

American Friends Service Committee

20 South Twelfth Street



Philadelphia, Penna.

BULLETIN ON RELIEF IN FRANCE

Bulletin #8

For the Use of Editorial Comment and Re-publication

Sept. 30, 1940

A VISIT TO TOULOUSE

by

Margaret Frawley

On Saturday September 7th I went to Toulouse where our new combination office and warehouse across from the principal railroad station defies the description of the street, Bon repos, and is even a place of teeming activity. The truck was being loaded, for a refugee train had just come in, with tired, pinched faces peering out of the cattle cars looking hopefully for the Quaker star and the friendly people who bring cool drinks, grapes, milk for the children, bread, the last paid for by the American Red Cross. They waved gayly, the drivers, the loaders, the delegates who hurried to bring provision to the 1200 on the train. This work - with sometimes as many as 7 trains a day, had been going on for 2 weeks day and night. It is now temporarily suspended but will presumably go on again in another week.

The Quaker star is everywhere - pointed ones on the windshields of our car, embroidered star on sleeves or lapels to distinguish our workers at the station, on the labels of all the goods which go out from our warehouse, on the food packets which are given out twice a week to needy refugee families, and a large one over the door. There is so much pride in working under it.

The warehouse and garage are on the first floor, the office on the second and the waiting room was, as usual, crowded - children who had come to register for the milk station service which the Service Civil has organized and for which they have a corner in our Toulouse Office, mothers who ask for colony care for their children, ragged people seeking clothes, especially shoes - some children cannot go to school because they have no shoes - men and women of every nationality, many of them just out of camps, seeking help.

We all feel we must help in the camps - in the women's camps in Gurs, in Vernet where we have already sent food and where the men tore the tags from the packages to save the star - it was the first outside help they had had; in St. Cyprien where typhoid fever had been raging. Even a little help is good because it persuades these people they are not abandoned and forgotten.

The program is shifting increasingly to women and children, but we ask America which has been generous not to compel us to abandon the 900 mutilated Spaniards we are caring for in Montauban, not to ask us to refrain from helping the men in Vernet, not to have to say no to the old and sick because they are men.

Toulouse is a city of rats and mosquitoes and fleas, our workers there have no comforts, yet not one of them would willingly go elsewhere, for there is great need and they meet it with devoted work.