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UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN: UNRRA AND DISPLACED
CHILDREN IN THE UNITED STATES' ZONE OF OCCUPIED
GERMANY (1945-1947)

The Graduate School of Economic and Social Sciences

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WIDY NOVANTYO SUSANTO

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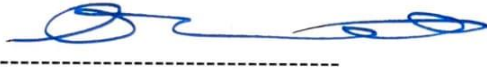
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Asst. Prof. Dr. Paul Latimer

Supervisor

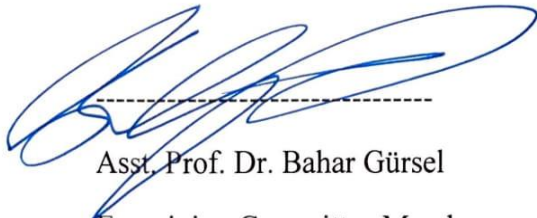
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Asst. Prof. Dr. Kenneth Weisbrode

Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in History.



Asst. Prof. Dr. Bahar Gürsel

Examining Committee Member

Approval of the Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences



Prof. Dr. Halime Demirkan

Director

ABSTRACT

UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN: UNRRA AND DISPLACED CHILDREN IN THE UNITED STATES' ZONE OF OCCUPIED GERMANY (1945-1947)

Susanto, Widy Novantyo

M.A., Department of History
Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Paul Latimer

August 2018

After World War II the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was tasked with providing assistance to millions of displaced people in Europe including unaccompanied children discovered in the US Zone of Occupied Germany. Mainly victims of Germanization, UNRRA's mission was to identify the nationalities of the children and to rehabilitate them through renationalization and repatriation. Determining the nationalities of the children was not as clear cut as UNRRA anticipated it to be. To have an understanding of the difficulties UNRRA faced, the relationship between UNRRA and other governing bodies such as OMGUS (Office of Military Government, United States), German authorities and the officials representing Central and Eastern European Governments need to be explored as their objectives did not necessarily align with each other. OMGUS was unwilling to remove the children due to protests from German authorities while the Central and Eastern European governments called for repatriation. UNRRA sided with these governments but the actions they could take were limited as they operated under

OMGUS's authority. In support of the German authorities, OMGUS introduced policies with the aim of preventing UNRRA and the liaison officers from removing the children from German homes and institutions. This thesis argues that UNRRA's process of determination of nationality became a cause of confusion and disagreement amongst the different bodies dealing with the unaccompanied children. UNRRA's attempts to overturn OMGUS's policies shows that these competing objectives were detrimental to UNRRA's mission and led to its child search operations come to a standstill.

Key words: Displaced Persons, Germany, Unaccompanied Children, United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, United States

ÖZET

REFAKATSİZ ÇOCUKLAR: ALMANYA'NIN ABD İŞGAL ALTINDAKİ BÖLGESİNDE YERİNDEN EDİLMİŞ ÇOCUKLAR VE UNRRA (1945-1947)

Susanto, Widy Novantyo

Yüksek Lisans, Tarih Bölümü
Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Paul Latimer

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II. Dünya Savaşı'nı takiben Birleşmiş Milletler Yardım ve Rehabilitasyon İdaresi (UNRRA) Avrupa'da, İşgal Almanyası'nın Amerikan Bölgesi'ndeki refakatsiz çocuklar da dahil olmak üzere, yerinden edilmiş milyonlarca kişiye yardım etmekle görevlendirilmiştir. UNRRA'nın misyonu çoğunlukla Almanlaştırma mağduru olan bu çocukların uyruklarını tespit etmek ve yeniden millileştirme ve ülkelerine iade yöntemleriyle onları rehabilite etmektir. Fakat çocukların uyruklarını tespit etmek UNRRA'nın beklediği kadar kolay ve net işlememiştir. UNRRA'nın karşılaştığı zorlukları anlamak için UNRRA ve Amerikan Askeri Yönetimi (OMGUS), yetkili Alman makamları, ve Orta ve Doğu Avrupa temsilcileri gibi diğer idari organlar arasındaki ilişkiler incelenmelidir. Zira bu kurum ve kuruluşların amaçları her zaman aynı doğrultuda olmamıştır. OMGUS Alman yetkililerinin itirazları dolayısıyla bu çocukları yerlerinden nakletmekte isteksizken, Orta ve Doğu Avrupa hükümetleri çocukların ülkelerine iadeleri için çağrılarda bulunmaktaydı. Her ne kadar UNRRA genellikle bu hükümetlerle hemfikir idiyse de, OMGUS'un otoritesi altında faaliyet

gösterdiği için uygulamaya koyabildiği adımlar sınırlıydı. OMGUS, yetkili Alman makamlarına destek vermek amacıyla, UNRRA ve irtibat subaylarının bu çocukları Alman evlerinden ve kuruluşlarından alınmasına engel olacak politikalar ortaya koymuştur. Bu tez UNRRA'nın uyruk tespiti sürecinin refakatsiz çocuklarla ilgilenen farklı organlar arasında karmaşa ve anlaşmazlıklara sebep olduğunu savunmaktadır. UNRRA'nın soruna verdiği tepki, bu çakışan amaçların kurumun misyonunu aksattığını ve neticede çocuk arama operasyonlarının durmasına sebep olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Almanya, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, Birleşmiş Milletler Yardım Ve Rehabilitasyon İdaresi, Refakatsiz Çocuklar, Yerinden Edilmiş Kişiler

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CTS	Child Tracing Section
DPs	Displaced Persons
EUCOM	Headquarters, European Command
IRO	International Refugee Organization
OMGB	Office of Military Government for Bavaria
OMG FOR GREATER HESSEN	Office of Military Government for Greater Hessen
OMGUS	Office of Military Government, United States
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
USFET	The United States Forces European Theater

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Objectives

The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was an international relief organization founded during the Second World War. Forty-four nations including China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States, agreed to establish UNRRA in November 1943. This organization, which was primarily an Anglo-American post-war project, was created with the aim of providing aid to countries and people affected by the war.¹ The largest contributor to UNRRA's relief effort from 1943 to 1947 was the United States with \$2.7 billion and Britain second with \$625 million.² The recipients of UNRRA's aid, which came in the form of necessities such as food, clothing and medical services, were widespread throughout the world and included countries such as Poland, Yugoslavia, Greece,

¹ Jessica Reinisch, "Auntie UNRRA at the Crossroads," *Past & Present* 218, no. Suppl 8 (2013): 70-97, doi:10.1093/pastj/gts035.

² George Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, Vol. III* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 428.

Italy, and China. UNRRA was closed and replaced by the International Refugee Organization (IRO) in 1947.³

One of the most difficult and important tasks UNRRA undertook throughout its existence was the attempt to solve the “displaced persons (DPs)” crisis in Europe. As a result of World War II the number of people who had been uprooted from their homes and countries reached millions. DPs were defined as United Nations nationals who were displaced during the war and were found in territories recovered by the Allies. This group included prisoners of war, foreign workers, slave laborers and concentration camp survivors. Germans who were displaced did not qualify for UNRRA’s aid unless they were victims of Nazi persecution.⁴

The statistics for DPs presented by UNRRA are difficult to verify as they may differ according to various sources. For example, there may have been inaccuracies in the number of Jewish DPs they registered as they were categorized by UNRRA as “Undetermined” in the early months after the war but were recorded as Jewish in the following months. Another example of a discrepancy is that in the month of June 1946 some of the DPs registered as Polish were most likely to actually be Baltic, Russian or Ukrainian DPs attempting to escape repatriation to the Soviet Union.⁵ During the 1945 Yalta Conference the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union agreed to an exchange of DPs and Prisoners of War. The Soviet Union was authorized to access areas occupied by the Western Allies to repatriate Soviet citizens

³ United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, *Out of the Chaos*. (Washington, 1945); Herbert H. Lehman Collections, "Agreement for United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (Washington, 9 November 1943)," accessed April 8, 2018, http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/collections/rbml/lehman/pdfs/0116/ldpd_leh_0116_0007.pdf.

⁴ Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 5; W. Arnold-Forster, "U.N.R.R.A.s Work for Displaced Persons in Germany," *International Affairs* 22, no. 1 (January 1946): doi: 10.2307/3017866.

⁵ Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 7.

(by force if necessary). The Soviet Union in return agreed to repatriate American and British nationals to their countries.⁶ To get a general understanding of the vastness of the DP problem, UNRRA's monthly figures for the month of December 1945 to June 1947 may be utilized as reference points. According to these numbers the majority of DP's receiving assistance from UNRRA by "claimed nationality" was recorded as Polish nationals. Other significant numbers of people who qualified for UNRRA aid included the Jewish, Yugoslavian and Soviet populations.⁷

In Germany alone there were approximately 8 million DPs and UNRRA's mission was to return these "Displaced Persons back home." Towards the end of 1945 UNRRA had repatriated approximately 6 to 7 million DP's to their home countries (some voluntarily and others by force).⁸ In the Allied occupied zones in Germany the figures show that UNRRA assisted DP's in the hundreds of thousands in the US and British Zones and tens of thousands in the French Zone. UNRRA was not authorized to work in the Soviet Zone by the USSR although they were allowed to provide aid in the Soviet Union.⁹

⁶ Anna Marta Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015), 38.

⁷ Woodbridge, 423.

⁸ Cohen, 5; United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. *Out of the Chaos*, (Washington, 1945), 8.

⁹ Woodbridge, 422; Lynne Taylor, *In the Children's Best Interests: Unaccompanied Children in American-Occupied Germany* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 37.

Table 1: Number of Displaced Persons Receiving UNRRA Assistance (in Germany, Austria, Italy, the Middle East and China) by Claimed Nationality

Month	Claimed Nationality	Total
December 1945	Czechoslovakia	2,943
	Poland	438,649
	USSR	21,435
	Yugoslavia	41,072
	Jewish	18,361
	Total	736,014
March 1946	Czechoslovakia	3,001
	Poland	476,964
	USSR	5,439
	Yugoslavia	27,521
	Jewish	58,964
	Total	827,699
June 1946	Czechoslovakia	1,740
	Poland	369,284
	USSR	4,561
	Yugoslavia	27,437
	Jewish	97,333
	Total	773,248
September 1946	Czechoslovakia	1,048
	Poland	341,968
	USSR	10,610
	Yugoslavia	23,680
	Jewish	145,820
	Total	781,359

Table 1 (cont'd)

December 1946	Czechoslovakia	1,041
	Poland	276,785
	USSR	11,821
	Yugoslavia	17,124
	Jewish	184,211
	Total	746,283
March 1947	Czechoslovakia	1,144
	Poland	193,331
	USSR	9,076
	Yugoslavia	19,539
	Jewish	181,042
	Total	720,604
June 1947	Czechoslovakia	700
	Poland	166,181
	USSR	6,771
	Yugoslavia	17,232
	Jewish	167,531
	Total	642,749

Source: George Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, Vol. III* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 423.

Table 2: Number of Displaced Persons Receiving UNRRA Assistance in Allied Occupied Germany

Month	Region	Total
December 1945	U.S. Zone	307,301
	British Zone	318,787
	French Zone	51,320
March 1946	U.S. Zone	337,503
	British Zone	372,637
	French Zone	48,241
June 1946	U.S. Zone	368,210
	British Zone	298,981
	French Zone	42,235
September 1946	U.S. Zone	402,961
	British Zone	259,222
	French Zone	33,447
December 1946	U.S. Zone	378,277
	British Zone	225,913
	French Zone	35,494
March 1947	U.S. Zone	366,179
	British Zone	217,336
	French Zone	189,119
June 1947	U.S. Zone	336,701
	British Zone	189,119
	French Zone	33,031

Source: George Woodbridge, *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, Vol. III* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 422.

Included the large group of DPs under UNRRA's care were the displaced children who were fewer in comparison but still significant in the eyes of the organization. Referred to as the "unaccompanied children," these were children under the age of 18 who were survivors of Nazi concentration camps, forced labor camps, and *Lebensborn* homes (where they were subjected to Germanization).¹⁰ The exact numbers of unaccompanied children is difficult to verify as well, but by September 1945 it was reported that UNRRA had aided and repatriated approximately 20,000 unaccompanied children out of the 6 million DPs that were sent back to their countries. By June 1947 UNRRA had managed 22,058 cases of unaccompanied children combined in the US, British and French Zones of Germany and Austria. Most of these children came from countries in Central and Eastern Europe such as Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Authorities in Poland claimed that they were missing 200,000 children but more accurate numbers place the estimates in between 20,000 and 50,000 children.¹¹

After the war UNRRA created the Child Tracing Section (CTS) as a separate subdivision with the purpose of finding and taking care of missing unaccompanied children who had been victims of Nazi persecution. UNRRA's child search teams discovered non-German children in the homes and institutions of German people. UNRRA's guiding principle was the rehabilitation of the unaccompanied children they had encountered during their searches. The welfare workers' mission was to reverse the effects of Germanization as many of the children they had found were

¹⁰ Simone Gigliotti and Monica Tempian, *The Young Victims of the Nazi Regime: Migration, the Holocaust and Postwar Displacement* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 278.

¹¹ Louise Wilhelmine Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 502; Tara Zahra, "Lost Children: Displaced Children between Nationalism and Internationalism after the Second World War," ed. Nick Baron, in *Displaced Children in Russia and Eastern Europe, 1915-1953: Ideologies, Identities, Experiences* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 190-191; Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 201.

either kidnapped or left by their parents to the Nazi authorities during the war. To achieve this UNRRA had a step-by-step process which included locating the children, finding their identities and nationalities, removing the children from German homes and institutions and sending them to UNRRA children's centers for "renationalization," and finally reuniting them with their families and/or repatriating them to their native countries.¹²

Nevertheless, as UNRRA continued to find more unaccompanied children they discovered that determining the nationalities was not as straightforward as they may have anticipated it to be. The question of nationality brought with it the problem of who would have the final say in the fate of the children. And to have an understanding of the difficulties the welfare workers faced, the relationship between UNRRA and other governing bodies such as OMGUS (Office of Military Government, United States), German authorities and the officials representing the governments of Central and Eastern Europe need to be explored, as the objectives of each party did not necessarily align with each other. While OMGUS was unwilling to remove and repatriate these children due to the protests of German authorities, the Central and Eastern European Governments were usually eager for the return of the unaccompanied children. UNRRA typically sided with the liaison officers who encouraged repatriation but the actions they could take were limited as they operated under the authority of OMGUS. In support of the German authorities, OMGUS introduced policies with the aim of preventing UNRRA and the liaison officers from removing the children from German homes and institutions. This thesis argues that UNRRA's process of determination of nationality became a cause of confusion and disagreement amongst the different bodies dealing with the unaccompanied children.

¹² Tara Zahra, *"Lost Children,"* 200.

UNRRA's response, specifically through protests and calls to overturn OMGUS's removal policies, shows that these competing objectives were detrimental to UNRRA's mission and led to its child search operations come to a standstill.

1.2 Historiography

Early studies of UNRRA and the IRO can be found in the official writings released by the agencies themselves. For example, in 1950 George Woodbridge, the official UNRRA historian, released the work titled *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* which was released in three volumes.¹³ In 1956, Louise W. Holborn published *The International Refugee Organization: A Specialized Agency of the United Nations. Its History and Work, 1946-1952*. Both of these publications include information such as the history of the organization and how it was created, statistics and their work with the DPs.¹⁴

Subsequent works that analyze UNRRA and DP's in Europe after the Second World War can be found in studies such as Mark Wyman's *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945-1951*. Through various sources including interviews with DP's, Wyman places the experiences of the DP's in the Allied Zones of Occupied Germany as the central focus of the book.¹⁵ In *The Bitter Road to Freedom: A New History of the Liberation of Europe*, William I. Hitchcock provides an account of the effects of war on civilians during and after Allied victories. In the sections related to UNRRA, Hitchcock explains the creation of the organization and the difficulties it faced implementing its mission of providing humanitarian aid in places such as Egypt, Italy,

¹³ Woodbridge.

¹⁴ Louise Wilhelmine Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization: A Specialized Agency of the United Nations: Its History and Work, 1946-1952* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956).

¹⁵ Mark Wyman, *DPs: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945-51* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

Greece and Yugoslavia.¹⁶ Anna Holian also places agency amongst DPs in her book *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: Displaced Persons in Postwar Europe*. Holian analyzes the differences between Jewish DPs and Eastern European DPs of Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian origin. She presents an explanation of the differences in understanding of wartime experiences as well as the postwar national and political objectives between these two groups of DPs.¹⁷

In addition to the literature of examining the importance of the DPs experiences, other historians have instead brought UNRRA to the forefront of their work. For instance, Jessica Reinisch has provided important contributions to the study of the history of UNRRA. One example of a publication by Reinisch is *'Auntie UNRRA' at the Crossroad*. In *'Auntie UNRRA,'* Reinisch examines the effect of the Cold War on UNRRA's relief workers and how they were reluctant to conform to the idea of rising tensions between the Western Allies and the Eastern Communist controlled lands. The relief workers considered themselves as important assets for the understanding of the culture of the countries in the Eastern bloc but their efforts were limited due to the United States' understanding of a bipolar world and desire to stop all aid to the Iron Curtain.¹⁸ Silvia Salvatici in *'Help the People to Help Themselves': UNRRA Relief Workers and European Displaced Persons* also focuses on UNRRA's relief workers. Salvatici analyzes the perceptions of the relief workers towards the DPs under their care. UNRRA's workers considered themselves as "rescuers" of the DPs as Salvatici explains that UNRRA's employees approach to humanitarian aid was based on the

¹⁶ William I. Hitchcock, *The Bitter Road to Freedom: A New History of the Liberation of Europe* (New York: Free Press, 2009), 400-465.

¹⁷ Anna Marta Holian, *Between National Socialism and Soviet Communism: Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015).

¹⁸ Jessica Reinisch, "Auntie UNRRA at the Crossroads," *Past & Present* 218, no. Suppl 8 (2013): 70-97, doi:10.1093/pastj/gts035.

view that the displaced were “passive and apathetic” and were not able to function in the society.¹⁹

In the past decade the literature on UNRRA’s work as an international organization has also expanded to include the topic of child displacement. Initially this subject has been written in the context of the larger DP situation after World War II. An example of this is Mark Wyman’s *DPs: Europe’s Displaced Persons, 1945-1951*. In this work Wyman dedicates a chapter and provides a general account of displaced children describing their experiences during wartime and life in DP camps. In relation to Germanization Wyman states that the objectives of the Nazis in kidnapping children from countries they had occupied was based on Adolph Hitler’s vision of a master race and strengthening Germany as a nation. Children taken away would weaken the invaded countries leaving Germany considerably powerful even if it was to lose the war. Secondly, the German population would still be intact despite the fact that they were losing their own people in the war. In relation to child search efforts and postwar aid by UNRRA towards displaced children Wyman claims that the most important method of identifying children who were victims of Germanization was through the language skills that UNRRA’s teams had. As UNRRA workers interviewed the children they came across accounts where children started to admit they were kidnapped or started to speak their native languages again once they were removed from a German setting.²⁰

In other bodies of work on child displacement a theme that is explored is the relationship and disagreements UNRRA had with other relief organizations, military bodies, and national governments. This topic consists of debates on what constituted

¹⁹ S. Salvatici, "Help the People to Help Themselves: UNRRA Relief Workers and European Displaced Persons," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 25, no. 3 (2012); doi:10.1093/jrs/fes019.

²⁰ Mark Wyman, *DPs*, 86-105.

the best interests of the child. The various governing bodies usually had different approaches on what they considered to be the best steps to take when it came to the fate of the children.

One example of this approach is Susan E. Armstrong-Reid and David Murray's *Armies of Peace: Canada and the UNRRA Years*. The authors dedicate a chapter to this issue focusing mainly on the contributions of Canadian social workers in UNRRA and its efforts towards women and children. Armstrong-Reid and Murray provide examples of problems UNRRA welfare workers faced with the organization itself, German foster parents, and the liaison officers of the Soviet Union. Focusing specifically on a welfare worker named Jean Henshaw, the authors explain how UNRRA was dedicated to their mission of renationalizing and repatriating unaccompanied children. Through the writings of the welfare workers the authors present the case that despite the positive outlook UNRRA described of the rehabilitating effects of repatriation, the organization had administrative and budgeting problems, a lack of directives to follow and in general a difficult task of tackling the vastness of the DP problem as a whole. The financial support was not sufficient in many instances such as when providing the necessary facilities of transport when repatriating the children. Henshaw also describes how the number of childcare specialists was insufficient for the number of unaccompanied children they had come across. Apart from the administrative problems UNRRA faced opposition from German foster parents. UNRRA had difficulties separating the children from them and at times the military had to remove the children by force. As for the relationship with national governments, the Soviet Union in this case, UNRRA was stuck in between the political and geographical realities of the Cold War. The Soviet Union wanted to repatriate all of the DPs claimed to be their own including the

unaccompanied children. For instance, Ukrainian Polish children became a source of conflict between UNRRA, the United States and the Soviet Union. These children had been born in territories that Poland had relinquished to the Soviet Union after the war. The Polish government accepted the children to be claimed by the Soviet Union but the United States government had not officially recognized the agreement between the two governments. The US military instructed UNRRA to refer such children to the Polish liaison officer instead of the Soviet liaison officer. Armstrong-Reid and Murray attribute the motives of such actions to the politics between the US and the Soviet Union and how the Americans commenced to become unwilling to repatriate children across the Iron Curtain. This problem was also reflected with children coming from Soviet controlled Baltic areas such as Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. The US had not recognized Soviet authority over the Baltic people. UNRRA's stance for these children was not consistent and depended on the situation. In some instances if UNRRA considered the best course of action was to send the children back home, they would ignore the unofficial instructions given by the US military about not allowing the Soviet liaison officers to come in contact with the children. For the most part, UNRRA followed the military protocol when there were too many conflicting decisions and ended up not referring the children to the Soviet Union liaison officers.²¹

Ben Shephard in his book *In the Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War* dedicates a chapter to the conflict between UNRRA and the military. In this work Shephard presents a narrative history and takes a neutral position on which side (UNRRA or the military) was correct about the position to take when it came to the best interests of the child. Presenting the views of the British army officer Sir

²¹ Susan Armstrong-Reid and David R. Murray, *Armies of Peace Canada and the UNRRA Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 202-213.

Frederick Morgan who ran DP operations for UNRRA in Germany, Shephard explains that UNRRA's child search efforts were criticized for the resources it had taken up and the damage it had done to the relations with the German population. Another criticism towards UNRRA was about "baby snatching" as the military claimed that UNRRA was breaking up families more than they were reuniting them. The disapproval was based on the assumption that the children were being sent to countries such as Poland with no guarantee that they would be received by their relatives and that many were sent to orphanages. With the dismissal of Sir Frederick Morgan and the uncovering of new evidence of kidnapped children the UNRRA staff was able to defend their program and proceed with their efforts. The Nuremberg trials and the information they provided on the Germanization of children had also contributed to this shift. But UNRRA's frustrations continued with the military. The welfare workers blamed the military for being reluctant to authorize the children to be removed from German homes and for not putting pressure on German authorities to find more information about the children. UNRRA blamed the limited results of child search by bringing forth the "shortsightedness" of the military. Shephard points out that the criticisms UNRRA had towards the military were not necessarily unanimous. There were a number of welfare workers, although a very small minority, who had questioned their own organization on the reasons why the child search operations may have failed. One welfare worker questioned the idea of the rehabilitating effects of repatriation when a child was removed from a foster family who had provided good care. According to this welfare worker taking a child away to an unknown place in their formative years would have created more damage. However, after UNRRA was replaced by the IRO in 1947 the principles of repatriation and renationalization were revitalized and emphasized once again by its welfare workers. They explained that it

was necessary to remove the children from German institutions as they regarded the German society as not yet purged from Nazism and authoritarianism. They claimed that the children they came across with showed signs of such behavior. Yet the political realities of the Cold War tensions prevented this idea and the Allied military forces continued to object to the repatriation of children to the Soviet bloc. The IRO had to pivot to a policy of resettlement to other countries instead of repatriation.²²

In Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany Atina

Grossmann describes the best interests of the children as a concern for Jewish groups such as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). Grossman states that Jewish children were considered as a “valuable resource” and their attention was towards the children under the care of non-Jewish families. The debate was between the social workers of JDC and UNRRA against Zionist groups. The main question was about whether it was a good idea to take into consideration the “personal circumstances” of the child versus the “collective will.” The personal circumstances included standing by children who had stable families in non-Jewish homes, or had distant relatives in Germany, in the United States or another part of the world. The collective will was the idea of sending Jewish children to a Jewish homeland. 1945 was the year it was certain that many UNRRA workers started to support the idea that Jewish children had to be sent to Palestine. The reason for this being thousands of children entered the American zone as “infiltrates.” They were also considered to be unaccompanied children (although they weren’t orphans) but were sent by their parents in Poland in hopes of speeding up the process of emigration to Palestine. Another reason was that UNRRA acknowledged the children could possibly face discrimination and persecution if Jewish children were to be sent back to Eastern

²² Ben Shephard, *The Long Road Home: The Aftermath of the Second World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 305-327.

Europe. Therefore in this case of Jewish children, Grossman explains that the best interests of the child were to send them to Palestine. The Jewish collective argument prevailed.²³

The most prominent work on child displacement is Tara Zahra's *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II*. Zahra provides an account on a large range of topics including displaced Armenian children during the First World War, Spanish Civil War refugees in France, and Czech and Polish children who were victims of Germanization. On the topic of UNRRA (and the International Refugee Organization) and displaced children Zahra describes how welfare workers from the United States and Great Britain working in UNRRA had the objective of psychologically rehabilitating children. In addition to providing material goods such as food, medicine and housing, the organization focused on the psychological well-being of the children which Zahra describes as the "Psychological Marshall Plan." This meant that the children needed to be reunified with their families and/or nation of origin. The separation of children from their parents was what the welfare workers saw to be a detriment to their wellbeing. The promotion of these psychoanalytic ideas of the link between family and the individual was an important objective of UNRRA/International Refugee Organization (IRO) relief workers in charge of the children. For them the family was the only institution that could develop the children into healthy individuals. The other half of rehabilitation was the renationalization of the lost children. Eastern European countries after the war were concerned with claiming and having their children back as they had been Germanized under the Nazi rule. UNRRA's welfare workers also depicted the idea of the family and renationalization as a remedy to Fascism and Communism in postwar Europe as well

²³ Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009), 193-194.

as the reconstruction of Europe itself. This idea of the relationship between the psychological wellbeing of a child and their reunification with their family was also debated amongst UNRRA and other organizations such as Jewish groups which promoted the idea of children belonging to collective groups. Zahra explains that these psychoanalytic ideas were challenged by those who focused on a collectivist approach. The family and repatriation approach was troublesome especially for the Jewish children who did not have a family to go back to. For Jewish children there was also the problem of facing discrimination if they were to go back to Eastern Europe. This view supported the idea that the psychological recovery of the children needed to be done collectively. They needed to be treated and educated with others who had similar experiences. The restoration of family values and placing orphans in a family home was not regarded as a satisfactory solution to the problems of the child. It was instead the community itself that was able to develop a healthy child according to the collectivists. UNNRA's welfare workers were initially reluctant and unsympathetic to the idea of separating Jewish children and placing them in a community. However their stance was changed especially after the US Zone faced the new problem of Jewish infiltrate children. The infiltrate children were those who were sent to the American zone by their parents from Eastern Europe with the intention of expediting the process of emigration to Palestine. Zahra also points out that the relationship between UNRRA/IRO and Eastern European governments started to change with Cold War tensions. Especially in 1948 Eastern European Governments were accusing the Allied powers from deliberately preventing the DPs of their nationals from being repatriated. And the IRO started to slow down their operations of returning children to their native countries and families.²⁴

²⁴ Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II* (Cambridge:

Another important work is Lynne Taylor's *In the Children's Best Interests: Unaccompanied Children in American-Occupied Germany, 1945-1952*. Taylor agrees with Zahra's assessment of how UNRRA's welfare workers placed importance on the psychological rehabilitation of the unaccompanied children. She also argues that the missing element in *The Lost Children* was how the actions of the welfare workers were also based on establishing legal identities of citizenship for the unaccompanied children. Taylor argues that the aim of UNRRA's welfare workers was to provide full citizenship of a particular nation to the children. In this way, the children would be protected and represented by a government which would enable them to participate in a society and its economy once they became adults. Taylor's assessment is based on the interactions of UNRRA/IRO, the US military, and the Eastern European governments in the context of the Cold War. The relationship between UNRRA/IRO and the US military is explained from the point of view that OMGUS started to put child search in the lowest of priorities starting in 1946. One of the reasons behind this depended on the larger DP crisis as a whole. They were faced with the problem of hardcore DPs who refused to be sent home or were not able to go home. Another problem was the flow of German people who were moving into Germany as a result of the forced deportation by the Eastern European governments. These factors and others such as the DPs taking up resources turned OMGUS's primary focus into dissolving the DP situation as quick as possible so that the camps could be closed. This approach also undermined UNRRA's child search operations as the international organization was dependent on the decisions of the US military. UNRRA was also affected because of the lack of decisions on OMGUS's part. Questions such as what was to be done with illegitimate children and the adoptions of children were never

clearly answered. Other questions such as the support of German protests against the removal of children and the proposal to make unaccompanied children German citizens constituted the points of disagreement between the two governing bodies. All of these were considered to be the solutions by OMGUS to lift the long term burden of taking care of the children indefinitely. In the context of the Cold War, Taylor explains that all of these solutions were based on a shift of focus from the DP crisis to the larger scale problem of Communism and turning Germany and Western Europe as a whole into a force that could combat it. And for OMGUS leaving the children with the German people was a “lesson of democracy” as this was seen as a better solution than sending them to a Communist controlled country. In reference to the idea that UNRRA/IRO were not only aiming for the psychological wellbeing of the children but also the legal protection of citizenship, Taylor explains that making the children German citizens did not have any legal validity in the German system and OMGUS could not dictate them to make it happen officially. For Taylor the legal protection of the children was also the reason why the IRO chose to resettle as many children as they possibly could.²⁵

Other than the subject of unaccompanied children who were taken care of by UNRRA, there have also been studies on “enemy children.” For example, Michelle Mouton’s *Missing, Lost, and Displaced Children in Postwar Germany: The Great Struggle to Provide for the War’s Youngest Victims* focuses on displaced German children. Mouton explains that since UNRRA did not take on the responsibility of the displaced German children, other organizations such as Red Cross groups, churches, and youth departments took on the task. The Allied military governments and the German people also made their efforts to aid these children. The concept of the best

²⁵ Lynne Taylor, *In the Children’s Best Interests: Unaccompanied Children in American-Occupied Germany* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017).

interests of the children and the reunification of families also played an important role with the displaced German children. Mouton argues that searching for children, aiding them, and reunifying them with their families became a complicated matter in an environment of Cold War tensions. For example, it was difficult to have a unified search and reunification effort as there was the East and West divide in Germany (and in Europe). In relation to UNRRA, Mouton explains that the organization's decision to not take care of "enemy children" contributed to these existing problems and severely affected the German children at a time when they were also in need of assistance.²⁶

1.3 Resources and Methodology

This thesis will mainly focus on the relationships between UNRRA, the US military and the German authorities dealing with the unaccompanied children in the US Zone. The primary sources in this thesis are derived from the "Child Search Branch" online collection located in the International Tracing Service (ITS) archive in Bad Arolsen, Germany. The documents consist of field reports, child search cases, correspondence, administrative orders and reports on organizational meetings. To supplement the digital archives of the International Tracing Service, other sources such as the official publications by UNRRA and the Greta Fischer Papers that are located in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum are included in this study.

The main questions this thesis analyzes include the following: what were the problems UNRRA faced when determining the nationalities of the unaccompanied children? How did the German authorities and OMGUS respond to the decisions

²⁶ Michelle Mouton, "Missing, Lost, and Displaced Children in Postwar Germany: The Great Struggle to Provide for the Wars Youngest Victims," *Central European History* 48, no. 01 (2015), doi:10.1017/s0008938915000035.

made on nationality and what was the overall impact on UNRRA's operations of the dynamics between the different governing bodies?

This thesis is based on the perspectives of UNRRA's welfare workers and therefore will give attention to particular groups of unaccompanied children that they encountered in German homes and institutions. As the largest group of DPs and unaccompanied children in Germany were presumed to be Polish (non-Jewish) this research will mainly focus on the case studies of these groups of children. It will also present cases of children from countries such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia to a lesser extent to support the thesis. This study will not focus on the Cold War dynamics of the different countries and organizations involved with unaccompanied children such as those claimed to be Latvian, Estonian, Lithuanian, or Ukrainian. It will also not focus on Jewish unaccompanied children as the topic of infiltree children deserves its own dedicated study. Instead UNRRA's encounters in German homes and institutions with children coming from areas such as the Silesian region which had a mixed Polish and *Volksdeutsche* (Ethnic German) population will be examined. This group of unaccompanied children will provide answers to the question of what problems UNRRA faced when determining nationalities. The evidence of non-German nationality that UNRRA presented was disputed by the German authorities since it was usually inconclusive. This caused the Silesian children to become an important source of conflict and put UNRRA in opposition to the German authorities and OMGUS. For the question of how the German authorities and OMGUS responded to the verdicts made by UNRRA and the liaison officers, the policies released by the US military and the measures they took and attempted to take in support of the German authorities to prevent the removal of children will be examined.

The following part, Chapter 2, The Rehabilitation of Unaccompanied Children, examines the welfare workers and their early search efforts, the discovery of evidence of Germanization, the process of rehabilitation and renationalization in UNRRA's children centers, and the repatriation of various children to Poland. Chapter 3, The Problem of Disputed Nationalities, analyzes the problems UNRRA faced when attempting to determine the nationalities of children coming from mixed areas with *Volksdeutsche* populations. This chapter also includes a case study of the Silesian children found in a German institution and explains the disagreements between UNRRA/liaison officers and the German people taking care of the children. The final chapter, Chapter 4, Objections to the Removal of Unaccompanied Children from German Homes and Institutions, analyzes the policies introduced by OMGUS that prevented UNRRA from removing children from German homes and institutions without the authorization of German authorities and the US military at the highest levels. It also investigates the attempts by OMGUS to introduce a directive to make all unaccompanied children German citizens and the debates between the military and UNRRA over this proposal.

CHAPTER II

THE REHABILITATION OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

2.1 The Discovery of Unaccompanied Children

With the surrender of Germany in May 1945, UNRRA encountered large numbers of DPs who had survived concentration camps, were prisoners of war and were slave laborers. One of the first responders to this crisis was John Troniak who was a welfare officer working in Passau located near the borders of Austria and Czechoslovakia. Troniak encountered what he described as the “great movement of peoples of all nationalities.” As new as UNRRA’s operations were this welfare worker’s approach to the DPs came with the understanding that they only had one aim. This was to repatriate the DPs to their “countries and homes.” As more welfare workers came on to the field they encountered instances of parents asking for help to locate their lost children. Overtime more requests from parents about missing children were being submitted to UNRRA. The welfare workers received stories about children being taken away by the Nazis. The children were claimed to have been taken to Germany from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Russia, France, and other countries that were occupied by the Nazis. The workers got the impression that since the people were now free their “only desire was to find their sons and daughters and to get them back home.” As UNRRA started to keep records of the DPs in the early months after the war, Troniak and two other workers came across non-German children who were living with German adults in homes and farms. Recollecting the stories they had previously heard, these workers were optimistic that they had discovered “stolen children.” In

August 1945 they were convinced that they had found unaccompanied children in a German children's home. They came across 78 children where "32 seemed without doubt to be of Polish nationality." The remaining nationalities were "suspicious" and were kept on the record as "questionable." At this instance, Troniak was working independently with his co-workers and UNRRA had not yet given priority for the search and registration of unaccompanied children. But these welfare workers continued to come across situations of children who were living in German company and were presumed to be coming from countries that Germany had occupied. Due to his encounters on the field Troniak continued to write reports of his experiences which caught the attention of higher ranking UNRRA officers. According to the welfare worker the unaccompanied children crisis started to become a priority as more evidence was uncovered. For example, a group of 120 children in the British Zone of Germany who had been possibly kidnapped and taken to Germany had contributed to this. As a result of the findings UNRRA was convinced that a large problem was imminent. In late January 1946 Troniak became in charge of UNRRA's first child search team called Team 566 (later known as Area Team 1048), and was assigned to find more information about unaccompanied children. A second team, Team 567, was set up in April of the same year.²⁷

Both of UNRRA's child search teams came to discover approximately 1,000 unaccompanied children following their existence. The majority of the children were found in Bavaria. The objectives of the child search team immediately became defined as the following:

²⁷ UNRRA Area Team 1048, Regensburg, "The Beginning of Child Search," 12 April, 1947, Search and Tracing Activities of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0001, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed May 17, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/252160>.

It is desired that all allied unaccompanied children who have been brought into Germany in groups from foreign enslaved countries, all those who were born under unusual circumstances, those who were abandoned by their parents or separated from them due to war circumstances and who are in Displaced Persons Camps, in German institutions, hospitals, children's homes and foster homes, be repatriated as soon as possible.²⁸

In the beginning the process of the repatriation of allied children (children who were victims of Germanization and came from countries occupied by the Nazis) appeared to be straightforward as it was explained that the children would be sent back home as soon as adequate information about their nationality was acquired. One of the first things UNRRA's search teams would do was to contact the heads of the German institution for information about the total number of German and United Nations children under their roof. The teams would then check the records and send groups of three to four interviewers along with a typist to gather more data about the children. Once the interviews were completed UNRRA's search teams would contact the liaison officers of the countries the children were suspected of coming from. The final decision for the determination of nationality would be made by these officers as UNRRA did not have the authority to repatriate DPs.²⁹

Another step UNRRA took to identify the children was the use of media. They attempted to reach out to the public through the press and radio in hopes that they could help reunite children with their families if they were still alive. The publicity was used by UNRRA as means to make up for any evidence that may have not been

²⁸ "UNRRA Child Searching Team 657," Headquarters UNRRA District No.5, 7 Lamontstrasse, Munich to Marnie Bruce, Relief Services Officer, April 15, 1946, in Search and Tracing Activities of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0001, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed May 17, 2018.

²⁹ "UNRRA Weekly Bulletin," Search and Tracing Activities of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0001, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, 1946, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251896>.

recovered during the interviews with the children.³⁰ For instance, within Germany there were weekly broadcasts of the names, places of birth, dates of birth and the last known residences of unaccompanied children published in newspapers. Outside of Germany, UNRRA requested that organizations such as the British Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross and the Jewish Agency for Palestine help publish information about the unaccompanied children in the media. The countries targeted for the broadcast of information included the United States, England, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Greece and Poland.³¹

One radio broadcast released by UNRRA included the pleas of a Polish mother searching for her missing son Georg Bajda who was born on April 14, 1944 in Austria. According to this broadcast this mother was forced to work in an orphanage in Czechoslovakia in 1945 while her son was sent to an orphanage run by the Nazis. At the end of the war she came to find out that her son and many other children had been moved to another location without her consent. Reportedly through her own efforts the mother was able to track her son somewhere in the area of Bavaria. The closing statements of the radio broadcast called for listeners to provide UNRRA with any information about children that had been taken away.³² Other general broadcasts

³⁰ Maria Liebeskind to Colonel J.R. Bowring, March 4, 1946, in Search and Tracing Activities of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0001, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed May 16, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251854>.

³¹ "Co-operation of Mass Tracing Division in Publicizing Names of Unaccompanied Children," Margaret Wenner to Miss Liebeskind, January 26, 1946, in Search and Tracing Activities of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0001, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed May 16, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251846>; "Publicity for Tracing of Unaccompanied Children," Maria Liebeskind to Mr. P. Ball, Public Information, C.H.Q., March 4, 1946, in Search and Tracing Activities of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0001, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed May 16, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251858>; "Co-operation of Mass Tracing Division in Publicizing Names of Unaccompanied Children," accessed May 16, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251848>.

³² UNRRA Central Tracing Bureau, Child Tracing Branch, "Sample Radio Scripts Concerning the Search for Missing Children," Exhibition of the World Jewish Congress, 6.1.2 0014, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed May 17, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/261595>.

about unaccompanied children provided information of how the children were specifically targeted by the Nazis. In one broadcast it stated that the children were “selected for Germanization, so that they might fill the gap the war had created in the man power of Greater Germany” and “to rob the Third Reich’s enemies of their life-blood, and render them weak and powerless in the future.” The report continued, after they had been transferred by the Nazis these stolen children were either adopted by Germans families or hidden in their institutions in an effort to “obliterate their past.”³³

The Germanization of the unaccompanied children was a product of the *Lebensborn* program introduced and run by Heinrich Himmler the head of the Schutzstaffel. The objective of this program was to make German women bear “racially pure” Aryan children. At first the *Lebensborn* program was seen as a solution to the decline of the Germanic and Nordic population, but with the Second World War the program was used as an excuse to make up for the loss of people in war. Starting in the winter of 1942, the babies of Eastern European women - who were forced laborers - were examined to confirm whether they were “racially desired” or not. The undesirable babies were sent to the “nurseries for foreign children” where they were neglected and usually died while the “desirable” ones were taken and cared for under the *Lebensborn* program. The children that were taken by the SS mainly came from orphanages in Poland and Czechoslovakia. The children were later transferred to *Lebensborn* homes to undergo the process of Germanization which included a change in their identity as they were given new names and birth certificates and labeled as ethnically German.³⁴

³³ UNRRA Central Tracing Bureau, Child Tracing Branch, accessed May 17, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/261589>.

³⁴ Simone Gigliotti and Monica Tempian, *The Young Victims of the Nazi Regime: Migration, the Holocaust and Postwar Displacement* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 278-279.

The *Lebensborn* program came as a surprise to the welfare workers in UNRRA as they did not possess knowledge of the program. They came to find out about the children as they continued their searches on the field. As they came across more accounts of Germanized children, the UNRRA staff realized that they were racing against time to locate, identify and register these children. One issue UNRRA had to face, which also made their work difficult was the fact that many of the children were too young to remember the details about their past such as the names of their parents or their birthplaces. But for children who were older, Germanization was regarded to be an ongoing process where UNRRA had to intervene and prevent it from going further. The fear of the welfare workers was the probability that the children would start to forget the names of people and places which would help UNRRA take one step closer to finding their nationalities and families. Another concern was the possibility that the leaders of the German institutions would be uncooperative and move with the children to a different location or end up dispersing them to different foster homes. According to Troniak, sending the children back to their real families was a humanitarian duty. More than just an altruistic deed, Troniak's justification of the child search program was based on the idea that he would not allow the children who were Germanized, "the cream of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and other lands, to remain in Germany and grow up as German children." If this were to happen, he added, the Nazis would have accomplished their mission and it was "imperative that we [UNRRA] do not allow this victory to them."³⁵

The motivation that drove the welfare workers to continue the process of discovering unaccompanied children was the evidence they had found in the field despite many

³⁵ John Troniak, "UNRRA Registration Team for Unaccompanied Children," 26 April, 1946, Child Search and Welfare Activities, 6.1.2 0009, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed May 18, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/259143>.

documents being destroyed during the war. In March 1946 under the direction of Troniak and Cornelia D. Heise (the US Zone Child Welfare Specialist), welfare workers collected and investigated information about children who were brought into Germany during the war. Their task was to uncover “major sources of information about the importation of children.” In their field report the investigators claimed that in the Regensburg District in Bavaria they located a thousand children under German care who were “brought into Germany chiefly from Upper Silesia.” The team also appeared to have verified information about the Nazi involvement. They recovered information from individuals who acted as participants in the process of transferring children and were also able to receive the names of other people and agencies involved.³⁶ The team concluded that the *Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt Samt* (NSV) “was the key organization which planned and carried out the importation of children for Germanization purposes.” Finding such information was a major boost to the confidence of the UNRRA workers in their goals of recovering the children as they were convinced that the organization had to take a “lead in seeking out and bringing attention sources of information about the importation of children and seeing that they are followed through to conclusion.”³⁷

From July 1946 to the end of November 1946 one of the places the welfare workers went to interview people who participated in the *Lebensborn* program was a school in Niederalteich. This investigation was open as a result of the information provided by

³⁶ "Field Report - Frankfurt and British Zone - Investigation of Sources of Information on Children Brought Into Germany from Surrounding Eastern Countries," Search and Tracing Activities of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0001, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, 1946, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251874>;

"Field Report - Frankfurt and British Zone," accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251876>.

³⁷ "Field Report - Frankfurt and British Zone," accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251878>;

"Field Report - Frankfurt and British Zone," accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251880>.

the representatives of the Polish and Czechoslovakian Red Cross about the possibility of children that had been taken to the school when the SS was in power. One of the interviewed people in the school was a nurse, Sister Franziska Ranzinger. The nurse stated that the records of children were all destroyed before the Allies came to power, but one record she was able to recover was a medical examination book with the names of 42 children. The welfare worker in charge saw that the names were of Polish origin and the sister verified that they were in fact Polish. Describing their physical appearances they also happened to have blond hair and blue eyes which was “typical for the purpose of the [...] Germanization of foreign children.” According to her information they came from Lodz. Upon further examination of the papers, one child by the name of Jan Szulisz was found. This child who was born in 1931 was taken in 1941 and sent to a German family one year later. His name had been changed to Süss Johann. Georg Ehrl, a teacher, verified the rumors that there were non-German children taken to the school. He claimed that there were around 20 to 30 “*Ostlandkinder*” (Eastern children). And in the spring of 1944 they were sent elsewhere to an unknown location. The children in the medical book had not been found after the interviews were conducted but it helped UNRRA’s welfare workers come closer to locating the children as now they had started to slowly uncover new information.³⁸

On 18 May 1946, Heise circulated a group of documents titled “Nazi Organizations involved in care of United Nations’ Children.” These documents contained information about how the Nazis were instructed to do with foreign laborers who had children or were pregnant. One of these reports stated the importance of keeping

³⁸ John Troniak, "Child Registration Memo No.7," Child Search and Welfare Activities, 6.1.2 0009, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, January 28, 1946, accessed May 18, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/259351>.

foreign children with “German blood” to make up for the loss of people in war as well as to raise them as German children so that they could be “secured for the German nation.” The Nazis searched for children of “intellectual or physical superiority who would be trained for special uses” such as being trained to become soldiers. Others deemed not worthy were used as medical experiments which left them injured or dead.³⁹ The parents would undergo a “racial experiment” to determine whether the child was to be sent to a “children’s homes for racially valuable children of foreigners.” The women currently pregnant who “accomplish the condition of *Lebensborn*” would be taken to SS homes to await instructions for their child. The report also placed importance in convincing the mother that their children had to be separated from them and that leaving the child under the care of the NSV or *Lebensborn* program while they worked was the best situation for them. This mission consisted of looking after the mother and providing the best possible medical conditions during her pregnancy. Another task was for the Nazis to make sure that the children were kept in Germany and their mothers continued to work. This did not apply to people who were not physically capable of working or who were “racially undesirable.” They were to be sent away when they would no longer provide any physical value as they were according to the Nazis a “heavy burden and political danger for the labor organization.”⁴⁰

UNRRA’s child search efforts were further legitimized with the ongoing Nuremburg trials that started in 1945. In May 1946 during the trials *The London Times* reported

³⁹ “Copy From the Stars and Stripes: UNRRA Finds 10 000 Kidnapped Children,” Search and Tracing Activities of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0001, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, 1946, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251948>; “Copy From the Stars and Stripes,” accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251950>.

⁴⁰ Nazi Organizations Involved in Care of United Nations’ Children, Cornelia Heise, May, 28 1946; Greta Fischer Papers; Series 5: Reports, memoranda, and speeches, 1945-1987; Box 2; Folder 11; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection.

that American prosecutor Thomas Dodd came into possession of the evidence of kidnapping of between forty thousand to fifty thousand children with ages varying from 10 to 14 years old. The objective was reported as “destroying the biological potentiality of eastern peoples” through training them and putting them through forced labor and making them serve the German army and economy. Baldur Von Schirach, the leader of the Nazi organization the Hitler Youth, and his office were charged with receiving reports about the transfer of the children. Dodd further added that ten thousand children were still missing and the allies were trying to locate these “young people so that they [could] be returned to their homes.”⁴¹

During the same month UNRRA claimed that they had located the ten thousand missing children in Germany. Although some of these children had been found the welfare workers had difficulties in confirming their identities. Many were placed with German families at such a young age that they came to believe that their guardians were actually their biological parents. In their words, many were Germanized as they were “induced to forget or deny that they were ever anything but German.” The older children, UNRRA stated, were instructed to hide their original identities. To solve such issues the UNRRA workers relied on the use of languages as the “best clue” to find their real identities. They had linguists who attempted to find out if the children who were suspected of being non-German could actually speak or recognize a different language. If the children slipped up and uttered a word that was not in German it was enough for the UNRRA worker to come closer to the conclusion that the child was not German. Other than the languages the children spoke, other pieces of evidence such as records of birthplace, concentration camp documents, and

⁴¹ "Extract From London Times," Search and Tracing Activities of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0001, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, 1946, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251912>.

“rumors and suspicions,” provided the UNRRA workers with clues on where the children were located in the past.⁴²

For UNRRA the interviews with children constituted an important tool to find information about a child’s nationality. According to the welfare workers the interviews assisted them in differentiating between a non-German child and a German child. The welfare workers attributed any difficulties in speaking a native language to emotional distress and trauma.⁴³ And as evidence for the differences in the characteristics of a German child versus a Germanized child the welfare workers referred to how confidently a child responded to the interviewer’s questions. In the process of interviewing some of the children found in the Bavarian area, the welfare workers observed that “a German child usually gives glib, assured answers, with no hesitation.” They reported that the German child did not usually become nervous, spoke freely and appeared to not be afraid of the interviewer. On the other hand the “Germanized United Nations children [...] indoctrinated by the Nazis, are usually shy, embarrassed and loathe to speak freely.” These children appeared to be anxious, had difficulties paying attention, looked around the room, were reluctant to speak and were usually afraid of the interviewer. The UNRRA workers considered this behavior as an important consideration in the process of determining their nationalities. Once all the information about the children were collected their cases were referred to the national liaison officers to decide whether the children were eligible to be removed

⁴² "Copy From the Stars and Stripes: UNRRA Finds 10 000 Kidnapped Children," Search and Tracing Activities of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0001, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, 1946, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251948>; "Copy From the Stars and Stripes," accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251950>.

⁴³ John Troniak et al., "Child Registration Memo No.7," Child Search and Welfare Activities, 6.1.2 0009, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, January 28, 1946, accessed May 18, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/259351>.

from the German home or intuition and placed in an UNRRA center and prepared to be repatriated.⁴⁴

2.2 The Rehabilitation and Repatriation of Unaccompanied Children

If the welfare workers in UNRRA were confident in their skills in detecting the Germanization of children, they were also sure that they would be able to reverse its effects given the appropriate location and opportunity. One children's center in Bavaria called *Kloster Indersdorf* was set up by UNRRA Team 182 with this idea in mind. The process of finding the identities of unaccompanied children they had brought in was also a part of UNRRA's work in *Kloster Indersdorf*. Similar to the other search teams Team 182 found difficulties in identifying the children. The children who were three or younger caused a serious problem as it was almost not possible to identify them. A two-year-old girl had records that consisted of only a surname which the welfare workers identified as possibly of non-German origin but there were not any other details about her date of birth or parents other than that both of her parents were presumed to be dead. The reason why there was no information for some of these infants was because a lot of the documents that were located in German institutions were destroyed just before the defeat of the Nazis. With the older children there was the problem of determining their actual birth dates. The welfare workers came to see that some children had changed their ages. The reason for this was that in the concentration camps the children would make it appear as if they were older so that they could work and survive instead of being executed. In the children's

⁴⁴ "UNRRA Weekly Bulletin," Search and Tracing Activities of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0001, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, 1946, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251896>; "UNRRA Weekly Bulletin," accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251898>; John Troniak, "Child Registration Memo No.7," Child Search and Welfare Activities, 6.1.2 0009, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, January 28, 1946, accessed May 18, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/259351>.

centers it was observed that the children did the opposite and claimed to be younger as there was an understanding amongst the children that the younger ones would be more likely to be moved from Germany. By January 1946 the children's center was able to discover the ages of the 361 children they were taking care of. There were 50 children that were 3 years or younger, 8 children aged between 4 and 12, and the rest of the children varied between 14 and 16 years old.⁴⁵

Kloster Indersdorf was described as an international children's center that had the aim of "[serving] any United Nations unaccompanied children."⁴⁶ According to the records collected by the welfare workers, they had determined that the majority of the children under their care were Polish. Other children were Yugoslav or Jews from Baltic countries, Germany and Austria. Team 182 had reservations about placing so many different groups of children under one roof, but regarded the children's center as an opportunity not only to strengthen the nationality of the children but to also to give them a chance to meet the "representatives of other nationalities and [to learn] to appreciate their difference and to live in peace with them." For example, the welfare workers saw difficulties between groups of Polish Jews and other Polish children, but the experiences of living, going to school and eating with other groups of children were considered by UNRRA as an "inestimable value in teaching tolerance and respect for each other."⁴⁷

Although Team 182 was positive about having different children from various backgrounds live together they were still set on one main objective: "to renationalize the children [and have] as many activities as possible conducted in their native

⁴⁵ D.P. Children's Center Kloster Indersdorf Kreis Dachau, January, 1946; Greta Fischer Papers; Series 5: Reports, memoranda, and speeches, 1945-1987; Box 2; Folder 8; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, 8-10.

⁴⁶ *Kloster Indersdorf* was an international children's center until August 1946. After 1946 *Kloster Indersdorf* became primarily a Jewish children's home until it was closed in September 1948.

⁴⁷ D.P. Children's Center Kloster Indersdorf Kreis Dachau, 10-11.

language.” The common language spoken by the children was mainly German and UNRRA wanted to reverse that. German language helped to maintain the connection between the children and made it easier for them to express themselves but the welfare workers wanted to teach the children as “quickly as possible their native tongue, folklore and mores.” Germanization was blamed for causing negative psychological effects on the children. The welfare workers viewed it as causing instability and a “conflict of nationality.” For the workers the children were “torn deciding for themselves [with] which group they wish to be identified.” In one case a 14-year-old girl, who was brought into Germany in January 1945 from Upper Silesia, did not want to give up speaking German and wanted to stay in Germany as she feared her parents were not alive. The welfare workers related her physical and mental health to the conflict of nationality noted that she was “obviously a confused, disturbed child who can become adjusted only when she is sure of the nation to which she belongs.” UNRRA’s children’s center was considered as the place to solve such conflicts as the child was later reported to as becoming more “settled” as she joined Polish activities.⁴⁸

One welfare worker Jean Henshaw, who was the director of *Kloster Indersdorf*, was a devotee to the concept of reversing Germanization through renationalization. She was in charge of 60 Polish unaccompanied children. In her observation of the children under her care she reported that the “Germanization had reached an advanced stage and few would admit being Polish.” She was also looking after twenty Yugoslav children who were “brought to Germany and put in the hands of German teachers by order of the Wehrmacht.” Similar to her observations with the Polish children she observed that they were “completely Germanized that they denied their homes, their

⁴⁸ D.P. Children’s Center Kloster Indersdorf Kreis Dachau, 11, 17.

country, wanting only to be German.” Henshaw claimed that this was the same case with children of other nationalities such as Belgian, Czech, and Russian. The older children were also described as not “[knowing] their background, religion, or the names of relatives” and that “six years in Germany is a long time in the life of a child, especially when he is taught to forget his past and to learn new ways.”⁴⁹

To fix this problem of children who did not want to be repatriated and “[wished] to be Germans,” Henshaw and the team established an “educational program” in the children’s center with the following idea:

[...] Our problem is to prepare them to accept return to their own country or resettlement in another part of the world. The school program is designed to teach them quickly the languages, folklore, dances, religion, and customs of their own country so as to bring them to the place where they can accept return home.⁵⁰

The program in *Kloster Indersdorf* consisted of focusing on the children’s general education, vocational education, and on recreational activities. The schooling in *Kloster Indersdorf* was for children between 5 and 16 years old. In the beginning the children were divided into groups according to their educational backgrounds, their abilities in languages, and specific needs. They were taught the basics about how to read, write and do arithmetic. In its initial stages the facilities, supplies and teachers were limited. There were 6 teachers; 4 Polish, 1 Lithuanian and 1 Yugoslav, who taught history, geography, music, English, Polish and arts and crafts. In time, more teachers and equipment became available. Hungarian, Hebrew, Ukrainian, Russian

⁴⁹ Jean Henshaw, "UNRRA in the Role of Foster Parent," Search and Tracing Activities of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0001, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, 1946, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251988>; Henshaw, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251990>.

⁵⁰ Jean Henshaw, "UNRRA in the Role of Foster Parent," Search and Tracing Activities of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0001, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, 1946, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251992>

and Yiddish were added to the list of languages. The daily program for the children started at nine in the morning until eleven and again from quarter past four to six in the afternoon. In the latter half of the schooling day the children worked on art, carpentry, sewing, gardening, typewriting and music. Physical activities were also a part of the curriculum as the students had gymnastics class. At the end of the school year in July 1946, the children had exams for their subjects and received certificates in both their own languages and in English in case they would be valid in their home countries. There was also an award ceremony where the children would show their talents and what they had learned throughout the year. At the end of the ceremony the center organized sports events and the children competed for prizes in different games. For UNRRA the schooling of children was a valuable experience as they were able to introduce somewhat a “normal life” as the war had completely interrupted their childhood.⁵¹

Designing a vocational program was difficult to do as UNRRA was unsure of what the future held for the children. But the lessons they had available in the center included learning trades such as shoe making and tailoring. Other skills the children had the opportunity of learning were house painting, auto mechanics, and nursing. The older children were able to make equipment and toys necessary for the younger ones. In this area *Kloster Indersdorf* faced shortages in teachers and supplies but it still provided for the children to work on something practical as it gave the possibility that it could be useful for the future.⁵²

Recreational activities involved playing in the house or garden, painting, playing games, sports, dancing, and music. In warm seasons they went swimming and in the

⁵¹ Anna Andlauer, *The Rage to Live: The International D.P. Children's Center Kloster Indersdorf 1945-1946* (Weichs: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012), 110-115.

⁵² Ibid., 115-117; D.P. Children's Center Kloster Indersdorf Kreis Dachau, 28.

winter they went skiing and sledding. The motivating factor of leisure for UNRRA though was to keep the children familiar with the culture of their national origins. Some of the children were described as decorating their rooms with objects from their national origin to remind them of home. Group activities with the children included celebrating holidays such as the New Year, Christmas, and Hanukkah. However it should be noted that for certain national holidays and celebrations children who did not come from the country that was celebrating the event were not allowed to participate. The workers described this whole program as creating a sense of “happiness and ecstasy” since the war had ended. It was also described as was a way to “remove the children from the artificial environment of Germany to one where free expression can be directly related to constructive, creative life.” What the welfare workers meant with this statement was that the center provided the children an environment where they rejected their German culture and past, and participated in a life that was considered to contribute to their presumed real identities.⁵³

Overall Henshaw considered the program to be a success as she claimed that the children started to acknowledge their native countries and reject Germany. She reported that the children would say such things as “see how the Germans are planting the Garden. At home we plant it this way.” She added that the children would have feelings of guilt towards themselves due to their “previous rejection of their country, resulting in a compensating period of intense national loyalty.” Describing how the “international discipline of national groups often serves to develop international understanding,” Henshaw also gave an example of children rejecting Germanization: a Yugoslav girl who was “thoroughly Germanized, became irritated at a Jewish lad and called him a Dirty Jew.” The other Yugoslavian children reportedly responded by

⁵³ D.P. Children’s Center Kloster Indersdorf Kreis Dachau, 28-29, 117-120.

scolding her and “telling her she had disgraced them all.”⁵⁴ The Polish children under Henshaw’s care were also observed in a similar way. The Poles reassured a group of Yugoslavian children who insisted that they were German by saying the following: “I know I went through the same thing. You will like it here. You don’t want to be German. You only think you do.” Reasserting her own views on the process of renationalizing the children Henshaw wrote that the children longed for “security that comes from being with one’s own people.” In Henshaw’s view renationalizing the children and sending them to their families led to the “war’s legacy of unhappy children [to] have been restored to home and happiness.”⁵⁵

To be repatriated and be with one’s own people was the next step the welfare workers attempted to complete. Working with the Polish Red Cross welfare workers from three children’s centers (*Kloster Indersdorf*, Wartenburg and Deggendorf) boarded a train on June 2, 1946 to repatriate 100 adults and 111 unaccompanied children to Poland. The adults were mainly very old or sick and were separated from the children. The caretakers consisted of thirty-three Polish Red Cross workers who were doctors, nurses, teachers and four UNRRA workers. To accommodate these DPs the train had sleeping compartments, kitchens, and an infirmary. The train left from a repatriation center in Munich and made its first stop in Prague a day later. In consistency with the portrayal of the idea that renationalizing and sending the children to their country of origin was a success, the welfare workers described how the children were waving flags and appeared to be hopeful as they sang Polish songs with the Red Cross personnel. Once the train reached Katowice in Poland they were greeted with boy

⁵⁴ Jean Henshaw, "UNRRA in the Role of Foster Parent," Search and Tracing Activities of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0001, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, 1946, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251992>.

⁵⁵ Jean Henshaw, "UNRRA in the Role of Foster Parent," Search and Tracing Activities of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0001, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, 1946, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/251994>.

scouts, a band and children with flowers. After getting off the train the children were transferred to a receiving center where they would temporarily stay to wait for their parents or for decisions to be made for where they would be moved to next. The names of children that arrived and the place where parents could pick them up were broadcasted in newspapers and on the radio. But for the children whose parents could not come, the children would be given three weeks before they would be moved again to a foster home. Within two days of arrival more than half of the 111 children were reported to be claimed by their parents.⁵⁶

The welfare workers were confident and stated with conviction that they were serving a bigger purpose when it came to the children as they had developed a sense of security which would last their lifetime after spending time in UNRRA children's centers in Germany. But they were still concerned with life after repatriation. They followed up with the central headquarters of the Polish Red Cross to discuss the social conditions the children would return to. The UNRRA workers received a bleak picture of the food and housing situation in Poland from the Polish Red Cross.

Production and supply of food appeared to be low. The situation of housing facilities was not any better although many nurseries were opened after the war to take care of children. Even though there was not a positive outlook on the current situation of the country, the welfare workers were still hopeful about moving the kids to Poland.

UNRRA was the sole supplier of aid to the Polish government. Other supplies were also coming in from voluntary agencies in Poland from the Netherlands Red Cross Society, Friends Relief Society and Jewish organizations such as the American Joint Distribution Committee. The problems Poland faced as a country on the other hand

⁵⁶ Report: Repatriation to Poland of Unaccompanied Children from Children's Centers at Wartenberg, Deggendorf, and Kloster Indersdorf, by Greta Fischer, 1946; Greta Fischer Papers; Series 5: Reports, memoranda, and speeches, 1945-1987; Box 2; Folder 12; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, 1-7.

were considered by UNRRA to fit within the framework of the larger DP crisis. As far as the evidence shows, the conditions did not cause them to second guess their decisions about sending the children to Poland. They considered UNRRA's children's centers in Germany only as a temporary place of shelter for the unaccompanied children. Even though the children had a sense of stability and security there UNRRA was still committed for them to be "steeped in their tradition, their language, [and] their plans for reconstruction" as this would be one of the final steps UNRRA would take for the rehabilitation of the children and the reversal of Germanization.⁵⁷ Just as the repatriation of the children would cure them from the experiences of the war, UNRRA considered the repatriation of the remaining Polish population still living in DP camps in Germany as the solution to the shortage of labor and production. And the "surest way of making success of repatriation of Polish displaced persons," they argued, would be to send the people back home with supplies and equipment. They argued that it was therefore important that the DPs be encouraged "to return home as speedily as possible."⁵⁸

⁵⁷ D.P. Children's Center Kloster Indersdorf Kreis Dachau, 31.

⁵⁸ Report: Repatriation to Poland, 8-19.

CHAPTER III

THE PROBLEM OF DISPUTED NATIONALITIES

3.1 The Problem of Determining the Nationalities of Unaccompanied Children

The stance UNRRA's welfare workers had on the unaccompanied children was that they all had what historian Tahra Zahra described as a "single authentic nationality of origin" which could be discovered through their methods of investigation.⁵⁹ This approach especially became a problem for UNRRA when they discovered the complexity of determining nationalities amongst ethnic German (the *Volksdeutsche*) populations in countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. UNRRA now had to answer the question of what the children from these areas were to be registered as. For instance, would their nationalities be determined as Polish or German? This question was of particular importance amongst children discovered coming from Silesia. Reflecting on the difficulties UNRRA's welfare workers wrote how it was the "most perplexing in the cases of children coming from

⁵⁹ Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 129-130.

Silesia because of the mixed German and Polish population [...]”⁶⁰ UNRRA was wedged between these two categories and did not consider that the children from Silesia may have been unsure about their national identities or actually belonged to a distinct region.⁶¹

Before World War II the majority of Silesia, Upper Silesia, was under the authority of Germany. The eastern part of Silesia belonged to Poland. In both areas there was a significant mix of Polish and *Volksdeutsche* populations. The *Volksdeutsche* were generally considered as citizens of the country they were born or living in. Ethnic Germans living in Yugoslavia, Latvia or Czechoslovakia would therefore be considered as citizens of those countries. According to UNRRA’s studies and understanding with the onset of World War II and the invasion of Poland by Germany, some of the Polish people were forced to become citizens of the Third Reich. These people were referred to as “*Volkliste*.” On the other side there were the ethnic Germans, the *Volksdeutsche*, who had Polish nationality but voluntarily became German citizens. After the war Silesia was given to Poland and the Polish authorities based their actions concerning their citizens on the distinction between those who were forced and those who had a voluntary change of nationality. The information Poland provided UNRRA stated that since the Polish people were forced to become Germans and did it so they could survive; these people were allowed to regain their Polish citizenship. The *Volksdeutsche* on the other hand were barred from becoming Polish citizens again and would either be interned or expelled from the country. For the unaccompanied children the question then became which category

⁶⁰ "Removal of Children (Polish) from the St. Josephs Kinderheim, Kaufbeuren," J. H. Whiting to G-5, Third U.S. Army, October 14, 1946, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255577>; "Removal of Children (Polish) from the St. Josephs Kinderheim, Kaufbeuren," accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255579>.

⁶¹ Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children*, 129-130.

they fell into. Were they *Volkliste* or *Volksdeutsche*? If they were *Volkliste*, meaning they were Polish, they would qualify for UNRRA's aid. But if they were *Volksdeutsche*, of German origin, they would be out of UNRRA's jurisdiction and would not be able to receive any type of assistance from the international organization.⁶²

The difficulties with such cases lay in the fact that documentation for the children was scarce. It was difficult to recover conclusive evidence of a child's background. In March and April of 1946 UNRRA brought up some important questions of how best to approach the unaccompanied children who did not have complete documentation and who came from areas that caused confusion. The first question they asked was the following: "Cases in which there is insufficient evidence to prove nationality, but in which the facts point to nationality, other than German. Should such children be given the benefit of United Nations status?" The second question in relation to the first was: "unidentified children who have been brought into Germany from the surrounding Allied countries. Shall they be considered United Nations children?" In other words, did the fact that a child who was determined to be non-German and coming from an Allied country, but had still not been proven to be from any particular country, justify and authorize UNRRA to remove the child from the German home or institution? Was this reasoning sufficient for UNRRA to consider them as coming from the United Nations thus making them eligible for their assistance? The other important question UNRRA asked was: "children whom the national liaison officers have accepted as their nationals but whom the Germans contend are Germans. Who makes the decision?" In other words, was the decision of the liaison officers representing

⁶² Eileen Blackey, "Problems Relating to Nationality, Status, Adoptions, Guardianship, and Other Repatriation and Resettlement Questions," Tasks of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0008, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed May 18, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/257911>; Taylor, 142-143.

their national governments final? And if the Germans protested a decision made by the liaison officer and claimed that the children did not come from the United Nations who would be the arbiter and have the final say?⁶³

3.2 The Discovery of *Volksdeutsche* Children

John Troniak, the director of Team 566, reported on his encounters in the field with unaccompanied children who had come from Silesia and the difficulties he had in determining their nationalities. The “Silesian Problem” was attributed by Troniak to the “continual changing of control on the territory of Silesia” which made it problematic for him and his team to decide whether a child was German or Polish and whether they should be eligible for UNRRA care. Troniak’s first encounter with Silesian children happened as he gathered a list of 2,500 names from the German Tracing Bureau. With time the list of names grew and approximately reached to 4,000.⁶⁴ During these early efforts Troniak and his team explained that they had to take the Silesian children on a case by case basis as there was not yet a clear instruction on how to deal with the children from that area. In instances Team 566 found Silesian children in a German home or institution and discovered information which pointed to the possibility that that they could possibly be Polish. Hence the welfare workers registered them and started to trace their parents or relatives. When the team managed to find the relatives they made contact with them and would request information about the parent’s nationality at the current moment and prepare the children to be repatriated if they were from Poland. This method was also

⁶³ "Monthly Report, Child Welfare Branch, March/April, 1946," Unaccompanied Children in the U.S. Zone, 6.1.2 0004a, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/254637>.

⁶⁴ John Troniak, "Memo on the Problem of Unaccompanied Children," Child Search and Welfare Activities, 6.1.2 0009, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, December 3, 1946, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/258939>; John Troniak, "Memo on the Problem of Unaccompanied Children," accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/258941>.

implemented for children who were suspected of coming from countries such as Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. The actions taken by Troniak and his team were independently made and not based on any formal decision by any higher authority. Unsure about operating on a case by case basis in his report he wrote: “[the] single cases of Silesian children is however no solution to the big problem which still has to be decided by UNRRA or any other agency which will carry on the humanitarian work of reuniting child with family.”⁶⁵

Another example of the confusion to UNRRA of children who could either be Polish or *Volksdeutsche* can be seen in an interview made with a twelve year old child named Eduard. The welfare worker reported the child as coming from a “suspicious territory” and as “probably not a pure-German child.” But Eduard also had a second name, Menzel, which the interviewer recorded it as a “good German name.” Either way, the information gathered in the interview was sufficient for the welfare worker to register the child. The interview started with questions such as what languages he spoke and what languages his parents spoke back at home. Eduard replied that he understood Polish but was not fluent in the language. His parents he said, only spoke Polish to people that did not understand German. To the interviewer’s question of where he thought his parents came from, Poland or Germany, Eduard replied that they came from Germany. Asking him about where he was born, Eduard answered that he came from a place called “Wellum.” Trying to uncover more information, the interviewer next asked whether they were *Volksdeutsche* or *Reichsdeutsche* (Germans of the Reich) to which Eduard replied that they were *Reichsdeutsche*. Later on in the

⁶⁵ John Troniak, "Silesia and Unaccompanied Children," Tasks of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0008, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, February 11, 1946, accessed May 18, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/257949>; John Troniak, "Silesia and Unaccompanied Children," accessed May 18, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/257939>.

interview the welfare worker discovered information that Eduard's father and brother had served in the Polish army which made him suspicious of whether the child was confused about being German. To find more information the interviewer continued to ask more about the child's background such as details about Eduard's parents and extended relatives. The interviewer asked what they did for a living, their personal details such as their birthdates, the addresses, and when his parents had died and how he ended up in Kastl, Germany. For many of the questions the interviewer could not find any answers but Eduard stated that he had an aunt Amalie at home who was still alive and wanted to go back to her. Eduard also revealed that his mother had most likely died in 1939 and his father in 1941. The year 1941 at aged seven was when Eduard was taken to Germany after he had been in a car accident. He had been taken by an Aunt Amalie to what he described as a "cripple children's clinic" for an operation and but had to "[flee] from the Russians" on March 4, 1945 which he distinctly remembered because of other children telling him the date. Such interviews although not necessarily conclusive were still beneficial tools for UNRRA in finding more children who might have been displaced as the children had been moved around in groups and possibly separated to different homes or institutions in a later period. Despite not coming out of the interview with a definite answer to the question about the nationality of the child, the welfare worker in his closing remarks stated that the work they were doing was "a mighty worthwhile job, for we feel we are saving children, we are doing our part in this marvelous work: Rehabilitation." It was only one small step towards finding the real identity of this "doubtful case." Finishing off his remarks the welfare worker wrote, "Is this child Polish? Is he German? What is going to happen to children like this one?" Similar to Troniak this UNRRA worker also waited for the higher authorities to finally determine the status and fate of the

child: “the Registrars often wonder, but they know: we have done our job, it is up to others now to decide.”⁶⁶

For such doubtful cases the registration policy of Team 566 consisted of the following. If the child was determined to be “definitely Allied and unaccompanied,” then they would be registered by UNRRA. If the children were considered as “unknown and/or undeterminable nationality,” or “of doubtful nationality,” then they would still be eligible and registered by UNRRA. Only in cases where the children were determined to be “definitely accompanied, regardless of nationality,” or “definitely German” would they not be registered by UNRRA. The team acknowledged that although the children may have resided in Poland or Upper Silesia, had parents or relatives whose names were of Polish origin, and knew the Polish language, these details were not sufficient to prove their actual nationalities. It was only an indicator that needed to be further investigated.⁶⁷

Further investigation involved finding additional evidence on a child’s background and presenting the information to the liaison officer to make the final determination of nationality. However, with the children who may or may not have been ethnic Germans there was still confusion amongst UNRRA’s welfare workers as the representatives of the Central and Eastern European governments did not necessarily have the same decision making process concerning these children. A welfare worker, Elsa Pick, described her experiences with two groups of *Volksdeutsche* children. One group was presumed to be Polish and the other Yugoslavian. In August 1946 Pick

⁶⁶ W. C. Huyssoon, "Who Is This Child, Sample of an Interview with an Unaccompanied Child," Search and Tracing Activities of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0001, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/252028>.

⁶⁷ "Present Registration Policy of Team 566," Child Search and Welfare Activities, 6.1.2 0009, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, April 16, 1946, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/259375>.

received news from the Polish liaison officer about a German children's home near Straubing about a group of girls between the ages of nine and fifteen who had possibly been kidnapped by the Nazis and were working for farmers. When the welfare worker visited the home she found that most of the children had come from Silesia and that they were the "offspring's of real *Volksdeutsche* families." Most of the children could not speak Polish. They also claimed that they did not want to leave as they had made a home in Germany and wanted to stay only until they could be reunited with their families in Germany. The decision for them to be removed was based on the Polish liaison officer's call. The Polish representatives decided that the children were to be removed and transferred to *Kloster Indersdorf*. Elsa Pick reported that the children were very upset about the move but once she visited them again later at *Kloster Indersdorf* she observed that the children had adjusted since they were able to stay in better conditions and live a new life where they did not have to do hard labor. An important note in the report was Pick's observation that there was a possibility the children could not be reunited with their parents if they were expelled from Poland which meant that their parents may had been sent to Germany as "*Volksdeutsche*, while their children [had] been sent as Poles."⁶⁸

Before coming across with the children who were determined to be Polish, Pick had also come to find *Volksdeutsche* children who had come from Yugoslavia. These children were living in a monastery called Windsberg. The story with the children was that they all had attended a school that was planning to go to on a trip to Austria but instead were sent to Germany and ever since they had not seen their families. The people in charge of the monastery told the welfare worker that the children were of

⁶⁸ "Report-Mrs. Elsa Pick, Unaccompanied Children," Search and Tracing Activities of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0001, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, June 5, 1947, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/252230>.

“pure German blood and origin” and if they were to be removed they should be removed to a German children’s home. Pick claimed that the children were calling for help to return to their real homes. Three of the people in charge of the monastery were reported to actually be sent to jail for having an association with the SS. When the Yugoslavian liaison officers were asked to step in to determine whether they were eligible to be moved to an UNRRA center for repatriation, they decided that the children were *Volksdeutsche*. The children were not eligible to be repatriated according to the liaison officers. These two sets of cases are indicative of the confusion amongst the welfare workers when investigating children who may have been of German origin and/or may have come from areas of mixed populations. Pick was surprised that on one side the Polish repatriation mission were willing to accept the children who “did not want to be Poles,” and on the other side the Yugoslavian repatriation mission who did not want to accept the children who “did not want to be anything but Yugoslavs.”⁶⁹

The reasoning behind the Yugoslav repatriation mission of not accepting the children as their nationals was based on the political situation back home. In regards to the *Volksdeutsche* children uncovered by UNRRA the children who could be repatriated depended on whether the parents in Yugoslavia were allowed to continue to live in the country. The children of the parents who were exiled were rejected and as minuscule as the chance may be the repatriation mission stated that the parents would be told where their children are in Germany so as to have an opportunity to reunite.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ "Report-Mrs. Elsa Pick, Unaccompanied Children," Search and Tracing Activities of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0001, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, June 5, 1947, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/252230>.

⁷⁰ "Report on Conferences on Unaccompanied Children Held in Berlin - March 15th-22nd-1946," Tasks of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0008, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/258179>.

With children who had disputed nationalities UNRRA's approach was generally consistent. As in the case with Team 566's discoveries, the children were given United Nations status regardless of how close they were to finding the actual nationalities of the children. Only in cases where the children were deemed to be accompanied or determined to be "definitely German" would the children be ineligible. In the Eduard case the child was given the benefit of doubt that he may have been a United Nations citizen and was registered by the interviewer. Considering Elsa Pick's encounters, these were examples of who would make the final decision for the children's futures; it was the liaison officers representing their national governments. The German's in charge of the children in the monastery had protested that the children were not Yugoslav but the decision to repatriate the children depended solely on the liaison officers.

This type of a procedure where the communication was only between UNRRA and the liaison officers eventually brought about the conflict between the international organization together with the representatives of the national governments against the German authorities in charge of the children. The Germans objected to the removal of the children from their homes and institutions claiming that the children were German nationals and accused UNRRA of not providing sufficient and reliable evidence proving that they were United Nations nationals. As a result there were custody battles, the Germans against UNRRA and the liaison officers, which eventually the US military government became involved in on the side of the German authorities. They attempted to stop this procedure and called for the return of the children. With the involvement of multiple parties having a say in the fate of the children and the fact that UNRRA was not the highest governing body, obstruction of the international

organization's step-by-step process of locating, identification, removal and repatriation of unaccompanied children was imminent.

3.3 The Custody Battle over a Silesian Case

One of the obstacles UNRRA faced was the protests of the German authorities and foster parents. An example of this problem occurred in May 1946 when an UNRRA team working in Kaufbeuren, Bavaria discovered in St. Joseph's *Kinderheim* a group of children who were discovered to have come from an institution in Kornowac in Upper Silesia. It was a collecting point for "problem children," a place where the Nazis transferred children to other establishments to educate them with their ideals or for medical experiments.⁷¹ A total of 53 children residing in the German children's home were interviewed. 21 of them were declared to be either Polish or Czechoslovakian. The rest were considered to be German citizens. In June, eleven children were recognized to be potentially Polish and their details were transferred to the Polish liaison officer Major Marian Langer. The officer recognized 10 of them as Polish and one month later they were picked up and removed to UNRRA's international children's center *Kloster Indersdorf*.⁷² Determining the nationalities of the children in St. Joseph's *Kinderheim* and removing them once they were identified was a difficult process for UNRRA. The welfare workers constantly faced resistance from the people who were taking care of the children in the institution. The opposition

⁷¹ "Repatriation of Polish Children," Jean L. Bailly, Director Team 567 to Samuel B. Zisman, Director District No.5, October 3, 1946, Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255589>.

⁷² "Removal of Children (Polish) from the St. Josephs Kinderheim, Kaufbeuren," J. H. Whiting to G-5, Third U.S. Army, October 14, 1946, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255575>; "Repatriation of Polish Children," Jean L. Bailly, Director Team 567 to Samuel B. Zisman, Director District No.5, October 3, 1946, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255591>.

came through allegedly instructing children on how to answer the questions asked by the interviewers as well as through protests in the form of appeals to the Polish liaison officer and the US military. This specific case was important in the context of the dynamics between UNRRA, German foster caretakers, and the Polish authorities.

Similar to many other unaccompanied children's cases the St. Joseph's case caused intense confusion due to the lack of identifying documents. They interviewed the children about their pasts and asked questions about where they possibly came from, the places they resided in, what languages they spoke, and any other information concerning their relatives.⁷³ The interviewers observed that the children's answers to questions about their nationalities were influenced by the home they were living in. During the process UNRRA claimed that the German children would answer their questions "freely and promptly." The children who possibly came from a United Nations country also answered freely in the beginning of the process but as the interview progressed UNRRA observed that the children started to become "reserved" and appeared to be instructed by their caretakers on how to respond. The non-German child who claimed to be German, they attested was "often characterized by embarrassment, hesitation, confusion or frantic appeal to a member of the staff for help in making reply. There is much evidence of coaching on the part of the staff." In one interview before a welfare worker started to ask questions a 12-year-old girl instantly announced that she was German and not Polish and that she only spoke German. Such encounters were recorded by UNRRA as a possibility that the children were being coerced. As a result of the interviews, evidence such as descriptions by children about their forced removals from their homes or countries made UNRRA

⁷³ "Removal of Children (Polish) from the St. Josephs Kinderheim, Kaufbeuren," accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255577>; "Removal of Children (Polish) from the St. Josephs Kinderheim, Kaufbeuren," accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255579>.

consider the higher probability that the children were actually non-German. The interviews they had with various children also “pointed to certain institutions in Upper-Silesia as [a] collecting point for children removed from Polish homes by force to be Germanized.”⁷⁴

The children in St. Joseph’s *Kinderheim* were under the care of Catholic Sisters and one of the people who looked after them both in Upper Silesia and Bavaria was Sister Irmentraud. 10 children had been removed from the institution. Along with Father Fink, a Bishop and the director of the children’s center, Sister Irmentraud protested against UNRRA’s decision and demanded the children be sent back to their institution. She insisted that they “were not displaced foreigners, but children evacuated from German territory.”⁷⁵ They claimed that the institution they were located in had become a war zone and the children had to be evacuated along with the Catholic Sisters to Kaufbeuren. Other points of defense also included claiming that the children did not come from a United Nations country as their parents came from Upper Silesia which was already under the rule of Germany before 1939 and that the only language the children could speak and understand was German. UNRRA was told that they did not have a legitimate reason to remove the children from their care as they had always been looked after by the Germans and that there was no reason to remove them as the children were very well taken care of by the staff. Other statements included how the German children’s home owed a responsibility to their parents and that they were instructed by the managers of the home not to send the children elsewhere before their parents were located. The claim was that the parents had voluntarily given up the children to the institution in Upper Silesia and that St.

⁷⁴ Removal of Children (Polish) from the St. Josephs Kinderheim, Kaufbeuren," accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255579>.

⁷⁵ "Removal of Children (Polish) from the St. Josephs Kinderheim, Kaufbeuren," accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255577>.

Joseph's *Kinderheim* had their own ongoing search efforts for their relatives. UNRRA was accused of forcibly taking away the children who did not want to leave. The home maintained that as "evacuees" the children had already experienced traumatic events in the past and criticized UNRRA for making the children's mental state worse by removing the children again.⁷⁶ The Sister also added that the children would be "unable to feel at home" in a non-German setting and for this reason they would especially not want to be sent to Poland.⁷⁷

To help with their case St. Joseph's *Kinderheim* turned to the U.S. military for the return of the children from *Kloster Indersdorf*. In a letter written at the end of July 1946 Sister Irmentraud explained that there was not sufficient evidence introduced by the Polish Repatriation Mission about the nationality of the children. They wanted UNRRA to provide hard evidence, a birth certificate, which proved what their nationality actually was. The staff at the German children's center also charged UNRRA with the same thing they were accused of doing, which was influencing the children's answers. UNRRA and the Polish officials they claimed were also not thorough in their investigations of nationality as they did not consult the German Youth Office or the staff in the home for more information. The idea that the children

⁷⁶ "Catholic St. Josef's Children Asylum, Kaufbeuren," Jean L. Bailly, Director Team 567 to The Polish Liaison Officer of the UNRRA, July 13, 1946, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255599>.

⁷⁷ "Catholic St. Josef's Children Asylum, Kaufbeuren," Jean L. Bailly, Director Team 567 to The Polish Liaison Officer of the UNRRA, July 13, 1946, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255601>; "Silesian Children from the Catholic Children's Asylum at Kaufbeuren," Parson Herman Fink to The Polish Liaison Officer of the UNRRA, July 13, 1946, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, , accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255615>.

were Germanized by force was absurd to the staff and they wanted to convince the military that the children had always been German as their parents had been.⁷⁸

As proof that the children had to immediately be sent back to the German children's home, a visit by Sister Irmentraud to *Kloster Indersdorf* was made and a letter written by a child to the Catholic Sisters was presented. Sister Irmentraud criticized *Kloster Indersdorf*, claiming that the Sisters were only allowed to speak to the children under the supervision of UNRRA. She also was critical of the living conditions of the place. Writing in the letter, Irmentraud stated that the children were neglected and that their clothes were dirty. She also added that the only children who were supervised were aged 10 or under and that the older children were left to attend to themselves. Finally, she stated that the children told her the environment of *Kloster Indersdorf* had "morally endangered" the children and that they wanted to go back with the Sisters. In the letter addressed to the Sisters written by a child, it was explained that the children were not enjoying their time there as much as they had in St. Joseph's. As Irmentraud had explained, this child had also wished to leave *Kloster Indersdorf*. The staff in St. Joseph's pleaded to the US military for their requests to be heard. They appealed to what they explained was a common goal between the two to "soothe sorrow and misery in Germany [and] quite especially to help the children."⁷⁹

⁷⁸ "Taking Away of German Children Out of Silesia into Poland through the Polish Liaison Officer of the UNRRA Munich," M. Schneller to Headquarters of the Fighting Forces of United States of America, Frankfurt A/Main, July 30, 1946, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255607>.

⁷⁹ Max Schneller, Director, "Transportation of German (Silesian) Children to Poland, Through the Polish Liaison Officer of the UNRRA in Munich," Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, August 5, 1946, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255603>; "Taking Away of German Children Out of Silesia into Poland through the Polish Liaison Officer of the UNRRA Munich," accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255607>;

Sister Irmentraud with Father Fink made one final stop to fight for their cause and talk to the Polish liaison officer in attempt to reverse his decision. This meeting between the two parties caused confusion about the fate of the children. Major Langer reversed his decision for 8 of the children in *Kloster Indersdorf*. Before they were to be sent back to the Sisters, Langer and UNRRA decided to involve the Polish Red Cross in the investigation and re-interview the children in the children's center.⁸⁰ When Langer visited *Kloster Indersdorf* he reported that he was greeted with children "smiling and welcoming him in Polish." Describing the mood of the children Langer observed how there was a change in the "children's attitudes and actions after their removal from under the influence of the German Catholic Sisters."⁸¹

Two of the children named Ewa Koim (aged 11) and Renata Kuklok (aged 10), without any coercion, voluntarily asked to be returned to Poland as soon as possible. Eva Koim was one instance where a child insisted that she had no knowledge of Polish but when she went on a repatriation train she "spoke fluently in Polish and completely identified herself with other Polish children."⁸² Renata Kuklok described to the Polish Red Cross that she was transferred by the Germans to St. Joseph's *Kinderheim* and that she wanted to be sent back to her parents who were living at Hindenburg in Upper Silesia (now called Zabrze). The Polish Red Cross described the

Sister M. Irmentraud, "1 copy of letter from a sister Irmentraud of Kaufbeuren to the Director of the Catholic Youth's Welfare Organization Augsburg" Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, July 28, 1946, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255609>; Sister M. Irmentraud, "Dear Honourable Sisters," Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, July 12, 1946, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255611>.

⁸⁰ "Repatriation of Polish Children," Jean L. Bailly, Director Team 567 to Samuel B. Zisman, Director District No.5, October 3, 1946, Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255593>.

⁸¹ "Repatriation of Polish Children," Jean L. Bailly, Director Team 567 to Samuel B. Zisman, Director District No.5, October 3, 1946, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255595>.

⁸² Removal of Children (Polish) from the St. Josephs *Kinderheim*, Kaufbeuren," accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255579>.

rest as “without a doubt Polish children being Germanized at the *Kinderheim* after being taken compulsorily from their parents.” They recommended that the children be kept in *Kloster Indersdorf* until they were able to be repatriated.⁸³ By October 1946 out of the ten children, six were repatriated to Poland while four remained in *Kloster Indersdorf*.⁸⁴ Finally, in accordance with the information provided by the UNRRA search teams and later on by the Polish Red cross, the Polish Liaison Officer rejected the pleas by St. Joseph’s *Kinderheim* to keep custody of the children. The Polish Repatriation Mission in Munich once again reversed their decision and concluded that the children were “Polish nationals who are Germanized by force and will return to Poland to their families or to educational institutions.”⁸⁵

Throughout the process of the St. Joseph’s case UNRRA faced resistance and criticism from the German institution about its conduct towards the children. UNRRA’s defense was that they took all the precautions when attempting to identify the nationalities of the children. They emphasized the importance of how the children were being influenced by the people in the institution which made it difficult to complete the background histories. More importantly UNRRA explained that they did not transfer any cases to the Polish liaison officer which they were uncertain of. The

⁸³ Kozłowski Florian and Jarocinski Antoni, "The Report of Duty Travel to the Children Center Kloster Indersdorf in Connection with Children Evacuated from Kaufbeuren," Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, 1946, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255623>.

⁸⁴ "Removal of Children (Polish) from the St. Josephs Kinderheim, Kaufbeuren," J. H. Whiting to G-5, Third U.S. Army, October 14, 1946, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255575>; "Repatriation of Polish Children," Jean L. Bailly, Director Team 567 to Samuel B. Zisman, Director District No.5, October 3, 1946, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255591>.

⁸⁵ "Silesian Children," Marian Langer to Cath. Kinderheim St Josef Kaufbeuren, July 16, 1946, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255617>; "Repatriation of Polish Children," Jean L. Bailly, Director Team 567 to Samuel B. Zisman, Director District No.5, October 3, 1946, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255593>.

children they had encountered were either registered as German or “doubtful,” meaning possibly to be a United Nations national. If a child appeared to be undoubtedly German or there was not sufficient information pointing to the child’s nationality UNRRA would hold on to the case. Only the cases where the interviewers were confident of the evidence of Polish nationality were the children’s information transferred to the Polish authorities.⁸⁶

UNRRA took precautions because the Polish liaison repatriation mission had stated that they were “prepared to repatriate all Silesian children of Polish nationality and any Silesian children of doubtful or German nationality where the parents could be found.” In other words, the Polish liaison officer had explained to UNRRA that they were prepared to take any and all *Volksdeutsche* children who were born in Silesia. Major Langer had specified to UNRRA that the policy they were following for *Volksdeutsche* children was of repatriation if they were born in Poland. He also explained that there was the situation where the *Volksdeutsche* were being expelled from Poland for “political treachery.” Nevertheless the children did not fall into this category. For Langer the question of “who had the first right to the children” was answered on the basis that first it was the family, and second the Polish state. This gave UNRRA the impression that all *Volksdeutsche* children who had parents in Poland were to be registered and repatriated.⁸⁷ The Polish liaison mission was willing to repatriate even German children whose parents were living in Silesian territories

⁸⁶ "Repatriation of Polish Children," Jean L. Bailly, Director Team 567 to Samuel B. Zisman, Director District No.5, October 3, 1946, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255587>; "Removal of Children (Polish) from the St. Josephs Kinderheim, Kaufbeuren," accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255579>.

⁸⁷ "Report of a Conversation I Had With Chief of Polish Repatriation Mission Major Langer., Polish & Red Cross U.S. Zone Representative: Major Wiszowski," Stephan Tyszka to Mr. Troniak, Director, UNRRA Team 566, August 1946, in Child Search and Welfare Activities, 6.1.2 0009, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/259021>.

occupied by Poland, but German children were out of the jurisdiction of UNRRA.

This sentiment of the Polish Liaison Office was the reason why UNRRA made sure that they could gather all the information they could and present the cases only when they were sure that the children they had found pointed to Polish nationality.⁸⁸

The Silesian cases illustrate two important points. First, for the question of whether the children should be given a United Nations status, UNRRA deemed them worthy and eligible for their care. Although there was not an official directive on how to approach children who came from areas such as Silesia, UNRRA recommended that these children not be neglected and their identities continue to be discovered and documented. UNRRA's reasoning was that if the welfare workers were given time to properly identify the children and if they actually turned out to be Polish their parents or relatives could be found and notified. Even if it was unclear whether the Silesian children were officially their responsibility, they wanted to provide care temporarily. In this way it would be possible for the liaison officers to also review these cases and decide whether they were eligible for repatriation or not. For UNRRA a chance for a complete investigation of the children's identities was necessary, and had to be done by their own staff until a "more satisfactory solution of the problem" could be found. They maintained that the children had to be taken care of in UNRRA centers until an official directive was launched explaining whether they were to be considered as

⁸⁸ "Repatriation of Polish Children," Jean L. Bailly, Director Team 567 to Samuel B. Zisman, Director District No.5, October 3, 1946, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-aarolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255587>; "Removal of Children (Polish) from the St. Josephs Kinderheim, Kaufbeuren," accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-aarolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255579>; "Removal of Children (Polish) from the St. Josephs Kinderheim, Kaufbeuren," accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-aarolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255581>.

Germans or stateless, or whether they had to be resettled in another country.⁸⁹ The second important point, as an outcome of the St. Joseph's case, was related to the question of who made the final decision in instances where the German authorities protested that the children in question were actually German and not from the United Nations as UNRRA insisted. In this case it was up to the liaison officer to decide on how to proceed with the children. The German authorities in the institution were not able to overturn the final decision. The St. Joseph's case was only one example of how the German authorities protested against the removal of children they considered and argued to be their own. Towards 1947 and until the end of UNRRA's run, the practice of having liaison officers as the sole decision makers for the fate of children changed as higher authorities within the German community became involved in the process. This became possible as a result of the official backing of OMGUS which also did not recognize the need for the children to be removed from their German families.

⁸⁹ Eileen Blackey, "Problems Relating to Nationality, Status, Adoptions, Guardianship, and Other Repatriation and Resettlement Questions," Tasks of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0008, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed May 18, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/257911>.

CHAPTER IV

OBJECTIONS TO THE REMOVAL OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN FROM GERMAN HOMES AND INSTITUTIONS

4.1 The US Military Government in Occupied Germany

After the fall of Germany in 1945 the Office of Military Government United States (OMGUS) was assigned to represent the United States in the Allied Control Council. The Allied Control Council was the military government of post-war Germany and was operated by the occupation forces of the United States, France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. In Germany the occupation forces of the United States were allocated the following areas: Greater Hessen, Bavaria, Württemberg-Baden, the Bremen Enclave (which were ports that were ceded to the United States by the British) and the United States section in Berlin. The US zone was divided into two districts commanded by the army; Hessen and Württemberg-Baden was the Western Military District and Bavaria was the Eastern Military District. The mission that awaited OMGUS in occupied Germany included, but was not limited to, restoring stability, building infrastructure, repatriating millions of displaced persons, and supporting the local population with food and medical assistance. To execute these missions and directives put in place by OMGUS, the United States Forces European (USFET) was first organized on July 14, 1945. And two years later on March 15,

1947 USFET was replaced by the Headquarters, European Command (HQ EUCOM).⁹⁰

The US military came across the DP crisis as they were moving eastwards into Germany. They came across large numbers of people in the countryside and on the roads. The initial solutions of the military were to house the DPs in camps that were available and in abandoned barracks. For much of 1945, the US military focused their efforts on repatriating the displaced. After the war, there were approximately two million DPs who remained in the centers refusing to be sent back which brought about the new problem of how to take care of the people and to plan for their futures. Since the number of people was too many for the US army to look after by themselves, they decided to join forces with UNRRA. In October 1945, it was agreed that the army would provide logistical support while UNRRA would be in charge of administering the DP camps and centers. The agreement between the military and UNRRA was extended in February 1946. OMGUS became responsible for necessities and the care and control of the movement of the DPs. USFET provided necessities such as food, shelter and medicine. UNRRA continued to administer the camps as well as the DPs living outside the centers. The food for the DPs was requisitioned from the Germans but the stock remained insufficient. This is where UNRRA came in with the help of other agencies such as the Red Cross, the American Friends Service Committee, and the American Joint Distribution Committee to provide relief.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Lee Kruger, *Logistic Matters and the U.S. Army in Occupied Germany, 1945-1949* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), xxvii, 85-86, 76-79.

⁹¹ Kruger, 149-152.

4.2 Protests by German Authorities over UNRRA's Removal Policy

The mutual contribution to relief efforts were only one side of the story when it came to the DPs. This was especially valid for UNRRA as rehabilitation was as important as the first "R." The neglectful attitude of OMGUS towards the rehabilitation of the unaccompanied children was an important factor that led to the division between the two organizations. The issue at hand was the intensifying resistance of the German authorities to the removal of children from their homes and institutions. UNRRA complained that their efforts and all the progress they had made towards the searches, screenings, and documentation was hindered because of the protests by the Germans, and also by not releasing the children to the international organization. OMGUS heard the calls of protests of by German foster parents and guardians which resulted in the governing body introducing legislation that would obstruct UNRRA's operations. The fact that the international organization operated under the authority of OMGUS and did not have the power to remove the children themselves from the German institutions once they were determined to be a United Nations national did not help their cause either. All of these factors led to intense debates over the custody of children between those in favor of removal and repatriation (UNRRA and the liaison officers) and those who opposed it (OMGUS and the German authorities such as foster parents, guardians in German institutions and German youth offices).

In July 1946 OMGUS explained their disapproval with UNRRA's operations in a meeting to "discuss and clarify UNRRA's activities and responsibilities in the location and removal of United Nations children from German institutions and German families." OMGUS accused UNRRA of deliberately undermining its authority by not acting in accordance with the "top levels." UNRRA typically contacted local military officials that were attached to their teams for any decisions

regarding the unaccompanied children. However OMGUS pointed out that these military officials did not have the authority to allow UNRRA into the German institutions, let alone the removal of the children. UNRRA defended their actions by stating that they had no knowledge that the proper channels for removal were to go through the highest levels of the military government. They placed the blame on OMGUS for not having a clear set of instructions that UNRRA needed to follow when it came to the procedures of removal. One other issue OMGUS brought up was that of the criticism of the Germans. OMGUS, German foster parents and guardians accused UNRRA of upsetting and disturbing the staff and the children during their investigations. UNRRA had what OMGUS described as having “disrupting influence on the children” especially in instances when they did not turn out to be from a United Nations country. OMGUS recommended that UNRRA’s child search activities be put on hold immediately until a final directive by the military government could be released providing instructions on the “determination of nationality, authorization of entering German homes and institutions and authorization for removal of children.”⁹²

Putting UNRRA’s child search operations on hold was not acceptable for UNRRA as in their view it would have been “nothing short of disastrous” for them to leave the children under the care of the Germans. Fortunately, for UNRRA a compromise was reached. UNRRA could not enter and remove children from German homes and institutions without written applications being made to the “Military Government Public Welfare Officer at Land Level.” They had to have two letters approved by OMGUS; one to enter and another to remove the children. The letters consisted of a

⁹² Eileen Blackey, "Report on Field Trip to the U.S. Zone July 12th-19th, 1946," Unaccompanied Children in the U.S. Zone, 6.1.2 0004a, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, July 29, 1946, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/254535>; Eileen Blackey, "Report on Field Trip to Berlin. 1st and 2nd October 1946," Unaccompanied Children in the U.S. Zone, 6.1.2 0004a, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/254544>.

list of the homes and institutions UNRRA was intending to enter as well as the names of the individual welfare workers who were participating in their investigations. UNRRA also had to include the names of all the children they were intending to remove. The instructions of written authorization set forth by OMGUS did not completely cut off UNRRA's operations, but it did add another hurdle the welfare workers had to overcome during their intensive child search operations.⁹³

Even with the compromise of written approvals UNRRA faced difficulties when they wanted to remove the children. In instances where both parties, UNRRA and the military, agreed that a child was recognized to be non-German, the child welfare workers would receive a letter with the following writing: the "Office of Military Government for Bavaria has no objection to the removal of the above named child to an UNRRA institution for repatriation to Poland." The problem for UNRRA occurred when the German authorities would not release the children to the organization. Since UNRRA did not have the power to remove the children by themselves they requested that the military use their authority for the transfer of custody of the children. Despite UNRRA having the written agreements required to remove the children, they could not force the German authorities to release the children. OMGUS maintained that they had to follow a set of rules and they too could not force the children to be given up if the Germans did not allow their release.⁹⁴

⁹³ Eileen Blackey, "Report on Field Trip to the U.S. Zone July 12th-19th, 1946," Unaccompanied Children in the U.S. Zone, 6.1.2 0004a, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, July 29, 1946, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/254535>; Cornelia D. Heise, "Authorization to Enter German Welfare Agencies, Homes and Institutions and to Remove Children," Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, July 22, 1946, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255689>.

⁹⁴ "Child Search," Mr. A. C. Dunn, District Director, UNRRA District No.3 Headquarters, Regensburg to Mr. C. J. Taylor, Deputy Zone Director, UNRRA U.S. Zone Headquarters, Heidelberg, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, September 24, 1946, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255681>.

4.2.1 The Restrictions on UNRRA's Removal Policy

The idea that OMGUS could not enforce the removal of children may give the image that the governing body was a passive actor in the midst of German protests of refusal to give the children up. On the contrary, OMGUS was stern with their instructions towards UNRRA in instances where they decided that there was not any basis for removal. There were two important directives released by the military that enabled both OMGUS and the German authorities to stand in the way of UNRRA's operations. The first was a directive released by USFET on May 11, 1946. Relating to the "circumstances under which the children will be repatriated or resettled," the directive stated that UNRRA could only remove the children if they had the consent of the foster parents.. The second significant directive was introduced on July 18, 1946. According to this decree, before the children could be removed it had to be established that they were of "undisputed United Nations nationality."⁹⁵

With these sets of instructions UNRRA became ineffective during the procedure of removing the children from German care. The final decision of determining the nationality and the process of removal no longer solely lied on the verdict of the liaison officers and UNRRA. Instead OMGUS and the Germans had a say in whether the child was a United Nations national and eligible to be sent to an UNRRA children's center for repatriation. With the policies introduced by OMGUS, German individuals such as foster parents and guardians as well as German institutions became active participants in the custody battle of the children. As a result, the

⁹⁵ Headquarters US Forces, European Theater, "Repatriation and Resettlement of Orphan and Unaccompanied Children," Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, May 11, 1946, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255721>.

attempts by UNRRA and the liaison officers to transfer the children from Germany were blocked by the foster parents and the German institutions.

4.2.2 The Office of Military Government for Bavaria Foster Parent Policy

Each district under the occupation of the US military implemented the directive for the need for foster-parent consent during the removals of children. They had variations between them in the ways they were executed, but in each case it led to UNRRA's operations to come to a standstill in both private homes and institutions. For example, the Office of Military Government for Bavaria (OMGB) made an announcement to UNRRA in early 1947 that they were planning to withhold the removal of children. But it was later modified to allow a transfer of custody as long as there was evidence that the parents of the United Nations child were requesting for their return in addition to the approval of the foster parent. OMGB wanted to confirm that the parents in the home countries were located and actually willing to receive their children.⁹⁶

A particular instance where OMGUS rejected the evidence presented by UNRRA as insufficient due to missing information about the biological parents was during a case in Hofheim in the German children's home "*Schloss Hubertus*." Stefan Tyszka, a Polish Red Cross officer attached to Troniak's search team reported that they had found a group of Silesian children who possibly had been taken from Poland. The person in charge of the institution, Sister Zimmer, was convinced that the children in the center were German. Working together with Troniak, Sister Zimmer combed through the available documents on the children and by the end of their investigation

⁹⁶ "Removal of Children from German Care. Report on Current Situation," Cornelia D. Heise to UNRRA Displaced Persons Headquarters, Hotel Majestic, Avenue Kleber, Paris 16 E, June 30, 1947, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255763>.

they were able to find evidence of the birth certificates stating that the children were in fact Polish. The initial number of children in the home that was presumed to be Polish was 40. In the final investigations 21 of them were confirmed to be Polish by the Red Cross worker, and the information was transferred to the liaison officer in charge. UNRRA requested OMGB to remove the children and was later given the approval to proceed. The first group of eight Polish children was removed in May 1947. Troniak described this group as being already in an advanced state of Germanization as they had almost forgotten how to speak Polish.⁹⁷ He did not approach this case any differently than with the other groups of Silesian children he had found. Acknowledging the difficulties the children would have during the process of removal from their German foster parents; Troniak was still dedicated to the goal of achieving the rehabilitating effects of repatriation on both the child and the nation and stated the following:

The problem itself seems to be urgent because of the fact that many fathers and mothers are living in Poland now on the so-called territory Silesia – Upper and Lower – are waiting for the children. The reuniting of the child with its family is not only the best humanitarian work of our mission, but also the best rehabilitation of any allied country and nation.”⁹⁸

The optimism towards the mission of returning the children was short lived when it came to the *Schloss Hubertus* case. As the Polish authorities were preparing for the

⁹⁷ John Troniak, "Removal of Allied Unaccompanied Children from German Children's Home "Schloss Hubertus" in Oberlauringen, Kr. Hofheim (Sister Gertrud Zimmer in Charge)," Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, 1946, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255785>; Stefan Tyska, Polish Red Cross Attached to UNRRA Area Team 1048, Regensburg, "Protest Against the Present Policy of UNRRA and Mil. Gov. Authorities in Regard to the Problem of Unaccompanied Children," Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, May 20, 1947, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255791>.

⁹⁸ John Troniak, "Removal of Allied Unaccompanied Children from German Children's Home "Schloss Hubertus" in Oberlauringen, Kr. Hofheim (Sister Gertrud Zimmer in Charge)," Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, 1946, accessed April 8, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255787>.

next group of children to be removed, UNRRA received a notification from OMGB instructing them to put the case on hold. The official response to why OMGB went back on their initial decision was not explained in the report. However, the Polish Red Cross officer described how the documents were not sufficient for OMGB, and that they needed to write to the parents of the children they had located and request them to specifically indicate whether they wanted the return of their children. The Polish Red Cross officer was impatient with such a waiting period as he stated that it would take months for the process to be completed. Another complaint by the officer was that OMGB's removal orders were also taking time away from UNRRA's capabilities of assisting the children in need. The officer described how a child had died because of tuberculosis in one of their previous cases. But without the requirement of further documentation that OMGB requested an official order that allowed the removal of the children would not be released. Taking into account the complaint by the Red Cross Officer of the difficulties of receiving statements by the children's parents in time, it's possible to indicate that OMGB had not accepted the evidence provided by UNRRA and the Polish authorities due to a need for confirmation that the parents were located and were indeed waiting and asking for the return of the children.⁹⁹

The children's home in Hofheim was not the only case where OMGB returned from their initial decision of authorizing the children to be removed. In May 1947 individual cases of 14 children were overturned by OMGB. These children were claimed to be coming from various countries such as Poland, Belgium, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, Ukraine and Yugoslavia. Each of them was previously

⁹⁹ Stefan Tyszka, Polish Red Cross Attached to UNRRA Area Team 1048, Regensburg, "Protest Against the Present Policy of UNRRA and Mil. Gov. Authorities in Regard to the Problem of Unaccompanied Children," Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, May 20, 1947, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255793>.

given the permission to be transferred. However, according to the report presented by UNRRA the “precipitating cause was the protest [of] a German family made to Office of Military Government, Bavaria” when the organization removed a child considered to be from the Soviet Union. UNRRA maintained that it had all the proper documentation and clearances required, but an official working within OMGB had made what UNRRA described as a “blanket withdrawal on all pending removals from German families.” The reason for this decision was similar to that in the *Schloss Hubertus* case. OMGB explained that the removal of these children would not continue “unless the parents [were] asking for the children.” With this verdict the 14 cases remained open indefinitely.¹⁰⁰

During the instances when UNRRA actually had requests available by the “natural or adoptive UN parents” to receive the children they still had to go through other requirements to get the authorization of OMGB. For example, a removal could be authorized if the parent was able to accompany the “Child Welfare Investigating Officer.” But this had to be followed up by the German foster parents recognizing the accompanying person. The reason was the fact that OMGUS wanted to make sure that there were no doubts remaining that the ones requesting the children were their actual parents and/or close relatives.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ "Allied Children in German Foster Homes for Whom Permission to Move to a Children's Centre Has Been Requested from O.M.G.B., Has Been Granted and Subsequently Withdrawn Pending the Berlin Directive," Eileen Davidson to Chief, Child Search/Tracing Division, Wiesbaden, June 3, 1947, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255781>.

¹⁰¹ Cornelia D. Heise, "Removal of Children from German Homes and Institutions Upon Request of Natural or Adoptive UN Parents," Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, March 10, 1947, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255821>.

4.2.3 The Office of Military Government for Greater Hessen Foster Parent Policy

The policies over the removal of children from German homes and institutions were as strict in the district of Greater Hessen. OMG for Greater Hessen did not allow removal from “foster homes except upon consent of the foster parent or the German agency which placed the child.” It also added that a foster home was interpreted as a “home in which the child is living regardless of whether custody or authority has been formally transferred.” These instructions meant that the consent for removal included not only individuals who were foster parents but also institutions such as the *Jugendamt* (the German Youth Office).¹⁰²

Examining the case of Jirina Anderlova who was born in 1940 can provide a glimpse of the removal policy of OMG for Greater Hessen. In April 1946 she was claimed to have Czechoslovak nationality by UNRRA. Tracing the movements of the child, it was established that Jirina was taken by the NSV and given to a woman by the name of Margaret Hannel who was also living in Czechoslovakia. After the war, Hannel and Jirina were evacuated to Germany. Hannel told UNRRA that Jirina was her own child but the welfare workers stated that she had no documents to prove that claim. By the end of the investigation of the case, UNRRA claimed to have found information about Jirina’s biological mother who happened to come from Czechoslovakia and was asking for her child to be repatriated. However, UNRRA received the following notice blocking the repatriation: “it is suggested that the local Germany Youth Office

¹⁰² "Removal of Children from German Care. Report on Current Situation," Cornelia D. Heise to UNRRA Displaced Persons Headquarters, Hotel Majestic, Avenue Kleber, Paris 16 E, June 30, 1947, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255763>.

be contacted by you in order to secure the consent of the foster parent for removal of Jirina Anderlova from her present home.”¹⁰³

In the Jirina Anderlova case, the exact reason why UNRRA was blocked from removing the child and redirected to the German Youth Office was not explicitly mentioned by OMG for Greater Hessen. Examining other examples such as those of Rita Becker and Heinz Zastowinkowicz which took place in January 1947 can provide an understanding of whose custody the children were in and who UNRRA had to go to for permission. Rita and Heniz were both claimed by the Yugoslavian liaison office and were certified that they were of “Yugoslav origin and [would] be accepted by Yugoslavia.” Three months later the children were requested to be removed to an UNRRA children’s center. In May 1947, UNRRA received a rejection letter by OMG for Greater Hessen in reference to USFET’s directive of May 11, 1946 stating that the children could not be removed without the consent of the foster parents. The rejection was based on the fact that both Rita and Heinz had been placed in their current foster homes by the German Youth Office, and that this agency was the only institution that could authorize the children to be removed from their current homes. This meant that the children were in the custody of the German Youth Office, and any requests for their removal by UNRRA needed the consent of the agency. OMG for Greater Hessen acknowledged that the agency had “legal guardianship of the children” Their policy of removal was that of recognizing the German institutions having authority over the children. It was explained to UNRRA that OMG for Greater Hessen did not have any legal basis to remove the children if the local German Youth Offices were the ones

¹⁰³ "Supplementary Record - Face Sheet, Anderlova Jirina," Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255641>.

who placed the children in their current homes and they were therefore responsible for the children.¹⁰⁴

4.2.4 The Concept of Undisputed United Nations Nationality

The second topic of dispute following the consent of the foster parents was the meaning of “Undisputed United Nations Nationality.” One of the criteria for UNRRA to remove the children was that there had to be evidence that a child was non-German and belonged to a country that was under UNRRA’s mandate. Most of UNRRA’s cases with both OMG for Greater Hessen and OMG Bavaria were blocked regardless of the findings of the international organization on the nationality of the children. For example, OMG Bavaria’s defense for blocking UNRRA was based on the need for a “nationality review” on their part as UNRRA and the liaison were accused of making mistakes in the past where later it was found that a child’s parents may have been in fact German.¹⁰⁵ Even if UNRRA may have been unsatisfied with OMGUS having a say in the determination of nationalities the organization was powerless to counter their policies. But one group UNRRA was hesitant about including in any nationality review was the Germans. As a response UNRRA requested OMGUS to release a directive with the following amendments:

[as long as the children are not] residing with a close relative by blood who is acting as a foster parent...a directive be issued authorizing the removal from German private homes of children of undisputed UN nationality and their admission to UNRRA Children’s Centers

¹⁰⁴ "Removal of Yugoslav Children from German Care," Cornelia D. Heise to Warrent Officer S. Milosev, Chief Yugoslav Liaison Officer for Repatriation, June 19, 1947, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255767>; "1. Rita Becker, Yugoslavian. 2. Heinz Zastowinkowcz, Yugoslavian," Margaret J. Newton to Chief Yugoslavian Liaison Section, May 18, 1947, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255769>.

¹⁰⁵ "Mil. Gov. Land Level Authority Re Removal of Children," Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, accessed July 28, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255831>.

regardless whether or not German authorities or the German foster parent consent to such removal.¹⁰⁶

Such a directive requested by UNRRA that would bypass the German authorities for consent was never released. The German authorities turned out to be active participants as shown in the previous cases that involved OMG for Greater Hessen and OMG Bavaria. To add more to UNRRA's disappointment the disagreement on what constituted as "undisputed United Nations nationality" also became a source of debate. For OMGUS the concept was defined such as the "actual nationality of the child must be certain above any doubt." This meant that UNRRA had to have had established the nationality of the children and have all the evidence before they could be removed. For example, if a child was found to be non-German, UNRRA had to provide proof that the child was without a doubt coming from a country in the United Nations territory, and provide evidence of what that country specifically was. UNRRA's understanding of the concept was different. They insisted that with their cases they had usually determined that a child was definitely non-German. The only problem was that they needed to have more time to figure out what the actual nationality of the child was. Such a finding was sufficient enough for UNRRA's welfare workers and they insisted that once it was established that the child was from one of the countries of the United Nations, there was not any need to further delay separating them from "German surroundings." Leaving the children in a German setting for a prolonged period of time was considered by UNRRA as counterproductive in finding their "true nationality" and in preparing the children

¹⁰⁶ "Removal of UN Children from German Foster Homes," Paul B. Edwards UNRRA US Zone Director to The Commanding General U.S.F.E.T. APO 757 US Army, March 3, 1947, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, accessed July 28, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255827>.

“psychologically for repatriation.” UNRRA insisted that the children had to be removed and given the “status and privileges of a United Nations child.”¹⁰⁷

As UNRRA’s discussions continued with OMGUS it became more apparent that the military government took the stance that the children had to stay with the German families until all the plans such as locating a relative and reuniting them afterwards to accommodate the children after their removal were made. OMGUS responded to UNRRA by stating that the actual psychological trauma would occur if there was a sudden separation from the foster parents. And if UNRRA was able to prove that the children had to be separated, then the local German Youth Offices had to be instructed to contact the foster parents to prepare the children for removal. OMGUS justified its precautions based on the idea that the Americans wanted to promote and “demonstrate democratic procedure to the Germans generally and to show the contrast with the Nazi methods of seizure.”¹⁰⁸

4.3 The Directive to Recognize All Unaccompanied Children as German Citizens

During the same time UNRRA was having their disagreements with OMGUS and the German authorities in the field, the representatives of the international organization were also in contact with the military government in hopes of promoting requirements

¹⁰⁷ "Removal of United Nations Children from German Institutions and Private Homes," Paul B. Edwards UNRRA US Zone Director to Commanding General, EUCOM APO 757 US Army, March 22, 1947, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, accessed July 28, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-aarolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255801>; Eileen Blackey, "Report on Field Trip to Berlin. 1st and 2nd October 1946," Unaccompanied Children in the U.S. Zone, 6.1.2 0004a, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-aarolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/254541>.

¹⁰⁸ "O.M.G.B. Procedure Re Referral of Allied Children (in German Foster Homes, Particularly) to Land Youth Dept., Where They Question the National Liaison Officer's Decision Re-nationality," District Child Search Officer to Miss Heise, Zone Child Search Officer, January 23, 1947, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, accessed July 28, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-aarolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255833>.

they considered were necessary to include in a final directive for the problem of nationality and removal. In a set of meetings that started to take place in March 1946, Eileen Blackey, UNRRA's Child Care consultant, reported on behalf of the organization on a series of proposals that would have been completely damaging towards UNRRA's aims for the unaccompanied children. On the opposite side of the talks was Colonel Abbot who was the leader of the Prisoner of War and Displaced Persons Division of OMGUS. Abbot laid out a draft of a directive intended not only for the US Zone but also for the British and French Zones for the problem of unaccompanied children. There were two major proposals that became a source of conflict between the two parties. The first proposal stated that "any child born or living in Germany whose nationality [could not] be determined is presumed to be German, until such time as other proof is available." And the second proposal specified that "no child who is with his natural, adoptive or foster parents or with any other person who has been caring for him, shall be separated from such persons, unless it is thought to be in the best interests of the child."¹⁰⁹

In a second round of discussions between UNRRA and Colonel Abbott in May 1946 an updated version of the draft was released with the following proposals:

- (1) Any children born of stateless parents in Germany are to be declared German citizens.
- (2) Any children of undetermined nationality shall be declared German citizens.
- (3) United Nations' children who have been placed in German families or adopted by German families are not to be removed from those families

¹⁰⁹ "Report on Conferences on Unaccompanied Children Held in Berlin - March 15th-22nd-1946," Tasks of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0008, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/258165>; "Report on Conferences on Unaccompanied Children Held in Berlin - March 15th-22nd-1946, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/258167>.

for the purpose of repatriation unless it is thought to be “for the best interests of the child.”¹¹⁰

The reasoning behind Abbott’s plan to keep the children in the custody of German families or institutions was based on the idea that “Germany also needed children.” What Abbott described as the “best interests of the child” was that of “continued residence with a responsible person.” In other words, he did not see any reason why any of the unaccompanied children should be separated from their German families, especially if they were well being taken care of. The only circumstances Abbott explained, where the children should be removed, were if they were being abused and were living in poor conditions.¹¹¹

One last issue of conflict between UNRRA and Colonel Abbot that obstructed the search operations was the issue of the lists of unaccompanied children in the US Zone that were provided by the German authorities. In January and March of 1946, the US military indicated that the German officials had to direct lists of children who were possibly of United Nations origin, and were living in German homes or institutions to UNRRA. By March, the lists of the children were instructed to be redirected and delivered to the POW & DP Division of OMGUS in Berlin instead of the UNRRA headquarters. This became a problem for UNRRA as it meant that the person in charge of the lists was Colonel Abbot. He refused to release any of the lists containing

¹¹⁰ Eileen Blackey, "Report on Field Trip to Berlin. May 1-10, 1946," Tasks of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0008, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 28, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/258057>.

¹¹¹ Eileen Blackey, "Report on Field Trip to Berlin. May 1-10, 1946," Tasks of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0008, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 28, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/258059>; "Report on Conferences on Unaccompanied Children Held in Berlin - March 15th-22nd-1946," Tasks of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0008, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 28, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/258169>.

information about the children to UNRRA and claimed that legally he was not allowed to distribute them.¹¹²

4.3.1 UNRRA's Protests to the German Citizen Proposal

UNRRA's representatives criticized the colonel for stating that Germany's population also needed children. This was unacceptable to UNRRA as they reminded him that the children they had found had in fact been taken from their real families and removed from their real nations by the Nazis. For UNRRA this was a very important detail that needed to be remembered and to be taken into consideration when deciding whether to leave the children under the German system or not. UNRRA objected to the proposals to declare the unaccompanied children as German citizens and did not perceive this option to be beneficial in their efforts of identification. They also considered the proposals to be in conflict with the requests of the governments of Central and Eastern Europe which was for the return of who they considered were their own children. UNRRA explained that for the cases in which the children's nationalities were considered to be in an undetermined status UNRRA had established they were not German. They usually had uncovered information that the children were brought into Germany from another country. The problem was that UNRRA could not determine the definite nationalities of the children. Similar to the problem of the requirement of having an "Undisputed United Nations nationality," UNRRA needed time to find information about the actual nationality of the child. If Abbott's proposal of declaring the children as German citizens became an official policy, UNRRA's operations would severely be affected. Not only would this stop the

¹¹² Eileen Blackey, "Report on Field Trip to the U.S. Zone July 12th-19th, 1946," Unaccompanied Children in the U.S. Zone, 6.1.2 0004a, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, July 29, 1946, accessed July 28, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/254537>; Louise Wilhelmine Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 494.

organization from finding information about the children's true identities and possibly their relatives but it would also mean UNRRA losing the custody of the children. As German nationals they would no longer be entitled to the care and protection provided by UNRRA and would lose their status as DPs.¹¹³ As German nationals, any attempts by UNRRA to overturn the children's status and gain their custody would have to go through German courts. UNRRA's hesitancy towards such an arrangement lay on the grounds that, although the United States military government was in supervision of the courts, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe would never accept the children to be lost in any system even partially under the control of the German people. In UNRRA's words the children would "virtually become a lost battalion" if they became German citizens.¹¹⁴

Abbott's proposal also covered unaccompanied children who were born in Germany to parents (or at least one parent) who may have been a citizen of the United Nations. Usually these were children who were born out of wedlock and their mothers either had abandoned them or given them away to German institutions while they worked as laborers for the Nazis. Parents may have passed away or been separated from their children during evacuations in the war. UNRRA wanted to approach this category of

¹¹³ "Report on Conferences on Unaccompanied Children Held in Berlin - March 15th-22nd-1946," Tasks of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0008, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/258165>; "Report on Conferences on Unaccompanied Children Held in Berlin - March 15th-22nd-1946," Tasks of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0008, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/258167>; "Principles for the Determination of the Citizenship of United Nations Displaced Persons - Draft Letter, OMGUS, April 1946," Determination of Nationality and Repatriation of Unaccompanied Children, 6.1.2 0017, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, May 21, 1946, accessed July 28, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/263137>.

¹¹⁴ "Report on Conferences on Unaccompanied Children Held in Berlin - March 15th-22nd-1946," accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/258165>; "Report on Conferences on Unaccompanied Children Held in Berlin - March 15th-22nd-1946," accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/258167>; Eileen Blackey, "Report on Field Trip to Berlin. 1st and 2nd October 1946," Unaccompanied Children in the U.S. Zone, 6.1.2 0004a, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/254541>.

children on a case by case basis. For both categories of unaccompanied children who were brought in from other countries and for those who were born in Germany but had Allied parents, UNRRA requested them to be given the benefit of the doubt of having a “United Nations identity.” They wanted to give the opportunity for the children to gain a United Nations citizenship if they were eligible for it. This was the same argument UNRRA had repeatedly pointed out. It was much more preferable than turning the children into German citizens and completely eliminating the chance of finding out their true nationalities from the beginning.¹¹⁵

In the dispute about the “best interests of the children,” Abbott had explained the concept as not causing further disruption and leaving the children with the German families and institutions. As they had done many times, UNRRA emphasized that the Central and Eastern European governments were insisting that the “children who were stolen from their own countries” be located and repatriated to their home countries. The international organization’s responsibility had been from the beginning of their child search operations to keep this promise to the governments by locating, identifying and repatriating the displaced children of the United Nations.¹¹⁶ UNRRA acknowledged the difficulties of removing children from their current settings as they had spent the last few years with their German families. However, UNRRA justified their mission as a positive contribution to the children’s future in the long run:

¹¹⁵ Principles for the Determination of the Citizenship of United Nations Displaced Persons - Draft Letter, OMGUS, April 1946," Determination of Nationality and Repatriation of Unaccompanied Children, 6.1.2 0017, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, May 21, 1946, accessed July 28, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/263137>.

¹¹⁶ "Report on Conferences on Unaccompanied Children Held in Berlin - March 15th-22nd-1946," Tasks of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0008, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/258165>; "Report on Conferences on Unaccompanied Children Held in Berlin - March 15th-22nd-1946," Tasks of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0008, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/258167>; "Principles for the Determination of the Citizenship of United Nations Displaced Persons - Draft Letter, OMGUS, April 1946," Determination of Nationality and Repatriation of Unaccompanied Children, 6.1.2 0017, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, May 21, 1946, accessed July 28, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/263139>.

[...] It is recognized also that it is important to consider the lifetime destiny of these children. They are not Germans and should not be raised as such. Many of them have parents or relatives waiting for their return. Even those who have no close relatives still living have a right to their own identity and the protection of their own countries.¹¹⁷

With the ongoing talks and the reports presented by Eileen Blackey and other likeminded welfare workers, it can be seen that UNRRA was still motivated to continue their work despite all the setbacks. In one report Blackey wrote how UNRRA's program should be of continuing to place importance in the "repatriation of children whose nationality has been definitely established." At the same time she called for the organization to start "strengthening out pro-repatriation activities and intensifying the search for United Nations' children still uncovered." The welfare workers claimed they were not calling for forced repatriation, but for the cases where children were reluctant to go home UNRRA's repatriation policy "shifted somewhat from that of a purely voluntary basis to one in which decisions are made by UNRRA for certain groups of children." UNRRA had the "consensus of opinion that [...] for many of the children it would be a relief to have the decision made for them." Giving an example of Polish children they had encountered, UNRRA wanted to encourage repatriation by making plans for reeducating and training children for jobs that they could possibly do in Poland. They saw this as potentially not only to "equip the

¹¹⁷ "Principles for the Determination of the Citizenship of United Nations Displaced Persons - Draft Letter, OMGUS, April 1946," Determination of Nationality and Repatriation of Unaccompanied Children, 6.1.2 0017, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, May 21, 1946, accessed July 28, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/263141>.

children to earn their livelihood” but it could also “quite definitely be used as an inducement toward repatriation.”¹¹⁸

For the children of “undetermined nationality”, UNRRA requested that OMGUS had to pay attention to their justifications of why the removal of the children was necessary. However UNRRA’s pleas went unnoticed. In one UNRRA report the welfare workers reflected on the meetings and criticized OMGUS for not understanding the problems that they faced in the field. Colonel Abbott was described as “disinterested and uncooperative” since he refused to make any revisions on his proposed directive in any of the meetings held with UNRRA. There was not any progress in these conferences made in favor of UNRRA over the problem of removing.¹¹⁹

The other source of the problem, the lists containing information about unaccompanied children who could have been from the United Nations, was not dealt with either in the talks with Colonel Abbot. As the colonel had confiscated the lists, UNRRA had made the best of their situation by referring to the lists they had already received before they were all redirected to OMGUS. At the same time, the removal policies introduced had also affected UNRRA’s attempts of transferring the children to their centers. The children living with private families had completely prevented UNRRA from accessing the children. Instead they had to specifically focus their

¹¹⁸ "Minutes of Inter-Zonal Conference on Child Search and Repatriation - October 16th, 17th & 18th, 1946," Tasks of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0008, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 28, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/257811>; "Minutes of Inter-Zonal Conference on Child Search and Repatriation - October 16th, 17th & 18th, 1946," accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/257837>; "Minutes of Inter-Zonal Conference on Child Search and Repatriation - October 16th, 17th & 18th, 1946," accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/257839>.

¹¹⁹ Eileen Blackey, "Report on Field Trip to Berlin. May 1-10, 1946," Tasks of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0008, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 28, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/258059>; Eileen Blackey, "Report on Field Trip to Berlin. 1st and 2nd October 1946," Unaccompanied Children in the U.S. Zone, 6.1.2 0004a, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/254543>.

efforts on the German institutions. This was a serious problem for UNRRA as one welfare worker reported that they were “uncovering between 200 and 300 children in a month.” And since the latest lists were not accessible, UNRRA was not able to investigate German families to see if there were children potentially of a United Nations origin. UNRRA brought up its dissatisfaction with Colonel Abbott for holding on to the lists and for “slowing up of the whole program for the location of children.” The workers were not convinced by Abbot’s reasoning of not having the legal authority to release the lists. They accused him of attempting to gain time for his draft on the determination of nationality and the removal of children to be officially released. Having possession of the lists may have provided UNRRA with clues to finding the nationalities of the children and without them this possibility was removed. They were of high importance to UNRRA as they were a source that could be used to find missing children.¹²⁰ By the end of 1946 the situation with the lists had not changed and UNRRA was not pleased with any of OMGUS’s actions. The process of removal in the U.S. Zone was described by UNRRA as being inhibited by a “lack of policy and by the protests made by the Military Government to such removals.”¹²¹

UNRRA reiterated their mission of “assisting United Nations countries in recovering their children” multiple times in these various conferences with OMGUS. But their objections to the directive of considering the unaccompanied children as German citizens did not sway the OMGUS representatives as they declined any calls for revisions. UNRRA came out of the meetings disappointed with the impression that “it

¹²⁰ "Minutes of Inter-Zonal Conference on Child Search and Repatriation - October 16th, 17th & 18th, 1946," Tasks of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0008, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 28, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/257815>.

¹²¹ Minutes of Inter-Zonal Conference on Child Search and Repatriation - October 16th, 17th & 18th, 1946," accessed July 28, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/257835>.

was obvious from this discussion that the directive on children is aimed at finding a quick solution to the problem and is part of a broader move to liquidate the DP program.”¹²²

4.3.2 The Final Directive for the Determination of Nationality and the Removal of Unaccompanied Children

In actuality the directives by OMGUS which included the consent of foster parents and the requirement to have an “undisputed United Nations nationality” were supposed to be temporary measures until a final directive for the determination of nationality and the removal of children could be released by the proper authority which was USFET (and later EUCOM). With Colonel Abbott’s proposal there would not have been a need for a directive by USFET. Referring to a report released in November 1946 it can be understood that UNRRA was starting to come to grips with the fact that the “removal of United nations children from German family homes [was] practically at a standstill in all districts.” But UNRRA was still hopeful about keeping in contact with USFET and presenting their cases as clearly as possible to “pressure [them] to issue a directive.”¹²³

UNRRA was waiting for the final directive to be announced and released with anticipation throughout its existence. A report released in June 1947 explains the confusion and the state of disarray amongst UNRRA’s child welfare workers as the organization was disbanding and about to be replaced by the International Refugee Organization. UNRRA had explained how they had been waiting for the directive by

¹²² "Report on Conferences on Unaccompanied Children Held in Berlin - March 15th-22nd-1946," Tasks of the Child Search Branch, 6.1.2 0008, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/258169>.

¹²³ "Removal of Children from German Homes," Cornelia D. Heise to Director, UNRRA District 1,2,3,5, November 5, 1946, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, accessed July 28, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255571>.

USFET (and EUCOM) since July 1946. Along the way UNRRA was in contact with USFET/EUCOM about the long awaited directive. As the draft was nearing its completion, UNRRA was told that their recommendations and worries would be taken into account when drafting the legislation while also attempting to “reconcile the differences with OMGUS.” Mid-1947 was already too late as UNRRA’s operations were severely disrupted in the midst of the instructions by OMGUS to restrict the children’s removal. Their closing views reflected discontent and how OMGUS was becoming “progressively restrictive and rigid” especially with their actions of keeping the children under German roofs despite UNRRA’s protests.¹²⁴

As UNRRA’s mandate was ending in June 1947, the organization was overwhelmed with cases and many remained open due to the roadblocks set up by the legislation introduced by OMGUS, and the refusal of the transfer of custody from the German authorities. Examining the statistics of Team 566 (Team 1048) for the months of March 1946 to May 1947, it can be seen that even if they had had more time there would still have been a long journey ahead of them before they could have a sense of mission accomplished. The number of cases that Team 566 dealt with was a total of 1,714. They had successfully closed 759 cases. Yet they still had active and inactive cases. The number of active cases by that period was 487 while the number of inactive cases was 468.¹²⁵

The directive in favor of UNRRA never came to fruition, but the end result of the official directive did not come out in favor of Colonel Abbott either. The colonel’s

¹²⁴ "Removal of Children from German Care. Report on Current Situation," Cornelia D. Heise to UNRRA Displaced Persons Headquarters, Hotel Majestic, Avenue Kleber, Paris 16 E, June 30, 1947, in Investigation of German Foster Homes and Removal of Unaccompanied Children from There, 6.1.2 0006, ITS Digital Archive, accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-aarsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255761>; "Removal of Children from German Care. Report on Current Situation," accessed July 27, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-aarsen.org/060102/content/pageview/255763>.

¹²⁵ Taylor, 163.

proposal was supposed to go into effect in all three zones but there was not any progress or any decisions made by the Allied Control Council on the problem of unaccompanied children and the proposal to make them German citizens. The final agreement released for the unaccompanied children was based on sharing the responsibilities between OMGUS, EUCOM and UNRRA. EUCOM was in charge of “displaced persons operations” which included searching for children and being responsible for their welfare. UNRRA (and its successor the IRO) was in charge of finding unaccompanied children and their identities while they reported directly to EUCOM. And for any operations such as entering German homes and institutions and removing the children from these places required the authorization of OMGUS. On the topic of children who had the status of “undetermined nationality,” the children in question were to remain in German homes and institutions (unless they were living in bad conditions) until EUCOM made the decision to remove them. But any decisions to remove, repatriate or resettle the children would not be done without the approval of both UNRRA and the liaison officers representing their respective governments. The other crucial directive proposed which was to give the children the status of German citizens was not included. The final decision stated that the children would be considered as DPs of the United Nations until it could be proven otherwise. This was not a complete victory for either side as OMGUS could not establish the citizenship of the unaccompanied children as Germans. However, UNRRA could not remove the children either without the approval of OMGUS leaving the possibility that the children would continue to remain in German homes which the international organization considered as a vital obstacle to their process of rehabilitation and renationalization.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Taylor, 196-197.

With the end of UNRRA's operations in 1947 and the obstacles the organization had to face with OMGUS and the German authorities, the questions UNRRA previously asked in 1946 about the process of determining nationality explain the dynamics between the different governing bodies and how it affected UNRRA's child search operations:

(1) Cases in which there is insufficient evidence to prove nationality, but in which the facts point to nationality, other than German. Should such children be given the benefit of United Nations status? (2) Unidentified children who have been brought into Germany from the surrounding Allied countries. Shall they be considered United Nations children? (3) Children whom the national liaison officers have accepted as their nationals but whom the Germans contend are Germans. Who makes the decision?¹²⁷

The debates with Colonel Abbott/OMGUS reflected the disagreement on whether a child should be given United Nations status so that they could receive UNRRA aid. When taking into account the Silesian children as well as the debates with the colonel, UNRRA consistently requested for the custody of the children. It was considered to be a necessary step for them to determine the nationalities. OMGUS on the other hand had a practical approach of ignoring the problem of determining nationalities by leaving the children with the Germans. OMGUS's policies on removal which required the consent of the foster parents and the refusal of German authorities to let go of the children reflected the question of who would have the final say in the fate of the children in instances when there was a disagreement in the claimed nationality. Ultimately OMGUS was the final arbiter for conflicting verdicts and they sided with the German authorities in the conflict of custody transfer. The provisions OMGUS and the Germans took against UNRRA affected the efficiency with which the welfare

¹²⁷ "Monthly Report, Child Welfare Branch, March/April, 1946," Unaccompanied Children in the U.S. Zone, 6.1.2 0004a, ITS Digital Archive, Bad Arolsen, accessed July 26, 2018, <https://digitalcollections.its-arolsen.org/060102/content/pageview/254637>.

workers could function and its child search operations were practically at a standstill towards the point when the organization was being shut down in 1947.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In the end, in the US Zone between December 1945 and May 1947 a total of 1033 children were repatriated back to their countries. Out of this total number 734 of the children repatriated were claimed to be of Polish origin.¹²⁸ From approximately 16,800 children cared for by UNRRA in Germany as a whole 6,871 had been repatriated by June 30, 1947.¹²⁹ The long term effects of the unaccompanied children's experiences as a result of UNRRA's care are difficult to measure.

According to *Kloster Indersdorf* welfare worker, Greta Fischer, the children "found physical health and the beginning of a moral and spiritual rehabilitation." Anna Andlauer, the *Kloster Indersdorf* historian who has traced and interviewed both Jewish and non-Jewish survivors, describes UNRRA's children's center as a place that was encouraging for the children since they were provided with the best care possible given the conditions available. The children's health was improved as they now had access to food and medical attention. And the opportunity for them to actually live as children helped with their physical growth. Andlauer states that they went through emotional and mental healing with UNRRA's help although it was not

¹²⁸ Taylor, 195.

¹²⁹ Baron, 204.

possible to erase the difficult experiences they had gone through during the war and the trauma as a result of it.¹³⁰

The activities of searching for and identifying the former unaccompanied children did not stop with the closing of UNRRA (and the succeeding International Refugee Organization). One project entitled “Remember Me?” created by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, has around 1000 pictures of the children who lived in *Kloster Indersdorf*. It was set up for people who may recognize the children to submit information about the survivors. Two children who were a part of the center were Polish siblings Sofia and Janusz Karpuk. In 1943 along with their mother they were kidnapped and became forced laborers in Bavaria. Sophia Karpuk was only eight years old while Janusz was four. Both of their parents died during the war and Sophia had to take care of her younger brother all alone. Eventually they ended up in *Kloster Indersdorf* and went back to Poland in 1946. Later they had their own families and Sofia Karpuk became a chemist while Janusz Karpuk became a player in the Polish handball national team.”¹³¹

The journey though for UNRRA to place the unaccompanied children in one of their centers such as *Kloster Indersdorf* with the hopes of providing long term stability was challenging. There were multiple governing bodies in conflict with each other who disagreed with UNRRA’s process of identifying nationalities. On one side there was UNRRA and the liaison officers and on the other there was OMGUS and the German authorities. Protests by the German authorities over the removal of the unaccompanied children and the support by the US military through removal policies and an attempt to make all unaccompanied children German citizens derailed

¹³⁰ Anna Andlauer, *The Rage to Live*, 159-162.

¹³¹ Anna Andlauer, *The Rage to Live*, 159-162; “Remember Me?” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed May 20, 2018, <https://rememberme.ushmm.org>.

UNRRA from their mission of locating, identifying, removing and repatriating the children and eventually led its operations to come to a standstill.

The German authorities disagreed with UNRRA's methods of identifying children.

This was especially true with cases of children coming from areas such as Silesia.

Most of these children were registered as undetermined as there usually was not

enough evidence to provide a conclusive report on their nationalities. There was not

an official directive either instructing the welfare workers on how to approach these

children. UNRRA wanted to give them the benefit of coming from a United Nations

country and argued for them to be removed and cared for in their centers until more

information could be found. The Polish liaison officers after reviewing evidence from

UNRRA typically wanted to repatriate these children. The German authorities

protested against their decisions and maintained that they were German citizens and

that UNRRA had not provided sufficient evidence. The removal of the Silesian

children was just one example of the protests UNRRA faced from the German

authorities. OMGUS in support of the German foster parents presented removal

policies that included the requirement of getting permission from them to remove the

children. The liaison officers were no longer the sole decision makers in the fate of

the children. Finally OMGUS attempted to solve the problem as a whole by making

all unaccompanied children German citizens and leaving them with their foster

families. This final proposal did not become official policy, but with all the

roadblocks set up by the military UNRRA was faced with the prospect that many

more children would be left undiscovered. For the children that they had actually

found there was the risk that many of them would have to stay with their foster

families instead of being sent to their real families and their native countries.

During UNRRA's time, the rehabilitation of the unaccompanied children was not a priority in the eyes of OMGUS. The military's view on UNRRA's second "R" may as well have been a reflection of the stance the United States had towards it back at home. When Secretary of State Dean Acheson, who was also one of the architects of UNRRA, was asked what the meaning of rehabilitation was he replied, "to us the word had no definition...UNRRA would have done its work and passed away before we were to know what 'rehabilitation' really required from us."¹³² Although the idea of rehabilitation was not of importance for the United States, after UNRRA was dissolved and the DP situation was taken over by the IRO, the idea of rehabilitating the unaccompanied children was still prevalent. Writing for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Thérèse Brosse reported "how much the children need a country of their own if they are to be psychologically normal and to feel like other people." This was a report released in 1950 to outline the needs and methods of how to provide for the upbringing and education of "war-handicapped children." The specific statement referred to UNRRA and IRO's discovery of displaced children in German foster homes and how they considered it was necessary to send the children to their native countries and if possible their family.¹³³

¹³² Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 2005), 119.

¹³³ Thérèse Brosse, *War-handicapped Children* (Paris: UNESCO, 1950), 20-22.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

1943

November 9, 1943 – The United Nations and Relief and Rehabilitation Administration founded.

1945

1945 – Creation of the Child Tracing Service (CTS).

July, 1945 – UNRRA International DP Children's Center *Kloster Indersdorf* founded.

1946

January, 1946 – UNRRA's first child search team, Team 566 (later known as Area Team 1048) founded.

March 1946 – First proposal released to deem all unaccompanied children as German citizens by the Office of Military Government, United States.

May, 11, 1946 – The United States Forces European Theater releases a directive stating that UNRRA could only remove the children if they have the consent of the foster parents.

July 18, 1946 – Directive released stating that the children could be removed only if UNRRA had established that the children were of “undisputed United Nations nationality.”

1947

June 1947 - The final directive for the determination of nationality and the removal of unaccompanied children released.

June 1947 - The closing of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.

July 1947 - The International Refugee Organization assumes the responsibility of the Displaced Persons.

APPENDIX B



UNNRA relief worker, Greta Fischer, interviews a teenage boy, who is lying in a bunk on a Red Cross train.

Source: UNNRA relief worker, Greta Fischer, interviews a teenage boy, who is lying in a bunk on a Red Cross train. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #10757. Courtesy of Lilo, Jack and Micha Plaschkes. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

APPENDIX C



View of the *Kloster Indersdorf* DP children's center.

Source: View of the *Kloster Indersdorf* DP children's center. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #10616. Courtesy of Lilo, Jack and Micha Plaschkes. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

APPENDIX D



Sofia Karpuk holds a name card intended to help any of her surviving family members locate her at the *Kloster Indersdorf* DP camp. This photograph was published in newspapers to facilitate reuniting the family.

Source: Sofia Karpuk holds a name card intended to help any of her surviving family members locate her at the *Kloster Indersdorf* DP camp. This photograph was published in newspapers to facilitate reuniting the family. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #86765. Courtesy of Lilo, Jack and Micha Plaschkes. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

APPENDIX E



Polish children study a lesson in their native language in the *Kloster Indersdorf* children's home.

Source: Polish children study a lesson in their native language in the *Kloster Indersdorf* children's home. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #51158. Courtesy of Joseph Eaton. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

APPENDIX F



DP youth attend a vocational class at the *Kloster Indersdorf* DP children's center.

Source: DP youth attend a vocational class at the *Kloster Indersdorf* DP children's center. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #11046. Courtesy of Lilo, Jack and Micha Plaschkes. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

APPENDIX G



DP girls sew and knit in their living quarters at the *Kloster Indersdorf* DP children's center. Pictured in the center is Sofia Karpuk. Sofia was the daughter of a former forced laborer. Most of the other girls came from Upper Silesia. Their German teacher brought her class to Bavaria to escape Soviet troops.

Source: DP girls sew and knit in their living quarters at the *Kloster Indersdorf* DP children's center. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #10323. Courtesy of Lilo, Jack and Micha Plaschkas. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

APPENDIX H



Departing DP children read on a train. Sophia Karpuk is on the right in a coat.

Source: Departing DP children read on a train. Sophia Karpuk is on the right in a coat. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #10499. Courtesy of Lilo, Jack and Micha Plaschkes. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.



Departing DP children peer out of the open window of their railcar.

Source: Departing DP children peer out of the open window of their railcar. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #10304. Courtesy of Lilo, Jack and Micha Plaschkes. Copyright of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.