

1-1-2009

# "I don't want to go back" : the complicated case of Polish displaced children to Canada in 1949

Monika Katarzyna Payseur  
*Ryerson University*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.ryerson.ca/dissertations>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Payseur, Monika Katarzyna, ""I don't want to go back" : the complicated case of Polish displaced children to Canada in 1949" (2009). *Theses and dissertations*. Paper 489.

This Major Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Ryerson. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Ryerson. For more information, please contact [bcameron@ryerson.ca](mailto:bcameron@ryerson.ca).

D  
810  
.c4  
B29  
2009

**"I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK": THE COMPLICATED CASE OF POLISH DISPLACED  
CHILDREN TO CANADA IN 1949.**

by

Monika Katarzyna Payseur, MA, University of Wrocław in Wrocław, Poland, 2001

A Major Research Paper  
presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
in the Program of  
Immigration and Settlement Studies

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2009

© Monika Payseur, 2009

PROPERTY OF  
RYERSON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

## **Author's Declaration**

---

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this major research paper.

I authorize Ryerson University to lend this paper to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

I further authorize Ryerson University to reproduce this paper by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

# **"I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK": THE COMPLICATED CASE OF POLISH DISPLACED CHILDREN TO CANADA IN 1949**

Monika Payseur  
Master of Arts, 2009  
Immigration and Settlement Studies  
Ryerson University

## **ABSTRACT**

On September 7, 1949, a group of 123 Polish displaced children from Tengeru Camp in Tanganyika (Tanzania) arrived in Halifax on board the U.S. Army transport, the General Heitzelman. The Canadian government accepted these children on the assumption that they were all orphans, but shortly after their arrival, the Communist regime in Warsaw accused Canada of kidnapping the children and demanded their immediate repatriation claiming that some of them had parents and relatives living in Poland. This paper examines the diplomatic row between the Canadian and Polish governments over the resettlement of these children and argues that the Canadian authorities assessed the problem from a more balanced and less ideological point of view while taking into account the interests of the children and a humanitarian image of Canada.

### **Key words:**

Polish displaced children, diplomatic row, the Polish Communist government, Canada, the United Nations

## TABLE of CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
TABLE of CONTENTS	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
HISTORIOGRAPHY.....	5
BACKGROUND.....	13
RESETTLEMENT TO CANADA .....	17
PROPAGANDA IN THE POLISH PRESS.....	20
“KIDNAPPERS” and “WHITE SLAVES”.....	25
BEGINNINGS OF THE DIPLOMATIC ROW.....	29
CANADA’S RESPONSE.....	33
CONCLUSION.....	44

## Introduction

Strolling through a deep forest in Uganda, visitors to Masindi would discover an old church. Upon closer inspection, they would see that this church was founded by a group of Poles. East Africa is not a place that immediately comes to mind when discussing the Polish diaspora. So, how did these Poles get there?

Until a *Toronto Star* article came out in 2006, few people--even most Polish Canadians --knew about Polish displaced persons (DP) camps in Africa. As the article explained, Masindi was home to a number of Polish women and children who were deported to the Soviet Union in 1939 and subsequently displaced to Uganda. Following the end of Second World War, many of them did not return to Poland and immigrated to Canada instead.<sup>1</sup>

There are numerous stories like this one of Polish women and children displaced to multiple countries and continents after being evacuated from the Soviet Union in 1941. Unfortunately, a vast majority of them have remained largely unknown or overshadowed by the tragic accounts of Poles in the Soviet captivity, the massacre of the Polish officers in Katyn<sup>2</sup>, or General Anders's army.<sup>3</sup> While such research has contributed to documenting the experiences of Poles in the Soviet Union during Second World War, the bulk of work has overlooked the similarly traumatic and complex experiences of Polish women and children. In particular, their post-evacuation displacement to Iran, Palestine, Lebanon, India, Mexico, Uganda, Kenya and other African countries deserves more academic inquiry not only because it was a truly global

---

<sup>1</sup> John Goddard, "Testament in the Jungle: from the Heart of Africa to Mississauga and Back," *Toronto Star*, April 29, 2006, B4.

<sup>2</sup> A forest in the western part of Russia where approximately 20,000 Polish military officers were killed in 1940. Among the many studies on Katyn, see John Thompson, *Katyn: A Massacre's Massacre* (Memphis: University of Memphis Press, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> A Polish army formed largely from released deportees between 1941 and 1942 and named after its commander General Władysław Anders.

migration experience spanning several countries and continents but also because many of the children were orphans. Unfortunately, if the topic of their displacement receives any attention, it is mostly in non-academic literature which often fails to capture the full complexity of their experience.

To partly fill this gap, this study focuses on a group of 123 Polish displaced children from Tengeru Camp in Tanganyika (Tanzania) who arrived in Canada in 1949. According to the International Refugee Organization (IRO), they were not only the last group of Polish displaced children but also one of the most difficult ones from a legal and political viewpoint.<sup>4</sup> When the IRO resettled the children to Canada, the Communist regime in Warsaw demanded their immediate return, claiming that some of the children had parents or close relatives living in Poland and that others belonged exclusively to the Polish state.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the Polish authorities claimed that the children's resettlement violated the IRO's Constitution, according to which unaccompanied minors under sixteen years of age normally required repatriation.<sup>6</sup> In addition to sending an official protest to the Secretary of State for External Affairs demanding the children's return, the Polish government raised the issue in the UN General Assembly and spread propaganda in the Polish press, accusing Canada and the IRO of "kidnapping" the children and resettling them to Canada to use them as cheap labour.<sup>7</sup>

The propaganda in the Polish press which started in August 1949 and reached its peak in September and October reflected fierce Cold War rhetoric and the Communist regime's approach toward the repatriation of DPs and children in particular. Such approach corresponded with the

---

<sup>4</sup> Louise W. Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization: A Specialized Agency of the United Nations, Its History and Work, 1946-1952* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 495, 508.

<sup>5</sup> Records of the Privy Council Office (RG2), Vol. 2644, Series A-5-a, Immigration of Polish Children to Canada, Cabinet Conclusions, October 13, 1949, Library and Archives Canada (LAC).

<sup>6</sup> Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 495.

<sup>7</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol.1, International Refugee Organization – Transport of Polish Children from Tanganyika to Canada, (LAC).

Soviet Union's view that repatriation should be the only form of assistance provided by the IRO to DPs.<sup>8</sup> This paper contends that the Polish propaganda drew attention to a number of other underlying issues. In light of two previous incidents involving the Canadian government, the Communist regime viewed the resettlement of the children as the last of a series of incidents that had strained diplomatic relations with Canada. Thus, the controversy surrounding the arrival of the Polish children in Canada should not be viewed as an isolated event. Furthermore, the information in the Polish press on Canada's immigration in the post-war period, although greatly distorted, pointed to the fact that the selection of post-war DPs was not always guided by humanitarian considerations. This paper further argues that the Canadian authorities largely dismissed the Polish regime's accusations and propaganda, and when confronted with a formal note from the Polish Minister, they assessed the problem of the DP children from a more balanced and less ideological point of view while taking into account the interests of the children because they were to a certain degree concerned with pursuing a humanitarian image of Canada. The Canadian authorities were more concerned about the rule of law than the ideology of the Cold War and ostensibly the welfare of the children, although they were also concerned about Canada's reputation on the international arena. Finally, the Polish authorities could not have really been concerned about the repatriation of these children because they not only declined the Canadian government's offer to repatriate those who allegedly had one or both parents living in Poland, but they never acted on their rhetoric and were not prepared to cooperate to ascertain the facts.

By drawing attention to the experience of the Polish children, this project seeks to contribute to a more accurate representation of Polish DP migration to Canada and the

---

<sup>8</sup> Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 340.



burgeoning historical work on children as migrants themselves. Unfortunately, in documenting the history of Polish DPs to this country, most researchers have focused predominantly on displaced males. For instance, Polish engineers and ex-servicemen who came before and after Second World War dominate the historiography of Polish DPs in Canada, hence neglecting the unique and complex experiences of children.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> For more information on the subject of Polish ex-servicemen, see Martin Thornton, *The Domestic and International Dimensions of the Resettlement of Polish Ex-Servicemen in Canada, 1943-1948* (Queenston, Ontario: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000).

## Historiography

The traumatic experiences of Poles deported to the Soviet Union during the Second World War have received less scholarly attention than the tragedy of Poles under the Nazi occupation. Indeed, numerous publications have documented the scale of atrocities committed by the Nazis in Poland, but the same cannot be said about the horrors perpetrated by the Soviets. However, the exception to this is Katyn which has received much attention from scholars. While the extent of the Nazis' barbarity can partially account for this imbalance in scholarship, other factors such as the political situation in post-war Poland and the Polish-Soviet relations also played a major role in hindering academic research on this topic.<sup>10</sup>

Following the end of the Second World War, Poland, like other Central and Eastern European countries, fell within the Soviet sphere of influence. From then until the collapse of Communism in 1989, the Polish authorities stifled any public debate on the atrocities committed during the Stalinist era, as was true elsewhere, including the USSR. Historians, in particular, were forced to refrain from discussing the treatment of Poles under Soviet occupation. In addition, they were frequently denied access to state archives, which greatly constrained their research possibilities on this topic. Although western scholars were not restricted by this form of state censorship, their access to archival material in Poland and the Soviet Union was also severely limited during that time. Thus, the deportations of Poles to the Soviet Union, although captured by western researchers and Polish émigrés in the post-war

---

<sup>10</sup> Katherine R. Jolluck, *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), xii.

years, did not become the subject of sustained academic research until the collapse of the Communist regimes in Poland and the Soviet Union.<sup>11</sup>

Ironically, despite an increased access to archival material since the 1990s, scholarship on this topic still contains major gaps, particularly in documenting the experiences of women and children. For instance, in Poland, the bulk of academic literature examining the treatment of Poles by the Soviet occupier has focused primarily on the massacre of Polish officers, the military, or diplomatic relations, hence neglecting the plight of the civilian population. In particular, the traumas and daily struggles of women and children have not been adequately described.<sup>12</sup> If these two groups are mentioned at all, it is either in memoirs written by former deportees or academic literature examining the plight of Poles under Nazi occupation.

Similarly, in Canada, most studies on the experience of children during Second World War have failed to take into account the deportations of Polish children to the Soviet Union and their subsequent displacement to other countries. An overwhelming majority of studies focus on the plight of Jewish children in Nazi-occupied Europe, international rescue efforts through *Kindertransport*, *Lebensborn* orphans in the Scandinavian countries, or the evacuation of British children to Canada.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, most studies on post-WWII refugees to Canada, of whom Poles constituted a significant number, also remain silent on the subject of Polish DP children and focus exclusively on Polish ex-servicemen recruited to work in Canada as farm labourers.

Unfortunately, autobiographies, biographies, memoirs, and diaries dominate the historiography of Polish children deported to the Soviet Union during Second World War. For

---

<sup>11</sup> Jolluck, *Exile and Identity*, xii-xiii.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii.

<sup>13</sup> See Kåre Olsen, "Under the Care of Lebensborn: Norwegian War Children and Their Mothers," 15-35, in *Children of World War II: The Hidden Enemy Legacy*, ed. Kjersti Ericksson and Eva Simonsen (Oxford: Berg, 2005); and Carlton Jackson, Diane Samuels *Kindertransport* (London: Nick Hern Books Limited, 1995).

instance, the pioneering works of Weronika Hort's *Tulacze dzieci (Exiled Children)* (1948), General Władysław Anders's *Bez ostatniego rozdziału: wspomnienia z lat 1939-1946 (Without a Final Chapter: War Memoirs from 1939-1946)* (1960), Alfons Jacewicz's *Santa Rosa. Osiedle polskie w Meksyku (Santa Rosa: Polish Settlement in Mexico)* (1965), and Krystyna Skwarko's *The Invited* (1974), were written by individuals personally involved in either caring for these children, educating them, or helping them evacuate from the Soviet Union. Although most of these works provide the authors' perspectives, they are indeed instrumental in establishing the children's narratives and documenting their deportation and subsequent displacement.

In contrast to these earlier books, the first academic work on the subject, published in 1981, focuses exclusively on children's observations of war and captivity in the Soviet Union. Jan Gross and Irena Grudzińska-Gross's *War through Children's Eyes* (1981), edited and compiled in the United States, comprises a collection of 120 essays written by Polish children during their temporary displacement in Iran. In addition to the essays, the book includes pictures drawn by those children who were too young to write about their experiences. These personal testimonies provide valuable insight into the children's suffering, and they constitute merely a fraction of approximately 20,000 stories recorded in Iran shortly after the Polish evacuees left the Soviet Union in 1942. Housed at the Hoover Institute Archives at Stanford University, these stories provide a fresh, vivid, and detailed account of the children's perceptions of war, deportation, and day-to-day life in the Soviet Union.

Following *War through Children's Eyes*, the subsequent works of Lucjan Królikowski's *Stolen Childhood: a Saga of Polish War Children* (1983) and Irena Beaupré-Stankiewicz, Danuta Waszczuk-Kamieniecka, and Jadwiga Lewicka-Howells's *Isfahan: the*

*City of Polish Children* (1987) are once again written by non-historians. However, unlike the first works on the subject, *Stolen Childhood* and *Isfahan* provide a more comprehensive view of the Polish DP children's experience, following their journey from the Soviet Union through places of their displacement and eventual immigration to various countries and continents. The latter one in particular, with its collection of memoirs, personal correspondence, diary excerpts, photographs, and copies of documents, makes a notable contribution to the historiography of Polish DP children. Moreover, what also distinguishes it from the earlier works is its focus on children's recollections and observations of their encounters in temporary DP camps in Iran, Lebanon, and Palestine.

In contrast, Królikowski attempts to capture the history of children from a different perspective. As the children's former guardian, he relies mostly on his observations and recollections of their daily lives in DP camps in East Africa. Apart from photographs and maps, Królikowski does not use any other primary source documents and does not cite his sources. Moreover, as a Catholic priest, he is militantly anti-Communist and does not shy away from expressing his political views throughout the book. Królikowski's lack of objectivity and insufficient presentation of children's perspectives highlight the need for trained historians to accurately and impartially document their experience. Yet, it would be unfair to completely dismiss the value of his work. Indeed, *Stolen Childhood* brings to light several interesting facts that may have otherwise escaped unnoticed. For instance, the role of the Catholic Church in Canada in assisting the Polish children with immigration and settlement and the dispute between the Canadian government and the Communist regime in Poland over the children's guardianship are both important but lesser known facts of Canadian history that deserve further academic inquiry.

Similar to Królikowski's book in capturing Polish children's experiences over a longer time period but written by historians, Maryon Allbrook and Helen Cattalini's *The General Langfitt Story: Polish Refugees Recount Their Experiences of Exile, Dispersal and Resettlement* (1995) fills some of the gaps in the historiography and reveals greater emphasis on quality. The book follows the children's long and arduous journey from the Soviet Union to Australia, where they immigrated in 1950. Apart from detailing the children's encounters in Iran, India, and several countries in East and South Africa, Allbrook and Cattalini also examine their settlement in Australia, pointing to difficulties associated with adjusting to a new country. The book also provides a detailed account of how the decision to bring the Polish refugees from Africa to Australia was made and how the selection process was conducted.

Despite its focus on the Australian context, *The General Langfitt* brings an interesting insight into the Canadian post-war admission criteria of Polish DP children and women. Moreover, the study makes a valuable contribution to documenting the unique migration process of Polish DP children to multiple countries and continents. In particular, Allbrook and Cattalini point to cross-cultural interactions between Polish children and the local population in India and East Africa and discuss the attitude of children towards their adopted countries. The interviews with former DP children provide further details on their experiences, such as learning local languages, interacting with local population, and attending schools outside DP camps in major urban centres in South Africa. Given its focus on interviews with former DP children, Allbrook and Cattalini's work is a valuable source emphasizing that all of children's encounters, all along their journey to the eventual host country shaped who they became as adults.

Continuing Allbrook and Cattalini's attempt to document the Polish DP children's immigrant experience, a collective work published in 2004 by Polish Children's Reunion Committee *New Zealand's First Refugees: Pahiatua's Polish Children* depicts the arrival of 733 Polish children and 102 guardians to New Zealand in 1944. The book comprises more than 100 personal stories by former refugee children and documents their successful integration into New Zealand society.

In addition to the works written by former refugee children, recent years have also witnessed a number of academic studies that are slowly filling the gaps in the historiography by drawing attention to the Polish children's experiences of deportation and displacement. Although not specifically focused on children, works like *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union during World War Two* (2002) by Katherine Jolluck and *The Polish Deportees of World War II: Recollection of Removal to the Soviet Union and Dispersal Throughout the World* (2004) by Tadeusz Piotrowski provide some insight into various aspects of the Polish children's experiences in the Soviet Union and other countries of their displacement.

Through its focus on interviews with Polish women, Jolluck's work, in particular, makes a notable contribution to documenting children's daily lives as seen from their mothers' perspectives. The often heart-rending testimonies of women draw attention to the traumas of exile, poverty, disease, hard labour, and separation from their children. More importantly, these stories also point to the strategies used by the Polish women to protect their children and provide for their education in the hostile environment. Jolluck points to various ways these women maintained their children's "Polishness" despite risking their own lives. Afraid that their children would lose their "Polishness", the women often established clandestine schools where they taught the Polish language, history and literature.

Piotrowski's book, on the other hand, is a collection of personal stories by former evacuees representing a cross-section of Polish society. While not specifically dedicated to the plight of children, his work devotes much attention to their perspectives of deportation and subsequent displacement to Near and Middle East, India, Africa, New Zealand, and Mexico. Although Canada is omitted as an immigration point for these children, the stories compiled by Piotrowski are nevertheless important to documenting the lesser known aspects of the children's experience, such as their displacement to Mexico. In particular, Piotrowski's work contributes to the historiography by examining the Polish settlement in Santa Rosa that also housed a group of Polish children during Second World War.

The most recent scholarship has focused more on analyzing the complexity of the Polish DP children's experience. A forthcoming study by Lynn Taylor *Polish Orphans of Tengeru: the Dramatic Story of their Long Journey to Canada 1941-1949* (2009) is devoted exclusively to 123 Polish DP children resettled to Canada in 1949. By addressing a number of issues associated with these children's long and challenging journey to this country, beginning in the Soviet Union, Taylor not only contributes to documenting their unique story but also brings it to the attention of other scholars in this country.

Nonetheless, there is an enormous amount of work to do in order to fully document the experience of Polish DP children. Notwithstanding the importance of the most recent and previous works, the post-deportation experience of Polish orphans continues to be an under-explored and often unknown subject that deserves further academic attention and inquiry. In order to obtain a more complete picture of the Polish children's experiences, there is a desperate need to look more closely into their immigration and settlement to multiple countries, always



remembering that their unique stories resulted from a tragic and complicated series of events that began on September 17, 1939.

## Background

To say that World War II massively affected the lives of millions of people is one of the most clichéd statements possible. Obviously, its effects were not confined to the European continent, but as historian Norman Davies's many works reveal, Central Europe was disproportionately affected by mass killings, deportations, ethnic cleansings, and displacements of persons.

In September of 1939, shortly after signing the Von Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, Germany and the Soviet Union invaded and occupied Poland, subjecting its population to many years of unspeakable terror and unprecedented brutality. The Nazi occupiers quickly turned Poland into "an 'archipelago' of death-factories and camps, the scene of executions, pacifications, and exterminations which surpassed anything so far documented in the history of mankind."<sup>14</sup> Similarly catastrophic and tragic was the Soviet incursion of eastern Poland. Between 1939 and 1941, the NKVD<sup>15</sup> conducted massive arrests of Polish citizens who were subsequently deported to prisons, labour camps, collective farms, and special settlements in the Soviet Union.<sup>16</sup> Although the exact number of Poles deported to the USSR is still disputed, it is estimated that about 1.5 million of them were captured and forced into exile.<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately, only a small percentage of those deportees succeeded in fleeing the Soviet captivity. On June 22, 1941, Adolf Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa and invaded the USSR. Unable to halt the German invasion, the Soviets made an agreement (Sikorski-Maisky Pact) with the Polish government-in-exile in London which provided for the formation of a Polish army in

---

<sup>14</sup> Norman Davies, *God's Playground: a History of Poland Volume II, 1795 to the Present* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 454.

<sup>15</sup> National Commissariat of Internal Affairs

<sup>16</sup> Tadeusz Piotrowski, *The Polish Deportees of World War II: Recollections of Removal to the Soviet Union* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc., Publishers, 2004), 8.

<sup>17</sup> Davies, *God's Playground*, 451.

the Soviet Union under the command of General Władysław Anders and the release of Polish deportees from the Soviet captivity. As a result of this agreement, an “amnesty” was announced, enabling 116,131 Polish deportees to leave the Soviet Union. Regrettably, the “amnesty” benefited a relatively small number of Poles as many more remained trapped in the USSR, hence losing their chance to seek freedom from hard labour, starvation, and imprisonment. Perhaps even more Polish lives could have been saved if all Poles had received the notification of the amnesty and if the local authorities had not prohibited deportees from leaving their places of exile by denying them documents necessary for their travel.<sup>18</sup>

The more fortunate Poles, however, managed to leave the Soviet Union in 1941 and embarked on a long and arduous journey across the country. It is estimated that approximately 37,000 civilians, of whom 18,300 were children left the USSR. Unfortunately, many of these children were orphans who were separated from their parents either during their deportation or whose parents died in exile.<sup>19</sup>

After long weeks of traveling in difficult conditions, the women and children, assisted by General Władysław Anders's Polish army, arrived in Iran in 1942. Between 1943 and 1946, they were subsequently displaced to multiple countries: Lebanon, Palestine, India, and Mexico.<sup>20</sup> A significant percentage of Polish DPs were also transferred to eastern and southern parts of Africa. For instance, Piotrowski claims that East Africa hosted over 13,000 Polish citizens who settled mainly in the British colonies of Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika, but there were also Polish DP camps in Northern and Southern Rhodesia. Moreover, Palestine hosted about 5,000 Polish DPs while India admitted about 6,000 of them. A large Polish settlement was also

---

<sup>18</sup> Jolluck, *Exile and Identity*, xiv, xv.

<sup>19</sup> Piotrowski, *The Polish Deportees of World War II*, 10.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 97, 10.

established in Santa Rosa, Mexico, where in 1943 some 1,432 women and children found a temporary home. Finally, in 1944, 733 Polish children with their 105 guardians were admitted to Pahiatua, New Zealand.<sup>21</sup>

Regardless of their geographical location, a vast majority of the Polish children were able to maintain their cultural and linguistic identity. Thanks to the cooperation of the local authorities, the financial support of the Polish government-in-exile located in London, and the assistance of various Polish immigrant organizations in the United States and Great Britain, most of these children went to Polish schools, had access to Polish libraries, and participated in various Polish organizations.<sup>22</sup>

Naturally, a vast majority of DP camps and settlements in the Near and Middle East, India, Africa, and Mexico were only temporary, and the Polish DPs had to vacate them shortly after the war. With the exception of the Polish children in New Zealand, who were offered permanent status upon their arrival, those in other countries had to either return to Poland or resettle to other countries.<sup>23</sup> For many, however, resettlement was the preferred option as the political developments in Poland at the close of Second World War would prevent many from returning home.

In short order, on July 22, 1944, the Soviet authorities established the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PKWN) in Lublin, the provisional Communist government which was subsequently recognized at the Yalta Conference in 1945. In the same year, the Polish People's Republic was established. The United States and the United Kingdom ceased to recognize the

---

<sup>21</sup> Piotrowski, *The Polish Deportees of World War II*, 10-11.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid; for more information on Polish schools and institutions in DP, see Maryon Allbrook and Helen Cattalini, *The General Langfitt Story: Polish Refugees Recount Their Experiences of Exile, Dispersal, and Resettlement*, (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1995); and Irena Beaupré-Stankiewicz, Danuta Waszczuk-Kamieniecka, and Jadwiga Lewicka-Howells, (editors), *Isfahan: City of Polish Children* (Sussex, United Kingdom: Caldra House, Ltd., 1989).

<sup>23</sup> Piotrowski, *The Polish Deportees of World War II*, 13.

Polish government-in-exile and accepted the Communist government in Warsaw. The latter, also known as the 'Lublin Committee', was soon succeeded by the Soviet-imposed dictatorship.<sup>24</sup> Afraid of the new regime, many Poles, whether displaced by the Nazis or the Soviets, strongly opposed the idea of returning to their country. Hence, for those, like the women and children formerly deported to the Soviet Union, the journey continued.<sup>25</sup> Hoping to build a better life for themselves, many chose to immigrate to the United States, Australia, Great Britain, and Canada.

---

<sup>24</sup> Davies, *God's Playground*, 472, 556; Kim Salomon, *Refugees in the Cold War: toward a New International Refugee Regime in the Early Postwar Era* (Lund, Sweden: Lund University Press, 1991), 45.

<sup>25</sup> Salomon, *Refugees in the Cold War*, 105.

## Resettlement to Canada

In 1948, approximately one year prior to the Polish children's arrival in Canada, the Canadian Catholic Conference (CCC) approached the Immigration Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources with the request to admit 1,000 Catholic orphans from DP camps in Europe. The church authorities' desire to resettle these children started with an appeal from the Pope asking if Canada was able to do anything to help thousands of children stranded in DP camps in Europe. Convinced that it was a "Christian duty to do everything possible to rescue these children", the church authorities agreed to accept 500 children for resettlement in the English-speaking Canada and the remaining 500 in the French-speaking part of the country.<sup>26</sup>

Although the immigration authorities agreed to the resettlement of 1,000 Catholic orphans and recognized that it was justified on humanitarian grounds, their decision was also based on the fact that such permission had already been granted to the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) which had to lobby the government to permit the sponsorship of 1,000 thousand Jewish orphans to be admitted in 1947.<sup>27</sup> The involvement of the CJC and the Catholic Church in the resettlement of the orphans shows that private efforts, dictated by humanitarian considerations, contributed significantly to relieving the post-war DP crisis.

Indeed, the resettlement of the Catholic orphans to Canada would not have been possible without the help of the Canadian public, to whom the church authorities appealed for cooperation. Catholics across the country were asked to open their homes to the orphans and provide donations needed to cover the cost of their transportation to Canada. Several

---

<sup>26</sup> Immigration Branch (RG76), Vol. 660, File B74072, Admission of Polish Orphan Children from Europe, February 11, 1948, LAC.

<sup>27</sup> Gerald Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1977), 167; and Ninette Kelly and Michael Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 338.

newspapers, such as *The Montreal Gazette*, *The Prairie Messenger*, and *The Calgary Albertan* ran announcements regarding the Church's plan. Moreover, Archbishop Joseph Charbonneau from Montreal, the leading advocate for the movement of the Catholic orphans to Canada, addressed the problem before the Richelieu Club, arguing that Switzerland and Ireland had already given shelter to 40,000 and 10,000 orphans, respectively.<sup>28</sup>

The Immigration Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources authorized the resettlement of the first larger group of Catholic orphans to Canada in the spring of 1949. Satisfied with their travel and living arrangements, the immigration authorities granted visas to 123 Polish children from Tengeru Camp in Tanganyika. During the Polish children's movement from Tanganyika through Italy to the American Occupation Zone in Germany, the Communist government in Poland made a number of protests to the respective authorities, demanding the children's return to Poland. On August 11, 1949, the Polish authorities also complained to the US and Canadian military missions in Germany, trying to prevent the children from departing Europe for Canada. The Communist regime's claim that the children should have been repatriated was partly based on the IRO Constitution whose policy on unaccompanied children was:

- 1) to unite children with their parents wherever the latter may be; and
- 2) in the case of orphans or unaccompanied children whose nationality has been established beyond doubt, to return them to their country of origin, always providing that the best interests of the individual child shall be the determining factor<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Immigration Branch (RG76), Vol. 660, File B74072, *The Prairie Messenger*, April 22, 1948, LAC.

<sup>29</sup> Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 499.

In addition to viewing the resettlement of the children as a violation of international agreements, the Communist regime argued that it ran counter to its view that the Polish state had an exclusive control over unaccompanied children.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the Communist regime's objections, the IRO officials decided to resettle the Polish children to Canada, arguing that many of them refused to be returned to their country. Amidst the Polish government's protests and the negative publicity in the Polish press, the children left Germany on August 29, 1949 and arrived in Halifax on September 7, 1949. The Canadian immigration authorities admitted them into the country on the assumption that they were all orphans. Guided by the definition in the IRO Constitution, which stated that unaccompanied children were war orphans or children whose parents had disappeared and who were sixteen years of age or under, the immigration authorities assumed that all the Polish children fell under this category. After their admission to Canada, the children were met by a representative from the Catholic Immigrant Aid Society and escorted to Montreal, where Archbishops Joseph Charbonneau assumed responsibility for their care and maintenance.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol.1, International Refugee Organization – Transport of Polish Children from Tanganyika to Canada, Draft Memorandum to Cabinet, September 23, 1949.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



## Propaganda in the Polish press

Before the group of 123 Polish DP children departed for Canada and even more so after they arrived here, the Polish press began to publish propagandistic articles denouncing the Canadian government for not repatriating the children to their country. The vast majority of the articles which appeared in various Polish national and local newspapers between August and September of 1949 described this controversial issue through virulent Cold War rhetoric, depicting Canada as a greedy capitalist nation desiring the children for the purpose of turning them into a source of cheap and exploitable labour.<sup>32</sup>

Although greatly distorted, the propaganda in the Polish press was not completely unfounded as economic interests did in fact play a role in the selection of DPs to Canada in the first years after the war. By the end of 1947, the country experienced a growing need for labour to meet the demands of its expanding economy, particularly in lumber industry, manufacturing and agriculture, and domestic work. Not surprisingly, in the initial years after the war, young and single DPs were usually selected from DP camps in Europe and resettled under the so-called bulk labour schemes for specific work in Canada.<sup>33</sup> Between 1947 and 1952, Canada admitted approximately 165,000 DPs who worked under one-year or two-year contracts in specific occupations.<sup>34</sup> For instance, about 4,527 Polish ex-servicemen came in 1946 and 1947 to work on Canadian farms and in Canadian factories. In fact, they were brought here to replace German

---

<sup>32</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol.1, File 3, International Refugee Organization – Transport of Polish Children from Tanganyika to Canada, The Chargé d’Affaires at the Canadian Embassy in Warsaw to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, September 16, 1949, LAC.

<sup>33</sup> Dirks, *Canada’s Refugee Policy*, 119, 151; and Salomon, *Refugees in the Cold War*, 213.

<sup>34</sup> Sedef Arat-Koç, “From ‘Mothers of the Nation’ to Migrant Workers,” in *Not One of the Family: Foreign Domestic Workers in Canada*, ed. Abigail B. Bakan and Daiva K. Stasiulis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 203.

prisoners of war who could no longer stay in Canada.<sup>35</sup> Nonetheless, one cannot discount the fact that although the Canadian post-war refugee policy was to a large degree motivated by self-interests, Canada accepted some 64,860 DPs by 1949. More importantly, it is estimated that about 14,630 Poles arrived in this country in the first years after the war, and they constituted the largest group of DPs.<sup>36</sup>

Ironically, while the Polish press accused Canada of a self-interested approach towards Polish DPs, Poland's own interest in repatriating its citizens was also motivated by economic factors. After the war, Poland was completely devastated and its population was reduced by about one-third. With about 6 million of its citizens killed during the war and another one million displaced, the country's manpower was severely reduced.<sup>37</sup> Not surprisingly, the Polish government viewed its DPs as an attractive source of manpower needed for the reconstruction of the war-ravaged country and its collapsed economy.<sup>38</sup> Hence, failure to convince a large number of DPs to return to Poland may partly explain why the Polish government was opposed to the idea of their resettlement in Canada. This may also explain why the arrival of the Polish ex-servicemen and a group of Polish women from a DP camp in Germany in 1947 drew so much criticism in the Polish press.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to the concerns related to manpower shortages, the Communist regime looked critically on an increasing number of Poles refusing to be repatriated for political reasons. Unlike most Soviet, Yugoslavian, and Czechoslovakian DPs who had been repatriated in the summer of 1945, many Polish DPs had no desire to return to their country because they refused to live under

---

<sup>35</sup> Thornton, *The Domestic and International Dimensions*, 160.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>37</sup> Davis, *God's Playground*, 489.

<sup>38</sup> Salomon, *Refugees in the Cold War*, 182.

<sup>39</sup> Joan Sangster, "The Polish 'Dionnes': Gender, Ethnicity, and Immigrant Workers in Post-Second World War Canada," *The Canadian Historical Review* 88 (2007): 482.

Communism. In fact, more than half of the DPs who required repatriation in the fall of 1945 were of Polish nationality.<sup>40</sup> The problem of Polish and other DPs refusing to return to their countries was particularly problematic because of the diverging opinions between the Western and Eastern powers regarding repatriation.<sup>41</sup> While the former thought that DPs themselves should decide whether they wanted to be repatriated or not, the Soviet Union demanded the repatriation of all its DPs. Although the Communist regime in Poland did not demand enforced repatriation of its citizens, it was of the opinion that DPs could be encouraged to return to their country by repatriation officers or propaganda literature circulating in DP camps.<sup>42</sup>

These conflicting opinions regarding repatriation became even more pronounced around the issue of unaccompanied children. The Soviet Bloc countries, including Poland, argued that repatriation should be the only option for children “regardless of whether their parents were living in their homeland or not.”<sup>43</sup> Western powers, on the other hand, although supported the idea of repatriation, viewed it from a different perspective. They thought that the decision of repatriation should always be made taking into account the best interests of children. These diverging approaches collided at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in August 1948. During the discussion of a resolution regarding the repatriation of unaccompanied children, the United States (US) delegation argued that “repatriation should only take place when it was not counter to the best interests of a child”, while the Soviet delegates claimed that “those interests would clearly be served by its return to the country from which it had originated.”<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Salomon, *Refugees in the Cold War*, 105-106.

<sup>41</sup> Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 340.

<sup>42</sup> Salomon, *Refugees in the Cold War*, 107.

<sup>43</sup> Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 496; Mark Wyman, *DP: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945-1951* (Philadelphia: The Balch Institute Press, 1989), 88.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 499.

Thus, the IRO, which replaced the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) in 1947 to provide assistance to DPs, faced a challenging task with respect to unaccompanied minors.<sup>45</sup> Eastern European countries never signed the IRO Constitution which they thought “reflected a Western rather than a Soviet model of refugee policy, favouring the principle of free choice over compulsory repatriation”.<sup>46</sup> Hence, from the very beginning, they disapproved of the IRO and its activities, and with growing tension between the Eastern and Western powers, the refugee question became another polarizing issue, attracting competing ideologies and political tensions.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to coping with the diverging opinions of the governments, the IRO had to face a host of other problematic issues. For instance, despite being responsible for the unaccompanied children, the organization could not assume the position of their legal guardian, which in turn raised the question of who could actually claim it? If it was not the IRO, was it the government of the child’s country of origin or residence? Or was it a relative if both parents were dead?<sup>48</sup> Another issue concerned the wishes of the children and their best interests, and the extent to which these two factors should be taken into consideration.<sup>49</sup> Thus, while trying to deal with the problem of thousands of unaccompanied minors in the first years after the war, the IRO had to face a number of challenges, the biggest of which was increasing Cold War tension making the issue of unaccompanied children “one of the most politically contested tasks” of the organization.<sup>50</sup> This was certainly evident in the Polish government’s anger at the resettlement of

---

<sup>45</sup> UNRRA, just like the IRO, was a temporary organization formed to help resolve the post-Second World War DP crisis; for more information, see Holborn, *Refugees in the Cold War*, 46-54.

<sup>46</sup> Reg Whitaker, *Double Standard: The Secret History of Canadian Immigration* (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys Publishers, 1987), 23.

<sup>47</sup> Salomon, *Refugees in the Cold War*, 175.

<sup>48</sup> Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 497.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 495.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

the Polish children to Canada and the propaganda in the Polish press which did not spare the IRO from virulent Cold War rhetoric and harsh criticism.

## **“Kidnappers” and “white slaves”**

Although varying in content, most articles in the Polish press framed the resettlement of the children as an act of “kidnapping”, “trafficking”, and “stealing”. Even words like “deportation” appeared several times; obviously, never with reference to the Soviet Union. Apart from the forceful removal of the children from Europe, Canada was also denounced for using them as “slaves” on Canadian farms or in Canadian factories. The editorial published in *Trybuna Ludu* (People’s Tribune) declared that: “Cheap labour is a welcome bite for Canadian aristocrats and big owners, especially if they are children, easily intimidated, who will for many years work intensively and thereby increase the profits of their employers”<sup>51</sup>. Echoing a similar tone, an article in *Głos Wielkopolski* (The Voice of Wielkoposka) claimed that the “employment of Polish workers is “good business” for Canadian industrialists.”<sup>52</sup> This type of propaganda was frequently reiterated in the Polish press through the same articles that were either reprinted on different days under a new title or appeared in a different newspaper. For instance, within the span of only three days, from August 11 to August 13, 1949, ten Polish newspapers published the same article under a new title.<sup>53</sup>

Apart from launching constant attacks on Canada, the Polish press also targeted the IRO, portraying it as the main accomplice in the “white slave traffic”. The article from *Głos Wielkopolski*, mentioned in the previous paragraph, proclaimed that the IRO deserved the name of a “recruiting office of cheap manpower for capitalist countries”, while *Życie Warszawy* (Warsaw Life) claimed that resettling Polish children to Canada was simply a “shameful affair organized by international kidnappers supplying “merchandise” to modern slave traders” and a

---

<sup>51</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol. 1, File 7, Newspaper clippings, LAC.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

“monstrous capitalistic hypocrisy”.<sup>54</sup> These articles were sometimes accompanied by political cartoons further unmasking the IRO’s “real” motives behind the resettlement scheme. For instance, a cartoon in *Pokolenie* depicted the IRO disguised as Baba Jaga holding a young boy’s hand and taking him in the direction of her gingerbread house in Canada. Hiding behind the house was a slave plantation, where Baba Jaga was taking the terrified boy, so he could join other slaves already toiling under a close watch of a slave master.<sup>55</sup>

Even the articles featuring heart-rending interviews with the children’s alleged parents living in Poland were also heavily infused with the Cold War rhetoric. A grief stricken father interviewed for *Gazeta Ludowa* (People’s Gazette) confessed: “When I see the happy children, returning from school, my heart breaks for they remind me of Wanda”. His grief, however, quickly descended into a propagandist rant against Canada and the IRO, claiming that his daughter would soon be “kidnapped” “for slave work for the Canadian rich” and “for denationalization, ill-treatment and exploitation”. In the same article, a woman recalled her dying sister’s last wish for her son’s return to Poland: “We do not permit the abduction of our child. Henryk must return to Poland for his place is with us”. In *Życie Warszawy*, a mother hoped that the Polish government would repatriate her daughters because she did not want them “to wander and to work for strangers” in Canada.<sup>56</sup>

In addition, many of the articles presented the dispute over the children as one of series of incidents that damaged the diplomatic relations between Canada and Poland. The first issue was related to Polish national treasures that Canada had not returned to Poland immediately after the war. Facing the growing threat of the German invasion, the Polish government decided to

---

<sup>54</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol. 1, File 7, Newspaper clippings, LAC.

<sup>55</sup> A witch-like woman in a Slavic folklore, notorious for luring children into her gingerbread house and eating them afterwards.

<sup>56</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol. 1, File 7, Newspaper clippings, LAC.

evacuate the royal treasures of the Wawel Castle in Cracow, including sixteenth-century Flemish tapestries from the collection of King Sigmund Augustus. In order to save them from the Nazi pillage, the treasures were transported to Canada via Romania, France, and England. The Canadian government agreed to protect the treasures for the duration of the war; however it kept them until 1961 because of the conflict over their ownership between the Communist regime in Poland and the Polish government-in-exile in London. The controversy surrounding the treasures led to an outcry from the Communist regime in Poland that accused Canada of stealing them instead of protecting them. The tattered diplomatic relations between the Canadian and Polish governments lasted until the treasures were returned to Poland following a series of negotiations with the Communist government.<sup>57</sup>

The second incident to which Polish newspapers frequently alluded was the resettlement of about 100 Polish women from a DP camp in Germany in 1947. The women, who were personally recruited by a Liberal MP Ludger Dionne to work under a two-year labour contract in his textile mill, also sparked a lot of propaganda in the Polish press after Dionne was accused of lowering his employees' wages and infringing their personal freedom.<sup>58</sup> Polish newspapers printed stories comparing Dionne's mill to a slave plantation and depicting the women as "defenceless" victims.<sup>59</sup>

The Polish press took advantage of these two incidents and frequently drew parallels between them and the case of the 123 children. For instance, many articles emphasized that the children's life in Canada mirrored that of the women in terms of the hardship and exploitation they had to endure. For instance, *Rzeczpospolita* purported that Polish children's life in Canada

---

<sup>57</sup> See Gordon Swoger, *The Strange Odyssey of Poland's National Treasures, 1939-1961* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

<sup>58</sup> Thornton, *The Domestic and International Dimensions*, 165.

<sup>59</sup> Sangster, "The Polish 'Dionnes'", 476.



was "as hard as that of those 100 Polish girls deported there from Germany".<sup>60</sup> Another one argued that the children encountered the same misery in Canada as the women who were now writing letters to Poland with complaints that they "work harder than their strength can bear, are insufficiently fed, live in most unhygienic conditions". Furthermore, *Express Ilustrowany* declared that the Polish children's fate in Canada was the same as "the notorious case of the Polish girls, inhumanely treated by a Canadian employer".<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, many of the same articles would also link the case of the children with the issue of the Polish treasures and depicted it as yet another act of appropriation by the Canadian government. For instance *Trybuna Ludu* argued that the children "have fallen victim to the Canadian appetite for everything Polish", alluding to the Wawel tapestries and the DP women. Echoing the same sentiment, other newspapers suggested that Canada refused to return the children after it had "illegally detained" and "usurped" the Polish tapestries.<sup>62</sup>

In addition to appearing in the Polish press, the references to these two incidents would later be used by the Communist regime in the notes sent to the Canadian government and in the statements made in the UN General Assembly. Although the first letter sent to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Ottawa did not mention these two issues, the Polish authorities would use them on numerous other occasions to exert pressure on the Canadian government to yield to their demands.

---

<sup>60</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol. 1, File 7, Newspaper clippings, LAC.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

## **Beginnings of the diplomatic row**

On September 10, 1949, Lester B. Pearson, the Secretary of State for External Affairs received an official protest from the Polish Minister in Ottawa, Jan Minikiel, regarding a group of 123 Polish displaced children who had arrived in Canada three days earlier. After briefly discussing the Polish authorities' great concern for all the Polish children displaced by the war and the efforts to reunite them with their families, Mr. Minikiel asked whether the Canadian government was aware that the 123 Polish children came to Canada "without the consent and against the will of their lawful guardians" and that they were "anxiously expected by their parents" in Poland. Furthermore, the letter also asked what the Canadian government was planning to do "in order to redress the injury imposed upon the children and return them to their families and lawful guardians". Claiming that these children's resettlement to Canada was a violation of general rules related to custody and of international commitments on children and displaced persons, Mr. Minikiel asked for the immediate return of the whole group to Poland so they could be reunited with their parents or lawful guardians and in case of their absence the Polish state.<sup>63</sup>

The news of the Polish government's indignation over the resettlement of the children did not probably come as a surprise to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. As early as August, Pearson received translated newspaper clippings from the Polish press forwarded to him by Kenneth Porter Kirkwood, the Chargé d'Affaires at the Canadian Embassy in Warsaw informing him about the apparent outrage this incident caused in Poland. More importantly, it was not the first time the Communist regime in Warsaw protested to the Canadian authorities

---

<sup>63</sup> Department of External Affairs, (RG25-G-2), Vol. 1, File 8, From the Polish Minister in Ottawa Jan Minikiel to the Secretary of State for External Affairs Lester B. Pearson, September 10, 1949, LAC.

about the resettlement of Polish DPs. Only a couple of years earlier, the Department of Foreign Affairs received similar complaints concerning the Polish ex-servicemen and the women brought by Dionne. Nevertheless, the letter from the Polish Minister raised a considerable alarm within the department.<sup>64</sup>

It is clear from the evidence here that this happened for a number of reasons. Canada's diplomatic relations with Poland had already been tarnished by the conflict over the Polish DP women and the ongoing dispute over the Polish national treasures. Clearly, the Canadian government did not need to be embroiled in another diplomatic row with Poland to further undermine the strained relations. Moreover, the Canadian authorities were also concerned that the resettlement of these children to Canada ran counter to the international agreements concerning unaccompanied children. In particular, the IRO Constitution provided that the normal procedure in the case of orphans sixteen years of age and under should be repatriation; hence, there were legitimate reasons to believe that the IRO may have violated its own constitution by resettling the children to Canada.<sup>65</sup>

There were also other problems. The Communists alleged that some children in the group had parents or relatives living in Poland and hence were not bona fide orphans. If such claim was indeed valid, this would not only show that the IRO may have made an error by sending these children to Canada but also that Canadian immigration officials authorized their admission into the country without carefully verifying their personal information. The Department of Foreign Affairs feared that if the Polish delegates raised this problem in the UN General Assembly, they would probably accuse Canada of violating international agreements and committing an "inhuman and unchristian act" in preventing the children from being reunited with their families

---

<sup>64</sup> Thornton, *The Domestic and International Dimensions*, iv; and Sangster, "The Polish 'Dionnes'", 482.

<sup>65</sup> Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 499.

in Poland.<sup>66</sup> Only two years earlier, the Canadian government faced a similar problem when the Communist authorities raised the issue of the 100 Polish women in the UN General Assembly, criticizing Dionne's scheme for exploiting the women and demanding their repatriation. Furthermore, the Secretary of State was also worried that the Polish delegation would cite the resolution for which Canada voted on November 27, 1948, recommending the repatriation of Greek children to their homeland. This resolution reflected the conviction of the majority of the members of the UN General Assembly that if the children, one of their parents, or their closest relative desired their return from Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, where they had been forcefully taken by the guerrillas, then they should be repatriated. Hence, in view of this earlier decision, the Canadian government thought it would be difficult to argue that the Polish children should stay in Canada.<sup>67</sup>

Realizing the manifold ramifications of the problem in relation to Canada's standing in the UN, its diplomatic relations with Poland, and the well-being of the children, the government launched an investigation before responding to the Polish Minister's letter. The Secretary of State requested an official statement from the Director-General of the IRO detailing the children's ages and any evidence of their parents' existence in Poland. Also, since the Canadian authorities suspected the breach of international agreements concerning those children who were sixteen years of age and under and whose parents or relatives allegedly lived in Poland, they asked the organization whether its use of Provisional Order was consistent with its constitution. In particular, the Canadian authorities wanted to know if the IRO was ever considering the repatriation of the children and on what grounds was the decision taken to resettle the children.

---

<sup>66</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol.1, File 3, Draft Memorandum to Cabinet, September 23, 1949, LAC.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

They also asked the IRO whether it was convinced that all the children were orphans and whether the organization had made any attempts to trace their parents. Lastly, the Department of Foreign Affairs also inquired whether the Polish authorities were informed about the children's presence in the camps in Africa and whether they were given permission to see them in the IRO camps in Italy and Western Germany.<sup>68</sup>

In addition to contacting the IRO, the department sent a letter to the United Kingdom, inquiring whether the British government had received similar demands from the Communist regime in Poland. In his response, the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom informed the Canadian authorities that the British government had been approached by the Communist regime in Warsaw with similar demands. Despite Britain's cooperation and permission to let the Polish officials obtain the lists of some of those children and interview them, repatriations never took place. According to the British government, Poland's failure to send these children back to their country indicated that propaganda rather than the well-being of the children were of primary interest to the Communist regime, adding that the Soviet Union voiced similar complaints with regards to about 1,000 children from the Baltic countries in the British zone in Germany.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol. 1, File 5, From A.D.P. Heeney, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to Hector Allard, Chief of Mission, International Refugee Organization in Ottawa, October 6, 1949, LAC.

<sup>69</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol. 1, File 8, Memorandum for the Prime Minister, December 29, 1949, LAC.

## Canada's response

The Canadian government's handling of this conflict, as evidenced in its investigation, formal correspondence with the Polish authorities, and proposed solutions, was often based on the idea of the rule of law, cooperation, and compromise, the basic components of Canada's post-war foreign policy. Louis St. Laurent, the main proponent of this policy, referred to it as pragmatic idealism and discussed its main principles in a public lecture held at the University of Toronto on January 13, 1947.<sup>70</sup> As the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Laurent argued that pragmatic idealism, with its emphasis on political freedom, the rule of law in international affairs, national unity, values of Christian civilization, and increased involvement in international affairs should be a guiding principle of Canadian foreign policy.<sup>71</sup> The last notion of Canada as an important player in global affairs was evident in the country's growing participation in international organizations. Following the end of the Second World War, Canada was committed to the creation of the UN in 1945 and continued to be one of its most contributing members, particularly throughout the 1950s, supporting the organization's peacekeeping efforts.<sup>72</sup> This may help explain why the dispute involving the Polish children was perceived as potentially harmful to Canada's efforts to assert its role in international affairs and particularly within the UN.

The adherence to the notion of pragmatic idealism, however, did not mean that Canada remained immune to the post-war conflicts of the Cold War. In fact, Igor Gouzenko, a cypher clerk at the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa who revealed the existence of the Soviet espionage in

---

<sup>70</sup> The lecture was entitled *The Foundations of Canadian Policy in World Affairs*. For more information, see Costas Melakopides, *Pragmatic Idealism: Canadian Foreign Policy 1945-1995* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998).

<sup>71</sup> The idealist component reflects such values as primacy of justice, respect for universal human rights, and cooperation in international affairs. For more information, see Costas Melakopides, *Pragmatic Idealism*, 4-5.

<sup>72</sup> Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 312.

Canada, embroiled the country in a Cold War scandal as early as 1945.<sup>73</sup> As the Cold War progressed, Canada became a signatory to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and maintained close ties with the United States.<sup>74</sup> Yet, what distinguished Canada's approach to the Cold War from that of the United States was "moderation in both Cold War rhetoric and in corresponding actions".<sup>75</sup> The principles of pragmatic idealism such as cooperation, communication, and moderation in international affairs may help explain why Canada advocated such approach and why its foreign policy at that time reflected the idea of containment and working towards world peace.<sup>76</sup>

Keeping in mind some of these ideals, it is easier to understand the Canadian government's response to the dispute over the Polish children, and why it pursued a more balanced and less ideological approach toward resolving it. Despite the Communist regime's provocative accusations and virulent propaganda, the Canadian government refrained from engaging in the anti-communist rhetoric, preferring to seek compromise and cooperation as well as trying to assess issues from a more objective perspective than the Polish government did.

Indeed, the Canadian authorities' less ideological approach was evident in how they reacted to the Polish government's accusations with regard to the children who were allegedly not bona fide orphans. Even before the investigation, the Canadian government agreed with the opinion of the Polish authorities that if some of these children had indeed parents or relatives living in Poland, they should have never been brought to Canada. Furthermore, the Canadian government was also willing to cooperate with the Polish authorities in returning the children to Poland if conclusive evidence as to their parents' or lawful guardians' existence was provided.

---

<sup>73</sup> Thornton, *The Domestic and International Dimensions*, 42.

<sup>74</sup> Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 312.

<sup>75</sup> Melakopides, *Pragmatic Idealism*, 47.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

The Canadian authorities upheld this opinion throughout the dispute as they thought that the children's interests were best served if they were reunited with their families. Both in the notes to the Communist regime in Poland and in the statement presented at the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly on November 4, 1949, the Canadian government stated that they would not prevent parents and children from being reunited and they would cooperate with the Communist regime in Poland in efforts to return the latter to their country.<sup>77</sup>

Furthermore, concerned about the rule of law, the Canadian government had to approach the IRO twice as the organization did not provide exhaustive responses to the queries regarding the IRO Constitution. In explaining their decision not to repatriate the children, the IRO informed the Department of Foreign Affairs that the Polish government's approach toward some of them demanded a different action. More specifically, the IRO claimed that when the children were in a temporary camp in Italy, the representatives from the Polish Embassy in Rome visited the camp and allegedly interrogated two sisters who initially expressed their interest in repatriation. Although the IRO did not elaborate on the incident, their statement purported that after the "intense interrogation", the two girls were extremely frightened and changed their mind about returning to Poland. Moreover, many other children, who were initially interested in repatriation, opted for resettlement after hearing about the girls' ordeal.<sup>78</sup> Another document also confirmed the same incident, noting that the two sisters were forcefully taken from the camp to a different location where they were questioned by the Polish officials. One of the girls was quoted saying: "I wasn't frightened before...but I am now. I have been in Siberia once. I do not

---

<sup>77</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol.1, International Refugee Organization –Transport of Polish Children from Tanganyika to Canada, September, 1949, LAC.

<sup>78</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol.1, File 6, A Note from P. Jacobsen, Assistant Director General for Repatriation and Resettlement, September 12, 1949, LAC.



want to go back".<sup>79</sup> Also, when the children were transferred to the Port of Bremerhaven in Germany, they were visited by representatives from the Polish Red Cross who demanded seeing the children without escort, which further convinced the IRO that the Polish government's actions were not well-intentioned.<sup>80</sup> Although the IRO agreed that its general policy was to repatriate unaccompanied children who were sixteen years of age and under, it claimed that in light of those circumstances the resettlement was a better option because the children were afraid of going back to their country.

To further justify its decision, the IRO reported that about one third of the children were in fact young adults, who were seventeen years of age and over, hence no longer considered unaccompanied minors under the IRO Constitution. They were also viewed as capable of making their own decision with regard to resettlement or repatriation. More importantly, many of those young adults had younger siblings in the group who were sixteen years of age and under. Given the general resentment of the children towards repatriation and the fact that most of the younger ones formed part of family groups, the IRO officials thought that the resettlement would be a better option. Furthermore, many of those younger children were twelve years of age and over, and according to the IRO they were old enough to express their wishes. Since they did not want to be repatriated either, the IRO thought that resettlement was the best solution in this case, justifying its decision on Provisional Order No.75.1 which provided that "the repatriation or resettlement of the child shall not be contrary to the wishes of the child". Claiming that it could

---

<sup>79</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol. 1, File 6, From Paul Martin, Minister of National Health and Welfare to Ms. M. Meagher, United Nations Division, September 14, 1949, LAC.

<sup>80</sup> Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 508.

not be involved in enforced repatriation, the IRO concluded that the use of Provisional Order was in accordance with its Constitution.<sup>81</sup>

Based on the IRO's evidence, the Canadian government agreed that the decision to resettle the Polish children was justified as it reflected the children's wishes and took into consideration the fact that many of the older and younger children were related; hence, splitting them would not be a humanitarian solution. Furthermore, the Canadian authorities presumed that the IRO's decision took into account the children's views and interests in the process. By contrast, the Communist regime's proprietary approach toward the children completely disregarded their wishes and deprived them of the choice to make independent decisions with regard to their repatriation or resettlement even though they may have been mature enough to do that. Furthermore, the Polish government's nationalistic attitude reflected the view that the country of nationality was fully entitled to unaccompanied minors if their parents or relatives were dead; hence, the Communist regime demanded the return of the whole group regardless of whether the children had parents living in Poland or not. Clearly, this investigation not only dispelled previous misconceptions regarding the motives of the IRO in sending the children to Canada but it also pointed to the Canadian government's good intentions toward the children.

The more troubling result of this investigation, however, was the discovery that about twenty three children in the group were not orphans, and they had one or both parents allegedly living in Poland. According to the IRO, sixteen of the children belonged to the older age group; hence, they were no longer considered children under the constitution. The organization further claimed that some of those young adults were also accompanied by older siblings. However, the

---

<sup>81</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol.1, File 6, A Note from P. Jacobsen, Assistant Director General for Repatriation and Resettlement, September 12, 1949, LAC.

IRO could not confirm how many of these children actually had living parents because it was still in the process of establishing their identity and making contact with them, which according to the organization was one of the most difficult tasks.<sup>82</sup> Although the Communist regime in Poland argued from the very beginning that many of these children had parents living in Poland, they never produced any conclusive evidence as to their existence, which suggests that they were probably fabricating their claims. Nevertheless, the IRO's discovery that some of the children were not bona fide orphans was particularly disturbing to the Canadian authorities because the children were admitted to Canada on the assumption that they were all orphans.

Clearly, the Canadian government realized the complexity of this case not only from the political, ideological, and legal perspectives but also because many of the children in the group were no longer considered unaccompanied children according to the IRO Constitution. Moreover, those young adults were also related to other children in the group, which further complicated making any decision with regard to their repatriation or resettlement. In fact, the Canadian authorities worried that if the Communist regime in Poland demanded the return of the children sixteen years of age and under, this could "precipitate controversy" in the country and create "heart-rending scenes" of siblings being separated from one another.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, the controversy surrounding these children also points to the fact that it was not always possible for the IRO or the receiving countries to strictly adhere to the principles of the constitution, particularly in cases like this one where the children's ages, wishes, and best interests had to be taken into consideration.<sup>84</sup> While the IRO and the Canadian authorities seemed to acknowledge

---

<sup>82</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol.1, File 8, Statement by the Director General of the IRO at the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, November 10, 1949, LAC.

<sup>83</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol.1, File 3, Draft Memorandum to Cabinet, September 23, 1949, LAC.

<sup>84</sup> Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 495.

the many complexities of this case and more importantly emphasized the children's wishes, the Polish authorities viewed things drastically differently.

Following the investigation, on October 13, 1949, the Cabinet agreed that a short note would be sent to the Polish Minister, informing him that the Canadian government authorized the admission of the Polish children "in good faith and in the belief that all were orphans and were properly within the mandate of the IRO". However, the note did not contain any information about the children who were not bona fide orphans and did not address any other contentious issues addressed in the letter from Mr. Minikiel. The Canadian government simply suggested that if the Polish authorities were of the opinion that certain children should not have been resettled to Canada, they should direct their claims to the IRO.<sup>85</sup> Refusing to do that, however, the Polish authorities raised the issue in the UN General Assembly on November 5, 1949, where they reiterated the same accusations and propaganda they spread earlier in the Polish press.

More specifically, in the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly on Refugees and Stateless Persons on November 4, 1949, a Polish delegation described the resettlement of the Polish children as "kidnapping on a universal scale" and referred to the living and working conditions of Polish DP men and women in Canada as "scandalous".<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, at the plenary session of the UN General Assembly on December 5, 1949, another Polish delegate reminded the case of the 100 Polish women, claiming that they were "brought for slave labour" and calling the IRO's operations "one of the most infamous chapters of slave exploitation in the twentieth century". Ironically, while accusing the Western powers of politicizing the issue of refugees and approaching it through the lens of the Cold War, the Polish delegation referred to

---

<sup>85</sup> Records of the Privy Council Office (RG2), Vol.2644, Series A-5-a, IRO, Immigration of Polish Children to Canada, November 13, 1949, LAC.

<sup>86</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol.1, File 8, Translation of Part of Statement by Mr. Altman, the Representative of Poland at the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, November 4, 1949, LAC.

refugees immigrating to the West as “traitors” and “spies”.<sup>87</sup> Again, the Polish delegates demonstrated more interest in reiterating the same accusations and propaganda than presenting any convincing evidence on the existence of the children’s parents. It is clear that the Polish authorities were using the case of the children to pursue their political agenda and had little interest in the welfare of the children.

To refute the Polish allegations, a Canadian delegate Senator Cairine Wilson argued that the Canadian government was guided strictly by humanitarian considerations when admitting the Polish children to Canada, stressing that “kindness” and “pity” were the motivating factors. Senator Wilson further stressed that the children were accepted based on “an impelling desire to help without thought of gain” and for “purely humanitarian reasons”.<sup>88</sup> Indeed, Senator Wilson’s claims were true in the sense that if it had not been for the Canadian government’s humanitarian motivations, these children and thousands of other post-war Polish DPs who refused to return to Poland for political reasons may have been repatriated against their will. Furthermore, without the humanitarian approach of the Catholic Church and the generosity of Canadians, these children’s resettlement to Canada would not have been possible.

While Senator Wilson’s statement certainly reflected the Canadian government’s concern for the well-being of the Polish children and affirmed its desire to promote the children’s best interests, it appears from the evidence here that her claims to humanitarianism were somewhat idealized.<sup>89</sup> As mentioned earlier in the paper, the decision to admit the Polish children into the country was partly motivated by the fact that such permission had already been given to one thousand Jewish orphans. Furthermore, the Polish children, like most DPs in the post-war period,

---

<sup>87</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol.1, File 8, *Słowo Powszechne*, December 5, 1949, LAC.

<sup>88</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol.1, File 8, From the Chairman of the Canadian Delegation to the United Nations Assembly to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, November 5, 1949, LAC.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

were subject to rigid selection criteria that often disqualified them from entering Canada based on health reasons.<sup>90</sup> For instance, in August 1949, the Canadian immigration authorities denied entry to about sixteen Polish children from Tengeru Camp as they found cases of tuberculosis, deafness, partial paralysis, and spinal curvature among them. Having been denied visas to enter Canada, many of these children were separated from their siblings who passed their health examinations and hence were allowed to immigrate.<sup>91</sup>

Furthermore, references to humanitarianism may have also reflected the Canadian government's concern about its image, threatened by the Communist regime's distorted allegations and propaganda. This concern may also partly explain why the Canadian authorities refrained from engaging in the Cold War rhetoric with the Polish authorities and stressed cooperation in reuniting the children with their parents. For instance, although Senator Wilson criticized the Polish allegations as "irresponsible" and "absurd", she refrained from making any other comments that could anger the Polish delegation. When referring to the Polish children's suffering during the war, Senator Wilson never made any anti-Soviet comments and only mentioned that these children were part of the original group of refugees who left the Soviet Union in 1941, probably to counter the Polish delegate's claim that these children were displaced due to the German invasion of Poland.

The Canadian government's willingness to cooperate with the Communist regime was further demonstrated in its compliance to the Communist regime's demands outlined in a note

---

<sup>90</sup> Salomon, *Refugees in the Cold War*, 193.

<sup>91</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2) Vol.1, File 6, From Paul Martin, Minister of National Health and Welfare to Ms. M. Meagher, United Nations Division, September 14, 1949, LAC.

handed to the chargé d'affaires in Warsaw on December 14, 1949.<sup>92</sup> For instance, the Canadian government was willing to provide the Polish Legation in Ottawa with a list of children's names less than eighteen and expressed its willingness to obtain their addresses if necessary. Moreover, the Canadian government also offered its "good offices" where representatives of the Polish Legation in Ottawa could interview the children, adding that these interviews would be conducted in "the presence of any other persons who had an interest in the welfare of a particular child". The Canadian authorities also agreed to assist the Communist regime in establishing contact between the children and their parents if it was proven that the latter were indeed living in Poland and lastly to discuss the means of the children's repatriation to Poland. Indeed, the Canadian government agreed to the Polish demands partly because it feared that the Polish government would bring this issue in the Economic and Social Council on February 7, 1950. Thus, the Canadian authorities thought it would be "necessary to present a strong and convincing argument in support of their action".<sup>93</sup>

However, it would be too simplistic to assume that the concern about its reputation was the only reason why the Canadian government complied with the Communist regime's demands. The decision to cooperate with the Polish authorities also stemmed from the concern for the well-being of the children and a desire to reunite them with their parents. Also, in light of the previous conflicts with the Polish authorities, the Canadian government probably wanted to prevent the escalation of yet another dispute. Furthermore, willingness to meet the Polish demands was also strategically-motivated. By meeting all of the Polish demands, the Canadian

---

<sup>92</sup> Since the UN General Assembly decided that the IRO had lost their control over these children once they landed in Canada, and it was impossible to retransfer the responsibility to the organization, the controversy over the children continued for the next few months.

<sup>93</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol.1, File 8, Memorandum for the Prime Minister, December 29, 1949, LAC.

government hoped the Communist regime would finally drop the case as it would deprive them of the reasons to argue and stir propaganda.<sup>94</sup>

This last prediction was indeed confirmed when the Canadian authorities received a note from the Polish authorities on July 24, 1950 which ignored the suggested offers and reiterated the same allegations voiced in the Polish press and the UN General Assembly. More specifically, in their note, the Polish authorities stressed again that Canada should “recompense the wrong done to the children, their families, and the Polish Nation”, adding that the Canadian government was not trying to reach an agreement on this and other issues. Although the note did not specify what those other issues were, it most likely referred to the dispute over the 100 Polish DP women and the unresolved row over Poland’s national treasures. While devoting much attention to those issues, the Polish authorities did not request the list of children’s names nor did they act upon the Canadian government’s other offers.<sup>95</sup>

Given the Polish authorities’ lack of cooperation and willingness to ascertain the facts, the Canadian authorities decided not to reply to their note, concluding that the former were more interested in pursuing propaganda than ensuring the children’s best interest. Indeed, the UN General Assembly certainly supported such viewpoint manifested in its decision to allow the Polish children to remain in Canada. It did, however, pass a new policy stating that no consideration would be given to a resettlement scheme of unaccompanied children unless approval from the IRO headquarters in Geneva was first obtained.<sup>96</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol.1, File 8, Memorandum for the Prime Minister, December 29, 1949, LAC.

<sup>95</sup> Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2), Vol.1, File 8, Note of July 24, 1950, concerning the Polish children brought to Canada from East Africa under the auspices of the IRO, U.N. DIV. File Copy, August 22, 1950, LAC.

<sup>96</sup> Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization*, 509.



## Conclusion

The discussion of the Polish children's resettlement to Canada in the UN General Assembly certainly illustrated the complexity of this case. The confluence of Cold War international relations and politics, the involvement of the Catholic Church, and the conflicting opinions of the Western and Eastern powers on international policy reveal how the decisions regarding these children's resettlement to this country were affected by geopolitical, religious, and ideological factors. However, the controversy surrounding the Polish children also provides insight into the beginning of international arrangements established to cope with the problem of unaccompanied minors; it shows that the national approach to dealing with children's displacement was being replaced with the notion that the children's own interests should be taken into account when decisions were made regarding their repatriation or resettlement. The Canadian authorities certainly embraced the latter approach when confronted with the problem of the Polish children. They not only supported the IRO's opinion of voluntary repatriation that took into account the Polish children's wishes and best interests, but they refused to comply with the Communists' demands to return the whole group to Poland. Although their decision was not strictly guided by the concern for the children, it nevertheless reflected a more humanitarian approach toward them. Indeed, other factors such as Cold War relations, previous diplomatic rows with Poland, and Canada's increased concern for its international image also played a role in how the Canadian authorities responded to this problem. When confronted with virulent propaganda and accusations in the Polish press and in the UN General Assembly, the Canadian government refrained from provocative rhetoric and approached the issue from a less ideological perspective, while making an effort to cooperate with the Polish authorities.

By contrast, the Communist authorities in Warsaw subordinated the wishes and best interests of the Polish children to pursuing their political agenda as they viewed this dispute strictly through the lens of the Cold War and previous incidents involving the Canadian government. The Polish authorities' lack of genuine concern for the children was evident in their rejection of the Canadian government's offers and in the insistence to repatriate the whole group of children to Poland regardless of their age limit and wishes. Clearly, the Communists were more interested in spreading false accusations and pursuing anti-capitalist propaganda in the Polish press and in the UN General Assembly than asserting the facts, by providing the Canadian government with convincing evidence as to the existence of the children's parents and lawful guardians in Poland.

In addition to shedding light on the issue of post-war international policy regarding unaccompanied minors, the case of the Polish children also draws attention to the lesser known but significant aspects of Canadian immigration history, foreign policy, as well as religious organizations dedicated to the cause of DPs after the Second World War. Clearly, these and other interesting aspects of the Polish children's experience are an absolute gold mine for researches, and this paper addressed only a small fraction of them. Thus, in order to accurately capture the Polish children's experience, there is a need to include their viewpoints of this conflict. The former children's accounts could provide valuable insight into how they perceived the situation and whether their perspectives were indeed taken into consideration. Further research on this topic should also include more inquiry into the role of the Catholic Church in this dispute. Although this paper discussed the church authorities' commitment to the Polish children's resettlement, it did not address their impact on the IRO's decision to resettle the children to Canada nor did it discuss their influence on the Canadian government's response to this conflict.

The intense discussions on the Polish children during the late 1940s illustrate the complexity of unaccompanied children's situation in general. Ostensibly, there are less hardened ideological views in today's post-Cold War context and the lack of agreement on international policy regarding unaccompanied children is not as pronounced today as it was during the Cold War; yet, there is still no convention dealing specifically with unaccompanied children. The complicated nature of children in a forced migration context is still a problem that has not been solved.

## Bibliography

### Archival Sources

#### A. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

*Department of External Affairs (RG25-G-2)*

Vol.1, File 3, International Refugee Organization – Transport of Polish Children from Tanganyika to Canada, The Chargé D’Affaires at the Canadian Embassy in Warsaw to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, September 16, 1949.

Vol. 1, File 3, Draft Memorandum to Cabinet, September 23, 1949.

Vol. 1, File 5, From A.D.P. Heeney, Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to Hector Allard, Chief of Mission, International Refugee Organization in Ottawa, October 6, 1949.

Vol.1, File 6, A Note from P. Jacobsen, Assistant Director General for Repatriation and Resettlement, September 12, 1949.

Vol. 1, File 6, From Paul Martin, Minister of National Health and Welfare to Ms. M. Meagher, United Nations Division, September 14, 1949.

Vol. 1, File 6, From Paul Martin, Minister of National Health and Welfare to Ms. M. Meagher, United Nations Division, September 14, 1949.

Vol. 1, File 7, Newspaper clippings.

Vol.1, File 8, Statement by the Director General of the IRO at the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, November 10, 1949.

Vol. 1, File 8, Translation of Part of Statement by Mr. Altman, the Representative of Poland at the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, November 4, 1949.

Vol. 1, File 8, *Słowo Powszechne*, December 5, 1949.

Vol. 1, File 8, From the Chairman of the Canadian Delegation to the United Nations Assembly to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, November 5, 1949.

Vol. 1, File 8, Memorandum for the Prime Minister, December 29, 1949.

Vol. 1, File 8, From the Polish Minister in Ottawa Jan Minikiel to the Secretary of State for External Affairs Lester B. Pearson, September 10, 1949, LAC.

*Immigration Branch (RG76)*

Vol. 660, File B74072, Admission of Polish Orphan Children from Europe, February 11, 1948.

Vol. 660, File B74072, *The Prairie Messenger*, April 22, 1948.

*Records of the Privy Council Office (RG2)*

Vol. 2644, Series A-5-a, Immigration of Polish Children to Canada, Cabinet Conclusions, October 13, 1949.

Vol. 2644, Series A-5-a, IRO, Immigration of Polish Children to Canada, November 13, 1949.

**B. Secondary Sources**

Anders, Władysław. *Bez ostatniego rozdziału: wspomnienia z lat 1939-1946 (Without a Final Chapter: War Memoirs from 1939-1946)*. Warsaw, Poland: Bellona, 1960.

Allbrook, Maryon, and Helen Cattalini, *The General Langfitt Story: Polish Refugees Recount Their Experiences of Exile, Dispersal, and Resettlement*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1995.

Arat-Koç, Sedef. "From 'Mothers of the Nation' to Migrant Workers." In *Not One of the Family: Foreign Domestic Workers in Canada*, ed. Abigail B. Bakan and Daiva K. Stasiulis. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006.

Beaupré-Stankiewicz, Irena, Danuta Waszczuk-Kamieniecka, and Jadwiga Lewicka-Howells, (editors), *Isfahan: City of Polish Children*. Sussex, United Kingdom: Caldra House, Ltd., 1989.

Davies, Norman. *God's Playground: a History of Poland Volume II, 1795 to the Present*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981.

Dirks, Gerald. *Canada's Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1977.

Goddard, John. "Testament in the Jungle: from the Heart of Africa to Mississauga and Back," *Toronto Star*, April 29, 2006, B4.

Gross, Jan and Irena Grudzińska-Gross. *War through Children's Eyes*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1981.

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

Hort, Weronika. *Tulacze dzieci (Exiled Children)*. Warsaw, Poland: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1948.

Jackson, Carlton, and Diane Samuels. *Kindertransport*. London: Nick Hern Books Limited, 1995.

Jacewicz, Alfons. *Santa Rosa. Osiedle polskie w Meksyku (Santa Rosa. Polish Settlement in Mexico)*. London, England: Katolicki Ośrodek Wydawnictwa "Veritas", 1965.

Jolluck, Katherine R. *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union during World War II*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002.

Kelly, Ninette, and Michael Trebilcock. *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.

Królikowski, Łucjan. *Stolen Childhood: A Saga of Polish War Children*. Buffalo, New York: Father Justin Rosary Hour, 1983.

Manterys, Adam (editor). *New Zealand's First Refugees: Pahiatua's Polish Children*. Wellington, New Zealand: Polish Children's Reunion Committee, 2004.

Melakopides, Costas. *Pragmatic Idealism: Canadian Foreign Policy 1945-1995*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998.

Olsen, Kåre. "Under the Care of Lebensborn: Norwegian War Children and Their Mothers." In *Children of World War II: The Hidden Enemy Legacy*, edited by Kjersti Ericksson and Eva Simonsen. Oxford: Berg, 2005.

Piotrowski, Tadeusz. *The Polish Deportees of World War II: Recollections of Removal to the Soviet Union*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc., Publishers, 2004.

Salomon, Kim. *Refugees in the Cold War: toward a New International Refugee Regime in the Early Postwar Era*. Lund, Sweden: Lund University Press, 1991.

Sangster, Joan. "The Polish 'Dionnes': Gender, Ethnicity, and Immigrant Workers in Post-Second World War Canada," *The Canadian Historical Review* 88 (2007): 469-500.

Skwarko, Krystyna. *The Invited*. Wellington, New Zealand: Millwood Press, 1974.

Swoger, Gordon. *The Strange Odyssey of Poland's National Treasures, 1939-1961*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.

Taylor, Lynn. *Polish Orphans of Tengeru - The Dramatic Story of Their Long Journey to Canada 1941-49*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2009.

Thornton, Martin. *The Domestic and International Dimensions of the Resettlement of Polish Ex-Servicemen in Canada, 1943-1948*. Queenston, Ontario: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000.

Whitaker, Reg. *Double Standard: The Secret History of Canadian Immigration*. Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys Publishers, 1987.