

FOREIGN SERVICE BULLETIN



MESSAGE FROM GERMANY	118
NEED IN FINLAND	119
VISIT TO HOLLAND	120
QUAKER WORK IN ITALY	121
LE HAVRE REFLECTIONS	122
SKY ISLAND	123
AID TO REFUGEES IN MEXICO	123

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AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

Message from Germany

The following paragraphs are taken from a message to English and American Friends from members of German Yearly Meeting of Friends which assembled in Bad Pyrmont, Germany, in July of this year:

"The Friends share in the guilt of their nation before God and are striving together with it for an inner regeneration and a new moral and religious life.

"There is great goodwill in our country, and many valuable suppressed forces are at work. We rejoice to know of your readiness to help these forces to prevail over error, resistance, indifference and

dejection. Help these powers to find room and also help those who now rule over us and hold the fate of the German people in their hands to realize that they can further our efforts only by trying to understand our great need and by showing confidence in those energies. Only by such faithful co-operation can the great danger be overcome that disappointment and bitterness will spread and the work of reconstruction and reconciliation be prevented."



Visit in Berlin

On the fifth anniversary of her departure from Berlin where she had been in Quaker Relief Service in 1940, Alice Shaffer arrived in Germany to renew the bonds between American and German Friends. She spent many days in vain search, often on foot, through rubble-strewn streets. She eventually, however, did meet with a number of Quaker families, some of whom had just returned from concentration camp where they had been sent for activities in behalf of Jews. All were overjoyed at reunion with Friends from whom the past years had separated them. She found German Quakers eager to engage in relief and reconstruction activities and eager for the help of Friends in other countries to augment what small efforts they already had underway. The following is from a letter received in Philadelphia on August 27, written by Alice Shaffer from Frankfurt:

"I have just returned from Berlin, after a week visiting friends there. One should really say "the outskirts of Berlin", for the center of the city no longer exists. One has the feeling of walking through some excavated city walls where life is gone except for those who pass through on their way to some other place. All seemed so very strange and different and most of the Quakers there give one a bit of a shock at first because they are so thin. I am not unmindful that such conditions exist and have existed too in other countries and the German Friends showed deep concern for them, more so than for themselves; but there are human limits for all and I am afraid of what the winter will bring, especially for the children.

"While I was in Berlin it rained very hard most of the time, and the city transportation is quite unpredictable. Sunday morning I left the Quaker Bureau at 7:30 a.m. to attend Meeting at 10:30, and even so arrived one-half hour late. Friends insist on going back to the Meeting room for worship although the building is badly damaged and the room itself has no windows, and the plaster is gone; but they feel at home in the close hand of fellowship. I must say that one suffers spiritually as one comes into such a group who have stood steadfast in their testimony through 12 hard years and who have yet so much to bear both physically and spiritually. One is bowed in humility before God.

"German Friends, there, on several occasions said that during these years and particularly now they find themselves in closer relationship with other re-

ligious groups and they are working very closely together in behalf of persecuted Christians and Jews, those being returned from camps, etc. Hans Albrecht, representing Friends, is kept busy at his house all day long seeing people who come with the greatest variety of requests and of course there is so little assistance one can offer in most of the situations.

"Almost everyone with whom I spoke stressed the need for helping children but they say supplies would not be available unless we can find them and get them there—milk and chocolate products particularly."



AFSC-UNRRA Team Now Working in Germany

A team of American Friends Service Committee relief workers was called forth from Paris to the Third Army Area in Germany the last week of August. They will be working near Munich under the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in a supplementary project involving the care of displaced people and victims of concentration camps.

Members of the group are: Edward Wright, leader; Viola Pfommer, Sarah Howells, William Edgerton, all of whom spent the past year working with Yugoslav refugees in Egypt under UNRRA; Russell Richie and Ima Lieven, formerly with Secours Quaker in France; and David Jeffrey of Friends Relief Service in London.

Need in Finland

by DOUGLAS STEERE

Traveling on behalf of the AFSC, Douglas Steere arrived in Sweden the last week in June and has been visiting throughout the Scandinavian countries. He was in Finland from July 9 to August 4. During this period, he spent ten days in Northern Finland (Lapland) where he observed the systematic devastation carried out by retreating German troops there. His reports of need in Finland are based on information gathered from concerned Scandinavian Quakers and officials in Sweden and Finland as well as from his personal observations. The following paragraphs are taken from his letters to the AFSC:

HELSINKI, FINLAND—

The Finnish authorities seem overjoyed at the meaning of the visit. That Americans care enough to come to them deeply touches them. The counsellor of the Legation in Sweden told me that this was the happiest news he had had to send to Helsinki since coming to Stockholm eleven months ago. Here in Helsinki, there is a great longing to re-discover the ties with America.

Food here is very lean—1,187 calories a day for all except those in special categories such as pregnant women and those doing heavy work. This ration is but half that needed in cold countries. After Sweden it is a terrific contrast. There is some oatmeal, black bread, dried peas, a few vegetables, eight cents worth of meat a month, and a half pound of cooking fat or butter or margarine a month, with butter almost impossible to buy on the legitimate market. The result of all this is a state of barter and black market, empty stores, plenty of money, but it buys little. If you go to the big hotels you can get a fair meal such as fish or even on some days fowl at very high prices, and one living there might be deceived about conditions; but if you live in a Finnish family, as I have done, you see the real situation even if they try to cover it up by giving you all they have stored up for a holiday. Everybody goes to the country and scours about among friends and relatives. The day of calories has come in Europe and all things are tested by the amount they yield, even the state of family relationships.

Sweden is carrying out a unique method of private help to Finland. Each Swedish town of any size has adopted a Finnish town and its people are sending it all kinds of things which it needs. Stockholm has equipped a children's hospital in Helsinki, for instance. All of these things, however, scarcely scratch the surface of Finland's hard plight, and added to her other burdens are the 300,000 Karelian refugees which she has placed in small groups all over Finland.

ROVANIEMI, FINNISH LAPLAND—

I write from a barrack used as a hotel for privileged people like government officials, members of the control commission, and others; and from this window as far as I can see there are only ruins—shells of the few concrete buildings, and the wooden houses which were universal as dwelling houses

show only the chimneys and a tangled mass of ashes and twisted metal that was once the families' comfortable beds, kitchen equipment, tools, and the like. This is Rovaniemi, the most modern and most attractive city of the north, in which a year ago 9,000 people were living.

Today, apart from a little strip of houses along the river, which a Finnish advance made dangerous for the Germans to touch, the whole city is an absolute shambles. It was not done by air bombardment, but by systematic destruction house by house with incendiary material, hand grenades, and dynamite. For the people who were evacuated to Sweden it was an unbelievable thing since they had lived peaceably and on the whole not without a certain trust in the decency of the German soldier—a word that comes with equal emphasis from Norway—but this wave of spite that has laid waste such a large percentage of the hard-earned property of Finnish Lapland has stirred the Finns against the Germans as nothing else has done. The people are now pouring back from evacuation, and another four weeks will have brought all the people who are well and able to work back from Sweden, and all of the cattle back. This means in Rovaniemi that already 4,000 people are living among the ruins, in cellars, togged-up packing cases, round cardboard affairs that will hold for the hot summer but never do for winter. Even old burnt-out car bodies are occupied with one or two sleeping there. A few barracks have gone up and the more fortunate may get a chance there; but most of the people are in these improvised shelters where six, eight, and ten may sleep in a single tiny room with no window or ventilation. The prospect of the winter is terrifying, for while they want to rebuild, few will have enough building material to do more than get started. Everything is short: nails, building iron, cement, lumber, in spite of its abundance in Finland, because of terrible transport difficulties.

I have travelled through a good deal of the territory up here. The roads are very bad, dirt roads to start with; and every bridge is blown up, every culvert destroyed, and the road itself pitted and worn. Travel is very slow, but in four days we have done over 1,200 kilometers. The roads are one stream of destruction. The Germans finished off each farmhouse as they passed and did the job with thoroughness, burning the hay stacks, snow fences,

barns, and even the poles on which the peasants dry the hay, and chopping down telephone poles. If ever there was a place in Finland needing help this winter it is this Lapland country.

Clothing and shoes are needed everywhere. Children's shoes that can be worn in snow and slush are the only ticket to school for fifty per cent of the Northern Finnish children.

Finland needs help from outside. Help from Sweden will be continued but it is limited, and the Swedes have been helping this neighbor for six years. The Finns are spiritually confused because of attack by both sides during this war. Finland needs spiritual help to face her dismay and despair. Here is a situation where more than commodities are needed, although one cannot in their need go empty-handed.



Visit to Holland

J. Barclay Jones, who has been AFSC Commissioner in the Mediterranean Area, returned home the last week in August after more than a year's service in Egypt, Italy, and France. He also visited England, and just before taking the plane for America, he made a visit into Holland, the first American Friend to greet Dutch Quakers after the years of separation. He brings the following news:

Members of Holland Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends have maintained their Quaker Bureau in Amsterdam where they conducted relief work throughout the occupation. They have had the care of 40 half-Jewish orphans, who were billeted in different homes. They also, during the occupation period, cared for numbers of stateless persons.

The Quaker school at Ommen had been taken over by the Hitler Youth, but is now being used for returning refugees. Dutch Friends hope that they may re-open the school, perhaps this Fall.

In spite of their small numbers and their own privations during the past years, Dutch Friends are concerned to undertake some emergency relief work in their own country, and hope they will be helped in this by Friends elsewhere. They are particularly anxious to come to the relief of the town of Zetten in the Bettuwe area, which was a "no man's land" between two branches of the Rhine River during the military campaigns. The devastation is vast, and agricultural lands are mined and houses laid waste. Most people in Holland have only the clothing they are wearing, and winter clothing will be greatly needed, also shoes and shoe repair material. Transportation is very short; for example, Friends outside of Amsterdam were unable to attend Yearly Meeting there in May.

English and American Friends are planning to

cooperate in helping Dutch Friends carry out some relief in the Zetten area and through the Amsterdam Quaker Bureau. Relief clothing for Holland will go forward from the AFSC storeroom.



THE EUPHEMISM "DISPLACED PERSONS"

David and Janine Blickenstaff, who represent the AFSC and five other American Relief organizations in Spain, have made a flying trip to the United States for a few weeks' consultation, returning this month to the pressing needs of the stateless refugees on the Iberian Peninsula. There they will assist the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees to work for a more permanent solution of the problems facing these people-without-a-country. The following was written by David Blickenstaff:

"It will be good to get back to Madrid where the acuteness of one's feeling for this infinite well of human misery can be eased by the impression of doing something useful, however small. It would be impossible, even if one desired it, to find refuge from the cry of the wandering masses of confused and homeless humanity, unwanted by a world that has grown too used to the solutions of deportation and concentration camp.

"What a story of anxiety, problems, fear, disorganization, suffering and, sometimes, hopelessness the world tells! Can you visualize those hundreds of thousands of uprooted men and women—who now go by the euphemism of 'displaced persons'—milling about in Central and Eastern Europe? Can you imagine the appalling extent of the permanent problem that will remain after Military Government and UNRRA have completed their work of repatriation, when the issues of collaborationism, pro-fascism, pro- or anti-Russianism, anti-semitism, and the incomprehensible passions of politics will have made stateless persons of the thousands upon thousands that can never return home? I can't, even with the little sample we see in Spain."

UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

"I am told that when Confucius declared that 'all men are brothers' he was not thinking of so large an area as the world, but there seems to be no reason why we should not make it apply universally. If the presence of the Friends Ambulance Unit in China has done anything at all to promote this idea of universal brotherhood, then we are quite content."

*—Colin Bell, Chairman, FAU China Convoy,
in a broadcast over the Chungking Radio.*

First Impressions of Quaker Work in Italy

by JOHN A. WADDINGTON

John Waddington arrived in Italy on August 10 to replace Howard Wriggins as AFSC representative, the latter being now assigned to AFSC work in France. Below, John Waddington gives his impressions of the small, symbolic effort of the AFSC-FAU project in Chieti Province to provide transport to aid in the reconstruction of this greatly devastated area. Ten Quaker appointees, two American and eight British, are at work on this task, and three more are preparing in Philadelphia to join the work:

My first impressions of our AFSC project in the devastated area of Chieti Province in the Aventino River Valley are naturally numerous and confused, because one gets so many glimpses of things. An almost overpowering and morbid fascination causes one just to wander around and stare at the destruction and to reflect upon it.

A Hopeless Feeling

When I first saw the almost hopeless destruction in the villages in the Aventino Valley, the blown-up bridges, the primitive means of transportation (oxcart, donkey, and human being), the stony soil which the entire family, even the small children, must till by hand, the need for clothing and shoes, the dirt, dust and smells of the villages, I wondered if we could ever hope for much improvement here. Then, too, the great difficulties which our fellows in the project must overcome, the overcrowded quarters and the problem of keeping transport on the road (I arrived at 8:30 p.m. and at 10:30 p.m. we helped unload 3,000 large roof tiles from a truck which arrived with one flat tire and a flat spare) made me wonder whether our scratching of the surface was worth the money and effort. One gets a completely helpless feeling when one stands in the midst of rubble on a sharp hillside and cannot distinguish the outlines of most of the former houses or even see where the streets had been. Think what rebuilding means! The villager has to dig into this by hand, sorting out the larger stones while his wife and children carry the remainder away to the edge of the town. He must climb up into the mountains and cut timber and carry it on his back to the village to help pay for the house that is to be. All this before he can begin to build his house—and all the time he is living in the crowded home of his relatives and working all day to grub out enough food to eat and to store for the winter.

... Replaced by Sense of Meaning

However, after two or three days of visiting the several communes with different members of the AFSC-Friends Ambulance Unit project here, of closely observing the work and the attitude of the people, of passing through places where we have been asked to help but cannot because of limited facilities, the first feeling is gradually replaced by a sense of real meaning in the project, a feeling of great respect and kinship with these hard working

little people of the mountains who are courageously rebuilding, and a realization of the much larger number of homes under construction in the communes in which we are working than in those left to themselves.

When the Quaker workers are embarrassingly forced to sit down to a large meal, in a villager's family circle, from a stock-pile which one knows, as does the owner, probably will not last his family through the snowbound winter, when one sees a happy family in a home they wouldn't have without our transport, one is sure this is a good Friendly project.

The Provincial Engineer has no transport and these villages are 30 miles or more from the brick and tile kilns (a two-day journey by oxcart). No large relief group has done much in this field, though UNRRA has begun a similar group with ten trucks. Other relief agencies seem to be concentrating on food, clothing, and medicine, programs which can accomplish only a part of their purpose when serious overcrowding exists.

Stimulus to Self-Help

That the transport definitely stimulates individuals is indicated by the contrast between a nearby city of some 20,000 to 30,000 people, which was about half destroyed, and the village of Colledemacine where we have been working. In the first city, in riding around, we could find only 12 dwellings, all in one government project, under construction. In Colledemacine, a village of possibly 1,000 people, perhaps 50 homes are in various stages of negotiation and construction.

It is estimated that the AFSC-FAU group will have aided in the completion of 300 homes before the snows come, and some estimate this as shelter for 1,000 persons. This may be conservative in view of the shortage of housing. Three families whom I saw in their completed houses numbered four, six, and nine persons respectively. It is a small but real contribution in Chieti Province, where the estimates of roofless persons range from 6,000 to 30,000, depending upon your definitions of roofless and overcrowding.

I feel that this work is a real Quaker job of doing vital work not being done by someone else and giving Friendly service to suffering people in a quiet way which encourages their self-respect.

Le Havre Reflections

"A woman came into the Clothing Center this morning with ten children, a thin, dirty, excited lot, to get clothes for three that were privileged (they are tubercular) to get off to the country for a few weeks. The mother asked if she could possibly have a blanket, as an extra, because it is so difficult to arrange the sleeping since all 12 members of the family live in one room. It does no good to get excited about situations like this; there just isn't any housing. At least now, with their new sweaters and shoes, the three children will be able to get away for some fresh air, away from destruction and rubble. Those left behind look for consolation to their bright Quaker quilt.

"There was another family, a grandmother and two young orphan boys, only a year apart but four sizes difference between them. The boy of eleven looked like seven. He was flat-chested, large-eyed, and very grateful for his new culottes and chemise. After they received their clothing, I went to help assemble their supplementary food pack, and they couldn't wait to eat the figs. The grandmother was so grateful that I was embarrassed.

"One comes to know something of what life has been like here by talking to people, by visiting, and by listening. The material destruction is so evident it is monotonous; to walk or cycle about is to be covered with dust from the heaps of what used to be houses. For the luckier ones, those whose houses were not destroyed, there are adjustments to make to requisitioning, overcrowding, and a complete lack of resources to draw upon for rebuilding their lives. It is not pleasant to look at or live with.

"What is particularly saddening to me is the fact that most of the destruction done by bombing, here at least, is the work of Americans, of my school and college friends, and the result in a wider sense of my own inadequacies insofar as I am involved in other men's lives. Is there such a hiatus between a bomb from the air and a tubercular family of 12 living in one room?"

—Harvey Buchanan, *Secours Quaker, Le Havre, France.*

* * *

"TRIBUTE TO OUR CHINESE COLLEAGUES"

A number of Chinese have been working with the Friends Ambulance Unit in China, and American members of the China convoy pay tribute to them:

"Quite a number (about 25) of Chinese students, doctors, and nurses have joined us on the same maintenance basis and have given a great deal to the work and life of the Convoy. A tribute must be paid to our Chinese colleagues who have not only stood by the Unit in its times of difficulty and faced many hardships; but by their willingness to give of their best to those in need without thought of re-

"LOVE YOUR BROTHERS"

"Significantly enough, the one stone of the Protestant Church in Caen still identifiable has engraven on it the words: 'Aimez vos Frères'."

—Burns Chalmers, *Secours Quaker, Caen, France.*

* * *

Letter to "Monsieur Quaker"

27 May, 1945.

Monsieur:

I was imprisoned at Drancy in September 1944, unable to communicate with my family, when one day I was given a package of provisions "from the Quakers." These provisions gave me great pleasure, but greater still was the moral comfort which they brought. My companions and I had believed that we were forsaken by God and Man. From that day we knew that on the other side of the camp walls there was a group who were moved by only one consideration; the sadness of our condition, and who tried to relieve it just as they had relieved the suffering of those who preceded us in this circle of misfortune.

"A Sort of Santa Claus"

Transferred subsequently to Tourelles, then to Fresnes, I had new occasion to appreciate, not only the generosity of the Friends, but their sensitivity and the modesty of their charity. Thousands of poor people whom your Society has saved from hunger and despair, that withering of the soul, do not have the slightest idea of your Society's origin and object. At Tourelles, my companions used to speak of the weekly visit of "Monsieur Quaker", for it was thus that the old and sick men designated your representative. "Monsieur Quaker" was for them a sort of exotic Santa Claus come from the other side of the herring pond.

"When the Hand Gives . . ."

Nothing gives greater honor to the Friends than their acquiescence in this mistake and the ignorance of those whom they were helping concerning their identity. When the hand gives and the face remains in the shadow—that is the most beautiful form of charity.

Please accept the profound gratitude of one of the many whom you have helped—

(sgd) Monsieur I. C., Paris

ward, they have indeed proved themselves China's true patriots.

"Without them, our work would have little significance, for the success of the Convoy is not only judged by the material help which we have been able to give to China but by the way in which we have succeeded in cooperating with Chinese people and organizations. It is significant that T. F. Tsiang, head of Chinese National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, recognizes this aspect of the Convoy's activities and wishes to preserve it in future relief work in China."

Sky Island: "Renewed Confidence in Mankind"

by ALGIE AND EVA NEWLIN

Algie and Eva Newlin of Guilford College, North Carolina, write of Sky Island Hostel at Nyack, N. Y. where this past summer they have been directors of this AFSC project:

Sky Island Hostel is one of the many efforts of the American Friends Service Committee to relieve mental and physical suffering and to restore despondent individuals to their proper place in society. It offers a two-weeks' vacation to people who have been admitted to the United States as immigrants and who have great need for the type of vacation and rest that Sky Island affords. Only those with low incomes who could not go to some other place for a satisfactory vacation are invited to Sky Island. For some of them, their two weeks at this Friends Service Committee outpost is their first vacation for many years.

Two weeks at Sky Island is not just an ordinary vacation, as extravagant expressions of gratitude from the guests indicate. During their stay, something takes place in their lives which gives greater hope for their future and a renewed confidence in mankind. One guest said, "Where is Sky Island? Not an island in the Pacific. No. Sky Island is a place out yonder toward Heaven where people who are disillusioned and broken in spirit may again find hope and joy in living." These were the words of an 89-year-old Austrian lady who appreciated and made use of every hour of her time at Sky Island. For group singing and folk dancing, she played the piano with the vigor of a young person. When telling the staff goodbye, she stamped her foot and said, "I will live to come back to Sky Island."

The guests work together on the meal crews and in maintenance of the household. Divided into small classes under the leadership of members of the staff, they study English, language and literature, American life and customs, social, political, and economic problems, and American history. They take great pleasure in the evening games, folk dancing, and singing. After these evening programs, guests have frequently been heard to say, "I have never laughed so much since before Hitler came."

Many of the guests can hardly believe that people can be found who are friendly to them. They often say that the terrible ordeal in Europe caused them to lose faith in mankind. Some have felt the chilling currents of prejudices in America. Their joy is great when they meet Sky Island's Friendly way of life, free from attack, where they can feel they are with their own friends and where the place of birth or nationality is not an obstacle to wholesome coopera-

tive living. They are surprised and more than grateful to find people willing to give up their own summer vacation to work with and for them, without pay, as members of the Sky Island staff.

The staff has varied in numbers from nine to fourteen, and four children of staff members have made their contributions to the life of the group. The staff members during the past summer season came from widely scattered places: Texas, Oregon, Ohio, North Carolina, Virginia, and Middle Atlantic and New England states. Housewives, teachers, students, and a business man were included on the staff.

Many of the guests had had to make difficult adjustments since arriving in America, their place of refuge. One woman, who in her own country belonged to the very wealthy class and there devoted much of her time and means to the education of underprivileged children, is now living in a home for elderly people. Others who were wealthy in Europe are now working in factories making hats, sweaters, artificial flowers; one man is an elevator boy. Former lawyers, dentists, and industrialists are forced to work in other fields at low wages. Every two weeks throughout the summer, 35 to 40 of these New Americans came to Sky Island Hostel where they had a happy and congenial vacation and were helped along the way toward constructive living in their new country.

* * *

Aid to Refugees in Mexico

The AFSC has sent clothing and has been giving financial support of \$100 a month to assist Friends in Mexico City in their work on behalf of refugees. Though many of the refugees helped are Central Europeans, a large part of this service is with Spaniards. While for the greater part, these people have found a place in Mexico, there are often calls for help such as a loan to buy dental equipment necessary to start a person in business, or calls for clothing for refugee children. Approximately 17,000 Spanish refugees are in Mexico. New arrivals are given help in finding places to live or work and counsel is given on a variety of individual problems.

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