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## RELIEF PROVIDED BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO ACADEMIC COMMUNITY OF SOVIET UKRAINE DURING THE FAMINE OF 1921-23\*

**Abstract.** International organizations, such as the American Relief Administration (ARA), the Joint, the Nansen Mission, etc., played an important role in overcoming the famine of 1921-23. A separate area of relief was the support of students and professors, who were cared for by the European Student Relief and the American Section of the European Student Relief. Help was provided through the mediation of the Nansen Mission and the ARA, and the latter played a key role because of its extensive logistical network and the largest financial resources. In the Ukrainian SSR, that organization assisted the academic communities of Odesa, Kharkiv, Kyiv, and Ekaterinoslav, where the majority of higher education institutions were located. The organizations established canteens for students, and in Odesa, there was also a separate canteen for professors. At the same time, the assistance, which lasted until 1925, was not limited to food, clothing, and medical care, but it was much broader, under the specifics of the intellectual stratum: provision of stationery, teaching aids, sports equipment, laboratory instruments and equipment, sending of scientific literature and subscribing to periodicals, establishing contacts with foreign colleagues and publishing the research works in European journals.

**Keywords:** famine of 1921-23; international organizations; relief; European Student Relief; students; professors

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POMOC ORGANIZACJI MIĘDZYNARODOWYCH  
SPOŁECZNOŚCI AKADEMICKIEJ SOWIECKIEJ UKRAINY  
W OKRESIE GŁODU 1921-23

**Abstrakt.** W przezwyciężaniu klęski głodu lat 1921-23 ważną rolę odegrały organizacje międzynarodowe: American Relief Administration (ARA), Joint, Misja Nansena itp. Odrębnym kierunkiem pomocy było wsparcie uczniów i nauczycieli, którymi opiekowały się European Student Relief oraz Amerykańska Sekcja European Student Relief. Pomocy udzielano za pośrednictwem Misji Nansena i ARA, przy czym ARA odegrała tu kluczową rolę, gdyż posiadała rozbudowaną sieć logistyczną i największe możliwości finansowe. W Ukraińskiej SRR organizacja ta pomagała społeczności akademickiej Odesy, Charkowa, Kijowa i Jekaterynosławia, gdzie znajdowała się większość szkół wyższych. Organizacje tworzyły stołówki dla studentów, a w Odessie istniała także osobna stołówka dla profesorów. Jednocześnie pomoc, która trwała do 1925 r., nie ograniczała się do żywności, odzieży i opieki medycznej, ale obejmowała znacznie szerszy zakres, zgodnie ze specyfiką warstwy intelektualnej: dostarczanie artykułów piśmienniczych, pomocy dydaktycznych i sprzętu sportowego, wyposażenie laboratoriów w narzędzia i urządzenia, przysyłanie literatury naukowej i prenumeraty czasopism, nawiązywanie kontaktów z kolegami z zagranicy i publikowanie prac naukowych w czasopismach europejskich.

**Słowa kluczowe:** głód 1921-23; organizacje międzynarodowe; pomoc; europejska pomoc studencka; studenci; nauczyciele

International charitable organizations such as the American Relief Administration (ARA), the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the Nansen Mission, and many others played a significant role in overcoming the famine of 1921-23 and its subsequent consequences in the following years. Except for a few works by the famous Ukrainian historian Olha Movchan, Ukrainian historical science began to address the issue of international organizations' participation only at the beginning of the 21st century. On the other hand, despite certain achievements in the study of this issue, many aspects are still unstudied or only partially studied. One such gap is foreign assistance to the academic community of Ukraine's leading academic centers: Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, and Ekaterinoslav.

The assistance provided by international organizations to professors and students during the famine of 1921-23 is practically not covered in historiography. We can name only a few works by American-British, Russian, and Ukrainian historians. The first work to present some aspects of the issue under study is Ruth Rouse's book *Rebuilding Europe. The Student Chapter in Post-War Reconstruction*, in which we find the chapter "Why Save Russian

Students?”<sup>1</sup> Two years later, the first work devoted to the activities of the ARA on Soviet territory, authored by Harold H. Fisher, a contemporary of the events and official historian of the organization (he headed the Historical Department of the ARA), appeared, where several pages discussed student relief through the ARA network.<sup>2</sup>

Only at the beginning of the 21st century, special publications covering certain aspects of the European Student Relief (ESR) activities began to appear. In 2009, a Russian researcher, Aliya I. Khairullina, published an article focused on the intelligentsia of Kazan,<sup>3</sup> and in 2012, Tymur Mykhailovskiy wrote a small publication about international assistance to the students of Odesa in 1922-23.<sup>4</sup> The latter material was included in a joint monograph with Oleksandr Trygub.<sup>5</sup> General trends in the ESR's activity are presented in the articles by Benjamin L. Hartley<sup>6</sup> and Elisabeth Piller.<sup>7</sup>

In general, it can be stated that in most contemporary studies, even the fact of the existence of the ESR is hardly mentioned, let alone analyzing its activities. Since the issue has not been comprehensively covered on the all-Ukrainian background, this is exactly what prompted the author to address the specified problem.

During 1922-25, the main funder of Ukrainian academic community (students and professors) was the well-known student organization European Student Relief and its American satellite – The American Section of the ESR. The ESR started in August 1920 as part of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). The central office was located in Geneva (Switzerland). It had its own pre-printed form and seal. In the center of the round-

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth Rouse, *Rebuilding Europe. The Student Chapter in Post-War Reconstruction* (London: Student Christian Movement, 1925), 158-73.

<sup>2</sup> Harold H. Fisher, *Famine in Soviet Russia, 1919-1923: The Operations of the American Relief Administration* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), 464-66.

<sup>3</sup> Aliya Khairullina, ““European Student Relief” i kazanskoe studenchestvo 1922-1923 gg.,” *Izvestiia Altaiskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 4 (64), no. 4 (2009): 251-54.

<sup>4</sup> Tymur Mykhailovskiy, “Mizhnarodna dopomoha studentstvu Odesy (1922-1923 rr.),” in *Pivdenna Ukraina v mizhnarodnykh vidnosynakh: istoriia ta suchasnist*, ed. Oleksandr Trygub (Mykolaiv: Ilion, 2012), 30-34.

<sup>5</sup> Oleksandr Trygub, and Tymur Mykhailovskiy, *Mizhnarodni humanitarni orhanizatsii na Pivdni Ukrainy u 20-kh rr. XX st.* (Mykolaiv: Ilion, 2020), 154-57, 198-200.

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin L. Hartley, “Saving Students: European Student Relief in the Aftermath of World War I,” *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 42, no. 4 (2018): 295-315.

<sup>7</sup> Elisabeth Piller, “Atlantic Ocean, 1923: European Student Relief, Humanitarianism, and Post-World War I Reconciliation,” in *Online Atlas on the History of Humanitarianism and Human Rights*, ed. Fabian Klose, Marc Palen, Johannes Paulmann, and Andrew Thompson, 2019, <https://hhr-atlas.ieg-mainz.de/articles/piller-atlantic-ocean>.

shaped seal, there was an image of the two hemispheres, linked by a ribbon with the Latin motto UT OMNES UNUM SINT! – That they may be one! – and the inscription “European Student Relief.”<sup>8</sup>

The appearance of the ESR in Russia, and later in Ukraine, became possible after the Agreement on Cooperation between the Government of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (RSFSR) and the ARA was signed on August 20, 1921, and exactly one week later, on August 27, a similar document was signed with Dr. Fridtjof Nansen. The text of the latter, as well as the addendum and appendix, contained provisions that allowed foreign charitable organizations, including those providing direct targeted assistance to students, to participate in sending and distributing food on the territory of Russia.<sup>9</sup>

The idea of arranging the feeding of students and professors of Soviet universities arose at the end of 1921. It was first voiced by the famous polar explorer and High Commissioner for Relief in Russia, Dr. Nansen. In December 1921, he made a special appeal to the ESR, requiring help on behalf of the starving students of Russia.

The first to respond to the call was the ARA, which decided to establish the American Section of the ESR, entrusted to a well-known YMCA figure, the ARA Student Relief employee Ethan Theodore Colton. The latter arrived in Moscow at the beginning of January 1922 to negotiate with the Bolsheviks on that matter. The Bolshevik government opposed the proposed arrangement of the nutrition under the complete control of the ARA, and as a result, it became possible to reach a common language only at the end of March (and at the time the famine was at its worst!), when the agreement on student nutrition was signed.<sup>10</sup> Spurgeon M. Keeny was appointed curator and Head of the American Section of the ESR from the ARA.

After Colton, in April 1922, the Head of the ESR, Donald Grant, appeared in Moscow. He was supposed to organize the so-called International Section of the ESR.<sup>11</sup> The work of the latter was planned as part of the multidimensional Nansen Mission. In April-May 1922 (unfortunately, the date of signing is not indicated on the copies of this document in the archive), John Gorvin, the Representative of Dr. Nansen in Moscow, the Representative for Russia from the ESR Donald Grant, as well as the Authorized Rep-

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<sup>8</sup> Khairullina, ““European Student Relief”,” 251.

<sup>9</sup> Khairullina, 251; SAOR, fonds P-453, list 1, file 2, p. 36.

<sup>10</sup> Spurgeon M. Keeny, “The First Six Months of Student Feeding,” *American Relief Administration Bulletin*, series 2, no. 33 (February 1923): 21.

<sup>11</sup> Rouse, *Rebuilding Europe*, 221.

representative for the Governments of the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR to all foreign organizations that provided support to famine victims, Aleksandr V. Eiduk,<sup>12</sup> signed a tripartite addendum to the Chicherin-Nansen Agreement dated August 27, 1921, entitled Agreement Regarding Aid to Students in Russia, the effect of which extended to Ukraine as well.<sup>13</sup>

According to the agreement, food aid was granted in the form of meals, which were provided to students free of charge in canteens managed by the Nansen Mission. The cities and educational institutions whose students were eligible to get meals were determined by the Moscow office of the Nansen Mission and the Authorized Representative for all foreign organizations.

From the very beginning of its functioning at the end of 1921 in Russia and Ukraine, the ESR maintained contact with both the ARA and the Nansen Mission. According to Hartley, “over the next several years, however, their work with the ARA would be much more significant as Nansen’s High Commission (sometimes also called the International Committee for Russian Relief) was limited in its funding and contributed perhaps only one-tenth of the aid that the ARA did.”<sup>14</sup>

In each higher educational institution, special committees were established, which determined who was “worthy” to receive meals. Each committee consisted of 6 people: representatives of the Nansen Mission and the Bolshevik government, and four students (two were elected by the student cooperative and two by the Nansen Mission). The Bolsheviks reserved the right to stop “academic” assistance at any time without any explanation.<sup>15</sup> Aid to starving students was provided by students and professors from England, France, Switzerland, Sweden, Holland, the United States of America, Canada, Japan, and other countries.

Having reached agreements, the Americans immediately began work, starting on April 20, 1922, with Moscow and Petrograd. After some time, the work started in Kazan, and after a few weeks Odesa, Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Ekaterinoslav joined the process.

The academic communities of Kharkiv and Odesa were the first to get relief, as evidenced by the telegram of Eiduk, Authorized Representative for

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<sup>12</sup> Eiduk Aleksandr Vladimirovich (1886-1938) was a Soviet Cheka operative of Latvian ethnicity. During the Famine 1921-23, he cooperated with foreign organizations that provided support to Russian famine victims and was a Soviet representative to the American Relief Administration.

<sup>13</sup> SAOR, fonds P-453, list 1, file 2, p. 86.

<sup>14</sup> Hartley, “Saving Students,” 307-8.

<sup>15</sup> SAOR, fonds P-453, list 1, file 2, p. 85.

the Governments of the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR to all foreign organizations that provided support to famine victims, dated May 8, 1922, where he reported that he “has granted permission to the ARA to start feeding students in Odesa and Kharkiv in the number of up to 1000 people or more.” And already on May 18, the Odesa newspaper *Izvestiya* enthusiastically reported that ARA

will open canteens for students of higher educational institutions of Odesa in the coming days. These canteens will serve up to 2000 students. Funds for student meals are donated by the American Student Friendship Foundation. The canteens are intended for students of the Medical Academy, OPI [Odesa Polytechnic Institute], INARHOSP [Institute of National Economy], INO [Institute of National Education], Agricultural Institute, Institute of Fine Arts, and Chemical-Pharmaceutical Institute.<sup>16</sup>

The first canteens in Odesa were opened on May 30, 1922, where 2691 people were given meals. In the first canteen, the students of the Medical Academy, Chemical-Pharmaceutical Institute, Institute of Fine Arts, and INARHOSP had their meals; the second was for OPI, Agricultural Institute, INO, and Robfak.<sup>17</sup> However, in the second half of 1922, the number of those receiving meals in Odesa decreased somewhat to 1,371 students (as of October 15, 1922).<sup>18</sup>

Keeny left an interesting comment in his report on the organization of meals for Odesa students:

It was our plan to open next at Kharkov, the capital of the Ukraine; but the sudden and appalling famine which overwhelmed Odessa in the spring caused the Government at Moscow to urge the claims of that city instead... Two weeks later [after May 12 – O.T.] we started kitchens which fed 1000. Because of the extreme need, students from all courses were accepted which number amounted later to 2000. Odessa, which had in its six principal institutions no more than 7000 students as compared with Petrograd’s more than 20000, thus received help much more liberally than Petrograd and Moscow. But there was no comparison as to the relative need; in point of view of timeliness and significance to the intellectual life of the city, the feeding at Odessa ranks with that in Kazan as the

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<sup>16</sup> Mykhailovskyi, “Mizhnarodna dopomoha,” 32. All translations by the author.

<sup>17</sup> Trygub and Mykhailovskyi, *Mizhnarodni humanitarni orhanizatsii*, 156.

<sup>18</sup> TsDAVO, fonds 261, list 1, file 266, p. 25-26, 42.

most useful we have done in Russia [the term “Russia” should stand for the territory of the USSR – O.T.].<sup>19</sup>

Thus, in contrast to Russian academic centers, in Odesa, the AS-ESR managed to include almost the entire student body, which numbered about 7000 people.

At the same time, on the initiative of individual groups of citizens and philanthropists, assistance was provided to doctors, medical students, medical staff, professors, and performing arts workers through the ARA. Consequently, in April 1922, American medical organizations sent 350 food parcels to the medical community. An American woman named Shuman sent a shipment of food for Odesa professoriate, and New York theatrical producer Morris Gest collected 250 food parcels for Odesa stage workers.<sup>20</sup>

The work of the canteens was carried out six days a week. The food ration was quite diverse for the time: rice, millet, panicum, legumes, potatoes, meat, hot cocoa, etc. Some of the food was imported to the starving region from abroad, the rest was bought with the organization’s money at the local market. The calorie content of student meals, which usually consisted of two dishes, averaged 1,501-1,519 calories. They contained, for example, rice or millet porridge with meat and hot cocoa, vegetable or bean soup with panicum pudding and tea, etc.

After the lentil soup, the “magical aroma of hot cocoa,” the snow-white fluffy bun made of corn flour seemed like “a forgotten childhood, a birthday.” If we compare the menu with the description of the “diet” of starving residents of the region – such as acorns, quinoa, millet, chaff, dried grass, leaves, straw, bark, rosehip – the vital need for students to get meals in the ESR canteens becomes obvious.

The maintenance of the canteens was the responsibility of the students themselves, who were supposed to deal with the issues of the staff, ongoing repair of the premises, etc. It was not uncommon for students to be involved in working in the canteens as laborers.<sup>21</sup>

Incidentally, in every cafeteria under the aegis of the ESR, students and professors were greeted by a poster:

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<sup>19</sup> Keeny, “The First Six Months,” 23.

<sup>20</sup> “Amerikanskaya pomoshch na Ukraine,” *Izvestiya (Odesa’s Newspaper)*, April 26, 1922.

<sup>21</sup> Trygub and Mykhailovskyi, *Mizhnarodni humanitarni orhanizatsii*, 157.

European Student Relief unites the aspirations of students of educational institutions and universities of thirty-three different countries in the United States of North America, South America, Western Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia in providing assistance to needy colleagues in Europe, including in Russia.

The opportunity to establish student canteens was given by American students, both Christians and Jews, as well as those who do not practice a religion.

In this way, they want to express their sincere sympathy and good wishes to their colleagues, as well as to emphasize the sense of friendship that unites student youth all over the world.<sup>22</sup>

At the beginning of July 1922, a canteen was established for Ekaterinoslav students' community, which consisted of 750 people. They represented the two main higher educational institutions of the city – the Mining Institute and the Medical Institute.<sup>23</sup>

Fisher states that the AS-ESR supported the intellectual elite of Kyiv, Odesa, and Ekaterinoslav.<sup>24</sup> Instead, according to archival documents, as of September 1, 1922, the students and professoriate of Kharkiv, Odesa, and Ekaterinoslav (a total of about 2,500 people were fed) were taken care of by the ESR, and the American Section provided food for the academic community of Kyiv.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, documents of 1923 confirm Fisher's information that only Kharkiv was under the care of the ESR, while Kyiv, Odesa, and Ekaterinoslav were supported by the American Section. There are only two possible answers to this question: changes in provision during 1922-23, or the banal bureaucratic confusion of Soviet officials (which, by the way, was not uncommon for that time).

February and March of 1923 saw the peak of the support of students and professors of the USSR – 31,450 people got meals every day.<sup>26</sup> On March 3, 1923, Authorized Representative Yulian Bashkovich<sup>27</sup> received a telegram, which stated that since March, the number of students getting meals in Kyiv and Odesa had increased by 500 people in each city, which corresponded to the agreements with Mr. Keeny, the Head of Student Relief at the ARA.<sup>28</sup> Accord-

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<sup>22</sup> Trygub and Mykhailovskyi, 302.

<sup>23</sup> Keeny, "The First Six Months," 23-24.

<sup>24</sup> Fisher, *Famine in Soviet Russia*, 466.

<sup>25</sup> TsDAVO, fonds 258, list 1, file 4, p. 633.

<sup>26</sup> Rouse, *Rebuilding Europe*, 221.

<sup>27</sup> Bashkovich Yulian Semenovich (Boshkovich Diula) (1891-1938) was a Soviet statesman, Bolshevik party and military figure of Hungarian ethnicity. In 1922-23, he was an Authorized Representative of the Ukrainian SSR to the foreign organizations that provided relief to famine victims.

<sup>28</sup> TsDAVO, fonds 261, list 1, file 60, p. 194.



ing to Karl Lander's<sup>29</sup> telegram to Authorized Representative Bashkovich, as of April 1, 1923, 9,000 people got meals in Ukrainian "academic" cities, namely: the ESR – 3,000, the AS-ESR – 6,000 people<sup>30</sup>. Thus, as of May 1, 1923, there were 3 ARA student canteens in Odesa, where 2,731 students could eat.<sup>31</sup>

A small report by Oliver Frederiksen, the Head of the AS-ESR in the Ukrainian SSR, provides us with rather detailed information on the issue of support for the professoriate. In particular, he notes that the issue of separate support for professors in Kyiv, Odesa, and Ekaterinoslav was resolved only in January 1923 (prior to that, professors and their family members received mainly targeted assistance through the ARA). During the winter and spring of 1923 in Kyiv, 100 professors got meals in student canteens with the support of the AS-ESR (since March, the number of supported had decreased to 60 people). In general, according to the organization's calculations, about 300 professors, or 500 people together with their family members, needed assistance in Kyiv.

In Odesa, direct aid to professors and lecturers during the second wave of famine was established in March 1923. It was concentrated in the House of Scientists, where a canteen for professors was located. During April and June, 168 professors received meals, and from July – up to 400. At the same time, Frederiksen believed that the number of meals should have been increased to 750.<sup>32</sup>

Since the middle of 1923, the system of donor food for teachers had undergone changes. In order to be eligible for meals, it was necessary to go through a selection committee, which consisted of representatives of each of the educational institution, the local authorities, and the AS-ESR. Moreover, the latter was the chairman of the commission having a casting vote. Food was provided mainly by donor assistance, but a symbolic fee for food coupons was introduced. Each professor recommended by the commission received two coupons: one for himself, one for a family member (wife, sister, brother, etc.), or for two children.

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<sup>29</sup> Lander Karl Ivanovich (Kārlis Landers) (1883-1937) was a Latvian Bolshevik revolutionary, Soviet statesman, official of the Soviet state security of the Cheka and OGPU, as well as a historian and journalist. In 1922-23, he was an Authorized Representative of the Soviet government RSFSR to the foreign organizations to relief the starving in Russia.

<sup>30</sup> TsDAVO, fonds 261, list 1, file 61, p. 180.

<sup>31</sup> TsDAVO, fonds 261, list 1, file 266, p. 218.

<sup>32</sup> JDC Archive, Letter from O. J. Fredericksen to Feeding of Professors in the Ukraine, September 26, 1923, AR192132/4/30/3/492/355777.

From May to September, the AS-ESR also provided support with rations to the Professors' Rest House, where more than 150 professors of Odesa and nearby gubernias underwent treatment and rehabilitation.

In Ekaterinoslav, the aid was more moderate and amounted to 30 meals for professors of local universities, who ate together with students in canteens (as in Kyiv, since only Odesa had a separate canteen for professors). Starting in September 1923, it was proposed to increase the number of meals to 100.

In general, according to the Head of the AS-ESR, it would have been desirable to bring the total number of meals, starting from October and until the summer of 1924 (within 8 months) to 1,350 (Odesa – 750, Kyiv – 500, Ekaterinoslav – 100), for a total of \$21,600. At the same time, it was proposed to use the additional funds for direct money transfers through the state bank, for subsidies for clothing, or to help professors with such self-help activities as publishing books, etc.<sup>33</sup>

Ruth Rouse, a contemporary of the events and a participant in assistance from the ESR, noted the high moral qualities of Ukrainian students and their mutual assistance in the fight against disaster:

In Ekaterinoslav, when first offered assistance, the students of the Mining Institute said, "Our students are in need, but we are not dying in the streets as we were several months ago. If you know of cities where students suffer more than here, reduce the gift to us and give it to them." At Kharkov, since relief funds would not permit the feeding of all really needy students, four hundred paired off in twos to share one meal a day.

Certain foreign relief agencies have by preference employed students as relief workers, finding amongst them a high standard of honesty and devotion. The enormous health investigation and preventive medical work done with the help of the E.S.R. for students in the universities, notably in the magnificent student-run clinics in Kharkov and Kiev, could never have been done apart from many hours of work each week given freely by the advanced medical students and doctors.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to food, the organizations provided students and professors with clothes, medicines, teaching aids, and sports equipment for physical training, laboratory instruments and equipment, as well as sent films about the achievements of Western medicine to universities, helped Soviet scientists establish contacts with foreign colleagues, and published their works abroad.

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<sup>33</sup> JDC Archive, Letter from O. J. Fredericksen.

<sup>34</sup> Rouse, *Rebuilding Europe*, 167.

On May 19-26, 1923, a meeting of the European Student Relief Committee was held, where a decision was made to continue assistance to the academic community of Soviet universities in the second half of 1923 until 1924. After the official winding down of the operations of the ARA (June 15, 1923), within which the ESR and the AS-ESR were actively functioning, the latter took the initiative to continue its work in the future, as a result of which the Ukrainian SSR signed a separate agreement with the ESR.<sup>35</sup>

In September 1923, an unofficial agreement was concluded with the People's Commissariat and the Executive Committee of Proletarian Students that the expenses for transport within the city limits and the maintenance of canteens would be partially covered by student deductions. The American Section of the ESR then "promised to introduce the maximum labor-based principle in the sense of maintaining the canteen by the students themselves. For which the students will be paid by the organization with items of general use (clothes, shoes, etc.)."<sup>36</sup>

During the fall of 1923, the American Section of the ESR continued to maintain 3 canteens in Odesa, which in October served 1,335 students and 450 professors of 9 Odesa universities, getting 42,825 meals per month, and during November, it served 1,448 students and 386 professors, who were given 37,384 and 11,849 meals, respectively. In Ekaterinoslav, there was one canteen, which in October served 875 students and 30 professors of 3 universities, and in November, 1,120 students and 30 professors were fed there, and received 31,017 and 600 meals, respectively.<sup>37</sup> The nutritional value of the lunch was 1,200 calories.<sup>38</sup>

In Kharkiv, the assistance was provided by the ESR, and it was less than in southern Ukrainian cities. On average, 200 meals of 1,600 calories were served. At the same time, a student hospital with 100 beds was maintained in Kharkiv,<sup>39</sup> as well as student clinics in Kyiv and Odesa operated on the funds of the AS-ESR.<sup>40</sup>

The second area of the ESR's activities became the distribution of clothing and medical care, because according to Rouse:

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<sup>35</sup> TsDAVO, fonds 284, list 1, file 2, p. 13.

<sup>36</sup> TsDAVO, fonds 284, list 1, file 2, p. 14.

<sup>37</sup> TsDAVO, fonds 284, list 1, file 1, p. 95.

<sup>38</sup> TsDAVO, fonds 284, list 1, file 2, p. 13.

<sup>39</sup> TsDAVO, fonds 284, list 1, file 2, p. 14.

<sup>40</sup> Fisher, *Famine in Soviet Russia*, 466.

As for clothing, many students faced the bitter cold of a northern Russian winter barefoot and in unspeakable rags. Out of 3,600 students examined in Odessa, 17 per cent. [!] had one set of underclothing or less, 6 per cent. had no overcoat, 52 per cent. were in desperate need of new shoes, 30 per cent. had gone through the winter without heat in their rooms. The clothing simply wasn't there. The item for clothes has disappeared from the budget of professors and students for years... Health conditions were and are appalling. The doctors in charge of the student clinic at Kharkov claimed that after careful examination, 43 per cent. of the students had tuberculosis. At Kiev 12 per cent. showed open tuberculosis, and out of 1,833 students personally examined 47 per cent. were found to have some contagious illness or disease requiring long, special and systematic treatment, and only 20 per cent. were in fair health.<sup>41</sup>

The clothes were collected by students from European countries such as England, Ireland, and Holland for "Soviet comrades" but, as a rule, required some repair. Among the things that came to the disposal of the committee, the sets were made that were distributed among students through a lottery. One set of clothes included: a pair of shoes, pants, a jacket, a set of underwear, etc.

Despite the fact that in the second half of 1923 the famine was generally overcome, the ESR and the AS-ESR expressed a desire to continue their work in the academic cities of the USSR. Organizations continued to provide meals for students and professors, distributed material aid, etc. For example, just in Odesa, from September 1, 1923, to March 1, 1924, the AS-ESR helped with foodstuff and basic necessities in the amount of 25,350 rubles.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to organizing student meals and distributing collected clothes, the ESR was engaged in providing Soviet universities with necessary literature. For this, each faculty had to compile a list of the most needed books and journals. Universities could order both Russian and foreign literature. In 1923-24, the American Section of the ESR planned to start activities in providing assistance to professors in 5 cities of the USSR: Moscow, Leningrad, Kyiv, Ekaterinoslav, and Odesa. For the professors, it was offered to organize subscriptions to foreign scientific journals, to provide places in rest houses, to improve the menu in rest houses, to organize special assistance in hospitals, and to have meals in canteens. The academic community of Odesa

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<sup>41</sup> Rouse, *Rebuilding Europe*, 160-61.

<sup>42</sup> TsDAVO, fonds 284, list 1, file 1, p. 115.

was thus allocated a total of 5,000 dollars for that, and of Ekaterinoslav – 2,500 dollars.<sup>43</sup>

In the fall of 1924, the AS-ESR was still operating in the Ukrainian SSR, carrying out a limited but generous program, supported almost entirely by American money. The work, however, was limited to medical assistance, meals for disabled students, and intellectual assistance, including assistance to disabled students, supplying students with books and tools, as well as financial assistance to professors and their families.

Nevertheless, despite the certain effectiveness and necessity of the AS-ESR's assistance, by the end of 1924, the assistance to students and professors was completely stopped (according to Fisher, the AS-ESR finally ended its assistance on the territory of the USSR as late as the spring of 1926;<sup>44</sup> instead, Rouse gives two dates of termination of the ESR's work in the USSR: the ESR – May 1924, the AS-ESR – April 1925<sup>45</sup>). In total, the academic community of the USSR in the period from March 1922 to July 1924 received \$623,000 from the ESR, two-thirds of which came from the USA.<sup>46</sup>

On April 2, 1925, the Moscow office of the AS-ESR received a letter from Olga Kameneva, Chairman of the Foreign Relief Commission at the Presidium of the Central Committee of the USSR: "Your offers of relief to the scientific workers and students of the Union of Soviet Republics, after consideration by the interested institutions, have been, unfortunately, recognised as unacceptable. I take this opportunity to express to the American section of E.S.R. gratitude for the work of relief which it has carried on."<sup>47</sup> That was the last point in the cooperation between the Bolsheviks and the European Student Relief.

## CONCLUSIONS

The intelligentsia of Europe, which suffered from the terrible consequences of the Great War, was given special attention by charitable organizations. Despite the former political confrontation, religious views, and national relations, the youth of European countries, with the support of their

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<sup>43</sup> TsDAVO, fonds 284, list 1, file 2, p. 136, 146.

<sup>44</sup> Fisher, *Famine in Soviet Russia*, 466.

<sup>45</sup> Rouse, *Rebuilding Europe*, 221-22.

<sup>46</sup> Rouse, 163.

<sup>47</sup> Rouse, 169.

American colleagues, actively joined the work of supporting school children, students, and professors of higher educational institutions of the continent. This relief did not pass by the “politically hostile Bolshevik Russia,” which included Soviet Ukraine.

Meanwhile, the relief was not limited to food, clothing, and medical aid, but it was much broader, in accordance with the specifics of the intellectual stratum: providing stationery, educational literature, sports equipment, laboratory tools and equipment, sending of scientific literature and subscription to periodicals, establishing contacts with foreign colleagues, and publication of their works in European journals. As a result of the worldwide support of students and professors of Ukraine, primarily in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, and Ekaterinoslav, where the majority of higher education institutions were located, it had become possible to save the intellectual environment of the Ukrainian nation, which was formed during the long-time development of education and its spiritual culture, from starvation and disease.

Unfortunately, despite the relatively productive work of the European Student Relief in the USSR during 1922-1924, the Moscow leadership and, accordingly, Kharkiv Bolshevik cardboard government adopted a course of complete liquidation by January 1, 1925, of all foreign aid in the USSR and the Union republics, if possible. It was not driven by economic reasons but primarily by political ones, as well as choosing a course of self-isolation and comprehensive suspicion and spy fever, when every foreigner, let alone an international organization, was viewed as an enemy and political opponent.

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