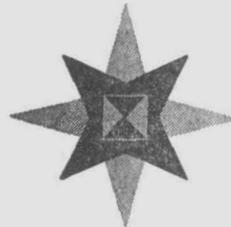


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**VOL. 1 NO. 6**

**DECEMBER 15, 1944**

**AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE**

## France Calls for Help from America

Clarence E. Pickett, Executive Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee, and Margaret Frawley of the Foreign Service Section have been in France for the first meeting with members of Secours Quaker after withdrawal of the Germans.

All delegations of Secours Quaker in the south of France emphasize the importance of receiving help from England and America. Their estimated needs for sixteen French departments are 8000 tons of food for the next four months. The following supplies are requested: milk, sugar, fats, soap, clothing,

bedding, shoes. Secours Quaker is providing food for babies, under-nourished children, students, and old people, both French and refugee.

The workshops in which refugees and destitute men and women are employed need thread, darning cotton, nails, shoemaker thread, leather, cloth, and needles.

The health report of the department of Gers recommends food supplements for 20,000 children, sick, and aged, out of a population of 200,000.

### From Field Workers' Letters

#### THE LACK OF TRANSPORT

"Lack of rolling stock and trucks is seriously impeding transfer of food from interior regions where it is plentiful to the coastal regions which are still facing serious shortages. In the departments of the Ardeche and the Iserre there are available butter, cheese, nuts, meat, and we are authorized to go and bring back as much as we can. However, we have only an ambulance-truck, which we have transformed to a gaso-bois and which can only haul a short three tons each trip."

—Marseille, Nov. 3, Secours Quaker report.

#### "WATERING A PARCHED FLOWER"

"The chief need in Toulouse is for fats, milk, and sugar. There has been only one distribution of sugar there since May. The bread ration has increased and its quality is much improved since the Germans had no time to destroy or acquire the wheat crops. Children are not growing and look to be far below their actual ages; but some who had gained no weight in two years showed improvement within six months when fed the bacon which recently came from Denmark. It was like watering a parched flower."

—Toulouse, Oct. 26, Secours Quaker report.

#### MILK CANNING FACTORIES DESTROYED

"As for milk distribution for infants, preliminary estimates indicate that as high as twenty-five percent of babies show loss of weight. The Director General of Food Supply tells us we should make every effort possible to import milk—because of transportation difficulties within France and the destruction of milk canning factories."

—Marseille, Oct. 30, Secours Quaker report.

#### "WE SHOUTED FOR JOY"

"We shouted for joy when I read your letter telling of ten tons of clothing to be transferred to us from America. All the time we get desperate appeals for clothes. Two such appeals came today: one, from a man who is trying to help a group of Jews in the Gers who were formerly in hiding and now have no clothes to speak of; and the other, from a mother who shows us a letter from the Child Care Colony where her children have been since last summer in which the directress says: 'Please come and get your children, but be sure to bring clothes for them because the boys no longer have any trousers that will do to wear.' It is cold here already; and, my, what a pleasure it would be to have clothing here to give where it is needed."

—Marseille, Oct. 30, Secours Quaker report.

### A Partial Answer

A cable, dated November 13, has come from Marjorie McClelland, AFSC representative in Switzerland, saying that she has been able to purchase there with \$15,000 forwarded by AFSC the following items destined for refugees in France: one ton boxed cheese, four tons unsweetened condensed milk, three tons sugar, five tons macaroni, and five tons meat bouillon concentrate containing

macaroni. These items were to be shipped to France within three weeks after purchase. An earlier shipment of Swiss food purchased by the AFSC for the children of southern France was expected to have arrived at Marseille.

Ten tons of clothing from the AFSC warehouse is on its way to France as a gift to L'Entr'Aide Française pour la Liberation.

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# Behind Prison Bars in Paris

by HENRY VAN ETTEN

*Henry van Etten, General Secretary of Secours Quaker and Director of the Friends Center of Paris, has sent a detailed report to the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia of the relief activities of French Quakers during the four years of German occupation.*

*Between the lines, one sees the tragic drama of arrests, imprisonment, of deportations, of fear and broken families, and the service French Friends were permitted to give, as the sole link between prisoners and their families. The following is taken from Henry van Etten's report and describes this service in part:*

We were able to learn of the plight of the majority of civilian internees in German prisons in Paris and the Parisian area—material conditions were bad enough, but moral suffering was most severe—and we undertook work for them as early as June 1941. Though the war was prolonged and discipline became more severe, the authorities were induced to permit us to carry on this work throughout the duration of the occupation because of the Quakers' position of being absolutely above all partisanship and because of Friends' desire to serve in a brotherly spirit.

## Improve General Conditions

We visited the following prisons regularly: Fresnes, the Cherche-Midi, Romainville, and from 1942 on, Villeneuve St. George as well as the German section of the Val-de-Grace, which since April of this year has been transferred to the hospital of St. Denis. We also visited the prison of the Sante up to October 1942, at which date it was converted to an exclusively French penitentiary center. Also, in collaboration with the French Red Cross, we made distributions of linen and clothing at the administrative camp of Les Tourelles. (Quaker aid to internees was also carried on in Bordeaux, Dijon, Nancy, and in Toulouse and Marseille.) Prison work had been begun by the American Friends Service Committee in France in November 1940, and French Friends took it on when the AFSC had to withdraw.

In the beginning we took particular interest in special cases, but we were led to occupy ourselves with more general conditions in each prison, following an appeal by the German doctor of Fresnes prison in behalf of two hundred particularly needy internees. Our services consisted of the distribution of linen and clothing and toilet articles, as well as food parcels; and medicaments and vitamins were supplied to the prison dispensaries. At the same time we endeavored to help in the solution of certain matters touching the whole of prison life such as laundry and recreational equipment for the prisoners. For example, we reorganized a library for the prisoners at Fort de Romainville (1700 volumes) and for those in the German and French sections of the infirmaries at Fresnes. We also added to other prison libraries and distributed tools and material for bookbinding.

## More Personal Service

More personal contact with prisoners was brought about when we were able to obtain permission to

visit certain prisoners such as those who had been condemned and to present them personally with gifts destined for them, from their families. Thus we were able to provide, often, a link between the internee and his family on the outside by distributing over 6000 parcels sent by families and by returning prisoners' soiled clothing to the families.

Thus the work has not merely been done in the prisons; the prisoners' families also required to be comforted, for often months passed before the internees could send news to their homes. We regularly carried out enquiries regarding people arrested by the authorities of occupation and whose families were without news of them and in turn communicated to the families all necessary information about the situation of their loved one. In 1944 we carried out about sixty such investigations each week. Since the beginning of our activities, about 5000 enquiries have been made.

## Contact with Families

We were also able to give financial aid to about 300 families of civil internees, representing more than 1000 children, throughout the years of occupation, thanks to the funds given to us by Secours National, the national French relief organization. Of these families, about one-half are French and the others are Poles, German and Austrian refugees, Hungarians, Russians, Turks, Rumanians, Czechs, etc., of whom a great many are interned or deported Jews. Each family received financial help every three months. The funds were used also to operate a dispensary at the Paris Friends Center principally intended for Jewish refugees and families of internees. Each week it received from ten to thirty patients, but this work became less important as the arrest and deportation of Jews went on. The funds were also used for organizing Christmas parties for the children of prisoners and other expenditures on behalf of such families such as the cost of identity cards, medical fees, and boarding of children in the country.

For years, work for those in prison has been a task Friends have seemed specifically called upon to perform; for the person who in general is least cared for is the person who for one reason or another is in prison. Friends are called to tasks which others are not able to undertake or do not want, seeking not to express "philanthropy" or "charity" but seeking always deeper fellowship with mankind.

# India Famine Notes

## DISEASE IN BENGAL

"At this center the doctor was swamped with work. I saw many interesting cases, medically speaking, and tragic cases too. The main illnesses found in the various centers seen are malaria, dysentery, kala-azar, worms, smallpox and cholera, although the last two are rather rare at the present moment. Malaria is taking a heavy toll of life and is in epidemic form in many places. The high mortality this year is directly due to the malnutrition and lack of resistance which follows on the heels of the famine."

—Dr. Allen Longshore, AFSC, India.

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## SITUATION IN NORTH BIHAR

"The province division official said that within the next few months, if no special action were taken, there might be 250,000 to 300,000 deaths from malaria, but that with a wide-spread drug distribution program, he hoped to cut the deaths to 150,000 to 200,000. This year, the irregular rains have meant that the crops in North Bihar will not be good, and there is every likelihood that there will be a serious food shortage."

—Eric Johnson, AFSC, India.

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## REHABILITATION OF DESTITUTES

"During the past week I visited two of our rehabilitation centers not too far distant. The projects are weaving cloth, making doilies, spinning jute into thread and making jute rugs. Both centers are run along similar lines and they market their products through a shop which sells only things made in Bengal. Both men and women are employed in the centers and each center had about forty to fifty persons working—all were destitute, widows, and orphans. The centers are almost self-supporting at present. The workers get both money and rice in payment for their effort and all seemed quite happy."

—Dr. Allen Longshore, AFSC, India.

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## MILK STORED IN THE JAIL

"One canteen that was of particular interest, both because it represented the canteens affiliated with dispensaries, and because it had a novel place to store the milk, was a canteen a few miles out of Calicut on the coast road. We didn't see it while the children were there but we inspected the place where the milk was given out and the kitchen where it was prepared. In contrast to the Maternity Center where the milk was kept in the delivery room, here the milk was kept in one of the cells of the local jail."

—John Scott Everton, AFSC, India.

## HANDICAPS FOR MEDICAL RELIEF

"The lack of boats has also greatly handicapped the medical relief work in these watered areas. Where originally each family had its own boat, now there is, say, one boat to every five families and if they want to hire it the cost is almost prohibitive. Hence, their problem of getting to one of the medical centers for treatment has come to be a serious one. They sometimes send one man to get the medicines for the entire five families. This means that the doctor would have to diagnose illnesses without seeing the patient. As inconvenient as it must be to the patients, most of the medical centers have the sensible rule that all patients must come to the clinic for the first visit so that the doctor can see them and make his clinical diagnosis and then, the following times, someone else can collect their medicine for them by simply bringing in their tickets."

—Dr. Allen Longshore, AFSC, India.

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## INDIANS EXALT AMERICA

"I felt that it was one of the most satisfactory discussions I had had with a group of Indian leaders since coming to India. As always, they fired all kinds of questions at us about America and we could not help but feel that our country does not entirely measure up to the high opinion they expressed. Theirs was a somewhat idealized version of America as the promised land, and while our appreciation of our own country has been enhanced by our period of absence, we still know that we have a long way to go before we can quite measure up to the exalted idea of America expressed by these men. Their faith in our country is very strong and we must somehow not let them down."

—John Scott Everton, AFSC, India.

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## AMERICAN MILK FOR MALABAR

"Until Malabar again has access to Burma food supplies to supplement her local stocks, or to some other resources equivalent to those formerly received from Burma, there will be a food problem of greater or less intensity throughout the year in Malabar. The milk program this year has helped to solve that problem and has made a significant contribution to the well-being of close to thirty thousand small children and nursing and expectant mothers. Aside from the physical results of the program, I do feel that in Malabar, to an unusual degree, the message of friendship and goodwill of American and English friends and the assurance of their concern for their Indian friends has made a real impression on the people who are involved in the milk program, and there is a continuing influence that will not disappear when the actual distribution of milk comes to an end."

—John Scott Everton, AFSC, India.

## Life at El Shatt: Six Facets

*All of the ten AFSC appointees to the UNRRA Balkan Mission are now at work at El Shatt camp near Suez, working with Yugoslav refugees, with the exception of Dr. Evarts Loomis who is at the Philippeville camp, and Louise Tibbetts who is enroute to the Middle East. Reports and letters from El Shatt, forwarded to Philadelphia by Barclay Jones, AFSC Commissioner for the Mediterranean, indicate the creative activity, the evident enjoyment of the task, and the responsibility each feels. The following extracts, from six different perspectives, help to round out a picture of this temporary home for Jugoslavia's war victims.*

### Self-Sufficient Jugoslavs

"I witnessed the arrival of a train load from the Khatatba camp. The self-sufficiency of these Yugoslav people has made a lasting impression on me: their ability to make things they need out of little; the spirit that seems to permeate them, their ingenuity displayed in the work shops for shoes, wood, tin, and the more formalized brands of education such as painting and sculpture, music, and sports. At the end of the second day I was assigned to the welfare department of Camp II. I was asked to interest myself particularly in the school and sports program.

"The children are most lovable and friendly, and the five and six-year old boys like to salute us with a 'Zdrovo' ('hello' or 'good health'). I have had some very interesting conversations with the refugees and have heard stories of some who have been refugees for the last seven years—most of them, not so long, however. Like millions of other people in the world today they are awaiting the time that they can return to their homes in their native land or to the home of near relatives in many parts of the world.

"Tonight I had the unusual experience of hearing a Yugoslav chorus on the Egyptian desert sing 'God Save the King' and 'The Star-Spangled Banner'—it being election day in the United States. The whole program was put on in celebration of the 27th anniversary of the Russian revolution."

—Oscar Marshburn, welfare officer.

### ... But They Long for Home

"Bill Edgerton is taking over clothing distribution so that I may have a little more time to devote to general welfare and public health. This week we started off sixteen Yugoslav girls, who had a basic course in hygiene, on tent visiting. This will mean close supervision and some teaching—a full time job if circumstances only permitted.

"Little by little restiveness increases. Ever since the wild celebration of the fall of Dubrovnik with singing, bonfires, and many speeches, it has been difficult to get anyone to make plans for the immediate future. When we first expressed interest in Christmas plans, only smiles appeared. The thought everywhere is 'We will be back in our country in another month.'"

—Viola Pfommer, welfare officer.

### Some Children Are Sick

"Little handicaps arise when we break some precious item or items—recently these were our only two syringes used daily for sedimentation rate tests for tuberculosis—or when the load of routine things seems to take precedence over the opportunity to teach Luiga, my Yugoslav helper, some technique or the distinguishing characteristics of blood cells, for example.

"The little lab is in a brick building adjoining the Dispensary (pharmacy to us) and we are quite close to the hospital. I walk across the hot, brown, pebbly sand a couple of times a day to get blood samples, etc., and enjoy every visit to the wards and children's isolation tents. The walls of the main 'permanent' children's ward have recently been decorated by some of the Yugoslav artists, and the children really seem to be delighted to teach me words for animals and scenes there. At first I'm afraid my own wide-eyed amazement and utter astonishment must have been startling to the children. It is really hard to describe the conditions of malnutrition and consequent abnormal growth, skin conditions, etc., that one can see among the babies and children up to four or so.

—Rebecca Taylor, laboratory technician.

### Emergencies Arise . . .

"I am now night supervisor in the hospital. I work 9:30 p. m. to 7:30 a. m. with (theoretically) two hours off during the night. Some nights I never sit down at all; some nights I have two or three hours (not consecutive, of course) for studying Hervatski or reading or writing. It is an interesting shift and I really enjoy it. My greatest problem is language. Before midnight, no one except one nurse on maternity ward speaks English, and after midnight, only one nurse on the men's ward. When we have enough hospital staff (if that time ever comes!), I will probably do tent visiting as part of a public health program."

*A section of Sarah Howell's report of the activities of a moderately busy night on hospital duty as follows:*

"1:30 a. m.—All is quiet. I check the patients who need special watching. Return to office. Start to study Hervatski.

"1:43 a. m.—Bolnicarke (nurses aide) comes from Ward A to say No. 14 has a lot of pain. I go to see her. Diagnosis is chronic appendicitis; now she is having severe abdominal pain, vomiting, high

pulse. Decide she should be seen. Draw a map and explain elaborately—with my limited Hervatski vocabulary—to the ambulance driver whom I have awakened, where he can find Dr. Mc. Send a note to Dr. Mc. Driver goes. I return to office to wait for the doctor. Try to learn a little Hervatski, but am not concentrating, keeping an ear out for the doctor.

"2:10 a. m.—Driver returns—hasn't been able to find doctor. I go myself. The doctor comes, sees the patient, decides she should go to the army hospital for possible immediate surgery. We make out papers. Driver cannot get ambulance started. I try to call the transport but our phone is dead. I go to the telephone exchange and get the operator to call from there.

3:00 a. m.—Other ambulance arrives. We put patient, a bolnicarka and the necessary papers aboard and send them off. Have telephone operator advise the hospital they are on the way.

"3:05 a. m.—Two men arrive from Camp I—they want an ambulance to get a woman in labor. I go again to the exchange to have transport called again. Then to maternity to advise them of impending arrival. Return to the office and Hervatski. Eat a sandwich and drink some coffee.

"3:30 a. m.—Ambulance arrives with patient who is admitted to maternity.

4:00 a. m.—I make another turn of the wards. F-3 (pneumonia) looks a bit blue in color; we give oxygen. Shoo out a mother who is visiting (against rules). Everything else O. K."

—*Sarah Howells, nurse.*

### ... And Children Are Lost

"One part of my work in Camp III that I would like to go into more deeply is following up inquiries about displaced persons. A man came into our office and said he had been trying to find his little daughter ever since he had been here. He had found another little girl in our camp—an orphan—who remembered having been with his daughter for a few days during her passage through Italy. (I am told that families often split up and slipped away by two or three different ways, none of the members knowing how they would manage to get together again, but willing to take any means of escape in their desperation.) I sent for the little orphan girl who came in half-frightened at being summoned to the headquarters, but when I explained that we only wanted her to help us find another little girl who was lost, she opened up and told us all she could remember. She was an attractive little girl of about ten, very straightforward in manner. She had come to our camp with a group of children under the guidance of an 18-year-old girl in another section of this camp. I sent for this girl who told us an amazing story of collecting Yugoslav children who had arrived in Italy without parents or relatives and taking care of them in their trek from the villages where they landed to the place where they gathered for the rest of the journey here. You could guess at

something of what she had been through when you saw the serious expression in her eyes.

"Before she arrived at our office, the father of the first inquiry brought in an old man who was looking for four of his grandchildren whom the orphan girl had also seen in Italy, so I asked the young girl about all of them at once. She could not remember the first child—small wonder, when she had handled so many!—but she told us where she thought we could find her. She also could not remember one of the four grandchildren, but she remembered the other three very well and told us they had gotten very sick on the way and she had had to leave them in a hospital in a certain town they passed through.

"She had a complete list of all the children she had taken care of, which I think will be of immense help to us. So now we have sent for her list (which is in the care of a brother in another camp), and we have started inquiries to the hospital where she had to leave the three children and to the town where she thinks the first man's daughter must be now."

—*William Edgerton, welfare officer.*

### ... But Values Are Found

"My duties at the camp seem to be settling into the following pattern: 1. Exerting some influence over production in the work shops (carpenter, metal, shoemakers, etc.), vocational training, and scrounging of material; 2. Developing the plan of Camp III to include new facilities as a community center group, including tentage for schools, block canteens, nursery schools, out-door stage, craft shops, and recreation hall; 3. Offering planning advice to enlarge the plant for 2000 refugees from Khatatba.

"Last Sunday when we were having Meeting for Worship on one of the sand dunes, I think most of us were searching for an evaluation of our experiences to date. Several experiences were parallel. We receive a real spiritual boost when we hear the rich Yugoslav choir, watch the active, friendly children at play, and see the unselfish acts of adult refugees. Under prevailing conditions of hard living and a cruel past of deprivations, the problems of the Yugoslav refugees take on a human appeal against which one can only measure his own inadequacies."

—*William Taylor, welfare officer.*

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### BENJI JOINS CHINA CONVOY

"A happier reminder of the grim side of things is Benji. This half-starved ten-year-old blind boy existed by begging at the city's North Gate. He slept squatting in a niche in the wall, having been abandoned by all his people. Benji, cleaned, clothed, and fed, has become a popular member of the Convoy household. Two eye operations have given him slight vision and another may help further. He has developing promising manual dexterity, and his spirits have soared since he has weathered a recent malaria attack and his second operation. He enjoys imitating the long-drawn cries of the street vendors."

—*China Convoy, Friends Ambulance Unit report.*

# Italy's Great Need

by DAVID HARTLEY

*The AFSC has two representatives in Italy working with the Inter-Governmental Committee for Refugees: Howard Wriggins in Rome, and David Hartley at Bari on the "heel" of Italy. The following reports from David Hartley show something of the results of war for the Italian people as well as for the Yugoslavs and Central European refugees who are temporarily living in Italy's towns and camps.*

## Broken Towns and Broken Morale

I drove to a certain town in southern Italy recently and was once again impressed and appalled at the destruction of the town thereabout. No one can realize how completely destructive war is without seeing its results. I suspect that the English know this but that our people have only photographs which have no depth and seldom, if ever, catch the human angle.

Really tragic are the handsome villas which are now, as the result of a bomb, only rubble with perhaps a fantastic, flower-like burst of steel girders in the center—or the older and poorer house which is just rubble because it could boast no steel.

Some houses are untouched, depending on the village and how long a time the war stayed, but the average house has a shell-hole or broken windows or a roof from which all the tiles have been blown.

The most curious thing of it all is the fact that such destruction remains as it was left when the troops moved on except for necessary military roads and installations. The people who fled to the hills seem to return when their villages are safe, push aside the worst of the debris and live in the one or two rooms which remain of their houses; at least those who have remaining rooms do. In several places, the town fountain remains intact and the people make their way across blocks of rubble to stand in line. What the other sanitary conditions are like one doesn't dare ask.

In one place in which almost all roofs had been destroyed, no repairs had been made after six months in spite of the full yards of a tile factory on the edge of town.

Most tragic of all are the people who cannot return to walk over the rubble on their own land but must remain in the area to which they were evacuated. This is often in Sicily or Calabria, too far to slip back in—legally, under most difficult conditions. No effort has been made for their return.

The fact that no action has been taken in clearing up this destruction is only part of a more general condition of low morale. What is needed is some leadership in returning select evacuees of useful skills, in organizing some plan for return to normal, in stimulating the local authorities to accept their responsibility and in obtaining whatever supplies are available through allied sources. A spark is what is needed to start this movement; the desire for normal home lives is adequate fuel.

## Refugees Rebuild Own Community Life

Last month the refugees at the camp at Santa Maria di Bagni gave a program of entertainment, planned and executed entirely by themselves, which seemed to me a high point in the camp morale. The occasion was a visit by Max Perlman of the Joint Distribution Committee, and myself; and all the camp administration were invited as well as twenty-five people from the Partisan section and about 200 of the Jewish camp. This particular version was for the Yugoslavs and was to be followed by a German version for the rest of the camp the following night.

We arrived just before the stated time of eight o'clock and were ushered into an anteroom where great quantities of hors-d'oeuvres (of sardines, eggs and cheese—the first two very scarce), and a very strong drink called rakija made from plums were served. Then we were asked to take our places which proved to be in the first row. Our seats were too close for some of the vigorous singing (especially for one refugee who used to sing for the Berlin opera); and we were too much in evidence, but since the party was in our honor we had to play our part.

The program, although a miscellany of talent, was given continuity by a master of ceremonies, and in spite of language difficulties we caught the references to ourselves and enjoyed the reaction of the audience innuendos.

The stage had been built by the work shop people in an alcove of the main hall of the community center. White canvas was used to cover the unsightly boards, blue canvas for the curtain and pieces of tin for reflectors. The question of the origin of the light bulbs, which are very scarce in this country, was answered when the program finished and the members of the audience began to remove the bulbs from the chandelier and footlights to return them to their homes.

During the interval, the toy shop which is just off the main hall, was thrown open for our inspection. They have just begun their work but everyone was impressed with the dappled-greys and carts, the "Mickey Mice" and especially with the dolls.

The entire evening represented an awareness on the part of the people of their own responsibility toward their community life. Sam Marriage, of the Friends Ambulance Unit, has stimulated their interest in the shop work and other projects, but this is something they have done entirely on their own. It marks a big step in the regaining of confidence after years of fear and flight.

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