

# American Friends Service Committee

20 South Twelfth Street



Philadelphia, Penna.

## BULLETIN ON RELIEF IN FRANCE

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For the Use of Editorial Comment and Re-publication

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### HUNGER IN UNOCCUPIED FRANCE

Reports of Quaker workers in unoccupied France chart the slow and inexorable march of famine, describe children "with distended stomachs and thin, spindly legs". Conditions are, in the opinion of competent observers, comparable to those which prevailed in Europe after four years of World War I. Over great areas of Europe, in France, Belgium, Poland, Greece, and Spain another generation of children pay the bitter price of war.

The official ration in unoccupied France for an adult during December barely approximated 1,000 calories, and food supplies in many areas were insufficient to provide even that dangerously low standard. This is the civilian's daily portion:

Bread	9.7 ounces
Fats	$\frac{1}{2}$ "
Sugar	$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce
Cheese	$\frac{1}{4}$ "
Meat with bones	$1\frac{1}{4}$ ounces
Potatoes	5 "
Dried Vegetables	5 "
rice and macaroni	

Yet as even official sources are frank to admit, there is little unrationed food offered in the cities. Shops are empty of fowl, rabbits and eggs. Fruits and vegetables are available only in extremely small quantities.

### Lack of Vitamin C

The present diet is notably inadequate in fats, milk, sugar, and meat. A medical inspection of children in the city of Marseille showed that 66 percent of those under 18 years of age showed no vitamin C in their blood. It is pointed out that the lack of other vitamins is serious but not so critical. Vitamin D, according to this medical report, is the only one present in anything like normal quantity.

A letter from the Committee headquarters in unoccupied France quotes a government official as stating on January 7 that reserve stocks are so low that further reductions in the ration of fats and bread may be expected within the next few months.

A small daily supplement of Quaker food distributed through school canteens reaches 84,000 children, yet many times that number need help. Health officials making comparative studies of children's weight indicate that in the past eight months approximately one third have lost weight, one third have remained stationary, and the remaining third have gained about half of normal weight. Most of these latter young people either live on farms or have access to farm produce.

### Wages and Living Costs

The following table indicating price increases since August 1939 has been compiled by an economist who is a member of the Quaker staff in Marseille:

#### INCREASES IN COST OF LIVING SINCE AUGUST 1939

FOOD	Quantity	Price August 1939	Present Fixed Price	Percentage of Increase*	Black Market Price
		Francs	Francs		Francs
Bread	2 lbs.	2.30	3.40	50%	
Milk	1 quart	1.90	3.10	60%	20
Coffee	2 lbs.	18 to 25	38	80%	225 to 300
Butter	2 lbs.	20	45 to 50	120%	100 to 150
Cheese		3 to 4	6.50 to 8.50	100%	18
Eggs	Each	.75	2.25	200%	5 to 8
Meat	2 lbs.	30	60	100%	150
Pork, Ham	2 lbs.	48	-	-	375
Chicken	2 lbs.	30	60	100%	130 to 160
Sugar	2 lbs.	4.50	8.40	95%	30
Potatoes	2 lbs.	1	2.25	125%	10
Dried Beans	2 lbs.	8	18	120%	50
Oil	1 quart	6	15	150%	180
Oranges	2 lbs.	5	20	300%	
Macaroni	2 lbs.	10	20	100%	40
Vegetables		INCREASE OF APPROXIMATELY 300%			

\*This represents the difference between Price August 1939 and Present Fixed Price. Black Market prices are in excess of these percentages.

<u>CLOTHING</u>	Price August 1939 (Francs)	Present Fixed Price (Francs)	Percent- age of Increase *	Black Market Price (Francs)
Man's suit	600 to 1000	1800 to 2000	200%	4000 to 5000
Overcoat	800 to 1200	2000 to 3000	150%	3500 to 4500
Shoes	100 to 150	300 to 400	200%	700
Shirts	30 to 50	80 to 225	350%	300 to 400
Socks	15 to 25	50 to 100	300%	
Stockings (silk)	25 to 30	100 to 120	300%	
Wool Dress	400	1000	150%	2500
Women's coat	600	1500	150%	4000
Hats	75	200	160%	
RENT	INCREASE OF APPROXIMATELY 10%			

\*This represents the difference between Price August 1939 and Present Fixed Price. Black Market prices are in excess of these percentages.

This table is the more significant when compared with prevailing incomes, most of which range between 1,200 and 2,000 francs a month. The average hotel meal costs around 45 francs, and it is a meager meal at that. Wood at bargain prices costs a franc for two pounds, coal being unavailable for residential use. Many families cannot afford to keep even one room warm. The table indicates that an overcoat may represent from two and one half to three months' salary.

Committee representatives making the rounds of the school canteens report children fainting in the classrooms because they have come to school without breakfast, empty seats because so many young have no warm clothes or shoes, able pupils who show no scholastic gains because they are too seriously undernourished to learn.

In the name of all the Americans who contribute to its purchase, the Committee brings food to France's children. This food, little as it is, does save young lives, and has become to its recipients a symbol that generous Americans care.