pedagogues romanticized the countryside as a place of unrestricted freedom. They believed that its bounty of fresh air, warm sun, and clean water would repair the damages inflicted on the urban child. Drawing directly from Rousseau's *Émile*, children's advocate Stanisław Łopatto called trips to the countryside a rebirth for urban children, a place to find the "strength, which was lost in the unhealthy air of the overcrowded city."[19]Furthermore, the tens to hundreds of kilometers that sat between camp and children's hometowns limited family contact to letters and the occasional weekend visit. By removing children from what Bronisław Krakowski called "the stuffy depths of [urban] housing," camp counselors believed they could transform children into new beings.[20]

---

[16] "Babicki, Józef Czesław," Wielka Encyklopedia Powszechna (PWN), accessed March 5, 2021, https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/Babicki-Jozef-Czeslaw;3873017.html; Józef Czesław Babicki, "Cel kolonji wypoczynkowej dla dzieci i jego realizacja," *Życie Dziecka* 4, no. 5-6 (May-June 1935): 130.
[17] Babicki, "Cel kolonji wypoczynkowej," 130.
[18] Marja Roszkowska, "Półkolonje letnie," *Życie Dziecka* 4, no. 5-6 (1935): 136-145.
[19] Jean-Jacques Rousseau quoted in Łopatto, "Kolonie i półkolonie," 8.
[20] Bronisław Krakowski, "Znaczenie Kolonij Letnich i ich rozwój w Polsce," in

Rational Relaxation

The transformation of a child from an "unordered egoist" to a citizen of summer began with camp's daily rhythm that broke from the patterns of family life. At home, summer break could mean fewer meals, increased domestic responsibilities, and long periods of unstructured and unsupervised time. At camp, children's days were filled with frequent meals, arts and crafts, physical exercise, swimming, sunbathing, singing, and story-time. This approach—which pediatrician Aleksy Salmanczuk dubbed "rational relaxation" (*racjonalny odpoczynek)*—centered around delivering food, rest, play, and free time in measured, purposeful amounts. The goal was to stimulate and rejuvenate children but not exhaust or demoralize them. Babicki told counselors that a camp's daily schedule should grant children "freedom within limits" rather than "remind them of the rigors of school, or military exercises."[21] Moniek, a boy who attended a summer colony in the late-1920s, retold a day of camp life in a way that captured this balance of structure and freedom. Moniek woke each morning to a bell alerting him to wash his body and make his bed. After morning prayers, he enjoyed a breakfast of bread, butter, and coffee, before heading off to counselor-led exercises. An hour and a half later, he took in a second breakfast of bread and milk, followed by dominos, a group stroll through the woods, and storytime. After washing hands, Moniek and friends feasted on a midday meal of soup, meat, and dessert. During afternoon free time, the children could read, write, draw, nap, sunbathe, or enjoy a piece of candy sent by a loved one. Free time wrapped up with a snack, followed by one last evening romp in the forest. Moniek's day ended with dinner, a quick body wash, and bedtime.[22]

---

50 lat działalności Towarzystwa Kolonij Letnich dla Dzieci imienia D-ra Stanisława Markiewicza Markiewicza 1882-1932: Sprawozdanie rachunkowe za rok jubileuszowy 1931/1932 (Warsaw: Wojciech Szajer, 1932): 3.

[21] Babicki, "Cel kolonji wypoczynkowej," 134.

[22] "Dzień na kolonje," *Mały Przegląd*, July 29, 1927.

It was a day that was structured but not overly demanding. Counselors expected children to adopt certain hygiene practices, such as frequent handwashing to prevent germ spread, while allowing them plenty of time to play, rest, and enjoy their surroundings.

Counselors coupled attention to children's rest and activity with strict surveillance of their food intake and nutrition. In order to counteract the ten months when children's nutrition was overseen by parents—who Sałamanczuk said "do not know or simply cannot rationally solve this problem"—camp managers "paid attention to [feeding] in the most rational manner."[23] A 1935 guidebook advised camp cooks to include not only high caloric foods but also those rich in protein, vitamins, and minerals—elements often missing from the working-class diet. The guidebook's author wrote that while "a mother clogs her [hungry children's] mouths with either bread or potatoes," camp counselors should supply children's bodies with vitamins and minerals to strengthen them for when they inevitably have to return to "less successful conditions."[24] Simple meals rich in milk, grains, fats, and vegetables left a big impression on children. In a letter to his parents, Chaimek announced his love for camp life because he got to "eat and drink a lot." In another letter, Srulek marveled how camp life allowed him and his camp-mates to "sit and eat until we are full. . . ." A third child, Motek, cut short a note to his family to grab an afternoon snack of bread with plum jam and coffee.[25]

Camp counselors saw themselves as doing more than bringing strength to children's bodies; they were restoring their minds to a state of childhood. Children's rights activists believed that neither city environments nor overworked, unenlightened parents provided the time, space, or opportunity for safe, age-appropriate play. As a result, they believed children

---

[23] Aleksy Sałamanczuk, "Powietrze, Słońce, Woda," in *Kolonie i półkolonie dla dzieci i młodzieży*, 100.
[24] *Jadłospisy dla kolonji wakacyjnej* (Warsaw, M. Arct, 1935), 1.
[25] "Trzy Listy do rodziców z kolonji," *Mały Przegląd*, August 12, 1927.

missed out on a critical stage of development and were thrust too early into the world of adult concerns.[26] At a colony near the Silesian village of Kobiernice, Bronisława Bobrowska, a teacher who devoted several years of her life to running camps for the Society for Children's Friends in Cracow (*Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzieci w Krakowie,* TPD), observed a ten-year old girl who presented the perfect case for childhood restoration. During the first few days of camp, the girl wandered alone and avoided social interaction. As the oldest of her siblings, she was used to helping her mother at home. "She didn't know how to play," Bobrowska later wrote. "To not work is very unpleasant for her." Since household chores were a routine activity for her, camp staff assigned the girl to work on the "kitchen team," which eventually drew her into play and conversation with fellow campers.[27]

In light of post-war devastation, famine, unemployment, and economic crises, child welfare advocates realized that the family home, especially in urban, working-class neighborhoods, too often subjected children to "the nervous bustle of adults fighting for work and existence."[28] Therefore progressive, non-clerical advocates worked to supplement, replace, or overcome inadequacies of the family home and restore working-class childhoods through child-centered environments run by professional caregivers.

Citizens of the Children's Republics

Initially, summer camps aimed to save weak, urban children from physical deterioration. However, by the 1930s, hygiene was one of many layers in the summer action's multifaceted

[26] Irena Ch., "Miasto wrogiem dziecko," *Dziecko i Matko* 2, no. 8 (April 1927): 1-2; Maria Miłobędzka, "Dziecko wsi a dziecko miasta," *Dziecko i Matka* 3, no. 10 (1928): 9-11; Babicki, "Cel kolonji wypoczynkowej," 129-135.
[27] Bronisława Bobrowska, "Z przeżyć kolonijnych," *Życie Dziecka* 4, no. 5-6 (May-June 1935): 163.
[28] Babicki, "Cel kolonji wypoczynkowej," 129.

cultural mission to reform the consciences of Polish youth. In 1935, Babicki expressed fears that a myopic focus on children's physical health might result in a generation of physically capable social deviants (*szkodniki*) who were strong in body yet weak in conscience.[29] To prevent cultivating a generation of able-bodied *szkodniki,* progressive educators began thinking of camp as a place where prophylaxis met pedagogy. In a shift that French historian Laura Lee Downs calls "the pedagogical turn," camp managers across Europe transformed camps into schools of citizenship and self-government.[30] In Poland, counselor-educators hoped to shape children into a new class of citizens who valued public health and personal hygiene, and embraced collective living, assumed responsibility for themselves and their peers, and had a deep knowledge and appreciation for their country and its people.

To underscore the summer action's cultural mission, doctors and pedagogues began calling the institution a new name: the children's republic. The concept of a children's republic dates back to the 1890s when New York City businessman William Rueben George started a camp for poor, urban children at an abandoned farm in Freeville, New York. Summer after summer, he experimented with methods that would offer street children assistance without pauperization. George eventually arrived at the idea of the "Junior Republic," a semi-self-supporting community in which children lived, worked, and governed. Under George's guidance, children of the Junior Republic wrote laws, ran courts, and earned money to pay for their room, board, and taxes. Based on the principles of several notable figures in progressive education including John Dewy, Friedrich Froebel, Maria Montessori, and Johann Pestalozzi,

---

[29] Ibid., 132-133.
[30] Downs, *Childhood in the Promised Land,* 197.

George's Junior Republic became an evolving experiment in democracy that targeted shaping model citizens.[31]

Over the next several decades, the junior republic inspired educational experiments in other parts of the United States and China, Cuba, England, France, Germany, South Africa, and the Philippines. By the turn of the century, experimental children's republics had cropped up in Central European summer camps, schools, and children's homes.[32] Scholars most often identify the Polish iteration of the children's republic with Janusz Korczak. Korczak, a revolutionary champion for children's rights, saw children not as the citizens of tomorrow but rather as individuals in the here and now. In his 1919 publication *How to Love a Child*, Korczak wrote:

> In what way is the child as a spiritual order different from ourselves? What are its characteristics and wants, what are the hidden possibilities unnoticed by us? What is that half of mankind like which lives together with and alongside us yet in tragic disunion? We make that half shoulder the responsibilities of men of tomorrow while giving it none of the rights of men of today.[33]

Korczak, who gained his first experience working with children at summer camps in the early 1900s, believed that children should be taken seriously, treated with respect and tenderness, and allowed to grow into whoever they were meant to be. For too long, he lamented, society "failed to see the child, just as at one time we were unable to see the woman, the peasant, the oppressed social strata. . . ."[34] Part of recognizing and respecting children as citizens of today, Korczak

---

[31] Thomas M. Osborne, introduction to *The Junior Republic: Its History and Ideals*, by William R. George (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1911), x; John R. Commons, "The Junior Republic I," *American Journal of Sociology* 3, no. 3 (1897): 281-296; for more information on the junior republic see: Jack M. Holl, *Juvenile Reform in the Progressive Era: William R. George and the Junior Republic Movement* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971), and Jennifer S. Light, *States of Childhood: From the Junior Republic to the American Republic, 1895-1945* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2020).
[32] Eva-Maria Metcalf, "Fostering Controlled Dissent: Democratic Values and Children's Literature," in *Change and Renewal in Children's Literature*, ed. Thomas Van der Walkt, Felicité Fairer-Wessels, and Judith Ingss (Westport, CN: Praeger, 2004): 83.
[33] Korczak, "How to Love a Child," 147.
[34] Ibid.

maintained, required carefully constructing child-centered environments that accounted for, valued, and nurtured their differences from adults. Thus, he transformed two orphanages in Warsaw and Pruszków into model children's republics.[35] At these homes, Korczak fostered what Joop W. A. Bearding calls a "pedagogy of respect" between child and educator and promoted a rich social life grounded in the principles of justice, participation, work, privacy, ritual, humor, fantasy, and care for one another.[36] Children at the homes wrote laws, ran courts, organized celebrations, published a newspaper, kept a yearly calendar, wrote in diaries, and served on a series of chore teams.[37] Korczak's pedagogical vision was to include children in practices of the modern world and educate them for citizenship in a democratic society.[38]

Korczak's institutions may have been the first in Poland to experiment with children's republics, but his practices did not remain within the orphanages' walls. Through teaching, publishing, and hosting visitors at the children's homes, Korczak spread his methods to other students, doctors, and educators from Poland and abroad.[39] His influence manifested in summer camps, which began experimenting with ways to treat children more as individuals and involve them in democratic practices and citizenship education. Some camps, like those run by the

---

[35] Zofia Waleria Stelmaszuk, "Residential Care in Poland: Past, Present and Future," *International Journal of Child and Family Welfare* 5, no. 3 (September 2002): 103; Betty Jean Lifton, *The King of Children: The Life and Death of Janusz Korczak* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1997), 48, 62, 73; Michał Taboryski, "O poglądach i postawie politycznej Janusza Korczaka," *Z Pola Walki*, 30, no. 4 (September 1987): 88.
[36] Joop W. A. Berding, "Meaningful Encounter and Creative Dialogue: The Pedagogy of Janusz Korczak," *Journal of Thought* 30, no. 4 (1995): 25-27.
[37] Shimon Frost, "Janusz Korczak: His Life and Work," *Journal of Jewish Education* 33, no. 2 (1963): 93-95; Bearing, "Meaningful Encounter and Creative Dialogue," 27-28.
[38] Brian Milne, *The History and Theory of Children's Citizenship in Contemporary Societies* (Heidelberg: Springer Dordrecht, 2013), 188.
[39] E. P. Kulawiec, "Testament of an Extraordinary Educator," *Educational Leadership* 43, no. 8 (May 1986): 69-70; Sara Efrat Efron, "Moral Education between Hope and Hopelessness: The Legacy of Janusz Korczak," *Curriculum Inquiry* 38, no. 1 (January 2008): 39-62; Bronisława Bobrowska, *Rzeczpospolita Dziecięca* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich, 1962), 6; Bearing, "Meaningful Encounter and Creative Dialogue," 3.

Cracow Society of Children's Friends, consciously adopted the title of "children's republic" (*rzeczpospolita dziecięca*). Others run by the Women's Union for Citizenship Work embraced various aspects of self-government, such as child-run newspapers.[40] Either way, by the 1930s, Polish summer camps expanded their focus from only bolstering healthy bodies, to also forming moral, engaged citizens.

The three pillars of the children's republic were work, self-government, and community. Similar to George, Korczak believed that manual labor carried a profound redemptive quality.[41] He wanted children to develop a love and respect for work and learn practical skills that would help them choose professions later in life.[42] Camp managers built small amounts of work into colony life by assigning children to chore teams and various committees. At the Medem Sanatorium, the Jewish Worker's Movement's summer camp for Jewish children at risk for tuberculosis, children joined one of twenty-six committees that oversaw everything from beds, feet, and teeth to office supplies, gardening, and care of the camp dog.[43] In addition to chores, children at many summer colonies participated in forms of self-government (*samorząd*), which included courts, councils, and newspapers. At Bronisława Bobrowska's camp in Lower Silesia, the child-run "League of Justice" investigated cases, heard testimony, and handed down rulings that carried a "binding force for the whole colony."[44] Courts at other camps delivered decisions to individual children. For example, a girl wrote *Little Review* to report that her camp's court

[40] Bobrowska also referred to the ideal camp as a "state of children" (*państwo dzieci)*, meaning a child-centered environment isolated from the cares and worries of adult life. See Bobrowska, "Z przeżyć kolonijnych," 160.
[41] Bearing, "Meaningful Encounter and Creative Dialogue," 27-28.
[42] Roza A. Valeeva and Irina D. Demakova, "Humanization of Education in the Context of Janusz Korczak Pedagogical Ideas," *Review of European Studies* 17, no. 4 (2015): 163-64.
[43] Liebmann Hersh, "The People's Preventorium for Children at Miedzeszyn (Poland)," *Annals of Collective Economy* 5 no. 2 (1929): 191-193.
[44] Bobrowska, "Z przeżyć kolonijnych," 164.

punished three boys for sneaking into the woods unattended by banning them from enjoying any of the sweets recently donated by Pluto's chocolate company.[45] Korczak wrote that child-run courts protected children from the whims of counselor-educators and placed communal responsibility in the hands of children themselves.[46]

Children at many camps, such as those operated by the Cracow Friends Society, the Women's Union, and the Jewish Worker's Movement also ran newspapers. Newspapers provided children the opportunity to comment on all aspects of colony life ranging from altercations to new arrivals and scandals to celebrations. In Korczak's mind, newspapers proved invaluable to certain educational institutions because they bound the children and staff "into an integral whole" and "firmly link[ed] one week to another."[47] At a Society of Children's Friends' camp in Kobiernice, a village forty-eight miles south of Katowice, the colonist W. Kozik invited new arrivals reading the newspaper get to "know our Kobiernickie ways" so that soon all campers, old and new, may "be formed as one big family and comply with the laws and responsibilities of the colony."[48] His declaration illustrates how newspapers and other self-government activities helped distance children from their homes in Cracow and brought them into their own "imagined community" of the children's republic.[49]

Although children's republics focused on the restoration of childhood, camp organizers also believed their work positively contributed to the improvement of Polish society. Fearing that the poverty, unemployment, and immorality of urban upbringing would produce a generation of children only programmed to fight for their own survival, educators engaged in a conscious

[45] "Sąd na kolonji dzieci szkół powszechnych," *Mały Przegląd*, July 29, 1927.
[46] Valeeva and Demakova, "Humanization of Education," 164.
[47] Korczak, "The Selected Works of Janusz Korczak," 312.
[48] Bobrowska, *Rzeczpospolita Dziecięca*, 161.
[49] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*: *Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006).

effort to transform children from "unruly" and "wild" street boars into a community of cultured child citizens.[50] They believed that camps could counteract the negative influences of strife-filled upbringings and raise children with a sense of pride, altruism, and responsibility for their environment and fellow man.

Educators pursued this goal through a moral education that included "social-citizenship education" (*wychowanie społeczny i obywatelskie*) and by "teaching children to live with each other."[51] In 1935, Babicki published a list of guidelines for children that counselors could use to promote a "culture of shared communal life." The list included stipulations such as "do not disturb others," "do not make others wait for you," "try to be useful, never harmful," "remember, that there are three useful phrases in interpersonal relations: please, thank you, excuse me," and finally, "be a friend in return for hospitality and kindness will be returned for you."[52] Babicki wrote that it was a "mistaken notion that children can gain culture through orders and prohibitions." The colony should not "disable the freedom of the child" but rather to "teach him the culture of everyday life and cultural intercourse with others."[53] In the same way that prohibitions did not promote culture, punishments did not build community. Babicki instructed counselors not to punish children's transgressions but rather treat them as opportunities to build trust between camper and counselor.[54] Korczak concurred, writing that one of the worst things in the world was a child who feared rather than trusted his parents and teachers.[55] Progressive educators believed that since children experienced enough corporal punishment at home and

---

[50] Bobrowska described a child that arrived at her camp as "an uncultured boy, a wild boar," see Bobrowska, "Z przeżyć kolonijnych," 162.
[51] Józef Flisak, "Zagadnień wychowawczych na kolonjach," *Życie Dziecka* 4, no. 5-6 (May-June 1935): 155.
[52] Babicki, "Cel kolonji wypoczynkowej," 135.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Lifton, *King of Children*, 144n17.

school, camp's goal was reverse rather than reinforce those harmful child-rearing practices of the family home.

Some even saw camp as a temporary replacement for family. The Cracow Society of Children's Friends reported to the Ministry of Social Welfare that some of its most important work was in providing every child with the "joy of life and a warm family home." It also praised the cheerful, warm, and "motherly" bonds that formed between child and counselor.[56] In the magazine *Child and Mother*, one contributor asked, "What could be nicer than the bustles and cheerful shrieks of those poor yet well-fed children for whom day camp becomes a home and family?" Bobrowska went so far as to praise the "disappearance of family feelings" among children who became fully socialized into camp-life. She recalled an afternoon when one camper witnessed a funeral procession for a teacher and whispered to herself, "How come that is not my father!" According to Bobrowska, the father was a notorious drunk who beat his family and drove them into the streets. For her, the fact that camp could bring "a little warmth and joy to this sad fate" counted as a mission fulfilled.[57]

Creating the Embedded Citizen

Another benefit offered by summer camps' physical distance from children's families and hometowns was their ability to immerse children in the rural environment. Inspired by Rousseau's premise that children develop best in natural settings, Polish educators sought to harness the pedagogical potential of the natural environment to forge children into curious and

[56] Bronisława Bobrowska and Edward Mazur, "Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzieci w Krakowie: Sprawozdanie Kolonji," July 2-September 1, 1929, AAN MOS 15/466; "Sprawozdanie Związku Kolonij letnich w Krakowie, za rok 1921," 10 AAN MOS 15/462.
[57] Bobrowska, "Z przeżyć kolonijnych," 163-164.

cultured individuals.[58] Maria Miłobędzka, an advocate for physical education, argued that relocation to the countryside offered children the "possibility of freedom, interest in nature, movement, and an awakening interest for simple and uncomplicated things."[59] While city trams, cars, and telephones twisted young minds, the countryside's colts, ducks, and caterpillars supported mental development through natural discovery. "Every manifestation of nature," she wrote, "yields something interesting and awakens the imagination."[60] In addition to the physical benefits bestowed by air, sun, and water, Babicki maintained that contact with the natural world would arouse children's sense of sincerity and altruism. He wanted camps to connect children with nature as often as possible through "happy tasks" that could take place in a "free and unrestrained atmosphere" of the Polish countryside.[61]

The natural world featured prominently in children's camp experiences. In letters home, they waxed poetically about swims in clean water, naps in broad meadows, and trips to "their forest." They marveled at the new flora and fauna discovered daily. Szlama Grundman, a seven-year-old boy from Łódź, was struck by the natural beauty he encountered at camp: "Next to my bed glistened the joyful, radiating sun. Next to the open window I could [hear] the wind quickly blowing on my face. . . Until this time I had never really seen a forest."[62] Meanwhile, Chaimek, also from Łódź, plotted ways to bring the natural wonders he encountered at camp home to his city. He told his parents, "I would like to take just one such tree to Łódź and set it by the window so that I could have a little green."[63]

---

[58] In *Emile*, Rousseau depicts a child raised in nature who develops into a "vigorous, independent-thinking adult." See Downs, *Childhood in the Promised Land,* 16.
[59] Miłobędzka, "Dziecko wsi a dziecko miasta," 11.
[60] Ibid., 10.
[61] Babicki, "Cel kolonji wypoczynkowej," 134.
[62] Szlama Grundman, "Pierwszy ranek na kolonji," in *Dzieci o Wakacjach*, 14.
[63] "Trzy listy do rodziców z kolonji," *Mały Przegląd*, August 12, 1927.

Adult observers also commented on the ways nature transformed urban children. A columnist for *Child and Mother* recounted the sight of bare-legged Varsovian girls eating breakfast on a veranda. She sensed that these girls, their heads wrapped in pink scarves, had acquired a new "still undefined" quality marked by sun-kissed skin, freedom of movement, and a new vernacular that "smelled of rural summer." She listened to their whispers of "grass," "new forest," "raspberries," and "beaches" and determined that they were unlike any urban children she had ever met before. Once the little waifs of Warsaw, the girls had become children of the colony thanks to a few life-giving days spent in the Polish countryside. [64]

Bobrowska credited nature for helping children adjust to camp life. To illustrate ,she offered the case of six-year-old Józek, a boy who arrived at camp homesick and fearful and proceeded to cry for his mother several times a day. One morning a counselor found him quietly seated on the edge of the bed. His face beamed as he listened to the birds chirp and the trees rustle. Later that day, he approached the counselor with a little bird in hand. "Are you friends with the birds?" she asked. Józek solemnly nodded his head. After that day, Bobrowska said Józek never cried and became "completely naturalized" into the camp environment.[65] Although it could take several days or weeks, camp leaders believed through spending time outside that every child would eventually assimilate into the paradise that they deserved.

Natural immersion proved integral to the summer action's mission to forge colony children into an embedded citizenry that intimately knew its country in terrain and population. If children exposed only to urban conditions grew weak and deviant, then children familiar with the nation's soil, mountains, and streams would grow more capable, verdant, and aware. Children could get to know their country through various types of summer camps that included the

[64] "Dzieci jadą na kolonję," *Dziecko i Matka*, 15 (1936): 13.
[65] Bobrowska, "Z przeżyć kolonijnych," *Życie Dziecka*, 160-161.

"resting colony" (*kolonia wypoczynkowa*), the "treatment colony" (*kolonja lecznicza),* or the "traveling colony" (*kolonje lotne)*. Resting colonies such as those detailed in this chapter were the most common. In 1921, the Cracow Consortium of Summer Colonies (*Związek Kolonij letnich w Krakowie*) reported sending 2,487 of the city's children to camps run by seventeen different institutions. Although very similar to resting colonies, treatment colonies were for children who in addition to fresh air and better nutrition needed more intensive medical care for conditions like tuberculosis. In 1921, 451 Cracowian children attended five treatment colonies, all located in the spa towns of Rabka-Zdrój and Szczawnica. The third type, traveling colonies, were mobile camps targeting older and healthier children. Traveling colonies, which served ninety-three Cracovian youth in 1921, used hiking and military-like training to strengthen the bodies of healthier adolescents of both genders, temper them for toil and difficulty, and discipline their minds for respect of law and government. By changing locations every couple of days, traveling colonies offered Polish teenagers the chance to discover Poland's various physical terrains and the different populations inhabiting its territory.[66] While deepening young people's fondness and familiarity for their country, traveling camps also shaped them into a "hardened society of citizens" that could defend that country in case of an enemy invasion.[67]

Educators believed children who knew the blades of grass and birds of the forest learned to love Poland. Time spent in the countryside also acquainted children with the local inhabitants. Educators hoped to leverage this love and knowledge to reconcile social divisions within the new Polish state. Four years after the Polish state's rebirth, the Cracow consortium told the Ministry of Health that fresh-air travel not only improved children's health, but also provided "benefits for all of society through awareness of the people and somewhat leveling differences and relations

[66] "Sprawozdanie Związku Kolonij letnich w Krakowie, za rok 1921," 5-8, AAN MOS 15/462.
[67] Ibid., 7, AAN MOS 15/462.

between the rural and urban areas, which have substantially worsened and deepened in recent years."[68] Discussions of summer camps' potential to reconcile differences within the new state went beyond improving urban-rural relations. In fact, since the early days of the republic, some institutions positioned summer camps as tools of borderland nationalization. The organization most dedicated to this work was The Defense League for the Western Borderland (*Związek Obrony Kresów Zachodnic*h), which Peter Polak-Springer identifies as the "the most important organization for 'Polonizing' (nationalizing) Poland's formerly Prussian borderlands."[69] Each summer from 1923 to 1938, the Defense League would transport anywhere between five-hundred to eight-hundred children from German Upper Silesia to summer camps in Poland. This transport was part of an agreement between the German and Polish states whereby nationalist organizations in each country lobbied to collect children from across the border and hosted them at summer camps to expose them to their "fatherland," meaning the country where "their" national group constituted the majority population.[70]

The Defense League initially concentrated its efforts on German Upper Silesia. Before the war, Silesia was an industrial province in the Prussian empire. After the war, the Allies initially granted the region and all its rich mineral resources to Poland. Still, German protests influenced them to opt for a non-binding plebiscite to help determine Silesia's fate. The plebiscite results were sixty percent in favor of joining Germany, forty percent for joining Poland. Two months later, a Polish uprising led the Allies to divide former-Prussian Upper

---

[68] "Sprawozdanie Związku Kolonij letnich w Krakowie, za rok 1921," 8, AAN MOS 15/462; Dydusiak also wrote that traveling colonies educated young people about the terrain of the fatherland, see "Opieka Publiczno-Prawna nad Dzieckiem w Polsce," 176.
[69] Peter Polak-Springer, "Gain Weight, Have Fun, Discover the Motherland: The German-Polish Children's Summer Camp Exchange and Interwar Era Revisionism," *Contemporary European History* (2020): 5, doi:10.1017/S096077732000051X.
[70] Polak-Springer, "Gain Weight, Have Fun, Discover the Motherland," 2.

Silesia between Germany and Poland. Throughout the interwar period, nationalist activists on both sides vied for influence across the border in their "lost" territory.[71]

When discussing multilingual border populations, one must take care not to conflate the claims and agendas of nationalist activists with the self-identification and interests of people living in the region. Silesians, who were Catholic, working-class, multilingual (German, Polish, Silesian), long resisted firm affiliation with either German or Polish national identities. Out of twentieth-century central Europe's populations, Tara Zahra writes, the Upper Silesians "were perhaps the most famously indifferent" of them all.[72] Thus, rather than promising parents in German Upper Silesia that a month in Polish summer camp would make their children into "good Poles," the Defense League focused on the benefits of a low cost or even free "exciting, restful, healthy, invigorating, educational, and above all, memorable, vacation" in Poland from which the children would return healthier and heartier.[73] Each July, Polish activists gathered children in Beuthen (Bytom), a border city in German Upper Silesia, and then transported them fifteen kilometers across the border to Katowice in Poland. From there, children were sent to summer camps in various rural regions in the voivodeships of Cracow, Pomerania, Poznań, Warsaw, and even Silesia, particularly to mountainous areas on the Polish-Czechoslovakian border. Scattering kids around the country "promoted national integration" by exposing children to new regions and peers from other parts of Poland.[74]

---

[71] Brendan Karch, *Nation and Loyalty in a German-Polish Borderland: Upper Silesia, 1848-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018): 97-98; Polak-Springer, "Gain Weight, Have Fun, Discover the Motherland," 2.
[72] Tara Zahra, "Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis," *Slavic Review* 60, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 99.
[73] Polak-Springer, "Gain Weight, Have Fun, Discover the Motherland," 9-10, 13.
[74] Ibid.,10.

Officially, the primary purpose of their stay was child welfare. However, in addition to good food, physical exercise, playtime, forests, and field trips, children from Germany learned Polish history and how to read in Poland, although many of them continued to speak German during their stay.[75] Children at these camps also learned the anti-German song "Rota" by Maria Konopicka, whose lyrics promise "not to give up the land, from which our people originated," and to "not let the enemy Germanise us and our children." They also learned the song "Silesia," which asserts that German Upper Silesia "was and remains Polish" and that although "separated from the motherland" it continues to "care for its Polish language."[76] Additionally, Polak-Springer finds that the Defense League built lessons about Silesia's "Polishness" and celebrations of the 1921 Polish Silesian Uprisings into its summer camp curriculum.[77]

The summer of 1938 marked the last year of the German-Polish children's summer camp exchange. A year prior, the minority protections guaranteed by the 1922 Geneva Convention expired. Without those protections, parents in German Silesia grew reluctant to send their children to Polish summer camps, and thus the Polish government refused to participate in the 1939 children's exchange.[78] Instead, the Defense League, which changed its name to the Polish Western League (*Polski Związek Zachodni*) in 1934, continued its work during the summer of 1939 by focusing on children Zaolzie, the part of Cieszyn Silesia annexed by Poland from Czechoslovakia in 1938 after the Munich Agreement; the Free City of Gdańsk; and the "threatened counties on the German-Polish borderlands."[79] According to a 1939 article from the *Białystok Gazette Good Day* (*Gazeta Białostocka Dzień Dobry*), the Defense League brought

[75] Ibid., 6, 1, 14.
[76] Ibid.,11.
[77] Ibid., 11.
[78] Ibid., 15.
[79] "Kolonie letnie Polskiego Związku Zachodniego," *Gazeta Białostocka Dzień Dobry,* July 16, 1939.

girls from the Polish side of the Silesian borderlands to a colony in the village of Porzecze near Grodno.

Meanwhile, a camp in the village of Czarna Wieś near Białystok welcomed boys from Zaolzie. Some of the boys, the reporter noted, “spoke Polish very poorly” and knew almost nothing about the history of Poland. Therefore the colony’s educational agenda included instruction in Polish and lectures about ancient and recent Polish history, all aimed towards a conscious “strengthening [of] the national feeling.” The boys also received military training and won shooting awards at the end of camp. The girls paid visits to Warsaw, Grodno, and the spa town of Druskienniki as a way to get to know different parts of Poland.[80] The Defense League’s choice to send kids to the Białystok Voivodeship is noteworthy, as it was not exactly the Polish heartland. Most of the region’s cities and towns had significant, if not majority Jewish populations, and the countryside had a substantial population that spoke Belorussian dialects and practiced Orthodox Christianity.[81] What the territory did offer was vast forested terrain and about five-hundred kilometers distance from the Czech-Polish borderland.

At the same time, the Defense League was trying to convince working-class children of German Silesia that their homeland was spiritually and culturally Polish. The Society of Children’s Friends was utilizing summer camps as a way to familiarize children from Cracow’s working classes with Cieszyń Silesia and Orawa as distinctly Polish territories. In 1921, the Society of Children’s Friends ran two colonies for Cracovian children: one in Jaworze, a spa

---

[80] Ibid.

[81] Demographic data from April 2, 1939 reported by the Białystok Voivodeship to the state identified the district’s population as 77.1 percent Polish, 13.5 percent Belorussian, 11.9 percent Jewish, 2.5 percent Russian, .5 percent German, and .9 percent Lithuanian. See Daniel Boćkowski, *Na zawsze razem: Białostocczyzna i Łomżyńskie w polityce radzieckiej w czasie II wojny światowej* (*IX 1939-VIII 1944*) (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Neriton Instytut Historii PAN, 2005), 116-117.

town in Cieszyń Silesia, and the other in Zubrzyca na Orawie, a village on the Orawa river, near Poland's present-day border with Slovakia.[82] At that time, the Polish state had only recently secured both regions after three years of border disputes with Czechoslovakia. Under the Austrian rule, the duchy of Teschen (Polish: Cieszyn; Czech: Těšín), also sometimes called Teschen Silesia, had belonged to the Czech lands. Like Prussian Upper Silesia, Teschen Silesia was a densely populated industrial region with rich coal mines, steel mills, and essential railway linkages. Also similar to Prussian Upper Silesia, before the First World War, Silesian identity under the Austrians was shaped by religion, state citizenship, and loyalty to the Austrian emperor. Whether they be Polish, Czech, German, or Silesian, languages played little to no role in how many Silesians identified themselves, as the locals remained resistant to the nineteenth-century Czech and Polish "national awakenings."[83] After the First World War, the new successor states of Czechoslovakia and Poland competed for control over the region.

During an agreement on November 5, 1918, local Czech and Polish authorities agreed to temporarily divide the region between Czech and Polish control without the agreement of central states. A month later, both sides mobilized troops along the frontier. In January 1919, Polish troops had to withdraw to defend other frontiers, Czechoslovak troops moved into the Polish-segment of Teschen Silesia. The Allied Powers pushed for a plebiscite, such as the one in Upper Silesia, but Cechoslovaks repeatedly rejected the idea. In the summer of 1920, the Allied powers arbitrarily divided the region without a popular vote. The agreement gave Czechoslovakia the Freistadt district and coal-mines, the western part of Teschen and its railway station, 1,300 square kilometers, and a population of 284,000 people that included approximately 120,000 Polish speakers. Poland, meanwhile, gained the rest of the city of Teschen, one-thousand

[82] "Sprawozdanie Związku Kolonij letnich w Krakowie, za rok 1921," 11, AAN MOS 15/462.
[83] Kevin Hannan, "Borders of Identity and Language in Silesia," *The Polish Review* 51, no. 2 (2006): 136.

square kilometers, and a population of 143,000. As compensation for perceived losses and validation of Czechoslovian military occupation, the Allied Powers also granted Poland the Slovakian districts of Spisz and Orawa.[84]

According to Bobrowska, vice president of the Cracow Society of Children's Friends, Jaworze, the Cieszyń Silesian spa town, met all the environmental requirements to host a children's summer camp. First, it offered a comfortable climate, close to the mountains and forests. Moreover, in addition to arousing the children's taste for cleanliness and fresh air and enriching their physical and moral strength, time spent in Jaworze "preserved in [the children's] hearts affection for a fresh piece of the fatherland."[85] "Now Silesia," Bobrowska wrote in a 1921 report to the Cracow Consortium of Summer Colonies, "will not be for these children just an idea, just a geographical place, but one that they know and will always see with the eyes of their soul, and they will believe it in their hearts, that it 'was and will be ours.'"[86] Similar to how the Defense League tried to convince working-class children from German Silesia that their territory was spiritually and culturally part of Poland, the Society of Children's Friends worked to teach working-class children from Cracow that Silesian territory and its people belong to Poland.

The society positioned children as both the objects and the tools of nationalizing projects in border regions. According to Brobrowska, Jaworze's most important feature as a summer camp location was that it acquainted "Cracovian children with Silesia and its inhabitants and vice versa."[87] Turning her attention to the organization's other summer colony at Zubrzycy na Orawie, a village in Lesser Poland near the Czechoslovakian border, Bobrowska described a tripartite

[84] Félix Buttin, "The Polish-Czechoslovak Conflict over Teschen Silesia (1918-1920): A Case Study," *Perspectives*, no. 25 (Winter 2005/2006): 64-66.
[85] "Sprawozdanie Związku Kolonij letnich w Krakowie, za rok 1921," 10, AAN MOS 15/462.
[86] Ibid., 11.
[87] Ibid., 10.

exchange that took place between the natural environment, a child-colonist, and the local adults. As the children breathed in the mountain air and basked in alpine sunlight, they began to "radiate from each other Polishness, which the indigenous population greedily absorbs."[88] Exposure to these Cracovian children, Bobrowska thought, would endear the rural inhabitants of this Carpathian border region who were "until recently fenced off from the mother tree trunk" of Poland, to the Polish language, culture, and nation-state.[89] To forge this contact, camp managers gave children chances to meet with and perform for the locals. Bobrowska wrote, "Almost every evening crowds of women and men gathered from all the villages to mingle with the children, while sitting on benches and intently listening to their [the children's] songs." These encounters afforded the locals opportunities to "learn more about the specific history of the fatherland," and "be made more aware in the national spirit than before."[90] As the children spoke, their "firm Mazurski speech" pleasantly grabbed local ears "accustomed to heinous Czech-Slovakian-Polish dialects." The children's melodies purportedly crept into the hearts of the local people (*lud*), awakening a feeling of Polish loyalty. Bobrowska's report alleged that when locals looked at the campers, their hearts grew, their eyes welled, and their lips softly whispered, "Our Polish children."[91] Without knowing it, children of the Society of Friend's colonies served as urban missionaries among the people of border regions.[92] Under the banner of child health and welfare, the Cracow Society of Children's Friends engaged in a nationalizing effort focused on forging

---

[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid., 11.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid., 11.
[92] Downs describes *colonies de vacances* of the worker-peasant alliance using urban children as cultural missionaries of culture among rural populations in 1930s France, see Downs, *Childhood in the Promised Land*, 5.

emotional ties between adults and children from different parts of the country and diverse cultural backgrounds.

It is important to point out that the examples provided come from the work of two starkly different organizations. The Defense League was a Polish nationalist organization that enforced and guided state policy towards nationalizing or "Polonizing" the western borderlands, whereas the Society of Children's Friends was a non-state, non-denominational, voluntary society run by progressive, scientifically minded professionals in medicine, psychology, and pedagogy. The society also had ties to the Polish socialist movement, although it remained independent from the Polish Socialist Party. While the Defense League used child welfare as a vehicle to promote its nationalist causes, child welfare was the primary focus of the Cracow-based society. According to the organization's 1914 founding document, its goal was the "facilitation, advocacy, and social organization of upbringing children without distinction of faith and social class according to the rules of scientific pedagogy [and] child psychology to assure each child's physical, moral, aesthetic, and mental development. . . ."[93] In her 1962 memoir, Bobrowska further articulated the society's mission as having been to raise people "of the future—free and independent—by awakening in [them] a deep social instinct and critical thinking through arousing a desire for a better form of life based on social justice and freedom of thought."[94] The intersection of the Cracow society's work with borderland politics of the early 1920s seemed to be framed as an added benefit of camp rather than its main objective. Nevertheless, these trends among organizations with very different social mandates and political visions speak to the importance of child welfare projects to build and shape the Polish Republic after the First World War.

[93] *Ustawa Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Dzieci w Krakowie* (Cracow: Drukarnia Narodowa, 1914): 4.
[94] Bobrowska, *Rzeczpospolita Dziecięca*, 13.

On the opposite side of the country, in provinces along the eastern border, non-state actors were also instrumental in promoting, if not a "Polonizing" then at least a pro-state agenda among non-Polish speaking children. In the 1920s, state authorities decided that the Ministry of the Interior needed to both defend the eastern border, monitor the "mood" of local populations, and prevent local people from encountering "dangerous influences."[95] By the early 1930s, state inspectors kept a close eye on voluntary societies run by ethnic minorities, including sitting in on community meetings and submitting regular reports to the district office (*Urząd Województwo*) and noting any potential anti-state activity. At this time, Sanacja officials believed that many groups embodying a spectrum of ideological, religious, and national agendas engaged in work that threatened state power in the demographically non-Polish eastern borderlands.

Ukrainian organizations attracted particular suspicion as potential nationalist agitators. In 1918 and 1919, Polish and Ukrianian forces—fighting on behalf of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic and the Ukrainian People's Republic—engaged in bitter conflicts to claim territories in the once Austrian-controlled eastern Galicia and the former Russian governorate of Volhynia. At the Treaty of Riga in March 1921, the Poles and the Bolsheviks divided what today might be referred to as the Belorussian and Ukrainian lands, with Poland claiming all of eastern Galicia and most of Volhynia and thereby gaining three million Ukrainian speakers, the interwar republic's largest minority group. In the newly acquired provinces of Volhynia and Stanisławow, Ukrainian speakers outnumbered Polish speakers at nearly seventy percent of the population, while Ukrainian speakers in the Tarnopol province comprised almost fifty percent of the population.[96] However, Poland's acquisition of these territories and the dissolution of both

[95] Ciancia, *On Civilization's Edge*, 81.
[96] Bohdan Budurowycz, "Poland and the Ukrainian Problem, 1921-1939," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 25, no. 4 (December 1983), 475; Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 140.

independent Ukrainian republics did not end Ukrainian national aspirations. In Galicia, which Tim Snyder describes as "the unrivaled center of the Ukrainian national idea" in the 1930s, Ukrainians embraced Wilsonian ideals of self-determination and remained dedicated to building a Ukrainian republic there. In Vienna, veterans of the Western Ukrainian-Polish War in Galicia founded the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (*Orhanizatsiia Ukrains'kykh Natsionalistiv*), an illegal terrorist organization that considered itself at war with the Polish state. Furthermore, Soviet agitators tried to mobilize Ukrainian-speaking peasants in Poland with ideas of land reform and national-self-determination. Concerns about Soviet influence in the east were so prevalent that in the early 1920s, state officials in Volhynia suspected anyone speaking Russian or Ukrainian of being a Bolshevik infiltrator.[97]

Within this context of fear and suspicion, Sanacja-era inspectors reported on activities of Ukrainian groups in the eastern provinces. In April 1934, an inspector for the Tarnopol province mentioned that the Ukrainian Pedagogical Society (Ukrainian: *Ridna Shkola*), which ran a network of Ukrainian schools, wanted to start a group of kindergartens to serve Ruthenian (Polish: *Ruski*) children. The terminology is important here. Over time, many names have been used to denote territory and residents of what is now called Ukraine. Often, the terms used for this place and these people unmask the political orientation of the speaker and could be used to deny the existence of a Ukrainian ethnicity or nationality.[98] When Polish officials in the *kresy* referred to children as "Ruthenian," they intentionally implied these children were part of a nationally immature, non-national, or proto-national ethnic group that could be assimilated into

[97] Ciancia, *On Civilization's Edge*, 33; Timothy Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War: A Polish Artist's Mission to Liberate Soviet Ukraine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007) xiv; Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations*, 143.

[98] Paul R. Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine: The Land and Its Peoples* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 10.

Polish culture, at the very least, could develop patriotic attachments to the ruling Polish state. To have labeled children "Ukrainian," on the other hand, would have acknowledged them as members of a sovereign Ukrainian nation, which was inherently threatening to Polish state authority.[99] At the meeting, the Ukrainian Pedagogical Society presented the results of a questionnaire it circulated in several counties that indicated local inhabitants' desire for early childhood institutions. The Polish inspector dismissed this claim, calling it a cover for an anti-Polish, Ukrainian nationalist project. In his report wrote, "When taking under consideration the relatively weak interest of the Ruthenian people for the need of child welfare, the action of founding kindergartens is operating on political grounds to serve the interest of the parents. Creating kindergartens is about making [children] head to school as material already prepared and resistant to alleged polonization."[100]

Although the inspector stopped short of admitting that children might encounter "alleged polonization" at public grammar schools, he seemed concerned that they might show up at school "resistant" to it. A decade prior, the right-wing National Democrats policy pursued a Polonizing approach to the "Ruthenian" population that included replacing Ukrainian-language schools with bilingual Polish-Ukrainian instruction, which in practice meant Polish-language instruction. The elimination of state funding for Ukrainian-language instruction led to a proliferation of private Ukrainian schools, such as those run by the same Ukrainian Pedagogical Society that was looking to start a network of kindergartens in Tarnopol province in the 1930s.[101]

After 1926, Piłsudki's Sanacja regime moved away from forcing national assimilation to promoting "state assimilation," which invited all citizens of Poland, regardless of their ethnic, religious, or national affiliation, to respect and serve the state. Sanacja replaced the National

[99] Ciancia, *On Civilization's Edge*, 41.
[100] Report from May 1934, AAN Urząd Wojewódzki w Tarnopolu (UWT) 1180/23.
[101] Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations*, 144.

Democrat's Polonization policies with what it called "civic-state education" (*wychowanie obywatelsko-państwowe*), exactly the type of curriculum offered by a variety of summer camps across Poland. Therefore, if Polish authorities could redirect children away from Ukrainian-run institutions to Polish ones that promoted loyalty to the state, it could still meet the needs of local children without compromising nation-building efforts in the east.

Even though Polish authorities had suspicions about Ukrainian groups running childcare institutions, they also knew these services sought to address actual communal needs that they would be unwise to ignore. In her study of interwar Volhynia, Kathryn Ciancia finds that Henryk Józewski, head of the Volhynia's provincial government beginning in 1928, advocated that the best way to endear the regions non-Poles to the state's work was through "apolitical administration" of programs to address the local population's everyday needs. He and other Sanacja officials encouraged the use of "semi-state" actors, such as female activists and health workers working for state-sponsored organizations, to meet community needs, build state-loyalty, and make sure rural locals practiced the "right kind of modernity."[102]

Schools offered one type of institution through which the state could "win" children's loyalties and promote state-loyal citizenship. However, given the poor state of many eastern rural schools—low attendance rates, inexperienced or unqualified teachers, and facilities often portrayed as dark, damp, crowded, dirty breeding grounds for infectious disease—summer camp offered a more hygienic and pedagogically evolved arena through which to forge a modern, rural, Ukrainian-speaking child citizen who was loyal to the Second Republic and resistant to the "harmful" political agitation that tempted their illiterate, uneducated parents.[103] Therefore,

---

[102] Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations*, 144; Ciancia, *On Civilization's Edge,* 129-130, 142-143.

[103] Ciancia, *On Civilization's Edge*, 143-146.

instead of letting Ukrainian-run kindergartens become supposed hotbeds of anti-Polish resistance, the state officials wanted to see "Ruthenian" children attend summer and day camps or "half colonies" (*półkolonja*) as they are called in Polish run by state-loyal, Polish organizations. One favored organization was the Women's Union for Citizenship Work, interwar Poland's largest women's organization. It had a Department of Welfare for Mother and Child and ran a variety of child welfare activities, including summer camps, kindergartens, daycares, after-school programs, playgrounds, and reading rooms. The Women's Union for Citizenship Work paralleled a Ukrainian organization called the Ukrainian Women's Union (Ukrainian: *Souz Ukrainok*) in its focus on women's civic education and increased influence in political and social life. But in contrast with the Ukrainian Women's Union's peasant makeup, the Women's Union for Citizenship Work's membership was made up exclusively or Polish women, primarily of intelligentsia backgrounds with deep personal and financial ties to the Sanacja political elite. Therefore, this group, which promoted a Polish civic identity loyal to the state and the will of Piłsudski, became the state's preferred organization to host non-Polish children at summer camps in the rural *kresy.*[104]

In the mid-1930s, seventy-five Women's Union day camps welcomed about three-thousand Polish and "Ruthenian" children from rural areas of the Tarnopol province. At the same time, the organization's preschools and kindergartens in the cities of Tarnopol and Buczacz accepted a "significant percentage" of children of "Ruthenian" children.[105] In Zaleszczyki, a provincial town in the far southeast corner of Poland on the Dniester River, inspectors called

---

[104] Miroslaw Piwowarczyk, "Selected Forms of Social and Educational Activities of the Union of Civil Activities of Women (Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet)," *Czech-Polish Historical and Pedagogical Journal* 4, no. 2 (2012): 13-20.
[105] "Sprawozdanie półroczne z życia polskich związków i stowarzyszeń za czas od 1 lipca 1935 do 30 września 1935 r." AAN UWT 1180/28.

Women's Union kindergartens a "really good for local poor people" as well as "very effective centers" to divert children away from Ukrainian kindergartens. In contrast to their feelings about Ukrainian involvement in early childhood education, the state inspectors eagerly welcomed the Women's Union's intervention in educating Ruthenian children. They praised the organization for promoting a "state spirit" (*duch państwowy*), especially among non-Polish children. In another noteworthy tone shift, inspectors now reported that the local populations, previously labeled as having a "weak interest in child welfare activities," took pride in organizing and supporting child welfare.[106] According to the logic of these Polish officials, local Ukrainian-speakers were capable of genuine interest in child welfare, so long as the activity was conducted by a Polish-run, state-loyal organization.

"Because All at the Colony are Free, all are Equal"

Although summer camp never lost its focus on health and hygiene, camp organizers of the interwar period also began thinking about the institution as a force for fighting inequality, flattening class differences, and forging a less hierarchical society. In an essay collection sponsored by the Ministry of Social Welfare, educator Nina Bobieńska wrote of the summer colony's potential to promote a more egalitarian ethos in social interaction. By her assessment, "people of lower culture" deferred to members of higher classes, ignored one another and condescended to those below them. A "cultured person," on the other hand, respected the diversity of humanity and was "equally pleasant towards all, and in all life settings."[107] Bobieńska believed that summer camp could fashion children into "cultured people" regardless of their class backgrounds and help smooth some of the more prominent social cleavages that

[106] Ibid.
[107] Nina Bobieńska, "Kultura życia codziennego na kolonii i półkolonii," in *Kolonie i półkolonie dla dzieci i młodzieży*, 166.

plagued adult society. Józef Flisak expressed similar admiration for the institution's ability to blur material and class differences. In 1935, he wrote that by teaching self-government and "social and civic work," summer camp "blurs class and property differences and teaches participants to coexist with their environment regardless of the social and social position of their parents."[108] Certain advocates for summer camps believed that through shared experiences, time at camp could more or less render a coherent whole from a randomly assembled group or children group.

If summer camps were to achieve that goal, they needed to recruit children of different backgrounds. In the summer of 1929, the Cracow Society of Children's Friends hosted 205 children ages three to fifteen at a resting-treatment camp in Kobiernice, a village approximately thirteen kilometers east of the Silesian city Bielsko-Biała. The children's parents were builders, carpenters, tailors, cobblers, janitors, cooks, barbers, tilers, tram drivers, railway workers, miners, government employees, and various other laborers. Sixty-five of the children's parents were out of work, and forty-seven came from families with a deceased father.[109] In addition to hosting children from Cracow, the camp also hosted children from Jaworzno, a mining community southeast of Katowice. Bobrowska found that exposing the children to each other decreased Cracovian children's prejudice towards the "proletariat of the provinces," while simultaneously helping children from Jaworzno to acquire some "culture of the city." She wrote that despite the groups' initial distaste for one another, by the end, they integrated completely and formed life-long friendships. When camp adjourned, Cracovian children bid their new friends farewell and sang, "He who does not love a Jaworzniak will probably soon be dead."[110]

---

[108] Józef Flisak, "Zagadnień wychowawczych na kolonjach," *Życie Dziecka*, 4, no. 5-6 (May-June): 158.
[109] Bobrowska and Mazur, "Sprawozdanie Kolonji," AAN MOS 15/466.
[110] Ibid.

Although most interwar summer camps primarily focused on the needs of poor children, by the 1930s, advocates for summer action began considering its benefits for children of wealthier families. The same advocates who believed poverty broke down children's bodies and decayed their souls worried that middle-class life might poorly prepare children to struggle for their existence. In *Mother and Child* magazine, the physician Franciszek Ksawery Cieszyński criticized the mothers of "the children nicely dressed but irrationally raised." He wrote, "If parents, in a poorly conceived love for their child, simplify life for them [and] they protect them from struggle, then they prepare for them spiritual emptiness, and the greatest misfortune, that a person might [meet] on earth."[111] Whether the problem was working-class poverty or middle-class indulgence, a summer at camp offered solutions. Five daily meals nourished the poor child while boosting the affluent child's appetite. Playtime in open spaces liberated impoverished children from dark apartments and children of the intelligentsia from tight clothing and nervous parents. Finally, nature's medicine and a doctor's care addressed physical maladies of the working classes while solidifying the bones and spirits of the more privileged classes.

At the Society for Children's Friend's camp in Kobiernice, the smallest percent of "minority" children came from intelligentsia backgrounds. Although the camp was meant for working-class children, occasionally an intelligentsia child would attend, which Bobrowska wrote offered "material sometimes for interesting observations."[112] For example, she noticed that while children of the intelligentsia had no trouble learning camp rules and responsibilities, they often had much more difficulty learning to "bend to the demands of collective life."[113] One summer, Janek, a smart and lively boy of intelligentsia parents, arrived at Kobiernice confident in his superiority over the other children. On his first day, Janek, confident that he was in charge,

[111] Cieszyński, "Tryb Życie w Mieście," 13.
[112] Bobrowska, *Rzeczpospolita Dziecięca*, 162.
[113] Bobrowska, "Z przeżyć kolonijnych," 163.

rang the bell that summoned children in for an afternoon snack. When no one responded to the sound of the bell, Janek shouted at them, which only resulted in laughter and someone hurling a dirt clod his way. Janek threw himself on the ground, making the other children laugh even more. Janek's troubles did not end there. The next day, he was catching frogs with a fishing pole. However, children from the camp's "Friends of Nature" society quickly came to the frogs' defense. They reported to a counselor "that new boy torments frogs, beats them and strips their skin."[114] The camp counselor confiscated Janek's fishing pole. Janek launched into a fit of rage and took to tearing down a fort built by other campers. The campers teamed up against Janek, shouting, "Beware Indians! Pale-face in the camp!" which Bobrowska took to be the children's demarcation that Janek was from a different social class than them.[115] It took a few weeks, but eventually, Bobrowska wrote that Janek began to "soak into the colony." By the end of term, she declared him "now a complete citizen of the Koberinski colony, where just a few months out of the year, life becomes idyllically social."[116]

Like most interwar child welfare projects, the summer action focused mainly on urban children. At first, experts believed that children who lived with year-round access to the countryside and fresh air had nothing to gain from summer camp. But the summer action's pedagogical turn sparked new discussions about how summer camp could benefit rural children who were often left alone while their parents worked. In the 1930s, grassroots village organizations such as the Farmers Union (*Związek Włościań*) and Agricultural Circles (*Koł Gospodarzy*), and local chapters of the Women's Union, the Polish Red Cross (*Polskie Czerwony Krzyż*), and the Committee for the Aid of Children and Youth (*Komitet Pomocy Dzieciom i Młodzieży)* began setting up "half-camps" or seasonal kindergartens (*dziecińce sezonowych*

[114] Bobrowska, *Rzeczpospolita Dziecięca*, 162.
[115] Bobrowska, *Rzeczpospolita Dziecięca*, 162; Bobrowska, "Z przeżyć kolonijnych," 163.
[116] Bobrowska, "Z przeżyć kolonijnych," 163.

wiejskie) to educate, entertain, and enrich rural youngsters during the hours when their parents worked in the fields.[117] From 1935 to 1938, the number of summer institutions serving rural children grew from 656 to 2,109, and the number of children attending them grew from 33,441 to 151,001.[118] Rural children also attended day camps at facilities where urban children stayed for weeks at a time, which fostered contact between children of different backgrounds and taught them common values in camp culture. Leon Dydusiak, who wrote a dissertation in 1938 about the state of Polish child welfare, even imagined creating multi-day or week-long urban colonies for rural children so that they might visit museums and other cultural institutions and become acquainted with the "peculiarities and function of the city and sources of cultural life."[119] However, the start of the Second World War interrupted such efforts to meet rural children's health and welfare needs.

The summer action promoted health and civic values among children of the Polish Republic to encourage horizontal thinking about society, minimize class differences, and form stronger ties between urban and rural populations. At the same time, it operated with certain Polonizing and nationalizing impulses regarding people in some contested borderlands. These two seemingly contradictory impulses raise questions about how summer camps serviced Poland's multi-ethnic child population. Depending on the social, political, or religious mandate of the organizing body, interwar summer camps took various approaches: some served children only of specific backgrounds, while some aimed to build solidarity and forge a common culture between children of different ethnic backgrounds. This variety was possible because, like most

---

[117] Stanisław Łopatto, "Dziecińce Sezonowe Wiejskie w latach 1935-1938 i projektowane w lecie," May 1938, AAN MOS 15/1659.
[118] Łopatto, "Dziecińce Sezonowe Wiejskie;" Stanisław Łopatto, "Kolonji i półkolonie letnie w 1938 r.: Tablica 1," AAN MOS 15/1659.
[119] Dydusiak, "Opieka Publiczno-Prawna nad Dzieckiem w Polsce," 176.

social welfare initiatives in the Second Republic, the summer action constituted the hybrid efforts of federal and local governments, voluntary societies, foreign aid groups, schools, and individual doctors, social workers, and philanthropists. Groups that funded and managed summer camps included local welfare and child protection committees, city governments, religious communities, charitable societies, orphanages for Polish and Jewish children, student aid organizations, workers committees, scouting organizations, women's organizations, gymnasia, organizations fighting against the spread of tuberculosis, emigration and borderland protection societies, youth organizations, the Polish Red Cross, and the Polish YMCA.[120] The diversity of groups involved multiplied further among those serving Jewish children. Sponsoring bodies of Jewish summer camps included the traditional Jewish communal authority (*kehilla*); Jewish charitable societies, which were often run by affluent assimilationists; affiliates of the Orthodox anti-Zionist party Agudas Yisroel; youth organizations and children's societies connected to the Jewish Labor Bund; Zionist groups including the nationalist sporting organization, Makabi, and the Zionist socialist youth movement Young Guard (*Ha-Shomer Hatzai)*; and finally the Society for the Protection Jewish Health, an apolitical Jewish public health organization funded heavily by the American Joint Distribution Committee. While the state held camps to certain national standards in terms of health, sanitation, and staff certification, the decentralized and hybrid nature of Poland's child welfare system afforded each organization the power to define its own target child population. Therefore summer camps served children from various religious, ethnic, class, political, and health profiles.

With such a large variety of camps and sponsoring bodies, securing funding for each session or placement for one's child could be an arduous process. In Cracow, the various groups supporting summer camps joined forces to lobby for public funds and streamline the

[120] See AAN MOS 15/464; 15/465; 15/466; 15/468; 15/472; 15/473; 15/474; 15/475; 15/1659.

child-placement process. In 1921, thirty-three different charities, schools, orphanages, shelters, trade unions, and medical societies joined forces to form the Union of Colonies and Half Colonies for Children and Adolescents in Cracow (*Związek Kolonij i Półkolonij dla dzieci i młodzieży w Krakowie*). Their combined work represented the full spectrum of public and private organizations helping Catholic, Jewish, working-class, and intelligentsia children. The union could ask the state for money, which it then divided out to the different groups managing camps. It also accepted children "without differentiation of faith, regardless of party affiliation, or social status of parents" for placement in a camp that best matched their particular needs or background.[121] It was an attempt to unify groups with diverse interests to address common interests of public health, hygiene, and education for all of the city's children.

While the majority of summer camps in Poland served children of a particular religious, ethnic, or national group, some organizations sponsored camps open to children of different religious or ethnic backgrounds. Organizations that consciously welcomed both Christian and Jewish campers tended to have assimilationist or socialist mandates. For example, the Hipolit Wawelberg Society, a society founded by the Jewish banker and philanthropist Hipolit Wawelberg, ran summer camps that, as of 1929, had hosted thirty-thousand needy children "without regard to religion." It was at one of these colonies that Janusz Korczak began working with children as a camp counselor in the early 1900s.[122] Each year the society sent boys and girls from different faiths to live together in the two big summer colonies outside of Warsaw in Ciechocinku and Leszna.[123] The summer camps fit within the spirit of Wawelberg's other

[121] "Sprawozdanie Związku Kolonij letnich w Krakowie, za rok 1921," AAN MOS 15/462.
[122] Alina Cała, "Wawelberg, Hipolit," The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 2010, https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Wawelberg_Hipolit.
[123] Towarzystwo Kolonji Letnich im. H. Wawelberga dla Dzieci Polskich bez Różnicy Wyznania, *Dzieci o Wakacjach*, 1.

philanthropic work, which supported both Polish and Jewish causes and promoted cultural harmony between Poles and Jews. Raised in an assimilationist Jewish family, Wawelberg was a fierce Polish patriot who joined insurgents in the 1863 Polish uprising. Over time, his sympathy also grew for the plight of Jews. He supported kosher kitchens in Wilno, donated money to help victims of the 1881-1882 pogroms, was active in the Jewish Colonization Association, and supported trade schools for Jewish children. True to his assimilationist roots, he continued to be a great patron of artistic, literary, and educational causes that benefited broader Polish society. Initiatives he funded included the Museum of Handicrafts and Applied Arts, the Museum of Industry and Trade, the construction of the Adam Mickiewicz statue in Warsaw, and the publication of works by Polish authors Henryk Sienkiewicz, Eliza Orzeszkowa, and Bolesław Prus. Additionally, he sponsored scholarships for both Jews and Christians. After founding the Technical School in Warsaw, which eventually became Warsaw Polytechnic Institute, he stipulated that Jews must not be barred from admission, a policy later overturned in the 1930s. In 1898, Wawelberg got permission from the tsarist government to establish a workers' colony in Warsaw that provided cheap apartments for Polish and Jewish workers who lived side by side in the one- to two-room apartments on 15 Górczewska Street.[124]

---

[124] Cała, "Wawelberg, Hipolit;" Alexander Hafitka, "Wawelberg, Hipolit," in *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia in Ten Volumes: An Authoritative and Popular Presentation of Jews and Judaism Since Early Times*, ed. Isaac Landman, vol. 10 (New York: The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, 1943), 478; Eli Valley, *The Great Jewish Cities of Central and Eastern Europe: A Travel Guide and Resource Book to Prague, Warsaw, Cracow, and Budapest* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 204; Szymon Rudnicki, "Anti-Jewish Legislation in Interwar Poland," in *Antisemitism and its Opponents in Modern Poland*, ed. Robert Blobaum (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 166; "Workers' Apartments of the Wawelberg Foundation (Warsaw)," Virtual Shtetl, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, accessed June 9, 2021, https://sztetl.org.pl/en/towns/w/18-warsaw/113-heritage-sites/28963-workers-apartments-wawelberg-foundation-warsaw.

The Cracow's Society of Children's Friends, a group that although formally independent from the Polish Socialist Party had many socialist ties, adopted a similar approach.[125] Since its founding right before World War I, the society took the position that members were "friends of children regardless of their nationality, race, faith, or the political-class membership of their family."[126] To underscore this point, the society's long-time leader Bronisława Bobrowska recalled in her 1962 memoir the words of interwar communist Halina Górska: "Christian or Jewish, Polish or German—are not they all just one? Simply a child."[127] Those words, which hung in the society's kindergarten in Cracow's poor Podgórze district, operated as a guiding mantra for the group's youth clubs, summer colonies, and day camps. Bobrowska wrote how their work always embraced "a certain percent of Jewish children" who came from less traditional families because Orthodox parents would not enroll their children at institutions

---

[125] The Cracow Society of Friends was founded in 1914. Some of its members, including its longtime leader, Bronisława Bobrowska, were members of the PPS. In 1919, Stefania Sempolowska, the teacher, journalist, social worker, and children's advocate, encouraged the PPS to create a body dedicated to helping working-class children. The result of her advocacy eventually grew into the Workers Society of Friends of Children (*Robotnicze Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzieci*, RPTD). The RTPD's mission was "to facilitate, support, and organize in social education of working-class children in according with the principles of scientific pedagogy, based on child psychology, providing working-class children with the possibility of ree physical, mental, and moral development." Their work was driven by the ideological assumptions of the PPS as well as advancements in modern medicine and progressive pedagogical strategies. The Cracow Society of Children's Friends remained independent from the RPTD, although the two groups were affiliated and shared similar ideologies and approaches. See "Historia Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Dzieci," Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzieci: Organizacja Pożytku Publicznego, accessed June 16, 2021, https://zg.tpd.org.pl/pl/nasza-historia-2/historia/919-dziaalno-towarzystwa-przyjacio-dzieci-rys-historyczny-2.html; "Historia TPD," Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzieci Oddział Mazowiecki," accessed June 16, 2021, https://www.tpd-maz.org.pl/index.php/o-nas-tpdmaz/historia; and Bogdan Tracewski, "Praca Socjalna: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzieci ma już 90 lat," *Praca Socjalnej* 1, no. 5 (2009): 66-96.

[126] Bobrowska, *Rzeczpospolita Dziecięca*, 159.

[127] Halina Górska as quoted in Bobrowska, Rzeczpospolita Dziecięca, 159 for more on Halina Górska see Adrian Uljasz, "O wrażliwość społeczną i tolerancję: Wartości wychowawcze w twórczości Haliny Górskiej," Przegląd Nauk Historycznych 22, no. 1 (2013): 215-239.

without kosher kitchens. Furthermore, the society's camps also regularly accepted children of "Silesian" identity, "as well as the occasional 'German' applicant.'" Despite the rampant antisemitism of the 1930s, Bobrowska maintained "there was never a general 'spike' between Jewish children and the rest." Instead, she observed the largest social cleavages occurred between children of different regions like Jaworzno, Upper Silesia, and Gdańsk, or between children in the youth groups of different political ideologies.[128]

Perhaps the most unexpected case of intermixing Jewish and Christian children at a summer camp took place at the Medem Sanatorium, a camp located in Miedzeszyn, a forested area near Warsaw. The Medem Sanatorium, a Yiddish-speaking camp run by the Jewish Workers Movement (the Bund), targeted children between the ages of six and sixteen who were at risk of contracting tuberculosis. Although the Bund created the sanatorium to help poor Jewish children, it occasionally admitted Christian children. According to a 1932 report, thirteen percent of the children that attended Medem at the time of the report came from working-class Christian families. Even though the camp operated entirely in Yiddish, the staff took measures to make sure non-Yiddish speaking children still had a pleasant stay that benefited their health. The number of Christian children was never large—only 121 children out of seven thousand over the sanatorium's first eleven years of operation—but it was nonetheless noteworthy for a Jewish, Yiddishist oriented organization to open its doors to any Christian children.[129]

The reasons that it did so had to do with ideology and political gain. The socialist mandate of the Bund meant that members running the institution wanted to help poor children regardless of their backgrounds. For example, at one point in the 1930s, the sanatorium accepted children of Polish coal miners as a way to show solidarity with the Polish workers' movement.

[128] Bobrowska, *Rzeczpospolita Dziecięca*, 160.
[129] Jack Jacobs, "The Medem Sanatorium," in *Bundist Counter Culture in Interwar Poland* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2009): 68-70.

Another reason for opening its doors to non-Jewish children of non-Jewish Polish socialists was that the sanatorium and the Bund needed political support from Polish Socialist Party (PPS) members of the Warsaw City Council. Offering spots at the sanatorium to children of PPS members, who were, in fact, the first non-Jewish children admitted to the sanatorium, was a way to build that political capital. Non-Jewish parents would send their children to Medem for reasons of politics and treatment. When it first opened, the Medem Sanatorium was Poland's only treatment institution for children with incipient tuberculosis. Incipient tuberculosis is when an infection is not yet showing clinical symptoms consistent with active tuberculosis but will likely progress to an active disease without further intervention.[130] Some progressive doctors, such as Mieczysław Michałowicz—a pediatrician, director of the University Warsaw Children's Clinic, and PPS activist—encouraged Polish parents whose children would benefit from the sanatorium to apply. If they balked at the suggestion, he reminded them that the closest acceptable institutions were in Switzerland.

As more suitable institutions for Polish-speaking became available and antisemitism increased, the number of non-Jewish children attending Medem decreased in the mid- to late-1930s. However, certain members of Polish radical intelligentsia, such as Wanda Wasilewska and Władysław Broniewski, still sent their children to the camp because of its progressive pedagogy.[131] Even with its specific cultural, political, pedagogical agenda, the work at Medem attracted much positive attention from "outsiders," such as non-Jewish educators and foreigners. In December 1937, *Moment*, a Yiddish-language daily paper in Warsaw that was not aligned with

---

[130] Jacobs, "The Medem Sanatorium," 70; Paul K. Drain, Kristina L. Bajema, David Dowdy, Keertan Dheda, Kogieleum Naidoo, Samuel G. Schumacher, Shuyi Ma, Erin Meermeier, David M. Lewinsohn, and David R. Sherman, "Incipient and Subclinical Tuberculosis: A Clinical Review of Early Stages and Progression of Infection," *Clinical Microbiology Reviews* 31, no. 4 (2018), https://doi.org/10.1128/CMR.00021-18.
[131] Jacobs, "The Medem Sanatorium," 70.

Bund spoke favorably that a “magnificent institution” conducted such fantastic work for Jewish kids during such sad times. Writing about the sanatorium’s work appeared in fifteen languages across twenty countries, and the sanatorium was visited and praised by Jewish and non-Jewish educators, including people with no ties to the Bund, socialism, or the Yiddishist movement.[132] Despite the sanatorium’s popularity with educators at home and abroad, the 1936 documentary film *Mir kumen on* (released in the United State under the title *Children Must Laugh*), directed by Aleksander Ford and written by non-Jewish, Polish, leftist writer Wanda Wasilewska as a fundraising tool for the institution, was officially banned in Poland because of its political undertones, specifically the scene where children of non-Jewish striking workers were welcomed to the sanatorium.[133]

In her memoir, Bobrowska titled one chapter with a quote from an unnamed source that read: “Because at the colony all are free, all are equal.”[134] Even though freedom and equality for all was not a social or political reality in Poland, it was the aspiration of many leaders in the summer action. In response to the social inequality and stark divisions endemic to Polish society, child activists, many with left-leaning political beliefs, designed camps to flatten divisions within society and promote a sense of tolerance among children by fostering contact, mutual respect, and shared values at summer camp. If the Poland they imagined was not yet possible, they would at least try to create it on a small scale with children at camp with hopes of building a better tomorrow.

* * *

---

[132] Ibid., 75, 80.
[133] Jacobs, “The Medem Sanatorium,” 77; Bernard Wasserstein, *On the Eve: The Jews of Europe Before the Second World War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012), 333-334.
[134] Bobrowska, *Rzeczpospolita Dziecięca*, 159.

During the interwar period, the summer action became a defining feature of child welfare in Poland. The summer action went from serving 19,450 children in 1923 to 600,000 in 1939, tens of thousands more than the year before.[135] These totals meant that Poland, a country of nearly thirty million, was sending almost as many children to summer colonies as France, a much wealthier country of over forty million people.[136] When it came to summer camps, Poland was a shining star among its European counterparts. In 1937, The International Conference on Social Work in Paris honored Poland with a first-place medal for its full and half colonies.[137]

The development of summer camps in Poland and across Europe resulted from many coalescing forces. Before the First World War, the earliest impulses were emotional and medical, when sympathy for poor, urban children combined with concerns about social diseases degrading the urban masses. Between the wars, the spread of fitness culture and eugenics, or the deliberate pursuit of many countries to improve their populations, gave the movement further focus. Then, around the early 1930s, summer camps across Europe took a "pedagogical turn" whereby social hygiene and preventive medicine merged with "social-state education" that taught children how to be cultured citizens of the Polish state. In Poland, summer camps developed as the country reconstituted itself after partition, occupation, and war and during times of famine, political instability, economic depression, unemployment, and stark social divisions. Investigating summer camps reveals what values the state and non-state actors tried to instill in children and how those values reflected hopes and visions for Poland's future.

---

[135] Łopatto, "Kolonie i półkolonie," 10.
[136] In 1936, 420,000 French children attended summer vacation colonies (*colonies de vacancies*), compared with the 417,00 Polish children that attended full and half summer colonies the following year. Ibid., 12.
[137] Ibid.

The summer action sought to transform summer orphans into child citizens. Social organizations aimed to help children who, if left alone in their impoverished urban environments, would grow up into "unordered egoists" programmed only to fight for their own survival. By removing those children from harmful surroundings, feeding them, immersing them in nature and community, letting them run and play, and enriching their minds with field trips, games and exercises, camp counselors believed these youngsters would discover what it was to be a child. Through that process of childhood restoration, the adult caretakers also empowered children to take responsibility for themselves and their community by joining chore teams, juries, councils, and newspaper staff. It was an ambitious and idealistic vision that developed in response to fears about social degeneration, geopolitical threats, and fragile democracy. The summer action wanted to ensure that children from working masses grew strong enough in body and mind to participate in democratic processes; knew and loved Poland well enough to defend the republic; and were moral, engaged citizens that valued good hygiene, politeness, courteousness, and self-discipline. It was a progressive cultural mission that wanted to promote horizontal thinking about society, minimize class differences, and forge stronger ties between urban and rural communities. Remarkably, leaders of the summer action saw poor children as less of a threat than as powerful assets to educate and civilize other children and adults.

The summer action also represented how the agendas of non-state actors, inspired by news developments and trends in child welfare, supported and aligned well with state agendas. For one, actors within summer action promoted social-civic education and a sense of loyalty to the Polish state, a key tenant of the Sanacja regime (1926-1935). Additionally, starting in the early 1920s, camps like those run by the Defense League and Society of Children's Friends worked to convince children and adults that people and territories of the western and southern

borderlands claimed in the early days of the republic were and forever shall be Polish. Finally, state officials in the eastern borderlands promoted summer camps run by the Women's Union to meet the social welfare needs and promote hygienic and social citizenship of Ukrainian-speaking children while keeping them away from "nationalist agitation" allegedly promoted in Ukrainian-run child care institutions.

In terms of minority politics, the summer action, like many social hygiene initiatives, embraced more progressive understandings of who could be a child citizen in the Second Republic. Summer camp became an expected part of working-class childhoods for many Jewish and Christian children. Although they most often attended separate camps, they often learned a similar set of values about being a hygienic, cultured citizen. In a few rare but fascinating cases, camps inspired by assimilationists or socialist agendas tried to forge a common citizenry out of Jewish and Christian children in the same space, which reflected their longed-for vision of Poland. All the while, expert-professionals increasingly sought to displace parents as shapers of Poland's younger generations on account of beliefs that parents were too ignorant, unwilling, or unable to provide children with the right kinds of hygienic, nurturing, child-centered environments.

Despite demonstrating progress during the years of the Second Republic, the summer action continued to meet only a fraction of society's needs. During the 1937-38 school year, Stanisław Łopatto wrote that out of the sixty percent of Polish children who received supplemental feeding at school forty percent still did not benefit from the "goodness" of summer colonies, including meals, medical care, and professional supervision during the months of summer vacation.[138] He also recognized that summer camp development had developed unequally across Poland in the last fifteen years. In 1936, Warsaw had received the most state

[138] Ibid.

funding for support of full and half colonies, followed by the Łódź province, the city of Cracow, and the city of Poznań.[139] Additionally, there was much summer camp activity for children in Silesia and Lwów. By the end of the 1930s, Warsaw sent about twenty-seven percent of its children to summer camp, with Silesia coming in second at twenty percent. That stood in stark contrast to how the summer action only embraced between 1.5 and six percent of rural children, depending on the region. So while summer camp had become a regular and anticipated part of Polish childhood, many "orphans of summer" were still unable to attend.

[139] Ibid., 10.

CHAPTER SIX
Finding Homes for Poland's Forlorn Children

If one doesn't have parents, somebody must still care for them.
A child writing for *Little Review*, 1927

One drizzly July evening at the Society for Children's Friends colony in Kobiernice, Bronisława Bobrowska and other counselors sat drinking tea on the veranda. While the children relaxed inside with books, letters, and drawings, their counselors enjoyed a brief moment of peace after a long day. Their peace was to be short-lived. Off in the distance, three dark figures emerged. As they came closer, the shadows became two boys from a nearby day camp hauling a barefoot toddler dressed in rags. "Please, ma'am," they begged, explaining that the small boy, who now stood shivering from the cold, had arrived at their camp earlier that day. Not knowing what to do with him, the boys brought the boy to the colony. Bobrowska and her colleagues hopped into action. After warming the tear-soaked toddler up with some tea and bread, they coaxed out a bit of information. The boy's name was Janek. When they asked where he came from, he answered, "I was kicked out." "Kicked out?" the counselors replied in disbelief. "Why?" To this, Janek responded in a matter-of-fact tone, "Because there is another father with a young child and they don't want me."

Over the following few days, camp staff learned more about Janek's story. As the illegitimate child of poor parents, Janek had been passed back and forth between two households, finding neither love nor comfort under either roof. No matter which home he stayed in, he was beaten. He would hide under the bed to avoid punishment, but the scars on his lip revealed otherwise. After his stepfather expelled him, Janek went to Czaniec, a village east of

Bielsko-Biała, to live with his grandmother. A poor woman herself, she could not provide for him either and sent him out to beg for food. "But I'm not that old!" Janek protested to the camp counselors. After being cast out of three homes, Janek wandered the countryside until he ended up in Kobiernice, another village about four and a half kilometers west of Czaniec. There he spotted a group of children playing outside a large, white school building. Too scared to go inside, Janek simply sat down nearby and wept. This is how the two boys eventually found him. The counselors at Kobiernice welcomed him into the colony with open arms, and researched his background to confirm his story. Camp staff reached out to both parents, but no one came calling. His mother replied that she did not plan to come get him.[1] At only a few years of age, Janek joined the ranks of interwar Poland's vulnerable class of "forlorn children" (*samotne dzieci*), orphaned by way of death or economic circumstance and resigned to the mercy of social institutions and charitable individuals.

As unfortunate as it sounds, Janek's story was not that rare. It could be seen as a consequence of the crisis of the interwar Polish family. Wars, famine, typhus, tuberculosis, and other ailments caused by poor and difficult living conditions claimed the lives of many adults who left behind large families with few means. In the years immediately following the First World War, an estimated 750,000 children were missing one or both parents.[2] By 1921, that number had climbed to 1,561,300 children, or fifteen percent of the entire child population.[3] Foreign journalists and aid workers who operated in the country between 1919 and 1922

---

[1] Bobrowska, Bronisława, "Wychowanie zakładowe czy w rodzinie przybranej?" *Życie Dziecka* 4, no. 7-8 (July-August 1935): 186.
[2] Fisher, *America and the New Poland*, 215; Czesław Kępski, *Dziecko Sieroce i Opieka Rad Nim w Polsce w Okresie Międzywojennym* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 1991), 1.
[3] Kępski, *Dziecko Sieroce*, 15.

described Poland as a land flooded with orphaned, lost, or refugee children. While traveling the country in its early days, British journalist Coningsby Dawson met bands of unaccompanied minors wandering the countryside in search of food, shelter, and some chance at survival.[4] Adeline Fuller, the wife of the ARA child feeding program's first director, also encountered war orphans in cities with nowhere to go and nothing to eat. In a letter home, Carrie Picket of the American Red Cross told friends and family that thanks to the war and daily deaths from disease and hunger, "Poland sure has a big problem ahead of her in caring for orphans even if there were no other troubles."[5]

Those troubles were not easily reconciled. Nearly ten years after the war ended, social worker and socialist activist Janina Ryngmanowa described its devastating consequences for Polish families:

> The war exiled fathers to the battlefields and mothers to earning a living, depriving children of family care for many years to come. Millions of fathers fell and, of the survivors, plenty did not return to their families. Others returned as invalids with traumatic experiences and shattered nervous systems. The war caused a "wandering of nations" as massive populations fled the fighting or were forcefully displaced, and individual family members, especially children, were lost en masse. The war triggered a crazy economic shock with unreasonable unemployment and a housing shortage that have lasted now for ten years. For the prewar generation it is incredible and unbelievable. The war and its effects have brought mass material poverty, the inherent moral ruin of society, and a total disintegration of the family.[6]

That "total disintegration of the family," Ryngmanowa pointed to included children's frequent separation from their parents. Immediately following the war, parental death caused the largest number of socially dependent children. As Poland's economic and social challenges worsened, many more children were pushed to precarious existences on the edge of society. They

---

[4] Dawson, *It Could Have Happened to You,* 84.
[5] Carrie Picket to Homer Folks, October 25, 1920, HIA CP 73083.
[6] Ryngmanowa, "O los dziecka bezdomnego," 40-41.

experienced long separations from mothers and fathers who went out in search of work, served in the military, or spent time in prisons and hospitals. Some had parents who forced them to beg on the streets, left unannounced, or deposited them at public offices and orphanages until further notice. Poverty, low employment opportunities, overcrowding, and inadequate social services for abandoned, single, and unwed mothers caused upticks in illegitimate births, infanticide, child abandonment, homelessness, and vagrancy. In 1936 alone, the Polish police handled 2,241 cases of child abandonment and 988 cases of child murder.[7] Marian Balcerek estimates that during the interwar period, each provincial capital had between one to two-thousand children living and working on the streets. This so-called "moral ruin of the family" left socially-minded people scrambling to deal with its consequences in the context of shrinking budgets for city governments and social institutions. In 1935, social worker Helena Sławińska demanded that governments find more ways to "stop parents from getting rid of their children en masse."[8] Until then, she and other like-minded people would have to keep working to house and raise the forlorn children of the Polish Republic.

Orphaned and abandoned children had existed in partitioned Poland but not on the same scale as between the wars.[9] Ryngmanowa called the issue of homeless children one of the Second Republic's most visible and publicly alarming "postwar plagues."[10] The sheer quantity and visibility of children in need of homes made care for orphaned and abandoned children one of the state's first social priorities. It declared its responsibility to the task in Article 103 of the

[7] Kępski, *Dziecko Sieroce*, 19-21.
[8] Helena Sławińska, "Opieka nad dziećmi w rodzinach zastępczych na terenie wojew. Wileńskiego," *Życie Dziecka* 4, no. 7-8 (July-August 1935): 194.
[9] Małek and Szczepaniak-Wiecha, "Female Organizers of Social Care in Poland," 26.
[10] Ryngmanowa, "O los dziecka bezdomnego," 40.

March 1921 Constitution, which stated that children deprived of proper parental care or neglected in any way had the right to government protection and assistance. In addition, Article 102 stated the government's responsibility to provide for the moral and religious care of citizens residing in public care centers such as children's homes and homeless shelters.[11] In 1923, Article 8 of the Social Welfare Act established a legal basis for this care, once again articulated the right to care for all in need, especially children, and simplified the process for foster families to adopt orphaned and abandoned children.[12]

In practice, care for children outside the home took two forms: institutional care and family placement. Children who passed through multiple institutions and homestays could often identify the vices and virtues of each. Adults engaged in care work, on the other hand, developed a strong preference for one or the other. The value of institutional versus family upbringing was perhaps the most hotly debated child welfare topic of the interwar period. Advocates on both sides claimed the other form threatened physical harm, moral decay, and the proliferation of social ills. For the decade or so, both the state and popular opinion upheld institutional care and the cornerstone of orphan care. By the turn of the 1930s, when the economic crisis forced local and provincial governments to search for cheaper solutions, more communities began to turn to foster care to alleviate demand for residential care. As early as 1926, the city government of Łódź started placing children in foster families as an improvised response to the lack of adequate funding and facilities. By the early 1930s, welfare administrators in several other Polish cities were experimenting with foster care as well. Then in 1936, the Polish Ministry of Work and

[11] Krystyna Nowak-Fabrykowski, "The Care and Education of Orphaned Polish Children: A Success Story," *Childhood Education* 80, no. 6 (August 2004): 300; Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960," 12.
[12] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960," 14.

Social Welfare started a Foster Family Campaign to help popularize the idea of foster families and instructed all provinces to start placing children otherwise bound for orphanages into foster families.[13]

This chapter explores the shift in care for orphaned and abandoned children and the debates on both sides. It finds that by the second half of the 1930s, there was a renewed trust in the family unit to raise a child, as well as a novel understanding of the orphaned child as an individual that deserves individualized care and their own family. From the First World War, when children were sent out to farm families with essentially no supervision, to the late 1930s, the discussion had evolved from thinking about orphans as social problems and objects of charity to thinking of them as individuals with rights and future citizens with value and potential. Social activists seriously considered the effects of each care regime on shaping individual citizens and affecting society at large. The overwhelming consensus from voices on both sides of the debate was that care systems needed to be doing a better job of preparing children for family, social, and civic life, as well as the struggle for existence that awaited them in adulthood.

The Postwar Orphan Crisis

In March 1927, *Little Review* ran the story of Sara, a twelve-year-old girl who lived in an orphanage in the Warsaw neighborhood of Praga. Sara was born in Vienna during the war to Polish-Jewish parents. Her father died before her birth, her mother passed a few days after. Initially cared for by people in Vienna, she arrived in Warsaw at two years old and moved through a series of Christian and Jewish orphanages. After six years in the Praga orphanage, Sara

---

[13] Zofia Waleria Stelmaszuk and Wanda Klominek, "Poland" in *The World of Foster Care: An International Source Book on Foster Family Care Systems*, ed. M. J. Colton and Margaret Williams (Brookfield, VT: Arena, 1997), 222.

still did not know anything about her family except that she possibly had a sister and a brother named Beci.[14] In this sense, Sara's life matched the traditional orphan trope. She was a young child with two deceased parents and almost no sense of her family or life before the orphanage.[15] However, in the context of interwar Poland, the category of "orphan" encompassed a much wider set of circumstances than just two deceased parents.[16] Generally speaking, children deprived of parental care fell into one of two categories: the natural orphan or social orphan. The term natural orphan referred to children whose parents had died, with the term full orphan (*pełnosierot*) referring to the child of two deceased parents, half orphan (*półsierot*) referring to the child of only one deceased parent. The term social orphan referred to a child whose parents were still living but had somehow neglected or abandoned them, usually because of illness, poverty, or social stigma.

Another frequently invoked term from the early interwar period was war orphan (*sierot wojenny)*. Although it appears frequently in the secondary literature and primary sources, the term's definition can be difficult to pin down. The legal definition, as articulated by the state Ministry of Social Welfare, applied to a child whose father died fighting for the Polish army or any of the armies of the occupying Russian, Prussian, or Austrian governments or a child whose mother or father died as a direct result of the war action.[17] The Joint Distribution Committee applied a broader definition of war orphans, which included children whose parents died in the

---

[14] "Sara odnalazła rodzinę," *Mały Przegląd*, March 25, 1927.
[15] Lydia Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans: Poor Families, Child Welfare, and Contested Citizenship in London* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press), 1.
[16] Józef Wojtyniak and Helena Radlińska, *Sieroctwo: zasięg i wyrównywanie* (Łódź: Polskie Instytut Służby Społecznej, 1946), 9.
[17] Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki Społecznej, "Sprawozdanie z działalności Ministerstwa Pracy i Opieki Społecznej w roku 1921," 128.

war or subsequent pogroms and epidemics.[18] Identifying the number of children who fell into this category is difficult to determine. In 1919, the ARC estimated that there were approximately 750,000 orphans in Poland. H. H. Fisher, the American historian who wrote about ARA's mission to Poland shortly after its completion, speculated that those numbers were likely exaggerated "due to the great confusion of that year" as families wandered around the devastated eastern provinces, occupying shacks, caves, and trenches.[19] In 1921, the Joint Distribution Committee registered 20,000 of an estimated 60,000 Jewish war orphans, most in eastern Galicia.[20] That same year, the first Polish census listed war orphans ages zero to sixteen at 1,561,300, or roughly fifteen percent of the child population. Of these children, full orphans constituted 1,115,200 or 7.4 percent and half-orphans made up the remaining 1,447,100 or 92.6 percent.[21] Czesław Kępski claims, however, that the term was applied arbitrarily and that certainly not all children counted under this category lost parents as a "direct result of war action."[22] J. Wojtyniak further speculates that this number would have been much higher had it included abandoned children and other social orphans.[23] A broader estimation that includes half and full natural orphans, social orphans, and needy children born out of wedlock would sit at around two million.[24] Certainly, the number of children in need of full-time residential and supervisory care after the war constituted a major social challenge.

---

[18] Boris Bogen, *Report of the Joint Distribution Committee Activities in Poland, February 1920-June 1920,* (New York, 1920), 12.
[19] Fisher, *America and the New Poland*, 215.
[20] Isidore Hirshfield, *The Joint Distribution Committee Activities in Poland* (*n.p.*, 1922), 19; Sean Martin, "How to House a Child: Providing Homes for Jewish Children in Interwar Poland." *East European Jewish Affairs* 45, no 1 (2015): 28.
[21] Kępski, *Dziecko Sieroce*, 15.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Wojtyniak and Radlińska, *Sieroctwo*, 20.
[24] Kępski, *Dziecko Sieroce*, 23.

On the spectrum of orphaned and abandoned children, war orphans had the most social value. Institutions prioritized them as the children of individuals who bled and died for the sake of Poland's rebirth. In 1915 a Piotrków orphanage for the children of Polish Legionnaires claimed to be raising "children of heroes," the "offspring of the noblest sons of the Fatherland," and "the greatest treasure and brightness of the future of the nation."[25] It warned society that to neglect the children of men who fell "laying the foundation for a better future for the whole nation" was to "curse their fathers who went to battle for the fatherland."[26] This rhetoric of pride, nation, and sacrifice carried over into childcare in the post-war era. The so-called "war orphans" of the Second Republic did not carry the same social stigma as other orphaned and abandoned children. Instead, their teachers and guardians told them they mattered and should be proud of their parents' sacrifice. The government reinforced this message by designating war orphans as the only publicly dependent children to receive full state subsidies, leaving the responsibility of all other orphan care to individual communities.[27]

The other orphan categories to earn public support and attention in the early republic were repatriated, refugee, and *kresy* children. The first term referred to children arriving in Poland from Russia, Ukraine, and the Baltic provinces following the First World War and the Polish-Bolshevik conflict. The second term applied to children evacuated to western and central Poland during these conflicts. And the third term was used for children located in the eastern provinces (the so-called *kresy* or borderlands). Since so many migrants arrived in the east, as did

[25] Joachim Soltys and Julja Świtalska, "Przytułek dla Dzieci Legionistów, Piotrków," August 22, 1915, accessed December 31, 2017, http://www.sbc.org.pl/dlibra/doccontent?id=81426&from=PIONIER%20DLF.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Martin, "How to House a Child," 28.

the Bolshevik army, the three terms were often used interchangeably. As early as the spring of 1918, the RGO had to confront this crisis as "re-emigrated children" arrived from all over. Between May and October, the RGO registered 2,470 repatriated children, ages zero to nineteen, from the Congress Kingdom, Lithuania, Volhynia, Podhala, Galicia, and Ukraine, as well as seventy-eight from "further borderland provinces and Russia."[28] In 1919, the Ministry of Social Welfare, working parallel to RGO efforts, began relocating children from the eastern borderlands to western Poland to alleviate overcrowded institutions and save children from starving.[29] It appointed for this job a special Commission for the Sheltering of Children from Wilno and the Kresy (*Komisja Schronisk Dzieci Wileńskich i Kresowych*), which included ministry representatives as well as those from other social organizations.[30] From 1919-1921, the commission relocated approximately three-thousand children to institutions in the western Polish provinces of Pomerania and Poznan.

In 1921, the Ministry of Social Welfare relocated approximately two-thirds of the evacuated children back to institutions in the eastern provinces, which proved to be a short-sighted solution. In September of the same year, Poland was hit, per the Treaty of Riga's repatriation agreement, with additional migration waves composed of former refugees, prisoners of war, and Poles living in Russia prior to the war. From 1921 to 1924, thousands of people

---

[28] "Sprawozdanie z ruchu reemigracyjnego dzieci od dnia 20/V do 31/X 1918," AAN RGO 52/1400.

[29] After independence, the RGO expanded its activity from Congress Poland to Lesser Poland, Cieszyn Silesia, Upper Silesia, the Free City of Gdańsk, and the eastern kresy. It was subsidized by the Ministry of Social Welfare as well as the Ministry of Public Health. "Notatka," AAN RGO 52/92.

[30] In February 1921 the commission was liquidated, but its duties were transferred to the Committee of Care for Adolescents and Youth (*Komitet Opieki nad Młodzieżą i Dziećmi*). See Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki Społecznej, "Sprawozdanie z działalności Ministerstwa Pracy i Opieki Społecznej w roku 1921," 130.

arrived daily with often little more than the clothes on their backs. Already riddled by hunger and disease, they came home to find their cottages destroyed, livestock gone, and land fallow. Years of exile had decimated and destroyed families. In one six-member family that left in 1915, only two members remained by 1922.[31] The frail father and his infant daughter had nothing to return to except a small piece of scorched earth, which offered little hope for food or shelter. Among the repatriated migrations came some fifteen-thousand natural orphans, and many more children whose parents could no longer support them. Children who did not arrive in Poland as orphans might soon have found themselves ones. Urszula Domżał estimates that by 1924 approximately 285,000 half and full orphans ages zero to sixteen lived in Poland's four easternmost provinces.[32]

Although the exact numbers of Polish children repatriated to Poland remain unclear, the problem of repatriated and *kresy* children posed a major challenge for the new state.[33] The Ministry of Social Welfare wrote in its annual report from 1921 that refugee arrivals left the ministry "enslaved to the task of finding care for these children."[34] Keeping children in the *kresy* seemed to be the surest path to continued suffering. In the early 1920s, a Society of Friends relief worker visited a village where he asked to be taken to the community's poorest family. The village head led him to a grey thatched cottage that stood nestled among the pine trees. Upon his first glance, the relief worker noticed a clay stove "with the inevitable bed on top," a pillar to support the roof, and a broken window with snow steadily oozing through the hole. The only

---

[31] "Refugees in Poland," HIA FWVRC XX333/2.
[32] Kępski, *Dziecko Sieroce*, 16; Urszula A. Domżał, Opieka państwa i organizacja pozarządowych nad dzieckiem w latach 1919-1939 (Łódź: Wydawnictwo WSEZ, 2009), 110.
[33] Kateryna Stadnik, "The Repatriation of Polish Citizens from Soviet Ukraine to Poland in 1921-2," in *Homelands: War, Population and Statehood in Eastern Europe and Russia, 1918-1924,* ed. Nick Baron and Peter Gatrell (London: Anthem Press, 2004), 129.
[34] Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki Społecznej, "Sprawozdanie z działalności Ministerstwa Pracy i Opieki Społecznej w roku 1921," 130.

household goods were a tin plate, a pot, rusty broken hatchet, and an empty glass bottle propped against the wall. "How could anyone live here?" the aid worker wondered. There was no fire and no sign of life, save for a small pile of mushrooms, potatoes, and a handful of tree bark. "Where is the family?" he asked. The village head pointed to the heap of rags upon the cold stove. As he focused in, the Quaker relief worker could see two frightened faces peering out from under the rags. Puzzled, he asked about the rest of the family. "That is the family--just two," answered the village head. "One is twelve, the other is eight." It turned out these children were two of the thousands of refugee children whose parents died on the return trip from Russia. When they first arrived in the village, community members tried to support them. But as times grew worse, neighbors had to shy away and focus on their own families. "At first we looked after them," the village head said with a shrug. "But now we must think of our own children. They will have to look after themselves. We will try to help them if a better time comes."[35] The reaction of this local official was not so much calloused as it was pragmatic. When communities lacked seeds, food, money, and basic physical structures, there was little anyone could do to care for extra children.

Local orphanages rarely could do much to help. In the case of these two children, the nearby orphanage was already full. Such was the situation at many *kresy* institutions. An orphanage in Kovel county, Volhynia was large enough to accommodate only twenty of the area's hundreds of orphans. Meanwhile, it only had blankets for only ten. Even if one was lucky enough to find placement in an orphanage, existence was not necessarily easier. In Wilno, two male school teachers had scooped up children from the trenches and set up an impromptu

[35] "The Lonely Orphans," HIA FWVRC XX333/2.

orphanage in an old Carmelite cloister, rumored to have once been the site of Adam Mickiewicz's imprisonment nearly a century prior. The Polish Grey Samaritan who encountered this operation found the sixty "trench orphans" with blue, swollen, blistered feet. The orphanage had no sheets, comforters, or pillowcases, just hard boards with straw for warmth. It also had no fuel or money. "In the summer," the Grey Samaritan reported, "it would have been a wonderful place, but in the winter and spring, one wonders how they could live." Whenever food grew scarce, the men would threaten to send some of the children back to Russia. To this, the children would promise "to eat only half as much if they will only be allowed to stay." These barebones operations offered the children a bit of shelter and little more. Every day the men had to go into the city to teach and left the orphans to tend to themselves. Children continued to pour into the area and Bolshevik advances that summer were expected to drive in even more. Foreign aid groups made modest attempts to support *kresy* orphanages with food, clothes, money, and medicine, but aside from ARA food aid, most of these were one-time gifts that offered only minor relief. They could neither alleviate problems long-term nor address the larger challenges afflicting the region. The Grey Samaritan who visited the cloister orphanage wanted to give money for better bedding, but also realized the futility of this act. "Even if one had plenty of money," she told her superiors, "it would be practically impossible to get those things unless an American organisation furnished them. . . Besides where would they get the soap to wash the linen, even if they had it?"[36]

Since housing children in eastern provincial orphanages would not solve the repatriation crisis, the state resumed relocating children to other parts of Poland. In December 1921, the

[36] W. R. Nellegar to ARA, September 11, 1921, HIA ARA 23001/706/2; "Snapshots of Polish Misery," HIA ARA 23001/702/2.

newly organized Committee for the Welfare of Adolescents and Children (*Komitet Opieki nad Młodzieżą i Dziećmi*) sent children to dozens of institutions, mainly in central and western Poland, that were either maintained or subsidized by the Ministry of Social Welfare. As with war orphans, the state covered the cost of placement. It subsidized between fifty and ninety percent of the costs for about 6,400 children in a few dozen institutions.[37] In addition, American relief groups contributed food, clothing, linens, and medical supplies to institutions serving evacuated children.

From a top-down perspective, the relocation efforts of *kresy* and repatriated children make these groups appear as a top priority. The state-organized special committees for their relocation and RGO shelters accepted repatriated children into Warsaw's shelters over local children.[38] In 1921, groups in western Poland including Caritas, the Red Cross Society of Greater Poland, and the Pomeranian Society for Child Welfare (*Pomorskie Towarzystwo Opieki nad Dziećmi*) began founding special institutions in and around cities like Bydgoszcz, Toruń, Poznań, and Kalisz to house children relocated from the east. The Ministry of Social Welfare, along with the Ministry of Religion and Public Education and Ministry of Public Works, even sponsored a contest to promote the building of new institutions to serve *kresy* children.[39] On December 5, 1921, an event commemorated the opening of one of these new institutions: the St. Wenceslas orphanage in Lisków, a village a few kilometers outside Kalisz. Local priest and organizer of social welfare activity, Father Wacław Bliziński, founded the orphanage to house 325

---

[37] Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki Społecznej, "Sprawozdanie z działalności Ministerstwa Pracy i Opieki Społecznej w roku 1921," 130.
[38] "Wysłania dzieci na wieś, 1917-1918;" "Rada Główna Opiekuńcza do Rady Opiekuńczej," December 9, 1918, AAN, RGO 52/89.
[39] Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki Społecznej, "Sprawozdanie z działalności Ministerstwa Pracy i Opieki Społecznej w roku 1921," 130.

child-refugees from Russia recently relocated from Białystok during the Bolshevik advance. It was a model institution consisting of several wooden pavilions and equipped with its own hospital and dental office thanks to help from the Polish government and ARC. The day opened with a church service, followed by breakfast at the orphanages and tours of the facilities. The evening culminated with a two-hundred-person banquet attended by such notables as the Chief of ARA activities in Poland, Dr. Philip Baldwin; the Ministers of Health, Social Welfare, and of Food Supply; the Marshal of the Diet; and various other government functionaries. It was a predictable philanthropic display in which sick, traumatized, sometimes limbless children were scrubbed clean and made to perform for visitors and their cameras. It was a moment in which the Polish state could display its efforts to embrace children recently returned from Poland and rescue them from the Bolshevik menace, all priorities aligned with its foreign benefactors' intentions.[40]

Inaugural banquets may have been good for public relations, but the evacuation from the *kresy* did not necessarily assure children's health or safety. The years 1919-1921 were complex and confusing times in many Polish communities. Migrants, missionaries, and the military came and went; there was never enough food, fuel, or money to go around. A load of evacuated orphans would roll up in boxcars only to find themselves in a place with little interest or ability to care for them. They then found themselves stashed in barracks with maybe a few blankets and a bucket. In September 1920, Josephine E. Tarnowska of the Polish Grey Samaritans discovered a bunch of refugee-orphans crammed into barracks in Częstachowa teetering on the edge of survival. They had no bedding, no firewood, and the only food they received came from the

[40] P. S. Baldwin, "Institution at Liskow," December 14, 1921, HIA ARA 23001/706/2.

ARA Children's kitchen 160 gram-a-day ration. Other than that, Tarnowska wrote, "there is no institution that takes much interest in them." In Leczyca, she found another group of refugee-orphans in a similar state. The municipal authorities had housed them in an empty building then basically abandoned them. The children got their daily American rations but had no warm clothes, no shoes. They were all sick with dysentery. The State Office for Returned Prisoners, Refugees, and Workers (*Państwowy Urząd do spraw powrotu jeńców, uchodźców, i robotników*) gave some money for heating, but there was no way to buy oil or firewood.[41] Tarnowska's encounters underscored the vulnerability of relocated children. Many did not know where they came from or had nowhere to go; some knew so little about themselves they could not produce a first or last name. They had been put on trains and sent out into the great unknown, only to arrive at places where people did not want or could not help them. Without proof of local residence or adults to advocate for them, they had no claim to communal support. Furthermore, as Margaret M. Green of the Society of Friends observed, refugees from the east were often tainted by the stigma of "the muddle and disorganization" of eastern or "Russian" Poland.[42] Therefore, they did not always find a warm welcome in the Polish interior. Unfortunately, the action intended to save them left many children further marginalized.

Even an orphanage designated for *kresy* children could be a thing of nightmares. In a memoir composed in her eighties, Halina Nowicka offered a rare glimpse into life at an orphanage for evacuated children. Nowicka herself was not from the *kresy* but rather belonged to a cohort of 887 children known as the "Siberian children" (*dzieci Sybiraczki*) who were evacuated from Russia to Japan in 1920. After some time spent in American orphanages, they

---

[41] Josephine E. Tarkowska to Howard, September 10, 1920, HIA ARA 23001/706/2.
[42] "The Refugee Problem in Poland," HIA FWVRC XX333/2.

eventually ended up in western Poland.[43] By the time Nowicka arrived in Poland, she had endured dislocation, family separation, illness, and a whirlwind trip around the globe. Yet, it was not until her time at the orphanage in Mielżyn, a tiny village in present day Gniezno county, Greater Poland Voivodeship, that she recalled real trauma. "To describe Mielżyn. . ." she wrote in 1994, "is very difficult because even today it awakens horror and fear!"[44] On February 2, 1922, Nowicka and 319 other "Siberian" children found themselves housed in an orphanage for children evacuated from the eastern regions of Podhale and Volhynia. The institution, run by Dominican nuns, consisted of several buildings once occupied by the German cavalry. After the war, they were converted to housing for orphans with a kitchen, bunks, and several makeshift chapels. What were barracks for the army, Nowicka recalled, "were stables for us."[45]

Nowicka describes life at Mielżyn as one of complete torture. The sisters kept them overworked and underfed. Any transgression could result in a beating. Nowicka herself got up at four a.m. every day to peel and cook potatoes before heading off to six a.m. prayers. Other girls spent the early twilight hours tending to chickens and rabbits.[46] Afternoons were designated for barrack cleanup, which included emptying the buckets used as bunk toilets, drying out mattresses soaked in urine, and kneading rolled-up balls of clothes to drive out the lice. Occasionally, Nowicka and other children were sent out to neighboring estates to work as day laborers, picking

---

[43] See George J. Lerski, "Japanese Children," *The Polish Review* 32, no. 3 (1987): 281-285; Wiesław Theiss, *Dzieci syberyjskie: dzieje polskich dzieci repatriowanych z Syberii i Mandżurii w latach 1919-1923* (Warsaw: Uniwersytet Warszawski, 1992).
[44] Halina Nowicka, "Część I: Psków, Omsk, Chabarowsk, Władywostok, Japonia, Ameryka, Polska-Mielżyn," 1999, 30, Ośrodek Karta (OK), Archiwum Wschodnie (AW) II/3194.
[45] Ibid., 26.
[46] There were boys housed at this orphanage too, but Nowicka did not know much about their experience. They were kept in separate barracks on a different daily schedule. Girls and boys rarely crossed paths during the day. Ibid., 32.

beets and threshing grain. The only bright moment of that backbreaking labor was the reward of a piece of bread smeared with lard at the end of the day. Of all her chore assignments, Nowicka hated the night shift in the children's bunk the most. It was tedious and frightening, and one never got much sleep. The kids—ages four-and-a-half to six—got up several times a night to use the bucket; others constantly wet the bed. Someone was always jolting awake from a nightmare screaming. The scariest moments came when random visitors would peek through the window at night, startling whoever was on duty half to death. At breakfast, one could expect a "soup" made out of "boiled water with a little flour, and five walnut-sized potatoes." Inevitably, three of the five would be rotten and inedible. At lunchtime, it was soup with bits of turnips and potatoes. For dinner: a third round of weak soup with meager potatoes. If time were good, Sunday breakfast might include a piece of bread with the soup. Nowicka remembers on Christmas Eve 1922 how they all stared wide-eyed when they appeared on the table a bowl of peas free from worms and a matchbox-sized piece of bacon.[47]

The nuns showed no concern for the children's physical or mental health. Sister Urszula, a young nun likey sick with tuberculosis, ran the infirmary, which consisted of two beds and "a pitiful pharmacy." Sister Urszula, who lacked much training or supplies, offered a predictable first aid regimen. For an injured finger, she provided iodine, bandages, and elevation; for an injured leg: iodine, bandages, and elevation. A child sick of holding their leg in the air might try to run away, but they risked ending up on the business end of Sister Dominika's whip. Nowicka described the barracks as stifling nests of sick and traumatized children. At least three girls in her bunk showed signs of "nervous disorders," no doubt a consequence of growing up in a war

[47] Ibid., 26-28.

zone. One girl woke up each night yelling about drowning. Another girl had been recently gang-raped and lay around all day unable to walk and riddled with stomach ulcers. Sister Urszula did not call a doctor. Instead, she dragged the girl's mattress, soaked with urine and pus, out in front of the barrack and lit it on fire. For Nowicka, it was a powerful symbol of the nuns' inability to meet the children's needs. "The only virtues discussed and prayed for were humility and cleanliness," she wrote. "Sex has, of course, been for centuries the Achilles heel of the Catholic Church."[48] The girls soon learned to only count on each other. One night, after everyone was asleep, a shriek ripped through the dark as one girl reached under her bed to touch a "horrible hairy face." It is unclear from Nowicka's account whether there was actually something or someone under the bed, but she does describe how the scream set off a cascade of emotion as girls crashed through the exit like an ocean wave. No one was injured nor did any adults come to check on them. Unsurprisingly, Nowicka showed no deep affection for the sisters, or as she called them, "unfortunate women so confused by their 'unearthly' love for Christ that they did not see the hungry, lice-ridden, beaten, humiliated hoards of homeless children right before them."[49] The children's lives may have been saved through state-sponsored relocation, but once the children were placed in the hands of privately run orphanages, they were at mercy of their keepers to be used and abused however they saw fit.[50]

The crisis in the *kresy* and subsequent rescue of its children forced the government to momentarily expand the categories of children worthy of care. Before the state's founding, the RGO, acting as the moral and material authority for welfare provision in German-occupied

---

[48] Ibid., 26.
[49] Ibid., 28.
[50] From 1914-1923 the state did not regulate orphanages or other child-care organizations for children of any nationality, Martin, "How to House a Child," 28.

Poland, excluded Jewish children from most of its welfare work. Furthermore, the geography and demographics of the General Government meant that the RGO was not responsible for the areas populated by majority Jews and non-Polish Christians that became the eastern border districts until after Polish independence. By 1918-1919, new domestic and foreign groups became involved in welfare provision. They started battling for the legal and symbolic control of the Vilnius, Volhynia, and Podhale provinces along with their ethnically diverse populations. After the war, the Ministry of Social Welfare's special child relocation committee transported both Christian and Jewish children. In July 1919, it evacuated about one-thousand children, six-hundred of them Christian (likely a mixture of Catholic and non-Catholic), four hundred Jewish from one Vilnius orphanage.[51] In December 1921, the ministry funded the placement of 6,400 children in a few dozen institutions, including ones for Ukrainian and Jewish children.[52]

From one perspective, the rellocation effort indicated a broadening from faith-based communal charity to a more public welfare system that embraced all members within the state's borders. From another perspective, the relocation of non-Catholic, non-Polish speaking children to religious institutions in western Poland—the birthplace of Polish Catholicism—opened up the door for possible forced conversions and Polonization. At the Mielżyn orphanage, the sisters took particular offense to Eastern Orthodox children participating in Catholic rights. During her stay at a Catholic American orphanage outside Pittsburgh, Nowicka recalled how no one seemed to care much about her religious background. The women there prepared the children for first

---

[51] K. Jocz. to president of the city of Wilno, July 8, 1919, AAN RGO 52/1400.
[52] These institutions included orphanages run by the Russian Red Cross in Sulejówek, a town easy of Warsaw, and the Ukrainian Society for the Protection of Children and Youth in Lwów; as well as orphanages and shelters for Jewish children in Warsaw and Wiszniew, a town between Wilno and Mińsk. Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki Społecznej, "Sprawozdanie z działalności Ministerstwa Pracy i Opieki Społecznej w roku 1921," 130.

communion, confession, and confirmation, which Nowicka fondly remembers for their grand American pomp. That was not good enough for the sisters of Mielżyn. They considered the administration of Catholic sacraments to Orthodox children to be a desecration of the Catholic Church. Thus, they baptized all of the non-Catholic children Catholic and performed funeral rites for their mortal sins. Nowicka, known then as Tamara Kryłów, was informed that she must also take a new name. The nuns first tried to name her Teodora, to which she stood up and yelled that she refused to be a "Dorcia."[53] The orphanage already had a Dorcia, whom Nowicka described as a "halfwit girl from the *kresy*." To this, Sister Anuncjata suggested she go by Halina, a name that she carried for the rest of her life.[54] Forced conversion or Polonization in child-care institutions was not the official state policy. Rather, it was the unintended, but perhaps a desirable result of reliance on primarily Catholic institutions in western Poland to care for a majority of non-Catholic children from the eastern borderland.

It was precisely the fear of forced conversion that kept orphan care for Jewish children in post-war Poland developing along a separate track. As Sean Martin writes, "The issue of orphaned children was especially sensitive, as Jewish leaders feared that abandoned Jewish children would be baptized in non-Jewish institutions and thus removed from the official Jewish community."[55] Given Halina Nowicka's experience, those fears were not unfounded. As a result, Jewish leaders developed and supported their own systems of orphan care to keep Jewish children out of non-Jewish institutions. After the war, Jewish orphans of eastern Galicia became the primary responsibility of the Joint Distribution Committee, other aid groups, and local

[53] Dorcia is the diminutive form of the name Teodora.
[54] Nowicka, "Część I," 30, OK AW II/3194.
[55] Martin, "Future Generations," 294.

communities. This was likely by mutual agreement with the state, as Jewish organizations rarely desired more than monetary support and the state was already overwhelmed organizing care for non-Jewish children. In 1920, the Joint brought in Dr. Simon Peiser, the JDC's European Director of Child Care to initiate its child care activities in Poland. Peiser developed a plan that included providing monetary subsidies for each registered child to sustain their placement in either an institution or a private home.[56] That same year, the Joint began supporting twenty-thousand Jewish war orphans in Galicia and setting up administrative offices in Lwów, Cracow, and several other Galician cities.[57]

The third major category of the postwar orphan crisis was the social orphan, a child orphaned not necessarily by parental death but by parental neglect and socio-economic circumstances. Social orphan was a catchall term to cover the subcategories of neglected children that included foundlings (*podrzutki*), abandoned children (*dzieci opuszczone* or *dzieci porzucone*), homeless children (*dzieci bezdomne*), and the so-called "street child" (*dziecko ulicy)* or "child-vagrant" (*dziecko-włóczęga*). Although it is impossible how many children fell into these categories, social activists noticed that rates of child abandonment, homelessness, and illegitimate birth all increased after the war.[58] The rhetoric and treatment that met this increase were proof that not all orphans were created equal. While natural orphans evoked a sense of sympathy and social responsibility, social orphans were not afforded the same treatment. "No one awakens mercy in the hearts of the masses like an orphan," wrote Regina Rudzińska, a social

[56] Bogen, *Report of the Joint Distribution Committee Activities in Poland, February 1920-June 1920*, 28.
[57] Martin, "Future Generations," 257-8.
[58] Ryngmanowa, "O los dziecka bezdomnego," 40-47; Kępski, *Dziecko Sieroce*, 20-22.

worker and advocate for abandoned children.[59] "Society's relationship to abandoned children, to so-called foundlings, was always different. The bad deed of the parents falls on the children. They are the 'other' children. Seldom will anyone take care of an abandoned child for very long."[60] Without adult advocates, social orphans had less access to institutional care and often carried the stigma of illegitimate birth for their entire lives. On account of overcrowding, understaffing, epidemic illness, and poor feeding prevalent in foundling homes, abandoned infants also had the highest mortality rate of any child population. In 1919, 846 of the 1,072 infants died at the Father Boduena Home (*Dom ks. Boduena*) in Warsaw, one of Europe's largest foundling homes.[61]

The situation for older children was not much better. Whether categorized as "street child," "homeless child," or "child-vagrant," these individuals lived on the margins of society. They were either unable or unwilling to return to their families. They slept under archways and alcoves, bridges, barracks, barns, and bathhouses. They got by on the sale of newspapers, flowers, and matches. They begged, stole, and hung out in train stations waiting to take men to the homes of prostitutes. Some even turned to prostitution themselves. Janina Ryngmanowa reported that homeless girls as young as twelve could be found turning tricks for ten groszy or a

---

[59] Rudzińska studied medicine in Switzerland and Germany, but could complete her studies on account of financial problems. In Poland, she taught in secondary schools, worked in summer camps, trained teachers, and completed studies at College of Social and Educational Work of Free Polish University, where she started collaborating with other students to design a modern project of comprehensive care for families. She wrote and taught widely and believed deeping in the abilities of children. Eventually, she ran the foster care for the Municipal Government of Warsaw. Małek and Szczepaniak-Wiecha, "Female Organisers of Social Care in Poland," 31-32.
[60] Regina Rudzińska, ". . . sierota i dziecko opuszczone winno być wzięte w opiekę i wspomagane. . ." *Opiekun Społeczny*, 3, no. 9 (September, 1938): 34.
[61] Miejska Służba Opiekuńcza m. st. Warszawy, "W trosce o los dzieci opuszczonych" *Opiekun Społeczny* 4, no. 8-9 (August-September 1939): 2.

piece of bread.[62] Unlike war orphans, the *sybiraczki*, or children of the *kresy*, social orphans were not seen as the offspring of Poland's heroes or the Bolshevik's victims. They were, at best, seen as the children of prostitutes, vagrants, drunks, and bums, and at worst, "the children of no one" (*dzieci niczyje*), stripped of any ties to time or place.[63]

On February 19, 1920, the Ministry of Social Welfare directed its attention to homeless and abandoned children by passing an order that would establish in major cities Emergency Care Centers (*Pogotowie Opiekuńcze*), an institutional form first pioneered in Vienna by Dr. Julius Tandler. The purpose of the Emergency Care Center was to receive, examine, and observe abandoned and neglected children brought in by police or parents. Center staff would take care of the children for a few weeks before placing them in more permanent institutional settings.[64] Ten days after the Sejm passed the order approving the construction of Emergency Care Centers, it designated five million marks to the project. The intention was to create forty stations to serve fifty cities, but the enactment fell pitifully short. Two years later, only three Emergency Care Centers had been built—one in Warsaw (capacity 250), one in Łódź (capacity fifty), and one in Lwów (capacity fifty). In 1934, only those three remained, but capacity was now limited to one-hundred total spots. In 1936, a fourth rescue station finally opened, increasing the total capacity nationwide to a modest two-hundred persons.[65] State-sponsored Emergency Care Centers were just one of many proposed solutions for child abandonment that never got off the ground. The pages of interwar childcare journals were filled with ideas for shelter networks,

---

[62] Ryngmanowa, "O los dziecka bezdomnego," 45.
[63] Ibid., 40-47.
[64] Komitet Polski Międzynarodowego Kongresu Opieki nad Dzieckiem, *Opieka nad Macierzyństwem, Dziećmi i Młodzieżą w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 10.
[65] Kępski, *Dziecko Sieroce*, 166.

homes, and vocational and moral education programs that could rescue children from the streets and hands of hideous parents and rehabilitate them for life and work. Like other state welfare initiatives that never developed to its intended potential, such as the school hygiene program, the issue of child homelessness and abandonment remained perennial topics of discussion until the end of the Second Republic.

Institutional Care

For the first half of the interwar period, placement in institutions—known as "total care" (*opieka całkowita*) or "closed care" (*opieka zamknięta)*—was the standard and preferred method for housing children who had nowhere else to live.[66] Institutions existed that embraced children anywhere from birth to their late teens. Generally speaking, the terminology differed depending on the age groups served. Children ages zero to three were placed in either a nursery (*żłobek*) or a foundling home (*przytułek*).[67] Children from about age three to fourteen went to institutions of varying terminology including orphanage (*sierociniec*), shelter (*schroniska*), and children's home (*dom dziecka*) and *ochronka,* a diminutive form of *ochrona,* which translates into English as "protection."[68] Children in early to mid-adolescence—the so-called "out of school" (*pozaszkolne*) years—could find residency in either a dormitory or boarding house (*internat* or *bursa*), which in addition to room and board, might include supervision, vocational counseling, and work placement. Each institution set its own age range, which resulted in a lot of variety. In 1928, Catholic orphanages of Berteszów and Brzozów in the Lwów Voivodeship served children

---

[66] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960," 71.
[67] Another translation of *żłobek* is crèche.
[68] *Ochronka* can also refer to a day-care or preschool, where children only stay for part of the day and then go home in the evenings.

ages seven to fifteen and six to fifteen respectively, while the Jewish and Ukrainian orphanages in nearby Drohobycz served ages five to fifteen. In the neighboring Stanisławow Voivodeship, various Jewish, Ukrainian, Polish, and Catholic institutions accepted children ranging infancy to sixteen, one to fourteen, three to fourteen, eight to fifteen, and eleven to eighteen.[69] The cut-off age for most children's homes, shelters, and orphanages was somewhere in early to mid-adolescence, but in practice staff often overlooked age limits for children who had nowhere else to go.

In the nineteenth century, residential child care was run by communal governments, social organizations, and religious orders, while the partitioning governments provided minimal support.[70] Although the Polish state assumed a much larger role after the war through regulation and monetary subvention, the actual residential care provision remained a mixed economy of governmental, religious, and social organizations. In 1934, social organizations ran 46.8 percent of all total-care institutions; followed by municipal, county, communal or provincial governments at 21.2 percent; religious orders at 14.4 percent; religious associations at 4.4 percent; and private initiatives at 1.3 percent.[71] Care provision tended to divide along ethnic, national, or religious lines, which meant that the variety of institutional providers in a given community tended to reflect its ethnic makeup. In eastern Galicia's Stanislawów county, residential care for children was provided by Evangelical (Lutheran) Charitable Institutions for foundlings, orphans, and the physically and mentally disabled; the Zofja Fryderski Polish

---

[69] Komitet Polski Międzynarodowego Kongresu Opieki nad Dzieckiem, *Opieka nad macierzyństwem, dziećmi i młodzieżą, w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 291-292, 315-326.
[70] Balcerek, *Rozwój opieki nad dzieckiem*, 51-52.
[71] Data was missing for 2.8 percent of institutions. See Eugeniusza Rudzińska, "Zakłady opieki całkowitej (zamkniętej) dla dzieci i młodzieży w 1933/1934 roku," *Praca i Opieka Społeczna* 15, no. 4 (1935): 575.

Ochronka (*Ochronka Polska dla dziewcząt sierot im Zofji Ryderyki*) for orphaned girls; the Polish-American Foundation's Orphan's Home (*Dom Sierot, funacja Polkso-Amerykańska*); the Jewish Orphan Asylum (*Zakład Sierocy Żydowski*), the Jewish Home for War Orphans (*Żydowski Dom Sierot Wojennych*), and *ochronki* (plural of *ochronka*) named for local figures in the Armenian-Catholic diocese.[72] In nearby Doliński County, the three institutions offering total care operated under respective Jewish, Polish, and Ruthenian leadership.[73] As Kępski writes, "Because the division of religion was very often connected to the division of nationalities, very few institutions admitted children of all faiths." The only institutions that offered non-denominational orphan care were a small number of homes linked to the Polish Socialist Party.[74]

<u>*Methods of Arrival*</u>

Children arrived at institutions through a series of adult interventions. In an attempt to crack down on vagrancy, loitering, and petty thievery, municipal police would apprehend "street children" and bring them either to Emergency Care Centers or local welfare offices. Here staff examined children for physical, psychological, and moral characteristics and then sent them to appropriate institutions. Healthy children were placed in boarding homes, orphanages, or

---

[72] Komitet Polski Międzynarodowego Kongresu Opieki nad Dzieckiem, *Opieka nad macierzyństwem dziećmi i młodzieżą w rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 320-324.
[73] Those three institutions were the Polish *ochronki* run by the The Tadeusz Kościuszki Polish *Ochronka* (*Ochronka Polska im. Tadeusza Kościuszki*), founded in 1916; the Ruthenian *ochronka* run by the The Ruthenian Society for the Protection of Children and Youth (*Ruska ochronka Ruskiego Towarzystwa Ochrony dzieci i młodzieży*), founded in 1917; and the Jewish Orphans' Home in Dolin (Dom Sierot Żydowskich w Dolinie) founded in 1919. Ibid., 315.
[74] Kępski, *Dziecko Sieroce*, 130.

workhouses.[75] In other cases, placement was achieved through the intercession of family friends, relatives, and community members. Archival files from the RGO and provincial welfare offices are filled with individual requests for child placement. Sometimes people wrote on behalf of orphans they took on themselves; other times, the requests come from priests or local welfare workers familiar with a specific situation. Either way, adult advocacy played a crucial role in securing children free or paid placement in a care institution.[76] In an anonymous autobiography published in *Little Review* in 1926, an orphaned girl tells how she bounced from relative to relative before finally connecting with an adult brother she never knew she had. Despite his poor financial situation, he paid for her placement at an *ochronka* in Żyrardów, a town forty-five kilometers west of Warsaw. After years of burdening reluctant relatives, she wrote "at last my wandering was over."[77]

The majority of children found placement through the conscious action of their parents. A little over half the children residing in Polish orphanages still had one or two living parents.[78] In the face of poverty, illness, unemployment, or the loss of a breadwinning partner, parents—most often mothers—looked to institutional care to save their children and sustain their families. While still waiting on her husband's return from Russian exile, Zofjia Nikta of Poznań asked the RGO in 1920 to please place her two boys, ages nine and ten, in some sort of *ochronka*, lest they

[75] Rudzińska, ". . .sierota i dziecko opuszczone winno być wzięte w opiekę i wspomagane. . ." 37-38

[76] AAN RGO 52/857.

[77] "Pamiętnik sieroty" *Mały Przegląd*, October 9, 1926.

[78] In 1938, fifty-five percent of the 35,965 children living in institutions still had one or two living parents. This count did not include the 5,976 children classified as "born out of wedlock," (*nieślubny*) whose parents also might also have been alive, or the 6,010 children for whom there was no data on family situations. See Rudzińska, ". . .sierota i dziecko opuszczone winno być wzięte w opiekę i wspomagane. . ." 30.

"completely waste away." "I would prefer to educate them myself," she reasoned, "but my material state does not allow it." Stanisława Flejszer, a sick widow unable to work, also found herself "in very difficult material conditions simply without a means to live." Since her husband's death on November 18, 1919, her four children had stopped attending school and had no clothes or shoes. "They are," she emphasized with the well-worn phrase, "completely wasting away." Flejszer worried that even her own chance of survival was threatened if the RGO did not grant her children full-time care and schooling. She explained, "Neglect of lessons might derail them and deprive me of help for the future, which I will need."[79]

Mothers built their cases through a variety of rhetorical strategies. They mentioned their marital and health status—which was often "widowed" and "sick"—their former or current employment status, their collection of social welfare payments (*zapomogi*), and sometimes their religion, Polish citizenship, or family background. They did this in hopes of establishing their social value and need. Reading these requests, one hears the mothers make difficult calculations about which children to surrender. L. Dalksa asked the RGO to please take her younger son, since her nineteen-year-old daughter already worked. Józefa Chmielewska, another sick widow of four, asked the RGO to take her oldest and youngest girls, ages fourteen and twelve, while she offered to keep the twelve-year-old daughter and mentally handicapped son. For Chmielewska, the decision was one not of favoritism but opportunity. The oldest girl had always cared for her and her husband and thus never got to go to school. By liberating her from household chores, Chmielewska hoped it would grant her daughter some opportunity to learn.[80]

---

[79] AAN RGO 52/853.
[80] Ibid.

Even women who worked for child welfare organizations had a hard time keeping their families together. In 1917, Kazimiera Pytaszowa lost her husband to tuberculosis, which he contracted while fighting with the Polish Legionnaires. During his illness, she sold nearly everything they owned. After he passed, Pytaszowa was forced to leave her apartment and "crawl off to paid work." As a result, she had to send her son, Gerard, to an orphanage for Legionnaire children in Lwów while she and her two-year-old daughter, Otylja, moved into her place of employment, a treatment facility in Cracow's Prądnik Biały district. Their stability was short-lived. The treatment facility eventually closed and she landed back on the streets. Pytaszowa found work at the Society for the Protection of Children and Youth's (TOM) Miechowska street milk station, but because it only offered "open care," she still had no place to live. This forced her to surrender her second child to a girls' orphanage on Lenartowicza street.[81] Pytaszowa's story, which appears in a letter written by a TOM employee asking the Cracow Magistrate's office to find her housing, complicates the expert-driven narratives about orphanhood and child abandonment. Pytaszowa was not some lazy or indifferent woman eager to unload her children on social organizations. She was instead a hard-working mother employed by a child protection agency yet forced to rely on social welfare institutions to help raise her two children.

In the face of desperate circumstances, Polish women demanded help from their state and society. Historians of the First World War have linked abysmal food shortages in the capital cities of Warsaw, Berlin, and Vienna with the political mobilization of poor women and children and

[81] TOM to Magistrat krol. stol. Miasta Krakowa, (n.d.), ANKr TOM 29/1786/8.

the eventual downfall of the German and Habsburg states.[82] Maureen Healey writes how in Vienna wartime food scarcity allowed assumed non-political actors to "enter into a new exchange with the state" and provided a useful lens for "understanding the relationship of state and an emerging citizenry. . . ."[83] As social strife continued in Poland after the war, women gained a new language about rights to social assistance and tested the state's purported embrace of children through individual acts of child surrender. Halina Sławińska, a social worker for the Vilnius Voivodeship, observed how "mothers who before the war considered it a disgrace to turn their children over to a foundling home currently demanded admission of their children to institutions." They supposedly "terrorized" orphanage directors by threatening to starve, drown or throw themselves under a train if their children were not admitted.[84] Sławisnka also noticed an uptick in parents who let children off at local government offices claiming that "they [the government] must take care of them."[85] It was an unexpected inversion of the social contract brought on by years of social strife. Women who had suffered dislocation, declining wages, and the loss of health, homes, and husbands in course of Poland's rebirth now came calling on the state and society to please heed their misery and help raise their children. What was once a shameful handout was now a hard-earned right of citizenship.

Children also assumed the civic task of self-advocacy. In 1920, thirteen-year-old Halina Arieszewska wrote to the RGO on her own behalf to request payment for her stay in an orphanage. As the daughter of a deceased mother and consumptive father, the home was her only

---

[82] Blobaum, *A Minor Apocalypse*; Belinda Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*.
[83] Healey, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, 33-4.
[84] Sławińska, "Opieka nad dziećmi w rodzinach zastępczych," 193.
[85] Ibid.

source of care. But her institution, run by Sister of the Resurrection, was in serious financial trouble. She could no longer stay there for free, and without securing the RGO's support, she would be cast into the streets. That same year, Arieszewska's classmate and rising seventh-grader, Stanisława Chojnacka, wrote RGO in the weeks following her mother's death to request placement in a dormitory (*bursa*). She underscored her status as a full-orphan and stressed her desire to keep attending school. To further emphasize their value, both girls enclosed with their letters report cards from the Queen Jadwiga Gymnasium in Warsaw. Arieszewska and Chojnacka, and many others like them, leveraged their positions as strong students and aspiring professionals to send the message that they were good citizens worthy of investment.[86]

In the case of "Forget-me-not," the pen name of a YIVO autobiographer, taking advantage of local orphan care meant finding the path to survival and self-preservation.[87] "Forget-me-not" was one of those not-so-rare "orphans" who, despite having a home and living parent, still suffered such abuse, neglect, and isolation that made her wish she had neither. In a house of seven children, she fell right in the middle. The siblings all quarreled, as did the adults. "For as long as I can remember," she wrote, "our home was always noisy. My father and mother fought constantly." She described her father as "a harsh man" who "never developed any fatherly feelings." When "Forget me not" was in sixth grade and right "on the brink of [her] future" her thirty-seven-year-old mother died from a heart attack. Calling her home now a "ship without a

---

[86] AAN RGO 52/853.

[87] In 1932, 1934, and 1939, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research welcomed Jewish youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty two to submit their life histories to a competition to help research become better acquainted with the lives of Jewish youth. See Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Marcus Moseley, and Michael Stanislawski, "Introduction," in *Awakening Lives: Autobiographies of Jewish Youth in Poland before the Holocaust*, ed. Jeffrey Shandler, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), xi.

rudder," she took on the unwelcome tasks of cooking, cleaning, and caring for her three younger sisters. As the woman of the house, she began a new target for her father's criticism. Finding herself faltering under the triple burden of school, housework, and childcare, "Forget-me-not" made the painful decision to apply to the local orphan's auxiliary on her two youngest sisters' behalf. She described feeling "like a mother who had been forced to give up her own children," but ultimately knew it was the right decision for them and for her. Nearly two years later, an opportunity opened up for her too. The same orphan's auxiliary opened a "day orphanage" for half-orphans who still lived at home. It ran from two in the afternoon until nine in the evening, and offered two meals, education, activities, and social space. "Forget-me-not" hastily applied, and she and her sister gained admission. Time spent at the orphanage brought both stimulation and great satisfaction. Here she was able to make friends, joined the student council, and began vocational training for dressmaking. Connecting with staff provided not only with supervision, but also with true mentorship, care, and guidance. Home may have been hell, but the orphanage allowed her to "become a free person."[88]

Critiques of Institutional Care

Despite residential care's privileged position, critiques of closed-care institutions emerged simultaneously with the nation's founding. Weeks after the formal declaration of Polish independence, journalists began questioning the integrity and safety of RGO children's shelters. In December 1918, Stefania Sempołowska, a Polish educator, writer, socialist, and renowned children's rights activist, was among the first to skewer the care council in the pages of *The Polish Newspaper* (*Gazeta Polska*). In later writing, Sempołowska recalled the RGO's

[88] "Forget-me-not," in *Awakening Lives*, 123-130.

Grzybowska street shelter with the statement, "The noise, screaming, crying, [and] dirt cannot be described." Other investigative reporters sided with Sempołowska, claiming that RGO shelters were little more than dirty barracks without beds, doors, or windows. They described facilities that functioned less like shelters and more like prisons, places where staff beat, harassed, and threatened the very children they were employed to protect. One teacher struck a boy's face so hard he drew blood; that same teacher hurled another girl's head into a wall. When a third boy with the last name Zygmuntowski dared to criticize this "educational system," he received a public beating. The whole class watched as Mr. Klienewski, a shelter assistant, held Zygmuntowiski's head between his knees and beat him until he spit blood. Klienewski would grab the older girls and say, "You are my girlfriend, I will kiss you!"[89] When fighting back did not work, children exercised the only other agency they had: they ran away. But those that were unsuccessful faced additional punishment and threats of transfer to correctional facilities.

Some staff in RGO shelters seemed to almost revel in their authority as ultimate arbiters of children's fate. They forbade parents from visiting, meeting the staff, or, as one reporter put it, "even look at the bed where their child slept."[90] They so traumatized one girl by forcefully separating her from her brother that she later tried to commit suicide. They would even threaten to send children back to their poor families. When one girl begged not to return to her sick father, the house-mother responded, "Go back to your home, I don't want you here. You can't learn here. If you do not want to go to your father I will send you to a correctional facility (*dom poprawy*)."[91] If their cruelty were not enough, RGO leadership may have also been cooking the

---

[89] "Jak dręczone są dzieci w schroniskach R.G.O.," *Przegląd Wieczorny*, June 6, 1919, AAN RGO 52/900.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Świadek, "Schronisko R.G.O.," *Robotnik*, AAN RGO 52/900.

books in order to pocket additional government subsidies. Bronisław Chybowski, another reporter for *The Polish Newspaper*, alleged that while budgets claimed five-hundred, six-hundred, and one-thousand children, the shelter ledgers showed no such attendance. He raged, “Doesn’t the RGO know that these thousands of young Poles cannot be a source of income for people with no experience in upbringing or teaching.”[92]

Concerns about other orphanages echoed across Poland as American aid workers identified many sanitary breaches through their facility tours. In January 1920, Polish Grey Samaritan Christine Zduleczna reported from Kovel that so many of the “orphanages” were nothing more than small cottages with a few rooms. “Can you imagine seventeen beds for fifty children?” she wrote. “Our theory of sanitation won’t work very well.”[93] In Kielce, aid workers encountered a group of nuns running an orphanage with sixty girls but only seven beds. Some girls had to sleep on the floor while the others sandwiched into the beds three or four at a time. From his survey of orphanages in eastern Galicia, the JDC’s Simon Peiser concluded that except for a few well-run facilities, most were “so abominably bad that they ought to be closed entirely.”[94] They lacked food, funds, beds, and linens and provided their children only primitive bathing facilities and irregular medical care. Peiser argued that without immediate attention, the children of these institutions would surely be “condemned to lasting invalidism or early death.”[95]

While overcrowding and lack of funding were both to blame, the phenomenon that most troubled critics was the abundance of untrained staff. During the partitions, universities, social

---

[92] Bronisław Chybowski, “Martyrologia dzieci polskich w schroniskach R.G.O.,” *Gazeta Polska*, June 22, 1919, AAN RGO 52/900.
[93] Zduleczna, “Interesting stories of Poland,” PGS 57026/1.
[94] Simon Peiser, “Appendix No. 17: Children in Galicia,” in *Report of Joint Distribution Committee Activities in Poland*, 97.
[95] Ibid.

organizations, and the Catholic Church offered limited courses to train social work volunteers whose work with children in preschools or *ochronki* was seen as furthering the cause of Polish nationhood.[96] In 1921, the Ministry of Social Welfare surveyed a select number of orphanages to find that their directors and care staff generally lacked proper professional training. Of the 186 people who responded, 35.5 percent had finished between the fourth and sixth grade, 6.54 percent had higher or specialized education, and the remaining thirty-seven percent came from either homeschooling, on-the-job experience, or communal classes for preschool teachers. The survey also revealed that most *wychowawcy,* the Polish term used to refer to people who worked with children in education or care facilities, were also overworked and underpaid.[97] In 1920, Paul Ward of the Society of Friends saw the effect of lack of professional training when he visited an orphanage where women kept children locked inside all day behind shuttered windows. They did not play, sing, or read with them. Ward found all the children were badly malnourished. He even saw children as old as ten who still could not walk. Ward realized the limits foreign aid would have without a deeper educational reform. "The [Quaker] Mission can provide food," he said, "but the ignorant women in charge make progress impossible."[98]

The trifecta of overcrowding, poor material conditions, and untrained staff created environments ripe for disease. In June 1919, a journalist for *The Evening Review* (*Przegląd Wieczorny)* wrote that at the RGO Czerniakowska street shelter in Warsaw about two-hundred out of four-hundred kids made daily trips to the clinic. Chybowski reported that same month for

---

[96] Waaldijk, "Politics of Social Work: Resistance and Accommodation," in *Guardians of the Poor-Custodians of the Public*, 78.
[97] Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki Społecznej, "Sprawozdanie z działalności Ministerstwa Pracy i Opieki Społecznej w roku 1921," 131.
[98] Paul Ward, "Publicity Poland," FWVRC XX333/2.

The Polish Newspaper that he found about half the shelter's children sick with mumps and scabies. Two had already gone blind from untreated trachoma, and on June 6th, 1919 a boy named Tadeusz Chadurski died and his body went two days without burial.[99] A fifty-percent morbidity rate was not limited to RGO shelters. In May 1919, Naval officer and ARA official Lieutenant T. Harwood Stacy visited an orphanage in Chełm where he found forty-eight of the one-hundred children ill. Only the "most dire" had been isolated, while the other forty with trachoma and fifteen with scrofula—extrapulmonary tuberculosis—were allowed to run free and "mingle with the others."[100] At the Mielżyn orphanage, Nowicka witnessed first hand the effects that poor sanitary practices had on her peers. She recalls several of the nuns being sick with what she suspected was tuberculosis. During her stay, one nun actually died from her "lung sickness" and another one ran the infirmary. During that year, several of her peers began showing signs of tuberculosis. In 1923, when Dr. Józef Jakóbkiewicz came to claim them for a Siberian Children's Home in Wejherowo, he sent children from at least three families to a sanitarium in Zakopane. They only lived a little while longer. After surviving their harrowing trip around the world, these five siblings from one family died from tuberculosis either contracted or exacerbated during their stay with the Dominican sisters.[101]

Attempts to Address Concerns

[99] AAN RGO 52/900.
[100] Grove, *War's Aftermath*, 146.
[101] Nowicka, "Część I," 32, OK AW II/3194.

Before the war, there were no programs to formally educate people who worked in residential care facilities.[102] Instead, this kind of care work was carried out by women from seventy-two different religious orders and laypersons who tended to have even less experience than the nuns.[103] That changed after independence. Inspired in part by the public outrage at the RGO's botched shelter program, the state and social organizations began turning their focus to education programs for child care workers. These actions triggered educational initiatives for care workers initiatives that in Kępski's words, made "the interwar period, in regard to child welfare, the period of transition between traditional and modern."[104] In July 1919, the Lwów Society for Child Welfare (*Lwowskie Towarzystwo Opieki nad Dziećmi*) ran the first course for child welfare workers in Poland. A few months later, the Ministry of Social Welfare opened a six-week course, followed by a year-long course that ran in the 1919-1920 school year. After that, the ministry began running and subsidizing regular one-time three-month courses around the country.[105] Since so many women from religious orders staffed care facilities, the ministry partnered with the Catholic Church, Catholic Charities, and Catholic schools of social work to assure that their staff

[102] Polish social work training started in Catholic "social courses" in Warsaw in 1907. Two years later, the People's University of Adam Mickiewicz in Cracow founded its College of Education to serve as a hub for people engaged in voluntary work. Then, in 1912, Józef Rostafisnki founded the Department of Voluntary Work by Higher Courses for Women of Baraniecki at a Cracowian institution created in the late-nineteenth century as a higher-education alternative for women. The program offered two tracks: the "social," which focused on everyday life, economy, forms of government, accounting, administration, and library sciences; and the "educational," which focused on chemistry, biology, anatomy, hygiene, infant and child care, psychology, and pedagogics. The department was most active from 1912-1914 and closed in 1919-1920. See Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960," 48-49.
[103] Kępski, *Dziecko Sieroce*, 53; Schulte, "The History of Social Work in Eight Eastern European Countries from 1900-1960," 115.
[104] Kępski, *Dziecko Sieroce*, 53.
[105] Ibid., 62-64; Ministerstwo Pracy i Opieki Społecznej, "Sprawozdanie z działalności Ministerstwa Pracy i Opieki Społecznej w roku 1921," 131.

could acquire certification. The ministry also partnered with secular organizations to make courses available for laypersons.

As valuable as these early programs were, Irena Lepalczyk and Ewa Marynowicz-Hetka write that the "first forms of educational institutionalization and professionalization [for social work] in Poland are inextricably linked with the person of Helena Radlinska."[106] In 1879, she was born to two accomplished, assimilated Jewish parents. Her father was editor of an art journal and founder of the Warsaw Philharmonic. Her mother, an editor and translator, was active in the women's movement. After studying the Polish language and history, Radlińska started secretly teaching those subjects in 1902 to people who had left the Russian school system. She and her husband, a physician, were active in underground educational and medical organizations, which eventually landed them in western Siberia. After they escaped to Cracow, Radlińska furthered her education in medieval history at Jagiellonian University and began teaching at Adam Mickiewicz People's University. Here, she edited the first Polish textbook on the theory of education. During the First World War, Radlińska continued to edit, write, and teach. After the war, she worked for the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment planning a mass educational campaign. In 1922, Radlińska began lecturing at the Free Polish University (*Wolna Wszecnica Polska*). Three years later, she founded the Free Polish University's School of Social-Educational Work (*Studium Pracy Społeczno-Oświatowej*), which she chaired until 1944.[107]

At this first Polish school of professional social work, students could specialize in adult

---

[106] Irena Lepalczyk and Ewa Marynowicz-Hetka, "Helena Radlinska: A Portrait of the Person, Researcher, Teacher, and Social Activist" in *History of Social Work in Europe*, 75.
[107] Helena Radlińska, "Self Biography," *Pedagogika Społeczna* 17, no. 2 (2018): 61-63.

education, library sciences, cultural life and social welfare, or work with youth and children. The program included one year of coursework and a second-year internship at a local facility. The program concluded with an exam and a thesis defense. In the 1930s, students could earn a certificate after two years of study or a diploma after four-years.[108] Radlińska believed social work studies should be interdisciplinary and offer a solid foundation in the liberal arts and sciences. Therefore, her students studied sociology, psychology, pedagogy, social policy, law, administration, social economy, history of cultural work, didactics, and philosophy. She invited lecturers from many disciplines, Janusz Korczak being a favorite among students. Coursework could be highly individualized to meet students' interests, and they were encouraged to self-assess and solve problems. Since her vision of social work had to combine theory with practice, Radlińska urged students to research at the facilities where they visited and worked. Most students admitted to the program already had work experience in local government or social organizations. Given that so many people in Poland were unemployed and searching for new professions, Radlińska didn't want anyone studying social work that was not already familiar with its challenges.[109] The school created a place for aspiring care workers, managers,

---

[108] Unlike in other countries, Poland did not have well-defined credentials for what qualified someone as a social worker. See Mary Deller Brainerd, "Helena Radlinska: Expanding Conceptualizations of Social Work Practice from Poland's Past," *International Social Work* 44, no. 1 (2001): 24.

[109] Brainerd, "Helena Radlinska," 21; Stelmaszuk, Zofia Waleria, "Helena Radlinska and the School of Adult Education and Social Work at the Free University in Poland," in *Cultural and Intercultural Experiences in European Adult Education: Essays on Popular and Higher Education since 1890*, ed., Stuart Marriott and Barry J. Hake, vol. 3, *Leeds Studies in Continuing Education: Cross-Cultural Studies in the Education of Adults* (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1994), 234-238; Szczepaniak-Wiecha, "Traditions of the Social Work Profession in Interwar Poland," 80-84; Irena Lepalczyk and Ewa Marynowicz-Hetka, "Helena Radlinska: A Portrait of the Person, Researcher, Teacher, and Social Activist" in *History of Social Work in Europe (1900-1960)*, 72-76.

and inspectors, and served as a critical meeting point for experts in the field to meet, lecture, and develop materials foundational to establishing Polish social work in theory and practice.

The program drew students, usually women, between the ages of twenty-five and thirty, with the occasional older student enrolling.[110] It attracted people with various political leanings, but most students were sympathetic to or active in left-wing parties. Radlińska's students included many Jewish-born individuals and even Catholic nuns and priests. Stelmaszuk writes that relations at the school were marked by "liberality and tolerance."[111] One of Radlinska's former students, a mother superior, actually sheltered her in a convent during the war. Students at the school needed to be committed to the transformation and building of a new society, for Radlińska saw herself as educating not only social workers but activists. She did not want her trainees to adopt the paternalistic role of philanthropy but instead taught them to lead in a non-hierarchical manner. She expected graduates to live in the environment they worked in, to recognize the ways that hardship can create strength, to be curious about the problems of both an individual and a group, to be facilitators and community mobilizers, and to be truthful, courageous, resistant to influences from outside. By 1936, 484 students had finished the program. Three years later, the program had graduated 657 full-time students and forty-two "freelance" students.[112]

Radlińka formed her version of social work around the theoretical framework of social

---

[110] Sixty-five percent of the program's graduates were women. See Stelmalszuk, "Helena Radlinska and the School of Adult Education and Social Work at the Free University in Poland," 235.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid., 235-238; Tilar J. Mazzeo, *Irena's Children: A True Story of Courage* (New York: Gallery Books, 2016), 25; Brainerd, "Helena Radlinska," 23-24; Szczepaniak-Wiecha, "Traditions of the Social Work Profession in Interwar Poland," 80-84.

pedagogy, an approach Mary Deller Brainerd describes as “a scientific discipline concerned with education and relationship between human development and the social environment.”[113] It originated from Enlightenment ideas about sparking human potential and improving social circumstances through education.[114] When industrialization and urbanization caused new social problems for children and adults, social pedagogy arose as what Juha Hämäläinen calls “a system of organized activities” designed to “confront social distress pedagogically.”[115] Hämäläinen explains social pedagogy is not so much a defined set of methods as it is “an educational orientation in which [one observes] the world, people, society, social problems, and social work.”[116] Based on the goal to lessen social exclusion, social pedagogy promoted an individual’s social functioning, identity, and competence as a member of society. Herman Nohl developed social pedagogy in Germany as a discrete field for university study. By contrast, the German pioneer of social work, Alice Salomon, as well as Radlińska in Poland, resisted limiting social work education to the halls of academia. According to Radlińska, social work was not a separate profession rather an influence in many social and educational careers.[117]

Radlińska’s social pedagogy drove her vision of social work to differ from movements elsewhere in Europe. Her work was not motivated by religious beliefs or the mission to morally improve individuals. She emphasized that social work deviated from traditional Christian charity because it was based on the public’s interests rather than Christian mercy. Social work was not

---

[113] Brainerd, “Helena Radlinska,” 21.
[114] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, “Traditions of the Social Work Profession in Interwar Poland,” 85; Juha Hämäläinen, “The Concept of Social Pedagogy in the Field of Social Work,” *Journal of Social Work* 3, no.1 (2003): 71.
[115] Hämäläinen, “The Concept of Social Pedagogy in the Field of Social Work,” 71.
[116] Ibid., 76.
[117] Ibid., 73, 75-76; Szczepaniak-Wiecha, “Traditions of the Social Work Profession in Interwar Poland,” 82.

about handing out donations but discovering strengths (in clients, in oneself, and one's environment) to help overcome difficulties. Radlińksa believed sincerely in human resilience and potential. Therefore, she thought social actions should create environments that allowed people to discover and develop their potential. She emphasized strengths rather than pathology and did not categorize people as "good or bad." At its core, her approach embodied fundamental respect for human dignity. As a result of her innovative work, Radlińska and her school became internationally known. She worked and corresponded with such social work pioneers as Mary Hurlburt in the United States and Alice Salomon in Germany. She never traveled to the United States but stayed abreast of social work developments there and was interested in the work of Jane Addams.[118]

For centuries before the Second Republic, residential care for Christian children had been the domain of religious orders whose goals were simple: keep the children alive and save their souls for God.[119] A religious upbringing was the top priority, with prayer occurring as often as nine times a day.[120] As Polish child care began to shift into the modern era, it attempted to include religious care workers. State-sponsored education courses for lay and clerical care workers revealed a much broader agenda that prioritized a child's holistic health with a much greater focus on stimulating the mind and protecting the body than on cleansing the soul. A program for the three-month course for aspiring professional caretakers in 1930 included 382 contact hours on the philosophical, legal, scientific, administrative, and practical work required in children's residential institutions. From January 15 to April 15, students attended

---

[118] Brainerd, "Helena Radlinska," 21-23, 27; Lepalczyk and Marynowicz-Hetka, "Helena Radlinska," 73-77.
[119] Ibid., 53.
[120] Ibid., 130-131.

seventy-seven hours of lectures on general psychology, child psychology and physiology, social welfare law, hygienic principles, and the history of moral-social education; sixty-two hours on theories of group upbringing, foundations of religious education, children's literature, and bookkeeping; 186 hours of drawing and visual art, performing arts, nature, and ecology, and physical education; and fifty-two hours on Polish history, culture, geography, and economy.[121] In addition to this coursework, attendees were offered lectures on special topics in child welfare including general hygiene, tuberculosis, trachoma, fungal infections, nervous disorders, bedwetting, alcoholism, summer colonies, adolescence, youth organizations, the benefits of nature, and the ethics of social education. Finally, each participant was required to complete thirty-nine hours of practical hours of visits to museums, monuments, and institutions; and participation in physical education, games, drawing, ecological field trips, and report writing. It is worth noting that of these 382 hours, a mere ten were devoted to religious education. Among the all-star list of expert lecturers drawn from the highest ranks of Polish social work, pedagogy, and medicine appeared the names of only two clergy, brought in to discuss religion and ethics in education.[122]

---

[121] Polish studies, legal foundations of child care, and history of upbringing/education were eliminated from the courses after 1932. Added after 1932 was work on administration and organization of institutions, and "citizen upbringing", although that had also been eliminated by 1936. Ibid., 68.

[122] Lecturers included J. Czesław Babicki, Dr. Marcelli Gromski, Stanisław Kopczyński, Tadeusz Kopeć, Janusz Korczak, Dr. Władysław Szenajch, Wanda Szuman, Władysława Szymanowska, and Marjan Zachert, and clergymen Father Jan Mauersberger and Ks. Prałat Wacław Bliziński, "PROGRAM wykładów na kursach dokształcających, zorganizowanych przez Wydział Opieki nad Dziećmi i Młodzieżą Departamentu Opieki Społecznej dla wychowawców zakładów opiekuńczo-wychowawczych," ANKr Kursy dokształcające dla wychowawców zakładów opiekuńczych (KD) 551/6/123.

By the end of 1936, 1,262 people had completed these courses, 1,127 in courses approved by the Ministry, and 135 in programs sponsored by other organizing bodies. Of the participants, 86.5 percent were women, 44.5 percent were laypersons, and sixty-one percent persons of religious orders. Still, increasing the education levels of residential care workers was a slow and arduous process. As of 1937—nineteen years after the creation of the first training course—540 institutions employed qualified personnel, but a remaining 250 were still staffed by unqualified personnel. 120 institutions were of unknown status. According to a decree issued by the Ministry of Social Welfare on January 17, 1936, the last date for workers in educational-care institutions to get certified was January 1, 1938, but given the data collected in 1937, that expectation was certainly not met.[123]

Other attempts to correct institutional shortcomings came through increased state regulation and supervision. In 1927, the state passed a series of acts aimed at controlling the activities of residential care facilities. The first measures—passed on April 22, 1927 as an Act of the President—relegated supervision and control of institutional care facilities to the provincial governors and special government appointed officers in the former Russian partition, magistrates in towns with their statutes in the former Austrian partition, and town presidents in the former Prussian partition. The county governments controlled the subsidiary level of supervision. In October and November, the Ministry of Social Welfare followed up with three decrees stipulating that each care center have qualified management, who was required to write a statute

[123] Kępski, *Dziecko Sieroce*, 69.

articulating the function and population it serves, and submit annual reports on activities and finances to its supervisory government body.[124]

State supervision shed additional light on health and sanitary issues. From 1925 to 1926, the Department Public Health Service studied the rates of disease infection among institutionalized children. It found that of the 39,198 children examined, 12.4 percent had trachoma and 73.25 percent of all orphanages had at least one positive case.[125] The results gave rise to a statewide campaign to eliminate trachoma among children living in residential care. Trachoma, also known as granular conjunctivitis, is an ocular infection caused by the bacteria *chlamydia trachomatis*. It is spread through contact with discharge from the eyes or nose of an infected person and can also be spread via hands, clothing, towels, or flies. It presents in its early stages as conjunctivitis, or pink eye and eventually leads to increased eye pain and blurred vision. If untreated, scars form under the eyelid, causing the eyelashes to turn inward and begin scratching the cornea, which can lead to partial or complete vision loss. Trachoma is most prevalent in children under nine and women who have prolonged contact with infected children.[126] Medical officials had to systematically isolate and transfer infected children to special treatment institutions to combat the disease. By 1927, there were twelve facilities with 1,865 beds for children with trachoma. These facilities, the largest two of which were located in Częstachowa and Witkowice, offered their patients full-time medical care, schooling, and

---

[124] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960," 14-15.
[125] H. Adamovitz, "Trachoma in Poland," March 28, 1927, LNA 21706/12B/R918.
[126] Robin J. Harman and Pamela Mason, eds., "Trachoma," in *Handbook of Pharmacy Healthcare: Diseases and Patient Advice,* 2nd ed. (Grayslake, IL: Pharmaceutical Press, 2002), 121; Hugh R. Taylor, *Trachoma: A Blinding Scourge from the Bronze Age to the Twenty-First Century* (East Melbourne, Vic: Center for Eye Research Australia, 2008), 97-102, 109-113.

recreation during their stay. In addition, the Department of Public Health Service under the Ministry of Social Welfare appointed five medical inspectors to visit orphanages and examine trachomic children after their treatment. It also provided schools and orphanages with special statistical cards to register trachoma cases, which were to be forwarded quarterly to the provincial health officers.[127]

Trachoma was just one of many health problems plaguing Polish orphanages. In 1928 reports from orphanage inspections revealed that sixty-one percent of all institutionalized children were sick in some way.[128] However, the number of children who died in residential care facilities had decreased about twenty percent from 1927 to 1928, indicating that the sanitary state of the institution had improved somewhat over the last few years.[129] Not everyone thought that state inspections were doing enough. Wanda Szuman became an outspoken critic of institutional care and state inspection. As a social worker trained in Polish orphanages she recognized the limits of state inspections in their current form. Inspectors only dropped in for a few hours and did not get a sense of the real sense of the institution. Instead, they only saw freshly scrubbed floors and their kids "in their Sunday best." She had been in at least two institutions where sheets and comforters were used only during the day. At bedtime, kids had to unmake the beds and sleep on dirty bare mattresses. Even those who fell ill were not allowed to sleep on made beds. In one place that she trained, beds were only made for a doctor's or manager's visit.[130]

---

[127] H. Adamovitz, "Trachoma in Poland," March 28, 1927 LNA 21706/12B/R918.
[128] Kępski, *Dziecko Sieroce*, 20.
[129] K. Górski, "Śmiertelność dzieci w zakładach opiekuńczych za rok 1928," *Opieka nad Dzieckiem* 9, no. 1 (January 1931): 24-27.
[130] Wanda Szuman, "Zarządy zakładów dla sierot," *Życia Dziecka* 2, no. 6 (June 1933): 155-157.

Szuman accused the state of substituting cursory glances for actual sanitary control. They glanced around only to make sure the bedrooms, dining rooms, and hallways looked clean and tidy. She said as long as nothing was on fire, the orphanage was certified safe. Meanwhile, inspectors never checked the mattresses with rotting straw or noticed how many children wet the bed. Had one visitor dared lift the corner of a shiny pink comforter they would have certainly been shocked by the filth hiding underneath.[131] Meanwhile, the radiant children lined in neat, obedient rows offered yet another illusion. On the week of the expected visit, the caretakers dressed the children in fresh white smocks, gathered up their toys and paper, and threatened them within an inch of their lives if they made any noise or a mess. They set out rows of glasses and toothbrushes in the bathrooms and told the kids they were only "for play." "Meanwhile," Szuman wrote, "there was no evidence that the children ever actually brushed their teeth."[132] In order to have any real effect, Szuman proposed that state inspectors take a more critical look at children's physical state. She argued that children be regularly examined, and their health statistics compared with those of their peers at local schools. Granted, institutionalized children had often experienced bouts of hunger and poverty, so their weights and heights tended to be lower. "That doesn't necessarily mean the institution is bad," Szuman wrote, "but it's about making sure that differences do not increase, but rather decrease during children's stay in an institution."[133]

Szuman, an early pioneer in Polish social pedagogy, was part of a new wave of experts—composed mainly of women who studied social work or pedagogics and worked in child care institutions—who began questioning the value of residential care. As she wrote in

[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid., 158-159.
[133] Ibid., 160. Author's emphasis.

1928, “It is not enough to give orphans bread and a roof over their heads, but is rather necessary to give them education specifically focused to destroy the bad influences.”[134] The same pedagogical turn that transformed summer colonies in the late 1920s and early 1930s also shaped discussions about residential care at the same time. Detractors began questioning the pedagogical effects of residential care on children’s development and morale. In 1930, Helena Jawidzykówna began publishing a series of articles in the journal *Życie Dziecka* (*Child’s Life*), the new name for the journal published by the children’s welfare bureau*,* condemning the institutional care complex for stifling the Polish youth’s development. Drawing on her first-hand experiences as an inspector for the Lublin district, Jawidzykówna painted a picture of children’s homes as “a collection of all kinds of misery.”[135] She first echoed the familiar critique that orphanages were understaffed, overcrowded places where the sick and healthy mixed, tuberculosis and trachoma ran unchecked, and the “underdeveloped,” “psychologically injured,” and otherwise “morally neglected” were left unattended among other children. Then Jawidzykówna brought into focus the harm of institutional upbringing on children’s cognitive and social development. When compared with their family-raised peers, institutional children lacked motivation, were more passive, performed worse in school, and got picked on more frequently. She argued that an orphanage’s hyper-controlled group environment turned the children into docile automatons, who resembled not so much human children as robotic shells stripped of their individual spunk and spark.[136] In 1933, Szuman seconded this position. “Good is the institution,” she wrote, “in

[134] Wanda Szuman, “Trudności wychowaniu sierot,” *Opieka nad Dzieckiem* 6, no. 3 (May-June 1928): 214.
[135] Helena Jawidzykówna, “Dziecko w zakładzie zamkniętym,” *Życie Dziecka* 2, no. 9 (September 1933): 237.
[136] Ibid., 237-241.

which children move around and converse with ease." Bad was the one "in which children walk around like mannequins, who do not smile during playtime, whose faces remain as still as death."[137]

After the centuries during which an orphanage's only goal was to preserve life, concerns now included the types of people they were creating. Jawidzykówna, for example, predicted that institutionalized children would be "future loafers"—a class of people utterly unfit for work and incapable of leading full and productive adult lives.[138] She hypothesized that the life skills they learned "inside" the institution, cut-off from any emotional real-world context, rendered children utterly helpless on the day their age forced them out of the orphanage.[139] Based on the orphan's own experiences, her concerns might not have been misplaced. According to "Forget-Me-Not," the girl who enrolled herself in a local "day orphanage," her time there was a definite source of survival, mentorship, and community. And yet, when she left her orphanage at age eighteen, she was suddenly struck by the realization, "Institutional living had isolated me from the world." All her friends were at the orphanage; she had no other connections and or practical skills. Her friends expressed a similar feeling of loneliness and disorientation when they entered "outside life."[140] In 1924, a 15-year-old Jewish orphan Tereza Rozenboym forced the readers of *Dos kind* (*The Child*), the Yiddish-language journal published by the The Association of Jewish Societies Care for Jewish Orphans (*Centralne Towarzystwo Opieki nad Sierotami*), to grapple with the long-term consequences of residential orphan care. While on the verge of being forced to leave her orphanage, she too realized she had nowhere to go except back to the "sleeping in the cellar

[137] Szuman, "Zarządy zakładów dla sierot," 161.
[138] Jawidzykówna, "Dziecko w zakładzie zamkniętym," 238.
[139] Babicki, "Opieka nad dziećmi w rodzinach zastępczych," 430.
[140] "Forget-me-not," 134-5.

on a straw sack" whence she came.[141] By the 1930s, adult pedagogues and social workers were keen to Rozenboym's and "Forget-Me-Not's" concerns. They expressed worry that the "luxury" of institutional living--warm beds, nice clothes, heating, plentiful food, and a predetermined daily schedule--actually weakened children for the "struggle for survival" that awaited them just outside the orphanage gate.[142]

Foster Care

Despite modest institutional reforms, the state eventually shifted its focus away from orphanages as the preferred care method. Already from 1918 to 1925, financial troubles and the withdrawal of foreign aid caused 225 orphanages to close their doors. That reduced the number of children served by institutional closed-care nationwide by 16,288. By 1936, state-mandated liquidations and consolidations shuddered an additional 294 orphanages, which forced a further fifty-percent reduction in the number of children served. By September 1938, the overcrowding that once defined institutional life had virtually disappeared. Instead of turning children away, institutions reported having four-thousand empty spots. The decline of institutional care signaled not much a waning need but rather new priorities. In response to mounting critiques and economic challenges, communities had shifted their focus from orphanages to foster care. In 1935, the Ministry of Social Welfare launched a campaign to promote foster family usage across the country, and instructed provinces to move as many children as possible from orphanages to

[141] Martin, "How to House a Child," 26.
[142] J. Cz. Babicki, "Umieszczanie dzieci w rodzinach zastępczych," *Życie Dziecka* 4, no. 7-8 (July-August 1935): 205; Stefania Wilczyńska, "Próby uporządkowania, albo usuwanie bez bólu" trans. Ela Frydman in *Słowo do dzieci i wychowawców,* ed. Barbara Puszkin and Marta Ciesielska (Warsaw: Muzeum Historyczne m.st. Warszawy, 2004), 74-76.

family foster care. Consequently, from 1935 to 1936, district administrations sent 5,598 children back to parents or relatives and placed an additional 916 in foster care.[143]

Foster care, defined as the paid or unpaid placement of a child with an unrelated guardian, has been called the oldest form of care for orphaned and abandoned children. In the nineteenth century, foster care was widely used in the Prussian partition, but in the Russian partition, abandoned children were typically placed with wet-nurses or nannies.[144] In 1738, the Father Baudouin Home in Warsaw began paying rural families to care for foundlings.[145] The home provided no inspection or control, which meant once they were distributed, children remained at the guardian's mercy. The program exposed children to horrendous abuse and exploitation. They were beaten, starved, housed with livestock, and passed among families as servants and farmhands. Most children died, and those that did not went on to live miserable lives. In the interwar period, adult survivors of this system—whom Babicki called "the martyrs of orphandom"—would pop up from time to time applying for benefits at local welfare offices. Illiterate and despondent, they were the living legacy of a system that neither valued the long-term consequences of charity for orphaned children nor possessed the administrative structure to protect their lives beyond the institution.[146]

The RGO's "Countryside for the Children" was a direct descendent of the Baudoin system that yielded similar horrible results. Unpaid guardians regularly neglected and abused

---

[143] Rudzińska, ". . .sierota i dziecko opuszczone winno być wzięte w opiekę i wspomagane. . ." 37-38, Waleria Stelmaszuk and Klominek, "Poland," 222.
[144] Waleria Stelmaszuk and Klominek, "Poland," 222.
[145] Infants came with a yearly stipend of twenty rubles, children one to seven with sixteen annual rubles, and children seven and older were placed for free. J. Cz. Babicki, "Opieka nad dzieckiem w rodzinach zastępczych," *Praca i Opieka Społeczna* 14, no. 4 (1934): 434.
[146] Babicki, "Opieka nad dzieckiem w rodzinach zastępczych," 434.

their charges and children were lost in the system for years. Upon the RGO's liquidation in February 1921—when hundreds of children were still missing—the Ministry of Social Welfare turned its energy towards improving institutional care.[147] During the first half of the 1920s, the only organization formally engaging in providing monetary benefit and modest medical care and supervision to children placed in homes was the Joint Distribution Committee. However, most of the seven-hundred children they supported under this program in 1920 were half-orphans living with their own mothers or blood relatives. Fewer than ten were actual fosters placed with unrelated families.[148] Foster placement in Łódź only resumed in 1926 as the city's response to low funding and crowded facilities. By 1931, foster care programs existed in Kielce, Lwów, Piotrków, Poznań, and Warsaw, where Wanda Szuman had organized a private committee to facilitate foster placement. Local activities drew state attention, and in 1934, the Ministry of Social Welfare notified all district governments to initiate foster placement on a trial basis.[149] After two years with positive results, the ministry instructed all provinces to place children otherwise bound for orphanages in foster care. In 1936, there were already 8175 children living in foster care, and by 1938 the number had grown to 10,617.[150]

In the mid-1930s, the Polish state cast its lot with the pro-family advocates. However, the state's embrace of foster care was not about social pedagogy so much as it was money. Local governments could no longer afford to keep funding orphanages and orphan placement, and

---

[147] Mirosława Jamrożek, "Rodzina zastępcza-przeobrażenia i stan badań," *Studia Pedagogiczne: Problemy Społeczne, Edukacyjne i Artystyczne* 11 (1996): 58-9; Helena Sławińska, "Opieka nad dziećmi w rodzinach zastępczych na terenie woj. Wileńskiego," *Życie Dziecka* 4, no. 7-8 (July-August 1935): 193.
[148] Peiser, "Appendix No. 17: Children in Galicia," 98.
[149] Babicki, "Opieka nad dzieckiem w rodzinach zastępczych," 435.
[150] Jamrożek, "Rodzina zastępcza-przeobrażenia i stan badań," 59; Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960," 67.

foster care offered a solution at about a third of the cost. Instead of paying thirty to ninety zloty a month per child for residential care, governments and committees could pay families a monthly ten to thirty zloty for more individualized care.[151] In the time of financial crisis and protracted poverty, foster care offered a budget-saving solution that might keep children off street corners and crowded orphanage bunks.

Foster care systems operated with a lot of variety, as each district, city, or private committee determined its own method of parent and child selection. During the first few years of the Łódź program, every family who applied was given a child. They tended to be families of lesser means raising a child for pay as a social welfare payout. As the applicant pool grew and regulations tightened, governments and committees became more selective. In urban settings, most foster parents were factory workers, artisans, and low-level state functionaries, as well as a small percentage of merchants, custodians, and groundskeepers. Programs that utilized rural placement tried to select landowning farmers of "high culture" and good means. The goal in either setting was to locate families that were neither too well off nor too destitute.[152] As Róża Kiesielewska-Zawadzka found out through her work as a childcare inspector in Lódź, "The rich, like the impoverished are not very good caretakers."[153] Programs tried to avoid working with widows, the unemployed, or families with many children. The ideal family, rather, was a two-parent childless household with a working father and stay-at-home mother.

---

[151] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek and Slany, "The System of Care for Abandoned Children in Poland, 1900-1960," 190; Babicki, "Umieszczanie dzieci w rodzinach zastępczych," 202; Babicki, "Opieka nad dzieckiem w rodzinach zastępczych," 435.
[152] Róża Kisielewska-Zawadzka, "Społeczne i psychologiczne podstawy oddawania dzieci do rodzin zastępczych" *Opiekun Społeczny* 2, no. 8 (1937): 26-29.
[153] Kisielewska-Zawadzka, "Społeczne i psychologiczne podstawy oddawania dzieci do rodzin zastępczych," 28.

At first, the city of Łódź experimented with infant placement only. Prospective parents grew reluctant because infants required more attention and were more prone to health problems. After that, the city started placing children between two and seven. Eventually, it expanded the placement to school-aged and adolescent children.[154] Other programs operated along similar lines, focusing on placement of infants or young children who seemed most intelligent, healthy, and well-tempered. The Warsaw Committee even tried to select children that most physically resembled the prospective foster parents.[155] Some programs took care to try and only place full orphans or children of unknown origins, while others placed children that still had contact with living parents.[156]

Similar to the summer camp movement, the rise of foster placement in the 1930s represented the child welfare's shift from child protection to child preparation. In the early days of Polish independence, child welfare advocates framed children as the innocent victims of war, disease, and starvation that needed rescue for the biological preservation of the nation. A decade later, the discourse had shifted to considering children as future citizens of the state whose healthy bodies and developed consciences were needed to perform the physical labor and civic pursuits that would sustain the new republic. However, among the advocates of child preparation, there emerged a fundamental disagreement. While activists like Korczak and Bobrowska focused on creating safe, child-centered environments to deliver working-class

---

[154] This data was only for the Christian children placed in foster care, see Józefa Puternicka, "Początek Działalności," in *Rodziny Zastępcze Łodzi*, ed. Aleksandra Majewska (Łódź: Polski Instytut Służby Społecznej, 1948), 17; Babicki, "Opieka nad dzieckiem w rodzinach zastępczych," 432.
[155] Wanda Szuman, "Z działalności Komitetu Umieszczania Sierot w Warszawie," *Życie Dziecka* 5, no. 8-9 (August-September 1936): 210.
[156] Sławińska, "Opieka nad dziećmi w rodzinach zastępczych," 199.

children from squalor and suffering that surrounded them at home, advocates of foster care like Szuman and Babicki proposed sending children back to those same difficult conditions. The latter justified this move by arguing that family life best prepared children to engage in life's struggle for survival. In 1935, Babicki best summarized this perspective with the following:

> In an institution, the child is detached from social context, he does not witness the fight for existence, he does not help acquire the resources to support himself, he does not save, etc. However, being raised in a working-class family, he remains in the environment whence he came and he takes a direct part in its struggles and joys. Seeing how difficult it is to earn a living, he learns to fight for his existence. Contributing to the home economy, he develops a greater sense of independence and self-worth. The family in which he is raised, become for him an environment on which can be relied in case of failure in life.[157]

In short, if life in Poland was going to be difficult, the best thing one could do was be prepared for it.

Precisely how much exposure to the "fight for existence" was too much? Could overexposure to life's hard knocks counteract the construction of prepared citizens? Bronisława Bobrowska thought so, and she warned child activists against the hasty embrace of foster care. The "warm family hearth" so often invoked in pro-foster care discourse she said was nothing more than an elusive myth. Home could not be separated from the larger socio-economic context. When families struggled, so did their children. To place children with families was to throw them back into the crowded dark basements whence they came. They would live in filth, be made to work, and not allowed outside to run and play. The city of Wilno's first experience with foster care proved precisely this point. After orphanage overcrowding and closures forced foster placement for 130 children in Wilno and rural counties, follow-up investigations revealed the material and moral bankruptcy of the hosts. The elderly blind woman who hosted

[157] Babicki, "Opieka nad dzieckiem w rodzinach zastępczych," 432-3.

twelve-year-old Weronika made her beg and care for her. The guardian who took in Józefa and Adela, girls aged ten and thirteen, hired them out as nannies for a family of a "different faith and nationality." Kazia had to tend cows, and Manusia was forced to live in a room with chickens and twelve other people. The children were dirty, unkempt, and uneducated. They lived not in the idealized embrace of new families but in the grim reality of abuse and exploitation so reminiscent of earlier fostering failures.[158]

The challenges faced in Wilno revealed a central paradox of Polish foster care: to place orphaned and abandoned children with families of similar backgrounds to the children risked subjecting them to further cycles of poverty, neglect, and abuse. The imagined ideal foster home was incompatible with working-class realities. The Łódź Department of Social Welfare wanted families composed of a male breadwinner and a stay-at-home wife, not the elderly widow or single mother who had traditionally fulfilled this role. All dwellings were to be well-lit, heated, and well-ventilated. Basements and lofts were not allowed. Apartments were not to be too crowded and all inhabitants were to be in good health as confirmed by a doctor. All living spaces were to be kept clean and orderly. Each child required a separate bed, clean sheets, clothes and underwear, a comb, a toothbrush, and towels with their name so that other members of the household would not use them. Children were to be bathed once a week, their hair kept short and clean, and their heads regularly checked for lice and lesions. Children were to attend school and be provided with school supplies, a place to store their books, and table space to complete their homework. On the weekends, they were to be allowed time for play and leisure. Overall, the city

[158] Sławińska, "Opieka nad dziećmi w rodzinach zastępczych," 191-200.

articulated children's right to be supported in their proper moral development and to live in a home free from quarrels, gossip, and drunkenness.[159]

The idealized working family was not a widespread social reality. After years of working for the Society of Children's Friends, Bobrowska knew well the lifestyles, tendencies, and material realities of the urban working poor and rural proletariat. She had no doubt the family home, with its pleasant atmosphere, warm bonds, and good parenting, was the most suitable environment for raising a child. "However," she wrote in 1935, "how many of *these* families can we even find?" Bobrowska knew that the majority of working families in Poland lived ten, twelve, or fourteen to a room, and that ninety-nine out of one-hundred children shared a bed with siblings or other adults. "Do I even need to mention the kind of danger this exposes a child to?" she asked. Bobrowska believed that exposing children to Babicki's "rhythms of family life" meant exposing them to the rhythms of fighting, sex, alcoholism, and abuse. And a life of want, she cautioned, bred antisocial behavior: "Among all mothers repeated the warning: do not reveal this or that or other children might take it. Eat it yourself, hide it for yourself, etc."[160] To teach children to "fight for existence" at home was, by Bobrowska's account, to teach them to steal, suspect, hoard, and fight.

To raise better children would require raising the culture of upbringing at home. In 1935, the Wilno Voivodeship took on that challenge. In light of its initial failures with foster care, the district assembled the Polanski Colony (*Kolonja Polańska*), an experimental "colony of family care." The colony was not one coherent settlement but rather a network of families hosting foster

---

[159] Józefa Puternicka, "Umieszczanie dzieci w rodzinach (II)" 188-193; ibid., 195-197.
[160] Bronisława Bobrowska, "Wychowanie zakładowe czy w rodzinie przybranej?" *Życie Dziecka* 4, no. 7-8 (July-August 1935): 182-192. Emphasis author's.

children across six villages in Oszmiana County. At the colony's administrative center sat an instructor-educator (*instruktor-wychowawczyni*) who lived in the area and made weekly visits to each family. As she got to know the families, she consulted on matters of health, hygiene, and school. If she detected neglect or abuse, she could quickly correct or place the child with another family.[161]

The Polanski Colony operated on the premise that guardians had to treat children as members of their own families. They could not hire children out as labor to third parties but instead had to send children to school, provide them clothes, food, clean and separate beds, take them to the doctor, and provide for their religious education. As remittance, the city of Wilno paid families fifteen zloty a month and agreed to pay each child's medical bills. If families did not abide by the rules, the child would be relocated to another home and the guardian would face legal punishment.[162]

The first sixth months yielded positive results. From when a group of thirty children first left Wilno on November 29, 1934 until May 1935, no child or guardian asked for a change in placement. Upon traveling to the Polanski Colony, inspector Helena Sławińska saw tender connections forming between guardian and child. After a respiratory illness landed three-year-old Cześ in the hospital during Holy Week, his foster mother stayed by his bed day and night. Six-year-old Jósio Z., another hospitalized foster child, told Sławinska, "I don't want candy from you ma'am, just please let my foster mother come." She was shocked at how well ten-year-old Ania's guardians took her bedwetting in stride, and amused when brothers Ryś and

[161] Babicki, "Opieka nad dzieckiem w rodzinach zastępczych," 435.
[162] Sławińska,"Opieka nad dziećmi w rodzinach zastępczych," 196.

Zdzić responded to the question of returning Wilno with a resounding "No!"[163] What began as the search for cheap room and board, seemed to be slowly transforming into an assembly of genuine family units. Among the program's new regulations was an emphasis on moral education. Parents told not only to love and care for their wards but also to "prepare the child for social life" and to "strive to make him a reliable citizen of the Polish republic."[164] In return, they would feel love and life satisfaction and build tight bonds with a possible heir and provider.

As bonds developed between child and parent, linkages also formed between citizen and state. Childless couples who might have once accepted a child for monetary gain were now recruited for the cultural mission of raising sound, capable citizens. But by agreeing to this, parents were becoming the unwitting objects of some cultural work themselves. Through home visits conducted by professional women of several titles—instructor-educators, nurse-educators (*pielęgniarka-wychowawczyni*), or social nurses (*pielęgniarki społeczne*)—provinces, municipalities, and private committees gained access to a family's domestic sphere. Once established, the visitor could leverage her access to guide the practices performed inside the four walls. In the Polanski Colony, foster mothers expecting a weekly visit from the "Pani" would scrub cottages, drive out the chickens, and present their fosters with nice clothes and brushed hair.[165] As visits became routine, so too did the practices that preceded them. Small changes begot larger ones. Rooms were painted, floors inserted, beds built, and heads cleaned. Even the chickens found new homes outside. Sławinska claimed that parents slowly developed an affinity

---

[163] Ibid., 198-9.
[164] Ibid., 196.
[165] Pani is the formal "you" in Polish when addressing a woman. In this case, it refers to the social worker making her regular home visit.

for cleanliness and modern child-rearing. And with that, ever so gradually "culture arrived under the roof of rural homes."[166]

Home visitors were not supposed to merely accept the conditions of working-class life; they were supposed to make them better. If children did not have a toothbrush or towels, she should help the family secure these. If the child did not go to school, she would help get them enrolled. During a month, home visitors spent hours demonstrating techniques and explaining a doctor's orders in an effort to improve children's home life. Often, this was an extension of the already carried out by visitors from mother-baby welfare stations. The difference was that while biological mothers might decline to enroll, foster mothers had no choice. To host a child was to open oneself up inspection and non-compliance risked losing the child. Józefa Puternikca, an inspector-educator for the city of Łódź, said an ideal home visitor was someone not only healthy, well-educated, and pleasant, but was also a person driven by idealistic zeal. "If, for example," Puternicka wrote, "we hear from the nurse's mouth: 'Ugh, will there ever be a time when each person in a working-class family has a separate bed?' then we can be sure that the number of separate beds for children, placed for pay, will problematic despite orders from on high."[167] Puternicka believed home visitors must be driven by "the deep conviction that they were simply fulfilling a cultural and educative mission among the wide masses of the proletariat."[168] Only then could they become the linchpin between theory and practice.

Beyond inspection and enforcement, home visitors had to build trust. Prudence and patience were the ultimate virtues. If one was too rude or demanding, Puternicka warned it

---

[166] Sławińska,"Opieka nad dziećmi w rodzinach zastępczych," 196.
[167] Puternicka, "Umieszczanie dzieci w rodzinach: Działalność Wydział Opieki Społecznej Magistratu m. Łodzi (III)," *Życie Dziecka* 1, no. 5-6 (August-September 1932): 213.
[168] Ibid., 212.

would “minimize the social benefit of this work.”[169] When one first visits a peasant cottage, Sławinska said, “Of course not everything is in order, but with local people (*tutejszych ludzi*) you need to approach them carefully so as not to offend them.” The skilled visitor would build trust through listening and small acts of kindness. In the Polanski Colony, the instructor-educator always arrived with a bag of medicine, drops, and dressings to provide first aid to anyone in the house. Once trust developed, she could leverage it to modify domestic behaviors. It was always a delicate way to balance “finding one’s way to the people,” while also never losing track of one’s ideals or demands.[170] But when properly executed, it provided these women unmatched professional satisfaction.

In the small-scale experiment of the Polanski colony, the instructor-educator seemed to be making strides. Inspector Sławisnka was happy with the state of children and families, and local teachers said children from colony homes were “very clean and better dressed than other peasant children.”[171] Encouraged by initial results, the Wilno Voivodeship decided to start similar colonies in two more counties.[172] This system, however, differed from all others in Poland by the home visitor’s close proximity to the children. She was only responsible for about thirty children placed over a couple of kilometers, which meant she could devote herself full-time to the work of supervising and building relationships. In most other foster programs, visitors were stretched much thinner. Even in Łódź, which had the country’s best-developed foster care system in 1926 still only had a dozen nurses in charge of visiting over five-hundred homes a month.[173] And most

[169] Ibid., 213.
[170] Ibid., 213; Sławińska,“Opieka nad dziećmi w rodzinach zastępczych,” 196, 198-9.
[171] Sławińska, “Opieka nad dziećmi w rodzinach zastępczych,” 199.
[172] Ibid., 200.
[173] Puternicka, “Umieszczanie dzieci w rodzinach (III),” 202.

of these nurses had already had other responsibilities at the city's Mother-Child Health Stations. As the state retreated in its support of orphanages, it gave my power back to the family while also putting more pressure on local systems in charge of foster care. Selecting, or rather shaping, the ideal family in many poor, underdeveloped regions was quite difficult. Many towns lacked the welfare stations or nursing staff to conduct home visits. And even when visitors could penetrate urban tenements or remote villages, they still had to confront suspicions and superstitions. Bobrowska recalled how when she made visits, parents would hide for fear their children would be taken away. She also expressed the massive frustration that came with trying to convince mothers that "kasha with milk is healthier than coffee and kielbasa" or that fresh air from open windows would not bring sickness and peril. Bobrowska lamented that no matter what you taught a child, whether or not it became a regular habit had everything to do with the home environment. Reforming homes from within required much more than a sporadic visit. To the idealists who believed foster care would better educate the poor on health, hygiene, and child-rearing, she responded: "I repeat: it is easier to find and educate individuals whose influence will radiate the whole institution, rather than to train thousands of sets of parents."[174]

Bobrowska, like Korczak, was one of many progressive educators who believed that careful, professional upbringing (*wychowanie*) applied in group settings would liberate children from working-class misery and propel Polish society into a better future. She rejected Jawidzykówna's claim that all institutions were "collections of sickness, squalor, and misery," and defended her Kobiernicki colony as a "school of life" for Poland's working-class youth. Poor parents, she argued, were only ever focused on the here and now. They had to put food on the

[174] Sławińska, "Opieka nad dziećmi w rodzinach zastępczych," 190.

table and keep the wolf from the door. They did not have time to invest in the careful shaping of future citizens. Many times, as with three-year-old Janek, they did not even have the capacity to keep their children nearby. However, Bobrowska wrote that the task of educators “is above all to liberate and transcend the limits of everyday life and always be thinking about the mandate of tomorrow.” Foster care might have exposed children to the struggles of survival today, but Bobrowska believed they deserved more. Proponents of foster care thought children who experienced family struggle would be better equipped to survive given the realities of Polish society. Bobrowska, however, believed children deserve more. “We [educators] have the right and even the responsibility,” she wrote, “to tell children that today the world exists as such, but here in our [colony], we live differently, we will try to forge a co-existence based on different rules, so that someday, when you are all grown up, you will be able to put it in to practice.”[175]

* * *

Poland’s protracted wars from 1914-1921 created a situation where orphaned and abandoned children were a vast and visible problem that demanded immediate attention from the state and social organizations. Given the state’s low capacity to care for all vulnerable children, it prioritized care for certain orphans over others. Sitting at the top of the hierarchy were war orphans, considered to have the highest social value because they were seen as the children of Poland’s defenders, even though their parents might have fought in the armies of the partitioners. Next was the repatriated and “*kresy*” children, valued as victims of Russian or Bolshevik aggression. The attention paid to these categories of children after 1918 expanded the definition

[175] Bobrowska, “Wychowanie zakładowe czy w rodzinie przybranej?” 189-90.

of the deserving child as the state included Jewish and other non-Catholic children from the eastern borderlands in its relocation efforts. However, the impact of these relocations on real-life children was often grim. Insufficient oversight for their care and lack of communal embrace of outsider children often further marginalized them and subjected them to further neglect and abuse. There also might have been a heavy reliance on Catholic institutions to care for non-Catholic children, although more research is needed to explore the impacts of these relocation efforts. Social orphans, viewed as the children of social deviants or even "no one," sat at the bottom of the hierarchy. The state eventually tried to provide care for social orphans by creating emergency care centers in major cities. Still, the construction of Emergency Care Centers and many other initiatives targeting abandoned and homeless children never reached their full potential before the collapse of the Second Republic. Throughout the interwar period, the attention paid to natural and social orphans changed their perception from social problems or objects of charity to individuals with rights and future citizens with value and potential.

Children without parents or other adult intercessors did not have much agency or ability to hold caretakers accountable. Acts of resistance were pretty much limited to running away from abusive situations. There did seem to be a rise in parents, especially women, demanding that governments and social organizations help them care for their children. Surrendering a child to an institution became an act of survival marked less by shame and was instead seen by some as a hard-earned right of their Polish citizenship. Although most children could only secure institutional placement through adults' help, some older children began advocating for themselves to gain the institutional care they deemed essential to their survival and sometimes preferable to their home lives.

Interwar residential care was run by a mixed economy of government bodies, religious groups, and social organizations, with the latter running the largest number of institutions. However, collaborations between the state and non-state providers were frequent and essential, such as relocating children from the eastern borderlands. The capacity of non-state providers to meet the demand for care in the republic's early years was challenging because there was very little food, supplies, or money. Most institutions' primary source of food from 1919-1922 was the ARA's food program, but other types of foreign aid were limited to one-time gifts that did not address the more severe problem lowering the quality of residential care: the lack of trained personnel. The interwar period saw robust efforts to professionalize the care force working in children's residential care, which resulted in an increased emphasis on care for children's minds and bodies and decreased focus on orphanages' religious life. The state worked to increase its capacity to fund, regulate, inspect residential care but continued to struggle in all of these areas. The types and quality of residential institutions varied widely. Children's narratives about time spent in orphanages reveal many benefits of institutional life over their previous existences, while others speak frankly about the abuse and neglect they encountered.

Many experts critiqued the quality and efficacy of residential care for raising good citizens of the republic, which led to a shift away from institutional care by the 1930s. This switch was driven in part by pedagogical experts who preferred family care to better prepare a child for adult life's difficulties. These figures worried that institutions did not equip orphans for family, social, and civic life and would not help them thrive in the struggle for existence later in life. Perhaps the more significant influences were orphanage overcrowding and the economic crisis, which made funding residential care for a large number of children unsustainable in the

1930s. The result was a turn towards fostering as the preferred method of care for orphaned or abandoned children.

Municipalities ran some interwar foster programs while private committees oversaw others. With so many different local approaches to foster care and different models being experimented with, there was increased accessibility in some communities, but there were no national regulations or oversights. Advocates of foster care, mindful of past mistakes, knew that greater oversight was needed to assure that children would not be neglected or abused. However, they often struggled to find families with the proper moral and economic circumstances that would not put the child at risk of further harm. Meanwhile, families who participate in foster care were often subject to home visits intended to promote a fondness of cleanliness and modern child-rearing practices. After discussing many interventions underpinned by critiques of parental, especially maternal, preparation and abilities, this chapter features the resurgence of a pro-family discourse and a renewed trust in the family unit. The same pedagogical turn of the 1930s that influenced developments in summer camps sparked debates about residential care reforms and foster care. By the end of the period, there is still an unresolved tension here whether family or the institutional setting was best prepared to deliver that hygienic upbringing and moral education.

CONCLUSION

"The test of social forces is part of the struggle for the nation's existence and the independence of the Republic."

Helena Radlińska, 1939

Poland's history of partition for over a century followed by rebirth after a catastrophic war had a profound impact on its government of childhood and the development of its child welfare regime. During the war, the RGO tapped into an established history of using social work as a vehicle for clandestine activities around national education and development beyond the watchful gaze of hostile authorities. The lack of well-established aid networks combined with the closure of many aid organizations during the first months of the war forced the RGO to rely on rural fostering as one of its primary forms of child rescue. Through child relocation, fundraising, and supporting centers that provided education for children and adults, child saving took on a dimension of nation building before Polish independence was even secured. The RGO, working in a post-imperial context, also leveraged child welfare to endear rural populations to a central state.

Because of the low state capacity to provide universal child welfare services in the early days of the republic, the state had to rely on non-state providers, mainly foreign aid missions, to provide relief for its suffering population. While delivering food and medical aid to children of all ages, the ARA and ARC founded and shaped the Second Republic's child welfare bureau and infant health programs per their own agendas and ideals. The ARA's approach was more paternalistic towards Polish leadership, while the ARC's was more collaborative with local medical authorities. During its early years, the children's welfare bureau struggled to implement American regulations, especially in the eastern regions where people did not respect inspectors' authority as agents of the Polish state. Instead, locals tended to only answer to the Americans,

who they believed controlled the donations. Meanwhile, the ARA also struggled with enforcement because its inspectors had to cover vast territories and did not understand the local terrains or customs.

Infant welfare stations, which became the lasting legacy of the ARC's influence, met with fewer challenges of enactment thanks to aid workers partnering with local physicians and social organizations. After the aid missions departed, infant health became the cornerstone of the Polish state's child welfare campaign. Fearing geopolitical weakness and societal degeneration, Polish leaders saw infant health as more than an investment in future citizens. They saw it as a sign of state power and a metric by which to judge the Second Republic's ability to care for its population, differentiate itself from the partitioners, and place Poland squarely among the "civilized" and "free" countries of the west.

Similar concerns about the physical and moral weakness of younger generations spurred the development of summer camps on a national scale. Each summer, local governments and social organizations transported more and more children out of crowded cities and into the countryside's fresh air for a multi-week stay at camp to strengthen their bodies and minds and make them good citizens of the republic. During the school year, children's health was tended to by school hygiene officers, a measure initially driven by the epidemics that plagued the early republic. Finally, the war and its associated social and economic consequences created a situation in reborn Poland where at least fifteen percent of the child population lacked parental care. During the 1920s, most of these children had to rely on residential institutions. The RGO's wartime relocation program's tarnished legacy delayed the development of foster care until financial necessity forced it in the early 1930s. During the Second World War, foster care once again became an essential tool of child rescue with an estimated 73,000 children living in foster

homes in 1949. After the war, the communist state discouraged foster care in favor of large state-run children's homes.[1]

At the end of the 1930s, children's activists took stock of the country's developments in child welfare and determined that radical changes were still needed. In the final days of its existence, the Polish state continued working to improve its child welfare policies and fulfill the promises made by the 1921 Constitution. On July 13, 1939, the *Sejm* passed its final piece of child welfare legislation facilitating the adoption of abandoned children and children born out of wedlock. However, the law was never able to go into effect.[2]

In the spring of 1939, war with Germany loomed on the horizon. At the end of March, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain promised that Great Britain would do all it could to protect against a German attack on Poland. A month later, Hitler renounced the Polish-German Pact of Non-Aggression. In response to these mounting threats, the editors of the *Life of Youth*, the child welfare bureau's publication formerly called *Child Care* and then *Youth Welfare*, dedicated what turned out to be the journal's penultimate issue to the topic of adapting child welfare in times of war. In the issue, Helena Radlińska, the mother of Polish social work, and Józef Czesław Babicki, a child pedagogue and long-time advisor to the Ministry of Social Welfare, articulated many needs including caring for children during evacuations and in refugee camps, ensuring continuity of care for children's emotional lives, converting barracks into nurseries and preschools, and preparing for the expected onslaught of orphaned, lost, or abandoned children. Radlińska even suggested using the summer camp season of 1939 to teach

[1] Stelmaszuk and Klominek, "Poland," 222-223.
[2] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960," 16.

young people ages fifteen to seventeen about rescue and social welfare work and acquaint them with the "needs of social life."[3]

While Radlińska reflected on social work during times of war broadly, the journal's editors turned to Babicki to synthesize what he learned working with children during the previous war. Babicki warned readers to brace for a wave of children who became either orphaned or separated from their natural guardians. He recommended that authorities immediately begin proper data registration to collect names, birthdates, and family information for as many children as possible. He also encouraged caretakers to have children practice reciting their personal information. He suggested designating "meeting points" in each community where children could gather should they become separated from their families. He addressed preparing children for evacuation, especially those living in institutional settings. He recommended that all children living in institutions be given a backpack with medicine, a warm coat, a light mug, a knife and fork, a change of underclothes, a few cloth bags to carry food, a week's worth of food, and a mask. Children also needed to learn different signals their group's guardian would give.[4]

At the end of the Second Republic, Polish social work and child welfare leaders reflected on the previous twenty years, the Great War, and the partition era to see what lessons and legacies could inform social care in the event of another cataclysm. What does this active period in Polish welfare development teach about how vulnerable sectors of the child population were cared for from 1915 to 1939? Examining sites of biopolitical intervention in childhood including welfare stations, schools, summer camps, soup kitchens, orphanages, foster care, and

---

[3] Helena Radlińska, "Praca społeczna w czasie wojny," *Życie Młodzych* 7/2, no. 5-6 (1939): 140-152; Józef Czesław Babicki, "Opieka nad dziećmi zabłąkanymi opuszczonymi w czasie wojny," *Życie Młodzych* 7/2, no. 5-6 (1939): 155-159. For Helena Radlińska's plan for summer camps, see Helena Radlińska, "Program kształcenia społecznego młodocianych na koloniach i w obozach wakacyjnych," *Życie Młodzych* 7/2, no. 5-6 (1939): 160-164.

[4] Babicki, "Opieka nad dziećmi zabłąkanymi opuszczonymi w czasie wojny," 155-159.

child-relocation schemes reveals how most interventions were the work of a relatively weak government combined with a robust network of foreign and domestic non-state providers. Child care initiatives, which evolved from child rescue to child protection and eventually child preparation, resulted from multiple coalescing forces including the old guard of Polish philanthropy, progressive-era aid workers from the English-speaking world, and Polish leaders in social medicine and social pedagogy. To focus only on state-run policy would miss the complex networks, negotiations, and multiple agendas required to understand a complicated terrain of accessibility, accountability, and capacity.

The presence of active non-state provider networks collaborating with a relatively weak state means that the narrative of inclusion in Polish society and the discourses about children of the Polish republic do not neatly square with the increasingly nationalist and exclusionist policies one usually encounters when studying the Second Republic. The growing influence of discourses from left-leaning activists in social medicine and social pedagogy created a welfare system with a more expansive (although not always clearly defined) sense of which children deserved care. Poland did not have a neatly segregated child welfare system. Instead, it is necessary to look at the type of care (open or closed) and the values and agendas of the group running a particular program or institution. The reliance on local and decentralized care resulted in widely variable accessibility and accountability to various faith or ethnic groups.

Throughout the study, several common themes emerge. One is the desire to distance care work in the Second Republic from past mistakes, especially those that occurred under the partitions, to demonstrate a new commitment to the population. Demonstrating that commitment included expanding care for all infants beyond foundlings, implementing hygiene education at all public and some private schools, sending as many children as possible to summer camps, and

treating orphaned and abandoned children not as social problems or objects of charity but as individuals with rights and future citizens with value and potential. The claim that all children deserve care regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, class, or politics echoed throughout the period, although the actual provision of care to a wide variety of children expanded or contracted depending on the ideological leanings of particular providers, and "care for all" often came with caveats.

A second theme is a push to professionalize the mostly female care force, as the lack of trained medical and pedagogical staff profoundly affected the welfare regime's capacity and accessibility. In the 1920s, several professional schools and training programs began for nurses, social workers, hygienists, and other professional caretakers. These schools and programs created new educational and employment opportunities for women and modernized children's care at various institutions. Other consequences included the increased disciplining of children and adults as they came into contact with the care regime. Time and time again, groups intervened in childhood as a way to reform the practices of adults. Chapters One and Five demonstrate how sending children to the countryside often served the dual purposes of helping children while also promoting cultural missions of nation building among the locals. During World War One, the RGO also attempted to educate rural populations about Polish history by creating daycares and "Save the Children" fundraising. After the war, the ARA leveraged child food aid to enforce certain expectations with the Polish government, the children's welfare bureau, the local welfare committees, and children's kitchens. It implemented strict rules about who could benefit from food aid, symbolically separating children from their family units and sometimes causing great anguish among aid recipients. Through station work, physicians and hygienists disciplined mothers to be attentive, diligent, obedient, and fully embrace the authority

of medical professionals who also saw themselves as social pedagogues reforming family practices. In one particularly tense encounter between a station hygienist and a mother of five, the hygienist threatened the woman that her children would no longer receive support if she did not behave. The home visits accompanying station work and foster care brought care professionals into the previously private domestic space. This access gave them additional opportunities to entice families to embrace modern hygiene and child-rearing. Finally, the interwar period marked several transformations in institutional forms that had existed decades or even centuries prior. "Drops of Milk" became maternal education centers, schools became sites of medical supervision and hygiene education, summer camps and orphanages became schools of good citizenship, and foster care became preparation for life's struggles.

Throughout the interwar period, the welfare regime struggled to overcome numerous challenges. The ever-deteriorating economic situation brought high prices, mass unemployment, housing shortages, and social strife making altering home environments to fit medical and care professionals' expectations impossible. Experts continuously preached guidelines that were entirely out of sync with children's living situations. The constant lack of funds and personnel made enacting universal care on a nationwide scale unfeasible. Officially, states have to treat all citizens equally and provide universal social welfare. However, as Cammett and MacLean articulate, non-state providers "are not created to deliver or mediate universal access to all eligible citizens of a nation-state." Although non-state provision tends to increase social welfare accessibility overall, with specific providers delivering high-quality services in particular locations, it is also "inherently uneven." The Second Republic relied on non-state providers for most of its child welfare services, which resulted in social and geographical disparities that included fewer services for rural and non-Catholic Christian children, especially in the eastern

borderlands. Jewish children often had access to several types of social aid (many of them provided by specifically Jewish organizations), although like all social aid organizations at this time, the demand consistently outpaced the capacity. These same disparities existed in school hygiene, an initiative for which the state was primarily responsible, save for the work of TOZ in Jewish schools.

The periods of social welfare examined in this study present the reader with a number of unresolved tensions. First, philanthropists and care professionals idealized the countryside as a place that could rehabilitate health and restore a sense of childhood to Poland's urban children, yet they largely ignored the health and supervision needs of rural children. Second, several child-focused initiatives were underpinned by anti-family discourses and practices that exercised power on children outside the family unit, while other initiatives (primarily in times of war or economic crisis) relied on the family unit to save children. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, parents, namely mothers, were labeled ignorant, stubborn, and even dangerous, although still trainable. Other times, parents are framed as hopeless, unreformable lost causes. Then, in the 1930s, there was a resurgence of pro-family discourse when families were needed to foster children due to orphanage closures. Third, are the discourses that frame children as innocent victims versus powerful agents of change. Along those lines, it is unclear where the Second Republic's government of childhood imagined children as future or current citizens. Finally, the flourishing of a progressive, child-focused welfare system during peacetime is bookended by the use of more retrograde philanthropic/charitable models during both world wars.

World War Two truncated the Second Republic's child welfare development. It also ushered in similar patterns of care and concern seen during the previous war. Like before, assuring children's physical survival became a top concern. The German occupation and Soviet

actions killed two-million children in Polish territories and led to thirteen-million abandonment cases. Once again, authorities severely restricted the activity of social organizations, and Polish society had to organize all sorts of rescue actions including finding foster families and securing food and material aid. After the war, concerns renewed over the biological survival of the Polish nation similar to what was seen in the early Second Republic, although under quite different political circumstances. In 1947, new legislation replaced the 1923 social welfare law by promising care for the family, mother, and child and proclaiming an individual's right to work, recreation, and education.[5]

The Second World War also marked the return of some familiar figures and organizations. In November 1939, a representative of the Commission for Polish Relief, also called the American Hoover Commission run by the now-former American president Herbert Hoover, met with German authorities to investigate opportunities for American aid. In January 1940, the Office of the General Government authorized the creation of the Main Welfare Council, again called the RGO, although this time headquartered in Cracow. For all the gains expert-run child welfare made in the Second Republic, RGO leadership returned to the hands of the old aristocracy. The RGO's first chairman was Janusz Radziłł, a prince and conservative prewar politician who had served as chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the *Sejm*.[6] Then from June 1940 until his arrest in 1943, the organization was chaired by Adam Ronikier, the same nobleman, conservative social activist, and politician who chaired the RGO during the

[5] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek and Slany, "The System of Care for Abandoned Children in Poland, 1900-1960," 184-185; Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960," 73.
[6] Marcus, *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland,* 393; Joshua D. Zimmerman, *The Polish Underground and the Jews, 1939-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 81.

previous war.[7] The RGO ran a network of regional and municipal welfare councils, just as it had done before. Its responsibilities included aid for natural disasters, assisting refugees and displaced persons, placement of orphaned children in orphanages or foster families, distributing food relief and donations, fighting prostitution, helping the poor and unemployed find work, supporting the families of POWs, organizing and maintaining social care institutions, submitting applications for community funds to aid those in need, and fundraising for its efforts.[8] In March 1941, the Germans removed civilian health from the RGO's purview. Despite notable similarities to World War One, the RGO and other social organizations operated under more severe restrictions during the Second World War. Most Polish voluntary organizations were placed under RGO supervision until German General Governor Hans Frank liquidated them in the summer of 1940. In September 1942, the RGO was named the "only legal organization of voluntary social care."[9] Parallel to the RGO, the Germans also created the Jewish Mutual Aid and the Ukrainian Main Council and then subjugated related lay and religious social organizations under each council.[10] Nazi limitations forced most social welfare organizations to stop their activities or work underground.[11] They also forced Radlińska's school of social work to close, however, it continued clandestine activities from 1939-1945.[12]

---

[7] It was not uncommon for the Germans to entrust individuals with more right-wing political beliefs with social welfare management. Jan Dobraczyński, a senior administrator in the Warsaw welfare department, was a devout Catholic, a member of the far-right ultra nationalist party the Camp of National Unity (*Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego*), and he held the anti-Semetic belief that Poland was for the Poles only. German supervisors trusted him and eventually him promoted to Warsaw's director of the Adult and Child Protective Care Unit. See Mazzeo, *Irena's Children*, 74-5.
[8] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960," 27-28.
[9] Ibid., 56.
[10] Ibid., 28, 39.
[11] For more on child-focused social welfare, aid, and rescue during the Second World War, see Krystyana Kowalkik, *Opieka nad dzieckiem w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, 1986).
[12] Ibid., 56.

When writing in the spring of 1939, Radlińska expressed her faith in the many brave doctors, nurses, social workers, and other young people willing to "enshroud themselves in unknown dangers" to organize social care for Poland's people should a war erupt.[13] And indeed they did, including Radlińska herself. In the face of great danger, Radlińska, a Jewish-born Catholic convert from a family of assimilated Jews and prominent intellectuals, remained active in underground work during the war along with many within her sphere of influence. During the September 1939 bombing of Warsaw, she lost all her books and manuscripts and was seriously injured. Despite spending most of her adult life as a Catholic, Radlińska's Jewish background put her at grave risk, as did her prominence as an intellectual. Radlisnka lost two-thirds of her colleagues during purges of the intelligentsia.[14] Radlińksa's brother, Aleksander Rajchman, a well-known mathematics professor at the University of Warsaw, was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to Sachsenhausen-Oranienburg where he died. Early in the war, she found safe hiding in a convent with Ursuline sisters under the code name "Rudinski." She continued writing, worked with the underground, and built the curriculum for secret university classes. She met and corresponded with colleagues and former students, encouraging them to organize clandestine care work. When Irena Sendler, a former student, met with her in the convent, Radlińska shared her idea of building an underground social welfare system for Jews, who could not receive state welfare. It is unknown the extent of Radlińska's direct influence on Sendler's eventual rescue actions, but files from the Home Army's underground intelligence document that Sendler, a person with many Polish contacts, especially on the left, was in direct contact with Radlińska.[15]

---

[13] Radlińska, "Praca społeczna w czasie wojny," 140.

[14] These purges dealt a significant blow to social welfare, as many of the purged individuals had taught and trained social workers, had many professional contacts in social services, ran social aid institutions, and worked with municipal social workers. See Mazzeo, *Irena's Children,* 39.

[15] Brainerd, "Helena Radlinska: Expanding Conceptualizations of Social Work Practice from Poland's Past," 22; Mazzeo, *Irena's Children*, 33, 38-39, 43-44.

Much has also been written about Irena Sendler, the Warsaw social worker credited with rescuing over two-thousand Jewish children from the Warsaw ghetto through her work with Żegota, the secret Council to Aid Jews (*Rada Pomocy Żydom*) that collaborated with the Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*) from 1942 to 1945.[16] Sendler's efforts earned her recognition as one of Poland's most famous rescuers of Jewish children and Yad Vashem's honor of Righteous Among the Nations.[17] Sendler's bravery, tenacity, ingenuity cannot be understated. However, there is a larger context for her actions. Most of Sendler's contacts in the ghetto were social workers and former students of Radlińska's and Janusz Korczak's, the famous educator and children's home operator who taught at Radlińska's school and was admired by many interwar social workers.[18] Throughout the war, many of Radlinska's former students and others within her circle of influence engaged in self-help, resistance work, and the rescue of thousands of children, especially from the Warsaw ghetto and during the Warsaw uprising.[19] Sendler and other rescuers must be seen as part of a larger movement for social justice composed in part by left-leaning social workers of Christian and Jewish backgrounds whose ideologies, practices, and networks

---

[16] See Mazzeo, *Irena's Children: A True Story of Courage* and Anna Mieszkowska, *Irena Sendler: Mother of the Children of the Holocaust*, trans. Witold Zbirohowski-Koscia (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011). For more about Żegota, see Irene Tomaszewski and Tecia Werbowski, *Code Name: Żegota: Rescuing Jews in Occupied Poland, 1942-45: The Most Dangerous Conspiracy in Wartime Europe* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010).
[17] "Irena Sendler," Yad Vashem: The World Holocaust Rememberence Center, accessed December 31, 2021, https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/stories/sendler.html.
[18] Mazzeo, *Irena's Children*, 70.
[19] Zofia Waleria Stelmaszuk, "Residential Care in Poland: Past, Present and Future," *International Journal of Child and Family Welfare* 5, no 3 (September 2002): 103-104. For example, in 1941, the underground infiltrated the RGO and worked with Jewish charities and Polish gov-in-exile to get aid to families in the Warsaw ghetto. By the fall of 1942, Aleksandra Dargielowa, social worker for the RGO who also worked with Żegota and was in contact with Radlińska, had rescued over five-thousand Jewish children by smuggling them out of the ghetto and placing them in city orphanages with false papers. See Mazzeo, *Irena's Children*, 156. For a list of people in Helena Radlińska's circle who also helped with Irena Sendler's rescue work, see Mazzeo, *Irena's Children*, 271-279. Małek and Szczepaniak-Wiecha also articulate the work of Radlińka and some of her colleagues from the late partition era until after the Second World War in "Female organisers of social care in Poland," 28-33.

developed in the Second Republic inspired and enabled their rescue and social work during the war. In addition to social workers from Radlińska's school, the Second Republic had thousands of nurses, physicians, and other care workers whose wartime efforts and ethics of care also deserve further investigation.

The years after the Second World War saw a resurgence of rescue activities reminiscent of the interwar period. The driving impulse behind these activities was, once again, to counteract threats to the biological existence of Poland's population. During the war and occupation, the country lost over two and a quarter million children, which accounted for thirty-five percent of its total population loss. Like before, orphaned and abandoned children presented in catastrophic numbers, posing as public reminders of the war's assault on the Polish family and its younger generations. Surviving children who had sustained any number of traumas in uprisings, partisan hideouts, and concentration camps were described as "castaways" and "homeless vagabonds" who left their childhoods behind in the "ashes of the family home."[20] Although much energy was dedicated to caring for orphaned and abandoned children after the war, financial resources and personnel were in short supply.[21]

Immediately after the war, child care was still legally governed by the 1923 social assistance law and remained primarily in the hands of non-state actors. Many secular and religious voluntary organizations active during the Second Republic resumed their work, for a time, without limitation. Professional training of social workers also continued thanks to Radlińska's dedication. In 1945, she launched the Department of Social Pedagogics at the Faculty of the Humanities at the University of Łódź. Like its predecessor at the Free People's University, the new school became an important training center and intellectual meeting ground

[20] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek and Slany, "The System of Care for Abandoned Children in Poland, 1900-1960," 184.
[21] Ibid.

for scholars and social workers. The following year, Radlińska founded the Polish Institute of Social Service to study and educate about social life across Poland.[22]

However, significant changes were afoot. In June of 1945, the new government of Poland relegated the care of children three and older to the Ministry of Education, while the Ministry of Health became responsible for regulating the care of children under three. Two years later, the state began systematically limiting the work of voluntary organizations to centralize and nationalize social welfare, healthcare, and education. Independent organizations lost the relative autonomy they had enjoyed and were either liquidated or absorbed into the state's infrastructure. In their place trade organizations and youth, clubs were established that fulfilled the objectives of the communist state. By 1950, the Catholic church's role in charitable organizations was abolished and its leading charity, Caritas, became subordinated to state authority. That same year, the state eliminated local self-government and began nationalizing children's homes and institutions. A renewed focus on institutional care for orphaned and abandoned children curtailed the growth of foster care as the preferred method of upbringing for orphaned and abandoned children. Finally, 1950 also marked Radlińska's firing from her teaching position and the closure of her Department of Social Pedagogics. She died four years later. To mark the transition towards nationalization and centralization, the state launched a six-year plan dedicated to improving orphan care (with the goal of raising such children as future builders of socialism), increasing the number of state-run children's homes, the selection of foster families with appropriate class backgrounds (meaning farmers, workers, and some intelligentsia), and improving childcare institutions that better-allowed women to work outside the home.

By the end of this six-year plan, many of the same that had long-plagued Polish child

---

[22] Ibid., 185; Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960," 40, 59.

welfare persisted, namely low pay for care workers, and lacks in money supplies, trained personnel, established legal norms, and a well-defined methodology for working with abandoned children and youth. Around 1956, new proposals were being made to place a greater emphasis on the prevention of social problems that led to child abandonment, as well as improve child care institutions, care networks, working conditions care workers, and coordination between the various state ministries involved in child care, which now included the Ministries of Work and Social Assistance, Justice, Health, and Education. Methodologically, there was a push to revive the ideas of Johan Pestalozzi and famous interwar Polish pedagogues, Kazimierz Jeżewski and Janusz Korczak, who had famously accompanied his orphans to the Treblinka death camp in 1942. In 1957, many of Radlińska's former students organized a national conference of social workers and pedagogues to define social works roles in Poland's new social and political conditions. Departments of social pedagogics were revived at universities in Warsaw and Łódź. However, they never reached the level of intellectual exchange and innovation seen during the interwar years.[23]

The interwar period left a profound legacy in social work and child welfare that raises questions for future research. What roles did social workers, nurses, doctors, and other professional caregivers from the interwar period play during the war regarding underground work with children, social aid, and resistance to the occupation? How did the more inclusive ideologies of social medicine and social pedagogy; the notion of a child as a child first regardless of ethnicity, religion, or class; the professional networks; and experiences in state and non-state provision influence child welfare and rescue during the Second World War, especially in regards to saving Jewish children? What types of work did these individuals return to after the war, and

---

[23] Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Małek, and Slany, "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960," 32, 42, 61, 69-70, 69; Stelmaszuk, "Residential Care in Poland: Past, Present and Future," 238.

how did they shape welfare provision under the early communist state? As the literature has shown, the story of eastern European social welfare does not necessarily begin or end with regime changes or forms of political rule. It was driven by motivated, tenacious individuals so devoted to their practice and their people that they were determined to administer care according to their vision in even the most dangerous, difficult, or dire of circumstances. It is my hope that this study inspires further research of their work.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archives

Israel

Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem

Poland Collection

Poland

AAN: *Archiwum Akt Nowych (Archive of New Documents), Warsaw*

MOS: Ministerstwo Opieki Społecznej w Warszawie (Ministry of Social Welfare in Warsaw)
RGO: Rada Główna Opiekuńcza w Warszawie (Main Care Council in Warsaw)
UWŁ Urząd Wojewódzki w Łucku (Provincial Administration in Łuck)
UWT Urząd Wojewódzki w Tarnopolu (Provincial Administration in Tarnopol)

ANKr: *Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie (National Archive in Cracow), Cracow*

KD Kursy dokształcające dla wychowawców zakładów opiekuńczych

TOM Zachodnio-galicyjskie Towarzystwo ochrony dzieci i młodzieży (Western-Galician Society for the Protection of Children and Youth)

APŁ: *Archiwum Państwowy w Łodzi (State Archive in Łódź), Łódź*

Towarzystwo Opieki nad Matką i Dzieckiem zbiór szczątków zespołów, 1916-1939 (Society of Care for Mother and Child collection of remains of the records.)

APW: *Archiwum Państwowe w Warszawie (State Archive in Warsaw), Warsaw*

Komisja Ratowania Dzieci Funduszu Amerykańskiego Czerwonego Krzyża w Warszawie (American Red Cross Foundation Commission for the Rescue of Children in Warsaw)

OK *Ośrodek KARTA, KARTA Institute Archive, Warsaw*
AW: Archiwum Wschodnie II

Switzerland

LNA: *League of Nations Archives, Geneva*

1607/8B/6154	Interchange in Poland, 1933
21706/12B/R918	Trachoma Enquiry
28794/12B/R883	Sick nursing and health visiting in Poland.

United States

HIA: *Hoover Institution Archive, Stanford, California*

ARA:	American Relief Administration
ARC:	American National Red Cross
AWF:	Adaline W. Fuller Papers
CP:	Carrie Picket Papers
FWVRC:	Friends' War Victims Relief Committee records 1914-1923
HWH:	Henry W. Hamilton Papers
PGS:	Polish Grey Samaritans
WPF:	William Parmer Fuller Papers

Newspapers and journals

The American Journal of Nursing
Dziecko i Matka
Mały Przegląd
Młoda Matka
Opieka nad Dzieckiem
Opiekun Społeczny
Pielęgniarka Polska
Praca i Opieka Społeczna
Przegląd Społeczny
Życie Dziecka
Życie Młodych

Primary Sources

50 lat działalności Towarzystwa Kolonij Letnich dla Dzieci imienia D-ra Stanisława Markiewicza Markiewicza 1882-1932: Sprawozdanie rachunkowe za rok jubileuszowy 1931/1932. Warsaw: Wojciech Szajer, 1932.

Adamowicz, Stanisława. "Poland." In *International Health Year-book, 1924: Reports on the Public Health Progress in Twenty-Two Countries*, edited by Health Organisation, 385-407. Geneva: League of Nations, 1925.

American Red Cross. *Co uczyni Polskę silną i potężną*. Warsaw: Zakład Grafi "ARS," n.d.

American Red Cross, *Do Dzieci Polskich*. Warsaw: "Jan Cotty," n.d.

American Red Cross. *Do Matek Polek.* Warsaw: B. Wierzbicki i S-ka, n.d.

American Relief Administration. *American Relief Administration European Children's Fund Mission to Poland.* Warsaw: Galewski & Dau, 1922.

Bobrowska, Bronisława. *Rzeczpospolita Dziecięca*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich, 1962.

Bogen, Boris. *Report of the Joint Distribution Committee Activities in Poland, February 920-June 1920*. New York, 1920.

Brooks, Sidney. *America and Poland, 1915-1925: Being the Story of Rebirth and Restoration of the Polish Nation and America's Participation Therein.* N.p: American Relief Administration, 1925.

Center for Urban History of East-Central Europe."Plan of Lwów." 1922. Accessed May 8, 2020. https://www.lvivcenter.org/en/umd/mapdetails/plan-miasta-lwowa-1922/.

Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry. "The Plight of Poland as Seen by Chicago Newspaper Man Returning to His Native Land." *Chicago Commerce* 12 (May 1916): 24-28.

Correspondence Respecting the Relief of Allied Territories in the Occupation of the Enemy. London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1916.

Dawson, Coningsby. *It Might Have Happened to You: A Contemporary Portrait of Central and Eastern Europe*. New York: John Lane, 1921.

Dock, Lavinia L., Sarah Elizabeth Pickett, Clara D. Noyes, Fannie F. Clement, Elizabeth G. Fox, and Anna R. Van Meter, *History of American Red Cross Nursing*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922.

Hersh, Liebmann. "The People's Preventorium for Children at Miedzeszyn (Poland)." *Annals of Collective Economy* 5, no. 2 (1929): 191-200.

Hirshfield, Isidore. *The Joint Distribution Committee Activities in Poland*. N.p., 1922.

Hoover, Herbert. *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: Years of Adventure, 1874-1920*. New York: Macmillan, 1951.

Falska, Maria. *Nasz Dom: Zrozumieć, Porozumieć się, poznać*. Zakład wychowawczy "Nasz Dom": Materiały źródłowe, Vol. 1, eds. Marta Ciesielska and Barbara Puszkin (Warsaw: Anchor, 2007): 121-124.

Główny Urząd Statystyczny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej. *Drugi Powszechny Spis Ludności z dn. 9.XII 1931 r.: mieszkania i gospodarstwa domowe, ludność, stosunki zawodowe: Województwo Nowogródzkie*. Warsaw: Ładem Głównego Urzędu Statystycznego, 1938.

George, William R. *The Junior Republic: Its History and Ideals*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1911.

Goodall, E. W. "Typhus Fever in Poland, 1916-1919." *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 13 (1920): 262-276. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/003591572001301507.

Gromski, Marceli. *Jak wychować zdrowe i silne dziecko*. Warsaw: "ARS," [no date].

Gromski, Marceli and Lucjan Bartel. *Stacja Opieki nad Matką i Dzieckiem: Organizacja i Prowadzenia*. Vol. 2, *Opieka nad Macierzyństwem Dziećmi i Młodzieżą*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Polskiego Komitetu Pomocy Dzieciom "Opieka nad Dzieckiem," 1926.

Grove, William Remsburgh. *War's Aftermath: Polish Relief in 1919*. New York: House of Field, 1940.

Jadłospisy dla kolonji wakacyjnej. Warsaw, M. Arct, 1935.

Kellogg, Vernon Lyman. *Herbert Hoover: The Man and His Work*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1920.

King, Truby. *Najważniejsze błędy w wychowaniu niemowlęcia*, translated by Marceli Gromski. Warsaw: American Red Cross, 1921.

Komitet Polski Międzynarodowego Kongresu Opieki nad Dzieckiem. *Opieka nad Macierzyństwem, Dziećmi, i Młodzieżą w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*. Warsaw: Wł. Łazarskiego, 1928.

Kopczyński, Stanisław. *Opieka higjeniczno-lekarska nad dzieckiem normalnem w szkole*. Vol. 1, *Zagadnienia opieka nad macierzyństwem, dziećmi i młodzieżą w Polsce*. Warsaw, 1929.

Korczak, Janusz. "The Selected Works of Janusz Korczak," edited by Martin Wolins, translated by Jerzy Bachrach. Warsaw: Scientific Publications Foreign Cooperation Center of the Central Institute for Scientific, Technical, and Economic Information, 1967. http://www.januszkorczak.ca/legacy/CombinedMaterials.pdf.

Krahelska, Halina, and Stephan Prus. *The Influence of Unemployment on the Life of Children and Juveniles of the Working Classes in Poland*. Reprinted from *Children, Young People and Unemployment: A Series of Enquiries into the Effects of Unemployment on Children and Youth People, Part II*. Geneva: The Save The Children International Union, 1933.

Kruszewski, Stanisław, and Mirosław Zdziarski. *Życie robotnicze w Polsce, 1913-1921*. Warsaw: "Książka," 1923.

Madajczyk, Piotr ."Testifying to Atrocities: The Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland." *39-45 Chronicles of Terror*. Accessed December 31, 2021. https://www.zapisyterroru.pl/dlibra/context?id=context0.

Majewska Aleksandra, ed. *Rodziny Zastępcze Łodzi*. Łódź: Polski Instytut Służby Społecznej, 1948.

Ogólnopolski Kongres Dziecka. *Wystawa "Dziecko w Polsce": katalog: Warszawa 2-30 październik 1938 r.* Warsaw, 1938.

Puszkin, Barbara, and Marta Ciesielska, ed. *Słowo do dzieci i wychowawców.* Warsaw: Muzeum Historyczne m.st. Warszawy, 2004.

Rada Główna Opiekuńcza. *Ratujmy dzieci! Jak wieś uratowała miejskie dzieci*. Warsaw: Lit. W. Główczewski, 1918.

Radlińska, Helena. "Self Biography." *Pedagogika Społeczna* 17, no. 2 (2018): 61-67.

Shandler, Jeffrey, ed. *Awakening Lives: Autobiographies of Jewish Youth in Poland before the Holocaust*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Soltys, Joachim and Julja Świtalska. "Przytułek dla Dzieci Legionistów, Piotrków." August 22, 1915. Accessed December 31, 2017. http://www.sbc.org.pl/dlibra/doccontent?id=81426&from=PIONIER%20DLF.

Stołeczny Komitet Pomocy Dzieciom i Młodzieży, ed. *Kolonie i półkolonie dla dzieci i młodzieży*. Vol. 1, *Biblioteczka Zagadnień Kulturalno-Wychowawczych* (Warsaw: Stołeczny Komitet Pomocy Dzieciom i Młodzieży, 1938).

Towarzystwo Kolonji Letnich im. H. Wawelberga dla Dzieci Polskich bez Różnicy Wyznania, ed. *Dzieci o Wakacjach: Jednodniówka wydana staraniem Tow. Kolonji Letnich im. H. Wawelberga dla Dzieci Polskich bez Różnicy Wyznania*. Warsaw, 1929.

Toynbee, Arnold. *The Destruction of Poland. A Study in German Efficiency*. London: T. F. Unwin, 1916.

Ustawa Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Dzieci w Krakowie Cracow: Drukarnia Narodowa, 1914.

Wulman, Leon. *5 yor tetikeyt fun "TOZ."* Warsaw: Towarzystwo Ochrony Zdrowia Ludności Żydowskiej w Polsce, 1927.

Secondary Sources

Adams, Matthew Lloyd. "A Few Days in Kiev: The American Relief Administration During the Polish/Soviet War." *Polish Journal for American Studies* 3, no. 3 (2009): 155-171.

______. "Herbert Hoover and the Organization of the American Relief Effort in Poland (1919-1923)." *European Journal of American Studies* 4, no. 2 (Autumn 2009). https://doi.org/10.4000/ejas.7627.

American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Child and Adolescent Health. "The Role of Home Visitation Programs." *Pediatrics* 10, no. 3 (March 1998): 486-489.

Balińska, Marta Aleksandra. "Assistance and Not Mere Relief: The Epidemic Commission of the League of Nations, 1920-1923." In *International Health Organisations and Movements, 1918-1939*, edited by Paul Weindling, 81-108. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

______. "The National Institute of Hygiene and Public Health in Poland, 1918-1939." *The Society for Social History of Medicine* 9, no. 3 (December 1996): 427-445.

Balcerek, Marian. *Rozwój opieki nad dzieckiem w Polsce w latach 1918-1939.* Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1978.

Baron, Nick, and Peter Gatrell, ed. *Homelands: War, Population and Statehood in Eastern Europe and Russia*, *1918-1924*. London: Anthem Press, 2004.

Benedict, Ruth. "Child Rearing in Certain European Countries." In *The Manner Born: Birth Rites in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, edited by Lauren Dundes, 211-217. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003.

Ben-Sefer, Ellen, and Linda Shields. "Courage Under Adversity: Luba Bielkicka-Blum (1906-1973) and the Nursing School of the Warsaw Ghetto." *Health and History* 18, no. 2 (2016): 27-39.

Berding, Joop W. A. "Meaningful Encounter and Creative Dialogue: The Pedagogy of Janusz Korczak." *Journal of Thought* 30, no. 4 (1995): 23-31.

Berger, Susan J. "The Children's Advocate: Janusz Korczak." *American Educational History Journal* 33, no. 2 (2006): 137-142.

Biegańska-Płonka, Maria. "'Kropla Mleka' w Łodzi w latach 1918-1939: Osiągnięcia w profilaktyce dziecięcej—sukces, ale jaki?" *Przegląd Pediatryczny* 38, no. 4 (2008): 302-306.

Birk, Megan. “Supply and Demand: The Mutual Dependency of Children’s Institutions and the American Farmer.” *Agricultural History* 86, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 78-103.

Blobaum, Robert. *A Minor Apocalypse: Warsaw during the First World War*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017.

Boćkowski, Daniel. *Na zawsze razem: Białostocczyzna i Łomżyńskie w polityce radzieckiej w czasie II wojny światowej* (*IX 1939-VIII 1944*). Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Neriton Instytut Historii PAN, 2005.

Bohachevsky-Chomiak, Martha. *Feminists Despite Themselves: Women in Ukrainian Community Life, 1884-1939*. Edmonton, Alberta: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1988.

Bradburn, Elizabeth. “Britain’s First Nursery-Infant School.” *The Elementary School Journal* 67, no. 2 (November 1966): 57-63.

Brainerd, Mary Deller. “Helena Radlinska: Expanding Conceptualizations of Social Work Practice from Poland’s Past.” *International Social Work* 44, no. 1 (2001): 19-30.

Budurowycz, Bohdan. “Poland and the Ukrainian Problem, 1921-1939.” *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 25, no. 4 (December 1983): 473-500.

Burrell, Kathy. *Moving Lives: Narratives of Nation and Migration among Europeans in Post War Britain*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2006.

Buttin, Félix. “The Polish-Czechoslovak Conflict over Teschen Silesia (1918-1920): A Case Study.” *Perspectives* 25 (Winter 2005/2006): 63-78.

Cała, Alina. “Wawelberg, Hipolit.” The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe. YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. Last modified 2010. https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Wawelberg_Hipolit.

Cammett, Melani, and Lauren M. MacLean, ed. *The Politics of Non-State Social Welfare*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014.

Ciancia, Kathryn Clare. “Poland’s Wild East: Imagined Landscapes and Everyday Life in the Volhynian Borderlands, 1918-1939.” PhD diss., Stanford University, 2011.

Ciancia, Kathryn. “Borderland Modernity: Poles, Jews, and Urban Spaces in Interwar Eastern Poland.” *The Journal of Modern History* 89, no. 3 (September 2017): 531-561.

______. *On Civilization’s Edge: A Polish Borderland in the Interwar World.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2021.

Cisińska, Anna. “Stanisław Kopczyński: A Specialist in Internal Medicine and Neurology–Pioneer of School Sanitary Sciences in Poland.” *Polskie Archiwum Medycyny Wewnętrznej* 117, no. 10 (2007): 1-2. https://www.mp.pl/paim/en/node/230/pdf.

Clements, Kendrick A. *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Imperfect Visionary, 1918-1928.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010.

Commons, John R. “The Junior Republic I.” *American Journal of Sociology* 3, no. 3 (1897): 281-296.

Cook, Daniel Thomas, ed. *Symbolic Childhood*. New York: Peter Lang, 2002.

Davies, Norman. *God's Playground: A History of Poland*. Vol. 2, *1795 to the Present*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

Davies, Norman. *White Eagle, Red Star: The Polish-Soviet War 1919-1920 and “The Miracle on the Vistula.”* London: Pimlico, 2003.

Davis, Belinda. *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

De Haan, Francisca, Krassimira Daskalova, and Anna Loutfi, ed. *Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006.

Drain, Paul K., Kristina L. Bajema, David Dowdy, Keertan Dheda, Kogieleum Naidoo, Samuel G. Schumacher, Shuyi Ma, Erin Meermeier, David M. Lewinsohn, and David R. Sherman. “Incipient and Subclinical Tuberculosis: A Clinical Review of Early Stages and Progression of Infection.” *Clinical Microbiology Reviews* 31, no. 4 (2018). https://doi.org/10.1128/CMR.00021-18.

Domżał, Urszula A. *Opieka państwa i organizacja pozarządowych nad dzieckiem w latach 1919-1939*. Łódź: Wydawnictwo WSEZ, 2009.

Donson, Andrew. *Youth in a Fatherless Land: War Pedagogy, Nationalism, and Authority in Germany, 1914-1918*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.

Downs, Laura Lee. *Childhood in the Promised Land: Working-Class Movements and the Colonies de Vacances in France, 1880-1960*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002.

Dubinsky, Karen. “Babies Without Borders: Rescue, Kidnap, and the Symbolic Child.” *Journal of Women's History* 19, no. 1 (2007): 142-150.

Dydusiak, Leon. "Opieka Publiczno-Prawna nad Dzieckiem w Polsce." PhD diss., Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów, 1938.

Efron, Sara Efrat. "Moral Education between Hope and Hopelessness: The Legacy of Janusz Korczak." *Curriculum Inquiry* 38, no. 1 (January 2008): 39-62.

Els, Brian J. "'Creating Free and Good People': Idealization of the Countryside in the Berlin Orphan Administration, 1890-1914." *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2010): 411-426.

Fass, Paula S. ed. *The Routledge History of Childhood in the Western World.* London: Routledge, 2013.

Fidelis, Małgorzata. *Women, Communism, and Industrialization in Postwar Poland*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Fisher, H. H. *America and the New Poland*. With the collaboration of Sidney Brooks. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1928.

Frost, Shimon. "Janusz Korczak: His Life and Work." *Journal of Jewish Education* 33, no. 2 (1963): 89-96.

Fukumoto, Kenshi. "Polyphonic Solidarity in Poland: The Milk Drop Society in Łódź." In *IGK Work and Human Lifecycle in Global History*. A collection of papers presented at the Summer Academy: Work and Non-Work in Global Perspective. Resonances, Connections, and Contradictions. Sogang University, Seoul, South Korea, August 9-16, 2015, 21-25. https://rework.hu-berlin.de/en/summer-academy.html.

Gatrell, Peter. *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia During World War I*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005.

Gelfand, Lawrence E., ed. *Herbert Hoover: The Great War and Its Aftermath, 1914-1923*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.

Hafitka, Alexander. "Wawelberg, Hipolit." In *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia in Ten Volumes: An Authoritative and Popular Presentation of Jews and Judaism Since Early Times*, ed. Isaac Landman. Vol. 10. New York: The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, 1943), 478.

Hamlin, Christopher. "Public Health." In *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Medicine*, edited by Mark Jackson, 411-428. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Haney, Lynne. *Inventing the Needy: Gender and the Politics of Welfare*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002.

Hannan, Kevin. “Borders of Identity and Language in Silesia.” *The Polish Review* 51, no. 2 (2006): 131-145.

Harman, Robin J., and Pamela Mason, ed. “Trachoma.” In *Handbook of Pharmacy Healthcare: Diseases and Patient Advice,* 2nd ed. Grayslake, IL: Pharmaceutical Press, 2002.

Hauss, Gisela, and Dagmar Schulte, ed. *Amid Social Contradictions: Towards a History of Social Work in Europe*. Opladen: Barbara Budrich, 2009.

Healy, Maureen. *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War in Everyday Life in World War I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Hering, Sabine, and Berteke Waalwijk, ed. *History of Social Work in Europe (1900-1960): Female Pioneers and their Influence on the Development of International Social Organizations*. Opalden: Leske + Budrich, 2003.

______. *Guardians of the Poor—Custodians of the Public: Welfare History in Eastern Europe, 1900-1960*. Opladen: Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2006.

Holzer, Jerzy, and Jan Molenda. *Polska w pierwszej wojnie światowej.* Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Wiedza Powszechna, 1973.

Inglot, Tomasz. *Welfare States in East Central Europe, 1919-2004*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Instytut Medycyny im. Witolda Chodźki w Lublinie. “Polskie Towarzystwo Medycyny Społecznej i Zdrowia Publicznego.” Accessed November 24, 2019. http://www.dokumenty.imw.lublin.pl/konferencje/100_lat_PTMSiZP_program.pdf.

Irwin, Julia F. *Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation's Humanitarian Awakening.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Jacobs, Jack. *Bundist Counter Culture in Interwar Poland.* Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2009.

Jamrożek, Mirosława. “Rodzina zastępcza-przeobrażenia i stan badań.” *Studia Pedagogiczne: Problemy Społeczne, Edukacyjne i Artystyczne* 11 (1996): 57-72.

Jasienska, Grazyna. *The Fragile Wisdom: An Evolutionary View on Women's Biology and Health*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.

Jarosza, Dariusz, ed. *Wypoczynek zorganizowany dzieci i młodzieży w Polsce w XX wieku.* Wrocław: GAJT, 2012.

Jones, Owain. “Natural Not! Childhood, the Urban and Romanticism.” *Human Ecology Review* 9, no. 2 (December 2002): 17-30.

Josephson, E. M. “Child Health in Europe.” *Medical Record: A Weekly Journal of Medicine and Surgery* 101, no. 1 (January 7, 1922): 101-103.

Karch, Brendan. *Nation and Loyalty in a German-Polish Borderland: Upper Silesia, 1848-1960*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Karge, Heike, Friederike Kind-Kovács, and Sara Bernasconi, ed. *From the Midwife's Bag to the Patient's File: Public Health in Eastern and Southeastern Europe*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2017.

Kauffman, Jesse. *Elusive Alliance: The German Occupation of Poland in World War I*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015.

Kępski, Czesław. *Dziecko Sieroce i Opieka Rad Nim w Polsce w Okresie Międzywojennym*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 1991.

Kelly, Catriona. *Children's World: Growing up in Russia, 1890-1991*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

Kirshenbaum, Lisa. *Small Comrades: Revolutionizing Childhood in Soviet Russia, 1917-1932*. NewYork: RoutledgeFalmer, 2001.

Kobrin, Rebecca. *Jewish Bialystok and Its Diaspora*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010.

Kowalkowska, Iwona. “The Nursing School at the Orthodox Jew Hospital at Czyste district in Warsaw.” Wirtualne Muzeum Pielęgniarstwa Polskiego. Polskie Towarzystwo Pielęgniarskie Zarząd Główny. Accessed April 7, 2018. http://www.wmpp.org.pl/en/nursing-schools/the-nursing-school-at-the-orthodox-jew-hospital-at-czyste-district-in-warsaw.html.

Kulawiec, E. P. “Testament of an Extraordinary Educator.” *Educational Leadership* 43, no. 8 (May 1986): 69-70.

Kuźma-Markowska, Sylwia. “W trosce o ‘dzieci jutra’: amerykańskie inicjatywy opieki nad niemowlętami w II Rzeczypospolitej.” *Medycyna Nowożytna* 23, no. 1 (2017): 113-138.

______. *Dziecko, rodzina i płeć w amerykańskich inicjatywach humanitarnych i filantropijnych w II Rzeczypospolitej*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2018.

Łapot, Mirosław. "Studium Pracy Społecznej we Lwowie (1935-1939)." *Pedagogika społeczna w Polsce i na świecie* 68, no. 2 (2018): 83-101.

Leś, Ewa. *Zarys historii dobroczynności i filantropii w Polsce*. Warsaw: Prószyński i S-ka, 2001.

Lerski, George J. "Japanese Children." *The Polish Review* 32, no. 3 (1987): 281-285.

Lifton, Betty Jean. *The King of Children: The Life and Death of Janusz Korczak*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1997.

Litt, Jacquelyn S. *Medicalized Motherhood: Perspectives from the Lives of African-American and Jewish Women*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000.

Little, Braden. "Humanitarian Relief in Europe and the Analogue of War, 1914-1918." In *Finding Common Ground: New Directions in the First World War Studies*, edited by Jennifer Keen and Michael Neiberg, 139-158. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

Magocsi, Paul R. *A History of Ukraine: The Land and Its Peoples.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010.

Mahler, Ralph. "Jews in Public Service and the Liberal Professions in Poland, 1918-1939." *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 4 (October 1944): 291-350.

Makari, George. *Revolution in Mind: The Creation of Psychoanalysis*. Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2008.

Marcus, Joseph. *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland, 1919-1939*. Berlin: New Babylon, 1983.

Martin, Sean. "Future Generations: Association for Jewish Children in Krakow, 1918-1939." *The Jews in Kraków*. Vol. 23, *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, edited by Michał Galas and Antony Polonsky, 291-320. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

______. "How to House a Child: Providing Homes for Jewish Children in Interwar Poland." *East European Jewish Affairs* 45, no. 1 (2015): 26-41.

______, ed. and trans. *For the Good of the Nation: Institutions for Jewish Children in Interwar Poland, A Documentary History*. Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2017.

Mayer, Susan L. "Amelia Greenwald." Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia. Jewish Women's Archive. Accessed on April 7, 2018. https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/greenwald-amelia.

Mazowiecka, Krystyna, and Jolanta Załęczny. "Korespondencje." *Notatki Płockie* 29, no. 1-2 (1984): 63-64.

Mazumdar, Pauline M. H. *Eugenics, Human Genetics, and Human Failings: The Eugenics Society, its sources and its critics in Britain*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Mazzeo, Tilar J. *Irena's Children: A True Story of Courage*. New York: Gallery Books, 2016.

Metcalf, Eva-Maria. "Fostering Controlled Dissent: Democratic Values and Children's Literature." In *Change and Renewal in Children's Literature*, edited by Thomas Van der Walkt, Felicité Fairer-Wessels, and Judith Ingss, 79-88. Westport, CN: Praeger, 2004.

Michlic, Joanna Beata. *Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jews from 1880 to the Present*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006.

Mick, Christoph. *Lemberg, Lwów, L'viv, 1914-1947: Violence and Ethnicity in a Contested City*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2016.

Milne, Brian. *The History and Theory of Children's Citizenship in Contemporary Societies*. Heidelberg: Springer Dordrecht, 2013.

Murdoch, Lydia. *Imagined Orphans: Poor Families, Child Welfare, and Contested Citizenship in London*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Muzeum Dulag 121. "Troetzer, Józef (1866-1937)." Accessed December 27, 2017. http://dulag121.pl/niepodlegla/troetzer-jozef-1866-1937/.

Muzeum Historii Miasta Zduńska Wola. "Matki, Żony, Emancypantki." Muzeum Historii Miasta Zduńska Wola-BLOG. Last updated March 13, 2017. http://muzeumzdunskawola.blogspot.com/2017/03/matki-zony-emancypantki.html.

Nash, George H. *The Life of Herbert Hoover: The Humanitarian, 1914-1917.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988.

Nowak-Fabrykowski, Krystyna. "The Care and Education of Orphaned Polish Children: A Success Story." *Childhood Education* 80, no. 6 (August 2004): 300.

Ofer, Dalia. "The Education of Jewish Children in Warsaw during the Nazi Occupation." In *Remembering for the Future: The Holocaust in an Age of Genocide*. Edited by John K. Roth, edited by John K. Roth, Elisabeth Maxwell, Margot Levy, and Wendy Whitworth, 289-301. London: Macmillan, 2001.

Ohry-Kossoy, Karin and Avi Ohry. "Dedicated Physicians in the Face of Adversity: The Association of Jewish Physicians (ZLRP) and the Jewish Health Organization (TOZ) in Poland, 1921-1942." In *Jews in the Former Grand Duchy of Lithuania since 1772*. Vol. 25, *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, edited by Šarūnas Liekis, Antony Polonsky, and ChaeRan Y. Freeze, 455-462. Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2013.

Ostaszewska-Chrzanowska, Barbara. "Antoni Ostaszewski (1896-1946): Lekarz, żołnierz, społecznik." Towarzystwo Lekarskie Warszawskie. Accessed March 29, 2019. http://www.tlw.waw.pl/index.php?id=21&newsy_id=110.

Palczewski, Stanisław. "Pierwsza w Polsce 'Kropla Mleka': Dzieje Stacji Opieki nad Matką i Dzieckiem w Płocku." *Archiwum Historii Medycyny* 40 no. 4 (1977): 441-450.

Payton, Robert L., and Michael P. Moody. *Understanding Philanthropy: Its Meaning and Mission*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008.

Piwowarczyk, Miroslaw. "Selected Forms of Social and Educational Activities of the Union of Civil Activities of Women (Związek Pracy Obywatelskiej Kobiet)." *Czech-Polish Historical and Pedagogical Journal* 4, no. 2 (2012): 13-20.

Plach, Eva. *The Clash of Moral Nations: Cultural Politics in Piłsudski's Poland, 1926-1935*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006.

Polak-Springer, Peter. "Gain Weight, Have Fun, Discover the Motherland: The German-Polish Children's Summer Camp Exchange and Interwar Era Revisionism." *Contemporary European History* 30, no. 2 (2020): 214-230.

POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews. "Workers' Apartments of the Wawelberg Foundation (Warsaw)." Virtual Shtetl. Accessed June 9, 2021. https://sztetl.org.pl/en/towns/w/18-warsaw/113-heritage-sites/28963-workers-apartments-wawelberg-foundation-warsaw.

Polonsky, Antony. "'Why Did They Hate Tuwim and Boy So Much?' Jews and 'Artificial Jews' in the Literary Polemics of the Second Republic." In *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland*, edited by Robert Blobaum, 189-209. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005.

Porter, Dorothy, and Ray Porter. "What Was Social Medicine? An Historiographical Essay." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1, no. 1 (March 1988): 90-106.

Przeniosło, Marek. *Chłopi Królestwa Polskiego w latach 1914-1918*. Kielce: Wydawnictwo Akademii Świętokrzyskiej, 2003.

Salmon, David and Winifred Hindshaw. *Infant Schools: Their History and Theory*. New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1904.

Schilde, Kurt, and Dagmar Schulte. *Need and Care: Glimpses into the Beginnings of Eastern Europe's Professional Welfare*. Opladen: Barbara Budrich, 2005.

Schumann, Dirk, ed. *Raising Citizens in the Century of the Child: The United States and German Central Europe in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2010.

Schnell, Patience. "Nationalizing Children Through Schools and Hygiene: Porfirian and Revolutionary Mexico City." *The Americas* 60, no. 4 (April 2004): 559-587.

Smith, Karen. *The Government of Childhood: Discourse, Power, and Subjectivity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Snyder, Timothy. *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

Snyder, Timothy. *Sketches from a Secret War: A Polish Artist's Mission to Liberate Soviet Ukraine*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

Starks, Tricia. *The Body Soviet: Propaganda, Hygiene, and the Revolutionary State*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008.

Steffen, Katrin. "Experts and the Modernization of the Nation: The Arena of Public Health in Poland in the First Half of the Twentieth Century." *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 61, no. 4 (2013): 574-590.

Stelmaszuk, Zofia Waleria. "Helena Radlinska and the School of Adult Education and Social Work at the Free University in Poland." In *Cultural and Intercultural Experiences in European Adult Education: Essays on Popular and Higher Education since 1890*. Vol. 3, *Leeds Studies in Continuing Education: Cross-Cultural Studies in the Education of Adults*, edited by Stuart Marriott and Barry J. Hake, 224-246. Leeds: University of Leeds, 1994.

______. "Residential Care in Poland: Past, Present and Future." *International Journal of Child and Family Welfare* 5, no. 3 (September 2002): 102-111.

Stelmaszuk, Zofia Waleria, and Wanda Klominek. "Poland." In *The World of Foster Care: An International Source Book on Foster Family Care Systems*, edited by M. J. Colton and Margaret Williams, 221-235. Brookfield, VT: Arena, 1997.

Sterkowicz, Stanisław. "Krakowska Kropla Mleka." *Polski Tgodnik Lekarski* 7, no. 14 (1952): 413-415.

Stone, Daniel Z. "An Introduction to Polish Democratic Thought." In *The Origins of Modern Polish Democracy*, edited by M.B.B. Biskupski, James S. Pula, and Piotr J. Wróbel, 1-23. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010.

Suchmiel, Jadwiga. "Idea i organizacja galicyjskiej akcji 'Dzieci na wieś,'" *Pedagogika*, 22 (2013): 399-408.

Supady, Jerzy. "Powstanie i Działalność Łódzkiej Kropli Mleka w Latach 1904-1914." *Zdrowie Publiczne* 88, no. 6 (1977): 411-415.

Surface, Frank M., and Raymond L. Blank. *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period: Operations of the Organizations Under the Direction of Herbert Hoover, 1914-1924*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1931.

Szczepaniak-Wiecha, Izabela Agnieszka Małek, and Krystyna Slany. "History of Social Work in Poland 1900-1960: Final Report of Polish Team." Network for Historical Studies on Gender and Social Work in Europe, University of Siegen. Accessed April 16, 2016. http://www.sweep.uni-siegen.de/content/Results/Results/Final_Reports_PDFs/Poland_Finalreport.pdf.

Szczepańska, Beata. "Work of Jewish Medical Community and the Health Culture at School in the Second Republic of Poland (1918-1939)." In *Jewish Medicine and Healthcare in Central Eastern Europe: Shared Identities, Entangled Histories*, edited by Marcin Moskalewicz, Ute Caumanns, and Fritz Dross, 97-108. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2019.

Taboryski, Michał. "O poglądach i postawie politycznej Janusza Korczaka." *Z Pola Walki* 30, no. 4 (September 1987): 81-100.

Taylor, Hugh R. *Trachoma: A Blinding Scourge from the Bronze Age to the Twenty-First Century* East Melbourne, Victoria: Center for Eye Research Australia, 2008.

Theiss, Władysław. *Dzieci syberyjskie: dzieje polskich dzieci repatriowanych z Syberii i Mandżurii w latach 1919-1923*. Warsaw: Uniwersytet Warszawski, 1992.

Tomka, Béla. *A Social History of Twentieth-Century Europe*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Toubas, Paul L. "Dr. Pierre Budin: Promoter of Breastfeeding in 19th century France." *Breastfeeding Medicine* 2 no. 1 (March 2007): 45-49.

Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzieci: Organizacja Pożytku Publicznego. "Historia Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Dzieci." Accessed June 16, 2021. https://zg.tpd.org.pl/pl/nasza-historia-2/historia/919-dziaalno-towarzystwa-przyjacio-dzieci-rys-historyczny-2.html.

Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzieci Oddział Mazowiecki. "Historia TPD." Accessed June 16, 2021. https://www.tpd-maz.org.pl/index.php/o-nas-tpdmaz/historia

Tracewski, Bogdan. "Praca Socjalna: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Dzieci ma już 90 lat." *Praca Socjalnej* 1, no. 5 (2009): 66-96.

Turda, Marius, ed. *The History of East-Central European Eugenics, 1900-1945: Sources and Commentaries*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.

______. "History of Medicine in Eastern Europe, Including Russia." In *A Global History of Medicine*, edited by Mark Jackson, 96-117. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Turda, Marius and Paul J. Weindling, eds. *Blood and Homeland: Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900-1940*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007.

Turitz, Leo E. "Amelia Greenwald: The Jewish Florence Nightingale." *American Jewish Archives* 37, no. 2 (1985): 291-292.

Vaculik, Jaroslav. "Views of School Hygiene in Poland Between the Wars." *School and Health*, 21 (2009): 51-54.

Valeeva, Roza A., and Irina D. Demakova. "Humanization of Education in the Context of Janusz Korczak Pedagogical Ideas." *Review of European Studies* 17, no. 4 (2015): 161-171.

Valley, Eli. *The Great Jewish Cities of Central and Eastern Europe: A Travel Guide and Resource Book to Prague, Warsaw, Cracow, and Budapest*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005.

Wandycz, Piotr S. *The Lands of Partitioned Poland,1795-1918*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974.

Watson, Alexander. *Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary in World War I*. New York: Basic Books, 2014.

Weiser, Kalman. *Jewish People, Yiddish Nation: Noah Prylucki and the Folkist in Poland*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011.

Wentling, Sonja Schoepf, and Rafael Medoff. *Herbert Hoover and the Jews: The Origins of the "Jewish Vote" and Bipartisan Support for Israel*. Washington, D.C.: David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies, 2012.

Wojtyniak, Józef, and Helena Radlińska. *Sieroctwo: zasięg i wyrównywanie*. Łódź: Polskie Instytut Służby Społecznej, 1946.

Wulman, Leon, and Joseph Tenenbaum. *The Martyrdom of Jewish Physicians in Poland*, edited by Louis Falstein. New York: Exposition Press, 1964.

Yad Vashem: The World Holocaust Rememberence Center. "Irena Sendler." Accessed December 31, 2021. https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/stories/sendler.html.

Załęczny, Jolanta. "Kilka uwag na temat płockiej gminy żydowskiej w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym." *Notatki Płockie* 29, no. 1-2 (1984): 24–28.

Zahra, Tara. "Each Nation Only Cares For Its Own: Empire, Nation, and Child Welfare Activism in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1918." *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (December 2006): 1378-1402.

______. *Kidnapped Souls*: *National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.

______. "Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis." *Slavic Review* 60, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 93-119.

Zieliński, Konrad. *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie na ziemiach Królestwa Polskiego w czasie pierwszej wojny światowej*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2005.

Žalnora, Aistis. "Development of Public Health Science at the Stephen Bathory University and Public Health Conditions in the Vilnius Province in the Years of 1919-1939," PhD diss., Vilnius University, 2015.

Zimmerman, Joshua D. *The Polish Underground and the Jews, 1939-1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

VITA

EDUCATION

Ph.D.	Dissertation defended January 2022, degree awarded May 2022, University of Illinois at Chicago, History, Doctoral Candidate, Ph.D.
M.A.	2019, University of Illinois at Chicago, History
B.A.	2003-2007 Carroll College, Helena, Montana, History and Psychology, *Summa Cum Laude*

FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

2015-2016	History of Poland Fellowship, University of Illinois at Chicago
2014-2015	Institute of the Humanities Dissertation Fellow, University of Illinois at Chicago
2012-2013	Fulbright International Institute for Education Research Fellowship to Poland
2012-2013	American Council for Learned Societies Dissertation Research Fellowship in Eastern European Studies (declined)
2008-2012	Jacob K. Javits Fellowship

PUBLICATIONS

Barry Doyle, Frank Brombir, Melissa Hibbard, and Balazs Szelinger, "The development of hospital systems in new nations: Central Europe between the Two World Wars," in The *Political Economy of The Hospital in History*, ed. Martin Gorsky, Margarita Vilar-Rodriguez, and Jeronia Pons-Pons (Huddersfield, UK: University of Huddersfield Press, 2020): 137-180.

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

"Health and Hygiene for School-Aged Children in Interwar Poland," Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies, Virtual Convention, November 7, 2020.

"Hospitals in Interwar Poland," European Healthcare before Welfare States Workshop, University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield, UK, February 17, 2017.

"Child-Citizen or Child-Pole? Competing Ideologies of Childhood in Interwar Poland," Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies, Philadelphia, PA, November 19-21, 2015

"Child Catholic or Child Pole: Competing Visions of Child Care in the Interwar Polish Republic," Society of the Study of Childhood in the Past, 8th International Conference, DePaul University, September 11-13, 2015.

"Urban Children, Rural Spaces: Child Rescue and the Cultural Politics of Integration," Third Annual International Conference in Polish Studies, University of Illinois, April 13-14, 2015.

"Nurturing Newborn Poland: Infant Health and Medicalized Motherhood," Third Midwest Historians of East Central Europe Workshop, University of Illinois at Chicago, February 27-28, 2015.

"'A Bit of American Philanthropy in Swampy Pińsk': Child Relief Work in Eastern Poland, 1919-1922," 129th Annual Meeting of the American History Association, panel sponsored by the Society for History of Children and Youth, January 2-5, 2015.

LANGUAGES

Polish	reading, speaking, writing
Yiddish	reading, speaking, writing
German	reading