



## Financial Help for War Victims and Latvian State Institutions by Latvians Abroad, 1917–1921<sup>1</sup>

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For the Latvian people 1917 to 1921 was a period of dramatic change, which saw the end of the First World War in the territory of Latvia, the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia on November 18, 1918 and the subsequent War of Independence until August 1920. These events were accompanied by a difficult and sometimes even dire economic, public health and social situation. Events of such relevance at their country of origin could not but influence also those Latvians, who were living abroad. As opposed to the people in Latvia, this influence was not actually physical but moral and of course much less intense. Nevertheless, faced with information about events of such magnitude in one's country of origin, each person abroad had to at least decide within himself what will his own personal attitude towards them be. Individual decisions, made according to one's political beliefs, level of knowledge about the situation, traits of one's character, etc., in turn influenced Latvians abroad as a group – formerly purely theoretical differences, for example, in political views, suddenly became actual and debatable.

Before World War I, there were about 220,000 or, according to other calculations, even up to 300,000 (Bērzis 2000, 65) Latvians living outside Latvia (including Latvians living in Russian Empire territories outside Latvia; their activities are not analysed in this article, as this group was altogether different in their composition and character and, during and after the war, in completely different circumstances). It is impossible to calculate an exact number. It is known that the largest community formed in the USA, with about 50,000 Latvians<sup>2</sup> living there (the main centres of residence were Boston, San Francisco and its surroundings, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia). In Canada, the number of

<sup>1</sup> This research was supported by the Latvian Council of Science research grant nr. lzp-2018/2-0147 “War and Society 1914–1921”.

<sup>2</sup> Already in 1920s very different numbers appeared in Latvian periodicals, giving the total number of Latvians in the USA from as low as 20 000 to as high as 80 000. 50 000 is the most likely number.

Latvians might have been nearly 10,000 (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-60, 259); however, they were scattered and often resided in very remote locations. Many Latvians also took up residence in European countries – Great Britain, Switzerland, Germany, France, Denmark and others. The South American Latvians mainly lived in Brazil and Argentina. In 1922, Brazilian Latvians themselves estimated that about 3000 Latvians resided in Brazil. (*LNA LVVA* 2574-4-193, 54)

Most of these Latvians had emigrated from Latvia starting from the second half of the 19th century and the end of the century in search of religious (Baptists) or political, for example, New Current supporters, freedom, as well as an economically better life. Before that Latvian emigration was largely incidental: residence in other countries was comprised of, for example, sailors or individual adventurers. Another significant wave of emigration took place after the Russian Revolution of 1905; in this case, the reasons for emigrating were highly political, and there were many left-wing Latvians among the emigrants.

The aim of the article is to analyse financial aid to war-affected people in Latvia and Latvian State authorities provided by Latvians abroad: in Western Europe, North America, South America and Australia. For this analysis, forms of financial aid that can be directly linked with foreign Latvians' attitude towards their homeland and/or developments in it (war and founding of the state) have been chosen. Private aid sent to relatives and loved ones in Latvia has not been covered in detail, as the motivation for it was largely private and determined by family ties. Although the provision of private aid could also have been influenced by the senders' attitude towards political developments, it was not the primary factor in making the decision on whether or not to send aid. At the same time, it should be noted that analysing the flow of private aid is a task worth undertaking in the future as well, as it is one of the aspects that allows one to obtain a more detailed look at the devastating impact of war on the society of Latvia as a whole, being one of the ways this impact was overcome.

It should be noted that only information on the views and action of socially proactive Latvian emigrants has survived. It is impossible to find out the opinion of those Latvians who did not stay in touch with other Latvians in their countries of residence and assimilated comparatively quickly. It is only natural that just a small part of an emigrant community is socially active, creates organisations in their countries of residence and participates in activities that are related to their homeland.

Up until now, the financial aid provided specifically by foreign Latvians has not been studied, either in the context of the chosen period or any others (the only exception being social studies on the present day diaspora's financial relations with their homeland). However, some research has been performed on foreign Latvians' attitude towards the statehood of Latvia as a whole. Ēriks Jēkabsons has studied U.S. Latvians' attitude towards Latvia's statehood after 1918 (Jēkabsons 2013; 2014), also in the context of the relations between Latvia

and the USA (Jēkabsons 2018). Historical works on important proactive U.S. Latvian public figures of that time period have been published (Truce 1944; Akmentiņš 1984), as well as several books combining both memories and documentary sources; sadly, they lack scholarly referencing (Akmentiņš, Bērziņa 1969; Akmentiņš 1991). Individual researchers have addressed the history of Latvians living in Brazil, including the time period before the mass immigration of Latvian Baptists in the 1920s and the establishment of the well-known colonies “Vārpas” and “Palmas” in the state of São Paulo (Vilmaņa 2019; Rimšāns 2010). History of Latvians living in European states or their attitude towards Latvia’s statehood has not been studied until now.

In preparing this study, mainly documents from the National Archives of Latvia Latvian State Historical Archive have been used. The main information source is the correspondence of Latvian diplomatic missions in Great Britain and France with certain Latvians living abroad and Latvian organizations abroad, which correspondence is stored in collection no. 2575 (Latvian diplomatic and consular missions abroad). The correspondence contains information about the flow of donations to Latvia, as well as more general information about the living conditions and political mood of Latvians in different countries. To a lesser extent, but also significant correspondence on similar issues with Latvians abroad is also stored in the collection no. 2574, which contains documents of the Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia.

### **Collecting of funds in countries of residence**

Already during the war, U.S. Latvians sent aid to needy Latvian people, refugees and victims of war several times (Lidums 1973, 42). In addition, calls for providing assistance to fellow Latvians in their homeland already appeared in the U.S. Latvian press in 1917 and in the summer of 1918 (Akmentiņš 1991, 114–115). However, the relief work grew significantly after the independence of the Republic of Latvia was proclaimed.

Both organisations and individuals participated in collecting funds or preparing material assistance. The collecting of funds involved both existing organisations and new organisations that were established for the specific purpose of this relief work. There were several such organisations in the USA; *The Lettish Relief Society of Philadelphia* was among the most active. Already during the war, the *American Red Cross Lettish Auxiliary* was founded. (LNA LVVA 2575-1-202, 49–52) On 20 September 1917, *The Lettish War Association of America* was founded with the aim of “helping, supporting and providing for the Lettish people in any way” (LNA LVVA 2575-1-202, 62–63); however, this organisation was apparently not particularly active later. *The Lettish Relief Committee* was active in Winnipeg, Canada in 1919 (LNA LVVA 2575-1-157, 2). In Nova Odessa, Brazil, the *Latvian National Relief Society* was established<sup>3</sup> (LNA LVVA 2575-1-150, 13); a similar

<sup>3</sup> It formally considered itself part of the American-Latvian National League, one of the biggest Latvian organizations in the USA at the time.

society was also active in the state of Santa Catarina, Brazil (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-393, 22). The Latvian youth society “Auseklītis” in Nova Odessa, Brazil, collected donations by organising a lottery. (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-393, 53) On 23 June 1920, the *Relief Committee for Latvian Refugees* was established. The committee was founded in Bern, but its aim was to collect funds for the relief of Latvian refugees in all of Switzerland (*LNA LVVA* 2498-1-70, 35).

Various already existing organisations (both religious and secular) participated in relief work. *Latvian Ladies Committee* in Denmark sent a donation to the Reevacuation of Latvian Refugees in Latvia (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-64, 112). Donations were sent by congregations, for example, St Marcus Latvian Ev. Lutheran congregation of New York (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-393, 23). *American Lettish baptist literary association*, who published the newspaper “Drauga balss” (“Friend’s Voice”), also voiced their support for the state of Latvia (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-202, 9–11). Also, the Baptists of the Rio Novo colony (Brazil) sent a considerable donation to the Latvian Red Cross (1462 franks) (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-65, 31) and to the Women’s Relief Corps in August 1920 (5848 Latvian roubles) (*LNA LVVA* 2498-1-70, 347–348).

In Great Britain, Latvian sailors working on different ships also participated in collecting donations, largely due to the encouragement of the Latvian Information Office and the legation (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-24). Several captains of Latvian nationality, as well as A. Rismanis, owner of “Latvian Sailors’ House” (an extended stay hotel for sailors) actively organised collecting donations from sailors. He sent donations collected from Latvian sailors to the Latvian legation in London for supporting its operation multiple times (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-24, 4-5,15). A. Liepiņš also attempted to collect donations in Switzerland, however, with little success (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-80, 14). It should be taken into account that the European states themselves had been ravaged by war and the economic situation in Europe was significantly less favourable to collecting donations than in the USA, Canada or even South America.

In the USA, the patriotic Latvian newspaper “Amerikas Vēstnesis” (American Herald) and its editor J. Sieberg played an active role in collecting donations. Since “Amerikas Vēstnesis” was also distributed outside the USA, including among Latvians in Switzerland and Brazil (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-59, 336), as well as Canada, the appeal to donate to the “Support fund for Latvia” found supporters not only among Latvians in the USA, but also in Canada and Brazil. In August 1919, J. Sieberg sent another donation to Latvia: FRF 2200 (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-16, 109), which was followed by an additional FRF 2682 in September. (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-16, 121) In December 1919, a remittance of 3405 franks followed: “To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for distributing among the fellow countrymen who need it most” (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-16, 118).

Foreign Latvians used various means to collect donations for aiding Latvia. They often held various social events, balls, and draws, with the proceeds going to

donations. On 14 June, 4 October and 25 October 1919, The Lettish Relief Society of Philadelphia organised social evenings where donated packages were drawn; the proceeds went to the support of people in need in Latvia. At the 25 October event, there was a draw with the main prizes being two paintings by the U.S. Latvian painter G. Āboliņš: “Lincoln” and “Fruit” worth USD 200, and each numbered lottery ticket cost 10 cents (*LNA LVVA* 4712-1-825, 38–39). This event was the most successful of all, raising over USD 300 (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-152, 18–20). In 1919, the society organised five events in total, and an additional four at the beginning of 1920 (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-60, 271–272).

Ernests Minka, a Latvian residing in Philadelphia, made a postcard series featuring various characteristic Latvian landscapes, works of Latvian artists, and Latvian politicians and public figures to simultaneously promote Latvia and raise funds to help the state. E. Minka both distributed the postcards among the U.S. Latvians and sent them to Latvian diplomatic representations in Europe for further distribution and sale, including in Latvia. The proceeds were donated for charitable purposes. In December 1919, J. Kēmanis, Counsellor of the Legation of Latvia in London, informed E. Minka on behalf of the Information Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the postcards sent by him “were sold for 143 Latvian roubles and this sum has been passed on to the Latvian Red Cross on your behalf and accepted with gratitude” (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-152, 6). The visual material needed for printing the cards (portraits of statesmen, artwork reproductions, as well as photos) were sent to E. Minka by O. Grosvalds from the Latvian legation in Paris (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-61, 224), whereas E. Minka sent 100 copies of each type of postcard to the legation in Paris with, for example, portraits of K. Ulmanis, J. Balodis, J. Čakste, Kr. Valdemārs, the U.S. President Woodrow Wilson and others (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-61, 223-230, 261).

### **Transfer of donations to Latvia**

Aid to Latvia was mostly sent in the form of money, especially from more remote locations such as the USA, as sending physical items (clothes etc.) was more costly; in addition, during the uncertain period when hostilities raged in the Baltics, it was initially nearly impossible or, at the very least, unpredictable. Sending material aid became much easier in the early 1920, when a direct shipping line linking the USA and Liepāja was unveiled. On 31 April, “Lake Frument”, the first steamship of this direct line, set out from New York. A number of U.S. Latvians sent packages with food and used clothes to Latvia (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-361, 32). The U.S. transport company *Gerhard & Hey, Inc.* offered anyone interested an option to purchase standard food packages and send them to Baltic ports. The price of food packages varied from USD 16 to USD 25, depending in their content, and they contained foodstuffs such as coffee, sugar, chocolate, milk, rice, canned meat, concentrated milk, spices (pepper), as well as soap. The fee for sending was USD 1.15 per cubic foot (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-361, 42). Taking the food shortage in Latvia into account, such help was undeniably desperately needed and valuable.

After the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia and the establishment of the first diplomatic representations abroad, sending the collected funds to Latvia via diplomatic representations was the safest way. They acted as intermediaries both in cases of private monetary remittances (for example, when the money was sent to relatives in Latvia) and general donations. The sender had to send the desired amount of money as a cheque either in francs (if addressed to the legation in Paris) or in pounds (if addressed to the legation in London), addressing either O. Grosvalds or G. Bisenieks, respectively. Legations notified the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the received amount and the intended recipient; the Ministry paid out the amount requested according to the exchange rate of that day, converting the money into Latvian roubles. The service was free of charge. However, if the sender wanted to speed up the sending process, the legations could also choose to send the notice to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a telegram; this service cost USD 1.5–2 (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-64, 52–53). Foreign Latvians provided extensive information in Latvian newspapers on the procedure of sending money (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-64, 48), and since newspapers such as “Amerikas Vēstnesis” were circulated in Canada and South America as well, foreign Latvians were very well informed of this option.

The donation money for supporting people in need and similar aims was also sent to Latvia in a similar manner. If the donors had not given notice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs allocated the money received at their own discretion to one or more of the following four organisations: Latvian Women’s Relief Corps, Latvian Red Cross, Latvian War Invalids Society and the Society for the Reevacuation of Latvian Refugees (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-64, 112).

As soon as it became possible (when the freight transport and remittance systems gradually sorted themselves out) in the first half of 1920, Latvia received money and material aid addressed not to people in need as a whole but to specific individuals: friends and family of Latvians living abroad. Individual Latvian organisations in the U.S. were hugely supportive of sending such private donations to Latvia. In February 1920, the so-called Lettish bureau “Latwia” sent out a letter addressed to about 1500 Latvians in the USA known to the bureau, informing them of the establishment of shipping traffic between the U.S. and Latvia and inviting them to send the provisions for relief they had long been wanting to send to their relatives, as well as reminding them not to forget valuable exportable trade goods available in Latvia (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-329, 15). Moreover, this kind of help was even more widespread than donations to support people in need etc., as it was only natural to help one’s impoverished parents or relatives in Latvia regardless of one’s political views or attitude towards the Latvian state.

### **Recipients and amount of donations**

By far the largest part of the donations were general and were addressed either generally, for example, for the people in need in Latvia, for war victims, for



orphans in Latvia etc., or they were addressed to a particular charity organization. Of the charity organizations, the four larger were the Latvian Women's Relief Corps, Latvian Red Cross, Latvian War Invalids Society and the Society for the Reevacuation of Latvian Refugees. These were the main recipients of the donations.

Foreign Latvians donated funds not only for war victims and people in need, but also provided financial assistance to, for example, the Latvian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. In September 1919, the legation in Paris received 1500 francs from G. Dancis in New York for the needs of the Latvian delegation (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-10, 86). A number of donations were intended for the support of the activities of the Latvian Information Office in London (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-24, 4-5); individuals often sent small sums of money in gratitude for the received information materials (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-110, 1).

It is interesting to note that Latvian sailors in Great Britain donated to various very specific and explicitly stated causes: the purchase of the flag of Latvia for the needs of the Latvian legation in London (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-204, 2), "the support of the representatives of the nation" (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-204, 6), the support of the Latvian delegates at the Paris Peace Conference (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-204, 9; 11), or "the founding of the Latvian state and, consequently, the revival of shipping" (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-204, 21). Sums of money collected from sailors on the donation lists varied: from a couple of pounds up to even 236 pounds (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-204, 19). The precisely stated aim of the donations and the carefully noted lists of the donators and sums each of them had donated for each cause testifies to the serious attitude with which such donations were collected and processed.

It is practically impossible to calculate the total amount of donations made by foreign Latvians, as it was sent to Latvia in various forms, to various recipients, and the calculations are given in different currencies. Several individual examples might help to illustrate the overall impression of the total amount. In August 1920, the Society for the Reevacuation of Latvian Refugees had received around 19,000 Latvian roubles from foreign Latvians via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-64, 112). In the first seven months of 1920, the Latvian Women's Relief Corps had received 44,675 Latvian roubles in the same manner from U.S. and Brazilian Latvians (*LNA LVVA* 2498-1-70, 325). The Latvian Red Cross's 1919 overview on donations received via the Latvian legation in London states that the organisation had received a little over 364 pounds in this way (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-361, 23). It should be noted, however, that this overview only gives information on money received via the legation in London for only one recipient organisation in Latvia. On the other hand, in the first half of 1920 more than 26,000 French francs had been sent to Latvia via the legation in Paris (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-65, 26-27).

As for the value of the donated sums, i.e. their purchase power, it was, of course, highly volatile and affected by a number of factors: shortage of foodstuffs, the government's attempts to regulate the prices, etc. There were also significant fluctuations in many currency exchange rates. In early March 1920, USD 1 was

worth 72 Latvian roubles, GBP 1 – 280 roubles, FRF 100–520 roubles (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-64, 56). To compare, in February of the same year the salary norm for Liepāja port and transport workers carrying out general tasks was 35 roubles a day (*LG* 1920).

### **Misunderstandings**

Recipients of donations in Latvia often did not express their gratitude clearly enough or did not acknowledge that the donation had been received at all, which did not help to build confidence between both parties. In 1919, J. Sieberg from the USA implored the recipients of donations to diligently give notification of the receipt of donations via newspapers or in any other way; such practice would build trust and facilitate further and more extensive donations from U.S. Latvians (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-16, 121). However, the situation in this regard did not improve, and foreign Latvians from different locations time and time again reminded Latvian diplomatic representatives in London and Paris (via whom the majority donations were sent to Latvia) to persuade the recipients in Latvia to nevertheless express their gratitude for the received donations (*LNA LVVA* 2575-1-361, 14). In July 1920, O. Grosvalds also sent a letter to the LRC board, strongly stressing the necessity to publish the receipts of the received donations in newspapers (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-65, 26-27). LRC replied that it already always does so and mainly publishes the receipts of the received donations in the newspaper “*Latvijas Vēstnesis*” (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-65, 28–29).

However, printing acknowledgements of the donations in Latvian newspapers also did not solve the problem. In 1921, even the most patriotic organisation of U.S. Latvians – the Philadelphia chapter of the ANLL or, to be more exact, its women’s committee (*The Lettish Relief Society of Philadelphia*), which was one of the most active donation collectors, wrote an angry letter to the Latvian Women’s Relief Corps, threatening to discontinue sending aid: “It is pitiful that various organisations operating in Latvia do not consider it a duty or necessity to respond, either to letters or consignments. In the last three years, during which many consignments of clothes and money have been made, there has been no statement confirming the receipt of our consignments. Although it is true that a couple of receipts have been printed in our homeland’s newspapers, it is of little importance, to be quite honest. Most local Latvians have no access to such papers, and, even if the receipts are reprinted by local newspapers, people do not believe them due to constant agitation against providing aid” (*LNA LVVA* 2498-1-70, 415–416).

U.S. Latvians were justifiably indignant over, for example, the incident regarding the donation of vehicles to the Latvian Red Cross. On 11 December 1919, the Latvian Red Cross sent a telegram to the American National Latvian League requesting to provide one car and one lorry (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-16, 15). Already on 20 December, USD 800 was collected among Philadelphia Latvians only, and ANLL representatives were certain that the remaining amount would be collected



over the next weeks (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-16, 14). On 10 March 1920, the “vehicle fund” already held USD 2500 (*LNA LVVA* 2575-7-60, 255). Apparently, the necessary amount was collected over time, and the vehicle was delivered to the Red Cross in early 1920. However, in May 1921, a year later, Ludvigs Sēja, Head of the Latvian delegation in the USA, wrote in his report that U.S. Latvians were very indignant, as regarding the sent vehicle, “...they had not only not received a word of thanks: there was not even an acknowledgement that the vehicle had been received either. They could, however, ascertain this fact due to a newspaper item reporting that a lemonade cart had been run over by the American Latvian car” (*LNA LVVA* 2574-4-133, 378).

Although it seems like mere curiosity, such incidents certainly did not encourage Latvians living in the USA to be more active in providing financial help for Latvia; on the contrary, they were much more likely to cause doubt as to whether the donations even reached Latvia at all or were used for the intended purposes. The surviving documents allow one to safely conclude that the foreign Latvian donations sent via legations or other official organisations did indeed reach the intended recipients and were used for the intended purposes; problems and misunderstandings were mainly caused by a lack of sufficient public gratitude for the received donations, as well as the fact that this gratitude (for example, in the form of a newspaper notice printed in Riga) did not reach the specific donor in a U.S. city in a timely fashion or at all.

### Conclusions

The case of financial and material aid sent to Latvia during the Latvian War of Independence is an example that illustrates the connection that is always present, but not always apparent, between diaspora and the country of origin (home country). When significant changes occur in the home country, the diaspora is inevitably influenced. Warfare and the proclamation of a national state in Latvia certainly were changes important enough to influence the lives of Latvians living abroad, at the very least putting them before a mental choice of attitude towards the new phenomenon and consequently causing certain divisions among the communities abroad.

Involvement with Latvia during this time is characteristic mostly of those diaspora Latvians, who were patriotic towards the new country and supportively minded. Although patriotic Latvians were not a majority among the socially active foreign Latvians, this fact was largely offset by their activity, and they managed to achieve significant results. Collecting and sending of financial help to Latvia was one of the areas of activity where these results are most demonstrable. The amount of individual donations sent by individuals and organisations tended to be small or medium, but all together the amounts donated were very considerable and certainly helped to alleviate the dire humanitarian situation of the time to an extent.

Any action is a manifestation of an intent, which is caused by a certain attitude or a sense of obligation. Accordingly, analysing financial aid provided by diaspora Latvians is also one of the means how to have a measurable data to reflect on such elusive and immaterial concepts as the feeling of adherence to the nation and attitude towards the newly founded national state. In this view donations to the state-related establishments, e.g. the Latvian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference or the Latvian Information Office in London are particularly noteworthy, as they are direct statements of approval, if we seek to measure the attitude towards the newly founded Republic of Latvia. Giving donations for the relief of sufferers and war victims, on the other hand, is indicative of general positive attitude, but the principal motivation can also be other, for example, compassion.

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### Uzsienio latviu finansinē pagalba karo aukoms ir Latvijas valstybinēms institucijoms 1917–1921 metais

#### *S a n t r a u k a*

**Pagrindinēs sąvokos:** *latviu išeivija, kova už nepriklausomybę, aukos, pagalbos organizavimas, išeivijos organizacijos.*

Nors ne visi patriotiskai nusiteikę užsienio latviai buvo socialiai aktyvūs, vis dėlto jų veikla buvo labai reikšminga. Finansinės pagalbos rinkimas ir siuntimas į Latviją – viena iš veiklos sričių, kurios rezultatai buvo akivaizdžiausi ir labai svarūs.

Individualūs aukotojai skyrė savo paramą tiesiogiai Latvijos valstybės struktūroms: informacijos biurui Londone, Latvijos delegacijai Paryžiaus taikos konferencijoje ir kt. Daugiausia siuntų buvo išsiųsta karo aukoms, vargstantiems žmonėms ir pabėgėliams paremti. Ši pagalba gavėjus dažniausia pasiekdavo per pagalbos organizacijas Latvijoje: Latvijos Raudonąjį Kryžį, Latvijos moterų pagalbos korpusą, Latvijos karo suluošintų žmonių draugiją, Latvijos pabėgėlių grąžinimo draugiją.

Tikslios bendros aukų sumos apskaičiuoti neįmanoma, tačiau turimi duomenys leidžia daryti išvadą, kad bendra suma buvo tikrai reikšminga. Organizacijų siunčiamos individualios aukos paprastai sudarydavo nedidelę arba vidutinę dalį visų pajamų, tačiau bendra suma, kurią į Latviją atsiųsdavo užsienio latviai, buvo kur kas didesnė – galėjo net gerokai viršyti 100 tūkst. Latvijos rublių per metus.

Aukų Latvijai rinkimas ne tik parodė teigiamą tam tikros užsienio latvių grupės požiūrį į savo tėvynę, bet ir buvo veiksnys, paskatinęs išeivijos latvių bendruomenių socialinį gyvenimą. Aukoms rinkti JAV, Kanadoje ir Brazilijoje buvo įkurta nemažai naujų organizacijų. Esamos organizacijos taip pat sutelkė savo pastangas šioje srityje.

Latvijai atsiūsta finansinė pagalba yra pavyzdys, iliustruojantis ryšį tarp išeivijos ir gimtosios šalies: jis visada egzistuoja, tik ne visada būna taip akivaizdžiai matomas.

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### **Financial Help for War Victims and Latvian State Institutions by Latvians Abroad, 1917–1921**

*S u m m a r y*

**Keywords:** *Latvian diaspora, War of Independence, donations, relief work, diaspora organizations.*

Although patriotic Latvians were not a majority among the socially active foreign Latvians, this fact was largely offset by their activity, and the patriotic Latvians achieved significant results. Collecting and sending of financial help to Latvia was one of the areas of activity where these results are most demonstrable.

Individual donors addressed their support directly to structures of the Latvian state, such as the Information Office in London or the Latvian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference. However, the majority of consignments was sent to support war victims, people in need and refugees. These resources mainly reached their recipients via the largest relief organisations in Latvia: the Latvian Red Cross, the Latvian Women's Relief Corps, Latvian War Invalids Society and the Society for the Reevacuation of Latvian Refugees.

It is impossible to calculate the exact total amount of the donations; however, the available figures allow one to conclude that the total amount was rather significant. The amount of individual donations sent by organisations tended to be small or medium; however, the total amount of money sent to Latvia by foreign Latvians was large and could – according to hypothetical calculations – even significantly exceed 100,000 Latvian roubles per year (total amount for all organisations).

Collecting donations for Latvia not only demonstrated the positive attitude of the particular group of foreign Latvians towards their homeland, but was also a factor that energised the social life of diaspora Latvian communities themselves. A number of new organisations were founded in the USA, Canada and Brazil for collecting donations. The existing organisations also focused their efforts in this area.

The case of financial and material aid sent to Latvia during the Latvian War of Independence is an example that illustrates the connection that is always present, but not always apparent, between diaspora and the home country.

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