

**UKRAINIAN DPS AND THE COMITÉ UCRAÍNO DE AUXILIO
ÀS VÍTIMAS DA GUERRA IN BRAZIL:
HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS**

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“Having returned home to Halychyna during the German-Polish war and upon the arrival of the red occupants on May 22nd, 1941, I lost my whole family, because new ‘liberators’ deported them to Siberia and only I was lucky to break free from their hands and while I was absconding from them, the German-Soviet war broke out and in a few months other ‘liberators’ but now of brown colour forcibly conveyed me to Germany into labour slavery.”¹

INTRODUCTION. Red and Brown Liberators.

“The Second World War brought unmitigated human suffering on a level never seen before or since in world history”² and this refers not only to the number of victims who were killed or died during the Second World War (hereinafter WW2). Another terrific factor was the millions of displaced persons (hereinafter DPs) who were scattered around the world, though, naturally, their ‘headquarters’ was in Germany. According to M. Proudfoot, “who ran the refugee department of General Eisenhower’s Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) in occupied Germany, some 60 million Europeans were uprooted during and after the Second World War”³. In contrast, Louise W. Holborn states that about 30 million Germans and 8.5 million Europeans from other countries were displaced during the war⁴. In any case, such a displacement became a result of ethnic and genocidal conflict and people who survived it were suffering the death of their kin and they felt obliged to survive and nurture their family legacy for generations. Among these people, “there were also a significant number of deportees, prisoners of war, refugees who fled Soviet-occupied countries, and people who had collaborated with Nazi Germany. Of the estimated 8.25 million

¹ Мороз В. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Міттенвальд, 1948

² Rankin J., Weise C. World History since 1500: An Open and Free Textbook. Tennessee: East Tennessee State University, 2022. P. 190.

³ Frank M., Reinisch J. Introduction: Refugees and the Nation-State in Europe 1919-1959. *Journal of Contemporary History*. 2014. №49/3. P. 478.

⁴ Holborn L. W. The International Refugee Organization: A Specialized Agency of the United Nations. Its History and Work, 1946–1952. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956. P. 15.

Eastern European DPs, two million were Ukrainian”⁵. Nevertheless, the DP status did not guarantee a peaceful and prosperous life for the victims of war and displaced Ukrainians faced a miserable dilemma – either to be, forcibly or voluntarily, repatriated to the Soviet Union or to remain in a still hostile environment in search of a better life. Following the reminiscences of the people, they had to choose the lesser of two evils: to return home, if there was any, and highly likely be deported by the USSR:

*“We do not have a place to return, because our home was burned out in a battle when Germans were retreating and my father was deported to Siberia in 1939.”*⁶

*“A month ago, my two younger brothers escaped from the red torturers and returned to me from the red heaven. My parents and my two sisters were deported to Siberia and the elder brother was tortured in prison.”*⁷

or to continue their constant struggle for life in an Allies’ zone of occupation:

*“Financial circumstances (an extremely significant shortage of food and garments) of the deprived private people who live outside the camps and do not receive any assistance from the UNRRA and the IRO are very rigorous. They fall victim to tendentious and frequent screenings – “cleansing” or they are miserable sufferers who in the whirl of hostilities have lost the remnants of their stuff and documents and could not prove to self-satisfied UNRRA henchmen of the notorious eastern force that they have been forcibly displaced into labor slavery to Germany. Many people are malnourished and starve, and wear the remains of their solitary garments, which have already transformed into eternally patched rags. So far, there has not been any aid or it has been so inconsiderable that it could not satisfy everyone because there are so many impecunious people here.”*⁸

The history showed that displaced Ukrainians did not always have the right to choose and “most of the 2.3 million Ukrainians who had left Ukraine between 1939 and 1945 were repatriated to the Soviet Union when the war ended.”⁹. Those displaced Ukrainians who remained in camps or as individuals across various parts of Germany, Italy, Austria, etc., were left in despair and felt dire need of moral support and financial assistance considering the life conditions, rationing system, lack of decent medical care, and a total shortage of all goods. Displaced people made every effort to secure

⁵ Popowycz J. L. World War II, Displacement, and the Making of the Postwar Ukrainian Diaspora, 1939–1951. Doctoral Dissertation. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2022. P. 1.

⁶ Козяр А. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Нідерланди, 1947.

⁷ Химинець-Зореслав В. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Мюнхен, 1947.

⁸ Желічко І. Лист 1 до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Амберг, 1947.

⁹ Satzewich, V. The Ukrainian Diaspora. London: Routledge, 2002. P. 86.

their next day, so they were in a constant rush and a search for any assistance from inter- or nongovernmental organizations like the International Refugee Organization (IRO), the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), and others. On a par with the aforementioned humanitarian organizations and the alike which were founded and funded by global institutions, Ukrainian societies and the societies of other minorities in various countries tried and joined the processes aimed at assisting their displaced fellow countrymen who found themselves in a tough spot. And sometimes their actions outpaced those of the global organizations. By no means, it happened due to the previous immigration processes which sprouted numerous diaspora associations around the world, even in such a remote country as Brazil, which before the 1940s had welcomed two significant waves of Ukrainian immigrants, c.f. 1895–1896 and 1908–1914¹⁰, 1895–1897 and 1907–1914¹¹, 1891–1914 and 1920–1939¹², and others.

Thus, “in 1922, in the city of União da Vitória, a new company Ukrainskei Soius (Ukrainian Union) was founded and whose headquarters moved to Curitiba in 1934. From 1937, this association changed its name to União Agrícola Instructiva ... Without a doubt, this is the largest Ukrainian association in Brazil with branches spread throughout the state of Paraná.”¹³. The União Agrícola Instructiva initiated sustainable assistance to the displaced Ukrainians in Europe by founding the Comitê de Auxílio às Vítimas da Guerra (Committee for Aid to Victims of the War):

*“On the ninth day of October in the year 1945, the colony of immigrants of Ukrainian nationality met in the Instructional Agricultural Union to organize a Committee for Aid to Victims of the War, of that section in the European territories.”*¹⁴

It is worth mentioning that this act of solidarity with Ukrainian DPs in Europe, to some extent, mirrored and pursued the tendency observed in other countries when

“... in the United States of North America, Canada, and Argentina, commissions representing the Ukrainian colonies are organized and their purpose is to raise donations to help the victims of the war ... In Brazil, there

¹⁰ Burko P. Valdomiro N. *A imigração ucraniana no Brasil*. Curitiba, 1963. Pp. 48–50.

¹¹ Boruszenko O. Brazil. *The Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine*. Available at: <https://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/info.asp> (Last accessed: 30.08.2024).

¹² Ціпко С. Три хвили української еміграції до Бразилії, 1890–1940-ті рр.: історичний огляд до 130-річчя українського поселення. *Ukraina Moderna*. 2022. № 32–33. С. 42. DOI: 10.3138/ukrainamoderna.32.040

¹³ Boruszenko O. A imigração ucraniana no Paraná. *Colonização e migração. Anais do IV Simpósio Nacional dos Professores Universitários de História*. São Paulo: FFCL-USP, 1969. P. 433.

¹⁴ Ata de constituição. Curitiba: União Agrícola Instrutiva, 1945.

is currently no official body that has such a purpose and it is urgent to organize the Committee for Aid to Victims of the War.”¹⁵

The proverb goes that bad news travels fast, but history shows that sometimes good news can travel even faster. In a little while, the Ukrainian DPs got to know about the newly-created organization whose aim was to support and assist them and they tried to reach out to them with their problems, concerns, hopes, and expectations. Therefore, **the research is based on 286 letters** written by the Ukrainian DPs in Europe and other countries to the Committee for Aid to Victims of the War (hereinafter the Committee) in Brazil in-between 1945 and 1948. These letters represent a **unique empirical database** because they have not been digitized, published, or transcribed yet. The statistics on the DPs’ requests are compiled on the basis of the leading appeal, however, some letters can include some additional or secondary requests. The letters have been translated from Ukrainian into English by the author; the spelling of the last names and other proper nouns is preserved.

The aim of the research is to analyse life, social issues, concerns, hopes, and expectations of the Ukrainian DPs who remained in Europe after WW2 and contacted the Committee for Aid to Victims of the War in Brazil from 1945 to 1948. I **hypothesize** that financial issues were not the predominant hardship that made Ukrainian DPs contact the Committee for Aid to Victims of the War in remote Brazil. To test the hypothesis, the abovementioned letters have been deciphered and analysed making it possible to compile two chapters: each chapter is devoted to a specific diachronic layer and covers a more or less equal number of letters under analysis what makes the chapters balanced and representative.

1. Please help find them! Life of Ukrainian DPs in 1945–1946

According to the statistics provided by O. Subtelny, around a quarter of a million Ukrainians refused repatriation or escaped and did not return home¹⁶, and as a result “WW2 and postwar displacement created a unique environment that allowed Ukrainians from different geographical locations, various socio-economic backgrounds, and diverse political orientations to unite through cultural nationalism in ways that had not been possible in the past.”¹⁷ Analysing the initial addresses of the letters under study it is possible to argue that the main centres of the Ukrainian DPs residence were: Germany – 112 letters, Italy – 69 letters, and Austria – 69 letters; however, the range of

¹⁵ Ata de constituição. Curitiba: União Agrícola Instrutiva, 1945.

¹⁶ Subtelny O. Ukrainian Political Refugees: An Historical Overview. In: Isajiw W., Boshyk Yu., Senkus R. (eds.). *The Refugee Experience: Ukrainian Displaced Persons after World War II*. Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1992. P. 14.

¹⁷ Popowycz J. L. World War II, Displacement, and the Making of the Postwar Ukrainian Diaspora, 1939–1951. Doctoral Dissertation. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2022. P. 2.

the countries where the Ukrainian DPs, immigrants, or societies/communities were present also included Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Poland, Romania, Morocco, Venezuela, etc. This list perfectly displays the significance of the humanitarian organizations among the displaced people, who turned to them in various parts of the world. The statistics and the analysis do not take into account numerous letters written by the Ukrainians in Brazil, because the thematics and problematics are completely different from the letters written by the Ukrainian DPs in other countries and the authors considered themselves immigrants but not DPs.

The official foundation of the Committee for Aid to Victims of the War in Brazil in October 1945 started a new stage in the life of the Ukrainian DPs. It is worth mentioning that the first letters to the Ukrainian Committee in Brazil were sent in early 1945 and marked a general tendency for the period of 1945–1946. Thus, the earliest letters under analysis were addressed to the Ukrainian committee in Brazil, which did not officially function as the Committee for Aid to Victims of the War but tried to support Ukrainians inside and outside Brazil in their requests:

*“I ask the greatly respected administration of the Ukrainian committee in Brazil to pay attention to my request and help me find my relatives and friends in Brazil and, if possible, in Paraguay. All the people indicated below left Poland in 1937–1938 ...”*¹⁸

By all means, it is possible to reflect that the requests of this type were twofold. Of course, people were interested in finding their friends and relatives whom they lost 8–10 years ago; however, due to the harsh living conditions in postwar Europe, it is reasonable to assume that the main goal of the search was to search these people in order to boost the chances of immigrating to Brazil, get a visa or an affidavit, make their life easier in a foreign country by getting support from ‘old’ immigrants.

On a par with these requests, some letters were more straightforward and the DPs directly inquired about the information concerning the lifestyle, job opportunities, and official procedures necessary for immigration to Brazil:

*“... the country, where the climate is suitable for our people and there are earning opportunities. Under what conditions can the current government accept us and whom can we contact here, where is the corresponding representative of the country to discuss this matter and to get an entrance visa?”*¹⁹

These two types of appeals, which had been written before the official representation of the Committee for Aid to Victims of the War in 1945, paved

¹⁸ Котуха В. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Риміні, 1945.

¹⁹ Коваль В., Радомський І. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Ольденбург, 1945.

the way for the biggest stratum of requests that were addressed to the Committee in 1946. Following the statistics, among 152 letters sent to the Committee in 1945–1946, 119 letters (78%) contain requests concerning the search of either the relatives:

*“I am kindly asking you to help me in my search of my kins, namely my mother ... and my brothers ... who left the country and immigrated to Brazil in 1929, and the last known place of their residence was in Uruguay, Montevideo, as they wrote me from there before the war.”*²⁰

or the friends and neighbours who left the European continent before or during the war:

*“... I am asking you to put out a following search in local newspapers: Andrii Stelnyk from Mashiivskiy district, Kovel county, Volyn, former Poland, is searching in search of his fellow countrymen and has a wish to restore contacts and describe them my miseries here.”*²¹

These letters can additionally disguise the scattering map of Ukrainians around the world and, in this case, across South America, where they could be found in Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela, etc.

Sometimes, in addition to the search of the relatives and friends, these letters could contain the requests concerning the immigration issues to Brazil:

*“I am contacting you with the following request: could you be so kind as to put out a search either via press or by any other means that Rev. Volodymyr Paszkowskyj from Sokal, Halychyna, is seeking out his former parishioners and acquaintances ... and is asking them for help and to facilitate him and his family (5 people in total) to leave for Brazil.”*²²

or the Ukrainian DPs directly addressed the Committee trying to obtain the necessary information and advice on whether it was possible and reasonable for them to immigrate to Brazil:

*“Thus, I am asking you to inquire whether any company or it would be even better if it is a state needs an electrical engineer to sign a work contract so I could move to work in Brazil. ... Please, inform me if it is possible to get a good plot of land for cultivating and what the credit terms for the first landowners are. What are the common illnesses? Is it possible to get a plot of land near a navigable river or are they all already occupied? In short, describe to us all the terms and conditions that await immigrants.”*²³

Sometimes, Brazil was regarded by Ukrainian DPs as a temporary and intermediate point in their search for better lives in the US or Canada, where

²⁰ Грицай М. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Риміні, 1946.

²¹ Стельник А. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Гайденау, 1946.

²² Пашковський В. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Рим, 1946.

²³ Стенковський А. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Брюссель, 1946.

they either had some relatives and friends or they considered these countries to be more suitable for living:

*“We wish to leave Italy for Canada and move to our relatives who live there. Despite the affidavits, which we have obtained from our relatives in Canada, the departure is currently postponed. Could you provide us with an affidavit and on our arrival to Brazil we would move to Canada as soon as possible? In the Brazilian consulate in Naples, we were informed that in case we have an affidavit we could immediately leave for Brazil. We are begging you, if it is possible, to grant us an affidavit, we will cover all the costs upon arrival. ... We informed you that we are students, but for the government we are farmers.”*²⁴

As the abovementioned excerpt from the letter shows, the ways and the attempts to achieve the desired goal were not fair, however, no one could blame those people who were suffering and perishing away from home in postwar Europe.

In late 1945, the Committee for Aid to Victims of the War together with other voluntary bodies from Argentina, Belgium, France, Italy, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom became one of the relief organizations represented by the Central Ukrainian Relief Bureau (CURB)²⁵. Such integration, of course, has significantly enhanced and expanded the Committee’s sphere of activity as now “the Committee’s activities were not focused only on matters of immigration and settlement but encompassed other issues, such as sending supplies to the camps and possible assistance in the search for relatives of the displaced.”²⁶ and it became authorized “... to transmit funds and parcels in the form of food, clothing, etc to addresses in Europe as arranged by the Central Ukrainian Relief Bureau”²⁷.

The new official status of the Committee and the extension of its activity could not go unnoticed. The news about a new humanitarian organization was not just rumored around:

*“By chance, I got to know your address and now I have an opportunity to contact you.”*²⁸

*“Pals from Rimini who have moved to Germany gave me the address of your Committee.”*²⁹

²⁴ Мартинюк М. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Барлетта, 1946.

²⁵ Ukrainians in the United Kingdom. *Online encyclopaedia*. <https://www.ukrainiansintheuk.info/eng/03/curb-e.html> (Last accessed 30.08.2024).

²⁶ Vitchmichen H. S. Refugiados no Brasil: A atuação do Comitê Ucraino de Auxílio às Vítimas da Guerra no Pós-Segunda Guerra Mundial. *Proceedings of the V Seminário Internacional História do Tempo Presente 25.12.2023–26.12.2023*. Florianópolis: UDESC, 2023. Pp. 7–8.

²⁷ Carta para a Cruz Vermelha Brasileira. Rio de Janeiro: CVB, 1945.

²⁸ Смирнов В. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Больцано, 1947.

²⁹ Южені М. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Барлетта, 1947.

but, moreover, it was officially highlighted and described by the newspapers of the two continents:

*“Dear Committee, I’ve just come across your address in our Ukrainian newspaper here in Germany, where there is much written about you.”*³⁰

*“Please, pardon me for this letter, but I have no one to appeal to and I was very happy when I saw your address in the Argentinian newspaper “Nash Klych”.”*³¹

Thus, word of mouth and word of paper reached their potential addressees and in 1946 another tendency emerged – Ukrainian DPs started to view the Committee in Brazil as an integral part of the global humanitarian network. Initially, these attempts were infrequent, probably, because DPs still remembered that the Committee functioned rather as an advisory body than an organization that could provide some material assistance; nevertheless, around 8% of all the letters under analysis contained the requests for such aid. Moreover, jumping ahead, I would like to mention that the requests in 1946 differ significantly from the appeals to the Committee made in 1947–1948.

First of all, in half of the letters of this group, Ukrainian DPs unexpectedly asked for books, newspapers, magazines, and other literature written in Ukrainian:

*“I am asking dear Sirs to answer me and to send me a couple of Ukrainian books and magazines”*³²

*“Could you be so kind as to send us some books for reading and newspapers for people to have something to read. Because we know that you cannot provide any other help to us ...”*³³

These requests were sent from various countries like Germany, Austria, France, etc. and this vividly testifies to the poorest conditions of the Ukrainians in DP camps and those who lived privately. In some letters, the Ukrainian DPs asked for different ‘teach yourself’ books and manuals, probably setting a goal to leave the country of their current residence in the near future:

*“By this, I am kindly asking you, if it is possible, to send me a ‘teach yourself’ Spanish and Portuguese books.”*³⁴

Another half of the letters described the unfavourable living conditions and the challenges people had to experience during and after the war and included either generalized requests for material assistance:

³⁰ Зубко Р. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Мельріхштадт, 1947.

³¹ Желічко І. Лист 2 до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Амберг, 1947.

³² Стешин Є. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Ріміні, 1946.

³³ Кошицький В. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Модена, 1946.

³⁴ Петрук В. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Мюнхен, 1946.

*“I have got a wife and a small child. Because I have run out of my means of living but I want to finish my studies (I have to take only two examinations) – I am begging you to provide me with some material assistance.”*³⁵

or the requests for some specific things like food packages or garments, etc.:

*“I am referring to the deeply respected Committee to provide me with both financial assistance and garments and linen and if it is possible with food, and my request I support as follows: ...”*³⁶

In addition to the abovementioned principal topics, there is also a category of letters (around 5%) that describe a wish to make personal or public contacts with the Committee or private people in Brazil:

*“I ask you to make the materials that I am sending to you available for the wider number of our immigrants and also I ask you to send me, to my address, your periodicals that I could tell our campmates about the life of Ukrainians abroad.”*³⁷

*“That is why, I am wholeheartedly asking you not to throw this letter into the rubbish bin but to hand it over to a sincere Ukrainian girl, intelligent and beautiful, who could show understanding to a captive Ukrainian officer and would like to brighten up his monotonous camp days with her letters.”*³⁸

Thus, the hopes and expectations that the Ukrainian DPs pinned on the Committee for Aid to Victims of the War in Brazil in 1945 and 1946 could be generalized into four groups: (a) searching for friends and relatives; (b) seeking advice and assistance in immigration; (c) receiving material aid; (d) establishing contacts. The letters from the first group constitute the absolute majority, whereas three other groups are represented more or less equally. However, if we compare the letters from 1945 and 1946, we can easily track the tendency towards a quantitative shift of the leading subject of the letters – search requests started yielding position to the requests for material assistance. One of the explanations for this shift in appeals was the change of the Committee’s status to the official humanitarian organization under the auspices of the Central Ukrainian Relief Bureau and the coverage of the Committee’s activity by the newspapers in the United States, Brazil, Argentina, Germany, etc. Another explanation, unfortunately, is much more appalling.

³⁵ Кравчук М. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Відень, 1946.

³⁶ Босак М. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Лайбніц, 1946.

³⁷ Городистий О. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Риміні, 1946.

³⁸ Оглюк Х. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Риміні, 1946.

2. By your grace we will survive. Life of Ukrainian DPs in 1947–1948

A semi-annual report of the Ukrainian Committee for Aid to Displaced Persons in Italy (Rome) which covered the period from July 1, 1946, to December 31, 1946, goes that:

“The living conditions of displaced persons both those who reside in the camps and those who live in private property are horrendous. There is a general lack of food, garments, and shoes, and in the camps, in particular, there are not enough adequate premises. But if in the camps despite all shortages and misfortunes people can get their basic living conditions provided, meanwhile, living conditions of people who live in private housing have significantly deteriorated, especially in the second half of the reporting period. Due to the high unemployment rate in Italy (over 2,000.000), the Italian government forbids providing displaced persons with any kind of job and it does everything possible to get rid of them. In late 1946, displaced persons en masse in Italy started obtaining a waiver of their requests for an extension of stay; moreover, people were required to determine the date of their departure from the country and, in this way, to make people leave Italy.”³⁹

The excerpt from the official report discloses the true life of the DPs during the postwar period and decisively supports all the reminiscences, complaints, requests, etc. which can be found in the DPs' letters. Furthermore, it thoroughly explains the shift in the thematics of the letters under analysis from the searches of friends and relatives, which totally predominated in 1945–1946, to the calls for material aid and assistance during 1947–1948.

Thus, among 132 letters under analysis, 122 (92.5%) contain the Ukrainian DPs' requests to provide them with some kind of assistance; for the most part, people referred to the material aid. They were willing to receive any material aid possible:

“... that is why I am kindly begging you to provide me urgently with some assistance and when I receive it, it will save me and, one day, I will return home, to my mother Ukraine, to die there. And now I want to live a little and to see the end of the Red Torturer's dominance of the Ukrainian people ...”⁴⁰

or people indicated their needs in accordance with the current living conditions:

“I, undersigned, am a wanderer from Halychyna and I beseech you to provide me with some food aid. I have been living in a distant foreign land

³⁹ Поліщук П. Піврічне звітлення діяльності Українського комітету допомоги збігцям в Італії – Рим, за час від 1 липня до 31 грудня 1946 р. Рим, 1947. С. 1.

⁴⁰ Літинський І. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Френсберг, 1947.

since 1941 and having received any material assistance, I ask you not to refuse my request.”⁴¹

Apart from the requests for supplying such basic provisions as food and clothing, the Ukrainian DPs could ask for the specific items of necessity or interest, which were scarce in the countries of their residence:

“Thus, I am referring to you, dear Committee, with the request to get this medicine for me and I am sincerely begging you to show interest in this matter and send it to my friend’s address”⁴²

“We, undersigned, ask you, if it is possible, to send us any philatelist items, obsolete and current stamps and badges, no matter what they are. Because we are Ukrainian captured soldiers who show much interest in philately and collect them.”⁴³

As a peculiar case, I would like to mention a couple of letters in which the Ukrainian DPs ask for craft materials, which they could use for personal use to earn money or for public artistic activity in the camps:

“So, I would dare to appeal to you with the following request: for our camp work we need embroidery threads, canvases, chisels for Hutshul art, varnish, binding, and other materials for marquetry.”⁴⁴

“Could the Committee be so kind as to help me and buy me oil paints and paint brushes, which I cannot get here in Austria? Lack of these painting supplies caused stagnation in my work, which have been the source of my income to maintain my family and son.”⁴⁵

Quite a specific layer is formed by the letters in which the Ukrainian DPs ask for ‘spiritual food’, i.e. books, magazines, or newspapers that could satisfy their cultural and literary needs:

“A lack of Ukrainian written word made me contact the Committee and ask you for “Kobzar” and, if possible, other Ukrainian books.”⁴⁶

“For sure you know that in the distant foreign lands, far away from the motherland and among strangers it is utterly dreary without native books or magazines. Therefore, we sincerely appeal to you, if it is possible, to help us with Ukrainian books, which we could receive from you as a gift.”⁴⁷

A noteworthy peculiarity, which can give food for thought, is that the requests for Ukrainian written materials were more often received not from

⁴¹ Темех А. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Філлах, 1947.

⁴² Зазов Ф. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Зальцбург, 1947.

⁴³ Деремнда Е. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Риміні, 1947.

⁴⁴ Сапіга І. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Нортгайм, 1947.

⁴⁵ Кміт М. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Брегенц, 1947.

⁴⁶ Вороний С. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Грейт-Хейвуд, 1947.

⁴⁷ Гончарук В. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Ужда, 1947.

Germany, Austria, or Italy which were the home for the majority of the DPs; but they were received from Great Britain, Morocco, Spain, etc.

The common focal point of these letters is the narration and description of the dire straits and predicaments DPs have found themselves in being unable to return home, find a job, or just simply buy the necessary goods either due to the lack of money or current rationing system:

“My family comes from Halychyna but now we live in Germany, our family consists of five souls: me, my husband, and three children. We cannot return home, because there only ruins are left. It was tough to live in the times of the war, however, it has never been so tough as it is now. During the war, one could get food only by rationing cards and the same is now, but there is a great difference between now and then. In wartime, a person per month could get two pounds of butter, two kilos of meat, and four centners of potato for one winter; nowadays, it is five deca⁴⁸ of butter per person a month, forty deca of meat per month, and one centner of potato for the whole winter. ... During the war, children under fourteen year old got $\frac{1}{2}$ l of milk per day and now it is $\frac{1}{4}$ l of milk per week for children under six ...”⁴⁹

This excerpt is just one among other numerous terrific stories that can be found in the Ukrainian DPs’ letters, where people describe the hardships of their postwar life. It is worth mentioning that sometimes the Ukrainian DPs described the cases of unfair treatment even on the side of the aid committees or official representatives in their countries:

“Bursa⁵⁰ gets almost nothing from the local committee and if the committee receives any aid it strangely disappears.”⁵¹

“Thus, if you could be so kind as to help us, please, do not send anything to the committee, because we will not receive anything again, so send the aid individually to the addresses that are enclosed.”⁵²

Nevertheless, despite their tough life in Europe, the Ukrainian DPs in 1947–1948 did not frequently search for their relatives/friends who left for South America:

“Would you be so kind as to search my relatives who left for Brazil in 1926?”⁵³

⁴⁸ Deca is a decimal metric unit that equals 10 grams

⁴⁹ Тумір С. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Людвігштадт, 1948.

⁵⁰ Bursa – preparatory classes and the student residence at the theological seminary

⁵¹ Яківчик Л. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Інсбрук, 1947.

⁵² Антонов В. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Брегенц, 1947.

⁵³ Карплук І. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Венторф-бай-Гамбург, 1947.

The analysis showcases that during 1947–1948, there were several requests of the Ukrainian DPs for assistance in immigrating to Brazil, and in all cases, these appeals were combined with pleas for food and clothing:

“But I would like to immigrate too, and I do not know if it is possible to get some help from the Committee, maybe there is a Ukrainian woman or a woman of another nationality who needs a girl to work at a farm or in a city. ... If there is no chance to immigrate, could you be so kind, if you have a possibility, to help me with a pack of clothes?”⁵⁴

The same downward tendency is observed in the letters in which people or organizations were trying to establish official or personal contacts with the Committee or Ukrainians who lived in Brazil:

“Due to an unusual drought in Germany this year, we need food aid for our sick and disabled people in order to be able to take care of them for the winter before they can emigrate overseas if any government becomes willing to take in our colonization community “Charitas” and through an allocation of land, inventory, etc. to guarantee their existence taking into account suitable climatic conditions. All our relief committees must work in this direction. We are also turning to you with this request to help us. We only mention that it is necessary to consider transport options and food for 5,000 people, inventory supply, etc. In our opinion, the decision to emigrate through the establishment of colonization communities is the best way to save our emigration.”⁵⁵

“We address you, dear fellow countrymen, with the following questions: (1) Could you be so kind as to send us information concerning the departure of our small colony of Ukrainian refugees from Lindau to Brazil? ... (2) Along with that, we try to help our poverty-stricken refugees and children, however, we do not have enough funds. In the enclosure, there is a list of our poor children who suffer from a lack of shoes, clothes, and food, and we beg you to help us in this matter.”⁵⁶

Therefore, the key issue in the letters written by the Ukrainian DPs to the Committee in 1947–1948 was the material aid in the form of food and clothes, which was explained by the deplorable conditions in which people lived in the postwar period. All other requests were reduced to a minimum.

CONCLUSION

Life in the postwar years was extremely tough for the population of Europe, however, the Ukrainian DPs, perhaps, were the most vulnerable

⁵⁴ Козяр А. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни. Манчестер, 1948.

⁵⁵ Tarnawskyj B. Brief an das Ukrainische Hilfskomitee den Kriegsoffern für die Landesvertretung des Sanitär- u. Charitas-Dienstes. Frankfurt/M., 1947.

⁵⁶ Чавс П. Лист до українського допомогового комітету жертвам війни від імені місцевого відділу католицької акції в Ліндау. Ліндау, 1948.

category among all, as the hostile environment, absence of home, and very often an uncertain official status constantly aggravated their situation. These people could trust only in God and themselves and sometimes partially rely on international humanitarian organizations. In 1945, the list of well-known organizations like the ICRC, the CARE, or the UNRRA expanded with the Committee for Aid to Victims of the War in Brazil, which in a short while started functioning under the auspices of the Central Ukrainian Relief Bureau. Official and unofficial information that was spread among the Ukrainian DPs offered hope and fuelled expectations for additional moral support and financial assistance and made people contact the Committee since its foundation.

Thus, the research is focused on the analysis of the Ukrainian DPs' letters in order to comprehend their living conditions, needs, and demands better. Following the requirement for balance and representativeness of the research, the analysis was divided diachronically into two parts: the first covers the letters written in 1945–1946 and the second constitutes the letters sent in 1947–1948. All the requests in the letters are subdivided into four major groups (a) searching for friends and relatives; (b) seeking advice and assistance in immigration; (c) receiving material aid; (d) establishing contacts. It is worth mentioning that some letters contain several appeals but for the statistical analysis, only the leading one was taken into account.

The first diachronic group (1945–1946) embraces 154 letters with the following subdivision according to their focal point: 120 letters (78%) are devoted to the search of relatives and friends who left for South America; 14 letters (9%) introduce the search for advice and assistance in immigration to Brazil; 12 letters (8%) represent requests for some kind of aid; and 8 letters (5%) are aimed at establishing contacts with the Committee or Ukrainian immigrants. The analysis proves that in 1945–1946, the Ukrainian DPs were predominantly trying to find and renew relations with their long-lost relatives and friends in order to get some help in leaving Europe and settling in Brazil.

The second diachronic group (1947–1948) testifies to a dramatic shift in the Ukrainian DPs' needs and requests. Among 132 letters, 122 letters (92.5%) are requests for general or specific aid like shoes, clothes, food, medicine, etc.; 6 letters (4.5%) are aimed at receiving useful information and getting help in immigrating to Brazil; 2 letters (1.5%) comprises the appeals to find relatives or friends; and 2 letters (1.5%) includes the wish to establish contacts with the Committee.

Therefore, the hypothesis of the research that financial issues were not the predominant hardship that made Ukrainian DPs contact the Committee for Aid to Victims of the War in Brazil has been partially proved. Shortly after WW2, the Ukrainian DPs focused more on immigration to Brazil, whereas, in 1947–1948, when the European countries started suffering from more acute

shortages than before and had to take decisive actions against refugees and displaced persons, people were trying to survive and made everything possible to get any material assistance.

SUMMARY

The paper is an attempt to get an insight into everyday life, problems, hopes, and expectations of the Ukrainian DPs in Europe based on their personal letters, which were sent to the Committee for Aid to Victims of the War in Brazil from 1945 to 1948. The research revolves around the personal issues described in the letters and can reveal all the horrors of the DPs' postwar life. The introduction familiarizes the reader with the general state of DPs' affairs in Europe and concisely explains why such a remote country as Brazil was among the first who initiated humanitarian aid to Ukrainian DPs. Chapter 1 represents the analysis of the letters which were written to the Committee for Aid to Victims of the War in 1945 and 1946 disclosing their leading theme – a search for relatives, friends, and compatriots who had already moved to Brazil or other countries in South America. Another remarkable appeal is a request to assist in obtaining a visa or an affidavit in order to immigrate to Brazil. Chapter 2 is devoted to the analysis of the letters written between 1947 and 1948 and the easily traced leading line is a desperate request for food and clothing, sometimes accompanied by specific and personal entreaties. Therefore, the empirical study and the statistical analysis of the letters partially prove the hypothesis that financial issues were not the predominant factor for the Ukrainian DPs in Europe to contact the Committee for Aid to Victims of the War in Brazil.

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