

American Friends Service Committee

20 South Twelfth Street



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BULLETIN ON RELIEF IN FRANCE

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For the Use of Editorial Comment and Re-publication

October 3, 1940

Report from Toulouse

by Helga Holbek

September 4, 1940

"We can use as much as you can let us have, usefully. At the moment the largest items are food distribution and canteen. The food distribution has been going on for some time already, but may of course stop if and when the foreign part of those we help either are repatriated or in other ways looked after. As you will know, most of the foreigners will be put into work companies, and the women and children in camps. Is there no way where we can help to avoid this new division of families?

"A great number of French refugees will remain in these parts, and new ones keep arriving, for instance all those who have settled in Alsace Lorraine after 1918, and who now leave with 40 kg. of luggage. Also those who will not swear to be loyal citizens of the Reich. So we shall have to help them to set up house and generally get going, if possible."

"Another thing we are planning for the winter is a series of soup-kitchens which can be run by already existing organisations, convents, etc. with practically no overheads, we simply supplying the raw food. Those who can, will pay a little, towards the cost.

"The repatriation is going on full speed, we have 4 trains here daily, which we supply with cold, and sometimes hot drinks, grapes, tomatoes, figs, etc. together with the Belgian Red Cross."

"I am sorry that we have not been able to keep you fully posted on our activities. The fact is that we are all slightly overworked. Miss Lieven is in Chateauroux and Limoges, Miss Marple on holiday, and Miss Resch going on holiday tomorrow. And the work is overwhelming. Distributions of raw food to about 3000 Spaniards daily, clothes to innumerable people four times a week, reception and advice to hundreds of people of all nationalities daily, ravitaillement of trains once or twice daily, 1200 people on each train, giving them coffee, cold drinks, about 50 litres of hot milk for the children, fruit, tomatoes, sometimes sandwiches, all takes a lot of time. Besides this, incessant consultations with Belgian Red Cross, etc. on the organisation, and what we can do, often being asked to "do" a train with perhaps one hour's notice.

"The food distributions to Spaniards, done here from the house, cost about 3 francs per day per person. Things are getting very much worse for the Spaniards now, and the few savings some of them had will soon be gone. This work will therefore grow rather than decrease. We are opening a canteen again in a few days, where we probably shall feed another 1000 people daily, and sleep 100.

Preliminary Survey of Needs in Unoccupied France

Howard E. Kershner, September 9, 1940

"Our preliminary survey of the needs in the zone non-occupied indicates that we should distribute 15,000 cases of tinned milk (48 cans in a case) each month. If you can obtain the money to pay for 3000 cases monthly we would therefore be able to do a 20% job. If we can only do one thing in France, we should of course continue to support all our children's colonies, if we can do two things, this milk project of 3000 cases a month should be our second thing. A third thing should be to continue our work with the Spanish mutilated men and our work in Spanish and other concentration camps. This leaves out entirely the question of emigration for the politicals who are permitted to leave. We are besieged with the most pitiful necessitous cases, and if any funds are available to assist them, please let me know.