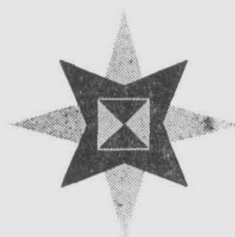


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VOL. III, No. 7

AUGUST, 1946

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

Relief in Japan—An Opportunity for Friendship

by SAMUEL D. MARBLE

Samuel D. Marble is in charge of the Japan Desk of the AFSC, and is chairman of the committee on Japan (Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia) of the American Committee of Voluntary Agencies.

When the Japanese Government opened negotiations for surrender, an emissary who was scarcely five feet tall was sent to MacArthur's headquarters. He was dwarfed by the enormous Brigadier-General whom Douglas MacArthur had sent to meet the plane, but as he approached the reception party he extended his hand in greeting. For a moment the American Brigadier hesitated. He started to reach for the extended hand of greeting. Then he caught himself. He clenched his fingers and pointed his thumb over his shoulder in a contemptuous gesture of "on your way, now."

Anyone who knows the Japanese people is aware that handshaking is foreign to their formalities and that this gesture was a concession to occidental convention. It was a tiny evidence of an intention to meet the Americans on their own ground, and on their own terms.

This split-second occurrence symbolizes a whole relationship between two nations. It is still a towering America, and a diminutive, defeated Japan. There is still a hand extended, and still a reluctance to reach out and honestly seize the fact of a common humanity. But the time is short. Such an invitation to friendship may not come to us again.

Because the American Friends Service Committee would like to build up confidence between the two peoples, it is planning a program of relief in Japan, launched in the hope that it will strengthen the peace-loving elements in Japanese society and provide a real experience in cooperation.

Japanese needs are truly great. According to government statistics the average food intake per person is less than 1,000 calories a day, although rural areas are better off than urban districts. The Associated Press reports that the Japanese have already eaten their silkworms. Flour made of roots and leaves is sold in the markets. Conditions are so serious that the U. S. Department of Commerce reports that the program of democratic reconstruction "is being seriously hampered by food shortages." Consumers' goods are also in short supply. For example, the present ration allows three matches a month, one cake hotel-size soap every three months, one light bulb a year.

Tuberculosis, trachoma, typhus and smallpox have increased. Yet because of shortages of drugs, medical equipment and supplies, many hospital beds

have to go unused. The Military Government estimates that hospitals are functioning at less than half their normal capacity.

Our government has assumed special responsibility for the future of Japanese people living under American control, who are learning at first hand about democracy and Americanism from the U. S. occupation forces. This means that, whether we like it or not, we Americans are responsible for the effect of our occupation on the life of that nation. Relief now is one method of aiding the Japanese in their struggle to become a healthy, democratic, peace-loving and prosperous people, pledged to world cooperation and working for the security and freedom of all.

The Service Committee is one of thirteen organizations which are united under the name of Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia, known as LARA. At the present time LARA is represented in Tokyo by two representatives; one, Esther B. Rhoads, is a member of the AFSC staff. These two persons are making arrangements with MacArthur's headquarters for the receipt and distribution of relief supplies. That agreement is almost complete and it is expected that relief goods will be shipped to Japan during August. Distribution will probably be channeled through public and private institutions, and will take place under the supervision of the two LARA representatives.

The first shipments will be primarily food: dried milk, multi-purpose meals, rice, fats and oils. Medical supplies will be sent on the first ships available, and clothing shipments will start in the fall. Feeding programs will be set up especially for orphaned children and homeless waifs who will be gathered into asylums and foster homes where they can be given a modicum of care.

The devastation of the larger cities in Japan was in some cases eighty-five per cent complete. The transportation system is at present defective and inadequate. Normal trade and food importation are still far in the future. But in spite of her enormous problems there is much evidence that Japan is struggling to enroll herself among the democratic and peace-loving nations of the earth. There is still a hand of greeting outstretched toward America, and the relief program is an effort to respond with the hand of friendship.

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Midwife Training Program in Calcutta

by JOAN COURT

From a report by Joan Court, an English nurse with the Friends Service Unit in India. In April the Bengal Nursing Council accepted her plan to introduce home experience into the midwifery curriculum of Calcutta hospitals.

Up till now the very poor people around here have usually been delivered by relatives or untrained midwives. Some of them go to the hospital, and among the better educated there is more understanding of the need for skilled care.

I was warned before starting this work that the customs in regard to childbirth would be a large obstacle, but have found that the majority have a sound health reason behind them. For instance, any vessel, jar or article of clothing used for the confinement must be thrown away afterwards. Though wasteful, this helps prevent infection, for it means no one will touch the bowl I use for bathing or swabbing, and the clean rags I wrap the baby in will not be used for any other purpose.

On the whole the patients are cooperative. They are reluctant to come to clinics, and find it difficult to see the necessity for regular pre-natal care, but once confident in you, will take advice. Some of their dietary habits are very bad, and ninety per cent of my patients are profoundly anemic.

My first delivery made a vivid impression on me. About four o'clock one morning the husband came for me. He led the way, swinging a kerosene lamp, down Keshab Sen Street where we threaded our way around people sleeping on the pavements and occasional buffalo on the road, down a narrow lane, and up the rickety stairs to Durga's one room which houses two adults and four children. There was no lighting, but they had a wooden bed and a stool.

We found Durga well advanced in labor. She had bathed, changed into a clean garment and put a jar of water to boil. I could find only one piece of rag for the bed, no mattress or blankets. A helpful neighbor looked after our wants and was not in the way. We boiled our bowls, made Durga a cup of tea and had one with her, and assured the husband that all was well. Within a couple of hours it was, and the neighbor holding the torch rejoiced with us to find the baby a boy. After the infant was born, Durga faded out and for a few minutes was pulseless. These people have very little stamina after years of malnutrition.

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Hospital Rehabilitation in Honan

by THEO WILLIS

Theo Willis, British FAU member recently returned to England, had the opportunity to visit hospital rehabilitation work in the cities of Chengchow and Changteh before leaving China.

A basic part of the FAU program in China is now concerned with the rehabilitation of mission hospitals serving the civilian population. Such hospitals were either closed or their activities curtailed by the Japanese Army, and for over seven years a huge backlog of serious conditions was aggregated. The worst example is kala-azar, a disease highly fatal if untreated. Though common before the war, movements of refugees to and from epidemic centers spread it, infecting hundreds of thousands. FAU personnel, supported by these hospitals, is taking a large share in the program of combating this disease, a program developed by the Chinese National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and financed by UNRRA resources.

In Chengchow the woodwork and glass of the Southern Baptist Mission Hospital were severely damaged by the Japanese Army though the main structure was left substantially intact. Carpenters and electricians were set to work on repairs, and one of the largest X-ray machines in China was restored from its cave hiding place where it had been in operation for three years.

At Changteh the Canadian Mission Hospital presented a more difficult problem, for it had been

used by the Japanese as an army headquarters. Sluice rooms had been converted into bathrooms, lavatories installed in many unlikely places, and an air-raid shelter dug into the foundations, seriously undermining the whole structure. But the most serious damage had been done by the Chinese Army after the surrender. Woodwork in doors, windows and cupboards had been removed for firewood, and wood floorings of adjacent buildings and even main joists had been torn up for the same purpose. Between the bitter cold of the Honan winter and Communist control of normal coal sources at that time, anyone would have been prompted to take the nearest substitute as fuel.

Through the generosity of the Canadian Red Cross and Canadian Chinese War Relief, a complete set of operating room equipment and surgical instruments was allocated to this hospital and will go far toward re-establishing a good medical service.

American funds from United China Relief cover much of the basic expense of structural and mechanical rehabilitation, and the missions contribute to this expense as they can. As personnel becomes available, the hospitals will be restored to them.

In Europe Now

by MAURICE WEBB

Maurice Webb, a member of the Society of Friends in Durban, South Africa, arrived in the United States in June upon invitation of the AFSC to consult on Anglo-American Quaker relief in Europe. For the past few months he has served the British Friends Relief Service as a traveling commissioner to study famine conditions in Europe. He visited Quaker relief teams in France, Holland, Poland and the British Zone of Germany.

Desolation and Daffodils

Recently I visited the island of Walcheren, where the RAF cut dykes, letting in sea water, in order to dislodge the Germans. I stood at the window of a house in Middleburg and looked out on the results of this flooding. Straight away to the horizon was water, stale salt water, and standing in it were houses and dead trees. In the whole landscape there was no green thing nor sign of life save one mournful sea gull.

The recovery of the island is a subject of national interest in Holland, for its fertility had made substantial fruit and vegetable contributions to the supplies of the country. Some say it will be five years before the land will be free from salt and anything can be grown again.

The FRS Relief Team with which I stayed has been working among the people of Walcheren since last year, feeding, clothing, combatting diseases, restoring houses as the water receded. The work has been hard, physically, but made joyful by the rare spirit of the people.

I stayed, too, in the Betuwe district where the bitter battle of Arnhem was fought. Smashed farms, ruined houses, abandoned tanks are eloquent witnesses to that conflict. But the Betuwe, also a vegetable and fruit producing area, was flooded with fresh water and already is recovered.

Much in Europe today is deeply depressing, but Holland is a tonic and a reassurance. Rotterdam, terribly bombed, is a clean, tidy and thriving city. Nowhere in Holland can a food queue be seen, and in all the towns flowers are in the windows and flower sellers along the streets offer daffodils, narcissi and tulips.

A Haunted World

From Holland, across the battlefields of Arnhem where wintersown crops are growing around abandoned tanks, I went over the bridge at Nijmegen and down the road to Kleve and Germany. At the boundary you know at once that you have entered another country; no, another world. The mind recoils and looks back to the fields and flowers of Holland, but it is no use, here is another world to be faced. Words come to the mind as symbols: victory, defeat; hope, despair; purpose, lethargy.

Down that road through Kleve and Goch and on to Cologne it seems as if the battle must have passed but yesterday, as though the dust of it has hardly settled. Houses are crumpled down as a shell collapsed them, and in little towns rubble sprawls across the streets. Cologne is not just a battered city, but a nightmare of rubble and fragments of walls that point fantastically to the sky. One becomes haunted by rubble. How many bodies are buried beneath it? Is it imagination that gives it a penetrating deathly smell? How do the people of Cologne live? They don't. They exist crowded into huge air-raid shelters and into cellars under the rubble. A child welfare worker told me that she locates her families by looking over the piles of rubble for smoke, then she finds somewhere nearby a hole leading down to a cellar where a family will be crouched over a tiny fire.

The Bone of Human Suffering

Flying over Warsaw I saw more terrible destruction, and I said, "This is Cologne over again." But it wasn't. Warsaw is the most completely destroyed city of Europe.

The bombing of Warsaw in 1939 announced to the world that war had come again, but little damage was done to the city. The insurrection in 1944 that led to sixty-three days of bitter street fighting added greatly to the destruction. But it was in reprisal for the insurrection, after it had failed, that the Germans systematically, section by section, destroyed the entire city.

Today Warsaw is amazingly full of life. People have poured back, and wherever amid the ruins something of a room could be contrived, there is a home. Street vendors sell anything from strawberries to brassieres at the curb. One hundred and fifty thousand trade unionists are giving free labor to clearing the city, university students are cleaning streets, planting trees and public gardens. Warsaw has refused to die.

As with Warsaw, so with Poland. Six million of her people were killed in battle or by deliberate killing. Four million more were deported to Germany and Russia. There are a million orphans. Almost two million have no roof for shelter. Total stocks of food yield an average intake of only 1,300 calories a day, and two million children are in serious need of food, clothing and care. In Poland you are very close to the bone of human suffering.

Cauldron of Europe

by WILLIS D. WEATHERFORD

Willis Weatherford, European Commissioner, was the first AFSC representative to enter Hungary after the war, and one of the first to reach Poland. After four months in these countries and in Austria and Germany, he has returned for a few weeks of consultation.

During the past four months three tremendous areas of need have become apparent to me. Whether they can be brought within the orbit of Service Committee action, or solved at all, is a real question; but the fact that they exist, are growing larger every moment, and are vitally related to the survival of human dignity and life, bring them to the focal point of my concern.

Expellees in a Defeated Land

Expellees, including many "Volksdeutsche," are forced to come into a defeated and destroyed land. Fifteen per cent of Germany's houses have been destroyed completely, twenty-three per cent partially, and in the ones left standing there are 1.6 persons on the average to each room, with four people per room in Kassel and other large cities.

Into destroyed and defeated Germany are pouring millions of people expelled from their homes in countries of eastern Europe because of German ancestry, making one man in seven a foreigner. Rebuilding in Germany will take twenty years at best, and in the meantime these people must consider barracks with four families to a room as permanent homes, or be crowded into already overflowing and hostile houses.

The million unemployed in Germany do not welcome the intrusion of the "Volksdeutsche" who take food and shelter from Germans and yet are not adequately cared for themselves; who take German jobs if they work, and become Government charges if they don't. No economy can stand to utilize one-fourth to one-half of its budget in maintaining public charges, as is happening in Germany, and the Military Government fears this welfare budget may break the whole zonal government. Added to the physical misery of this situation is the psychological fact that the Germans consider the "Volksdeutsche" complete foreigners, while the expellees refuse to be integrated into the new society.

Reconciliation Between Germany and Her Neighbors

The second problem lies in the hatred of the French for Germany, which is surpassed only by that of the Poles. When you remind a Pole that Germany is even more destroyed than Poland, he does not want to believe it, and if he does believe it, is likely to be sorry only that more Germans were not killed. Europe does not comprehend that the

hand which struck it down is now suffering intensely. The Germans, on the other hand, are unable to see over the ashes of their own ruins to the suffering that has been caused in their name all over Europe, and this lack of understanding makes them repay hatred with indifference, self-centeredness and generous disrespect. Feeding is a step in the right direction since well-fed men can see their neighbors' troubles, but just food is not enough. Friends must develop programs specifically designed to reconcile man to man in the cauldron of Europe. Work camps are no panacea, but they might be one approach. I would like to see camps in both Germany and France, each with workers from France, Germany and America, as symbols of mutual concern and repentance.

The East and the West

The third problem is that of cooperation between East and West. I have seen Russia at work in Berlin and Vienna, Poland and Hungary, and I am sobered by disagreements on petty welfare decisions in Berlin and by conversations with Russian soldiers in Hungary. We assume the infinite value of each human being, while Russia assumes men are of value in so far as they serve the state, and though we compromise on specific issues, neither culture can abandon its fundamental belief. One compromise does not make the next easier, but leaves the whole fundamental argument to be gone through again. Though sobered as to the possibility of East and West cooperating, I have been quickened to its necessity. Perhaps because governments cannot, private agencies must uncover the impossible possibility. This may not be a job for Friends, but usually where a concern is felt a way is opened. Work in devastated Russia would be a long step in the right direction.

* * *

INDIAN MILK FUND

In June 1946 the Indian Government sent a check for \$1,200,000 to the AFSC to be used for purchasing and shipping to India 1,500 tons of powdered whole milk at the rate of 500 tons a month for three months. These shipments of milk are being distributed by the Friends Service Unit for supplementary feeding of children in South India.

Work Camps in Lapland

by the AFSC STAFF IN FINLAND

A Summer Program

This summer we are continuing a limited program of food for schools, but our main project is in two work camps, applying techniques based on the pattern the AFSC has used in America to the problems of post-war reconstruction in Finland, where shortages of manpower in the devastated areas and the tasks of home reconstruction and agricultural rehabilitation are great.

The AFSC and Suomen Huolto (the coordinating relief agency in Finland) are providing financial support, staff food and equipment, while the local communities involved are each providing certain necessities such as firewood and the use of a central building for each camp. The Finnish Government is helping by supplying free transportation for Finnish campers. The camps are as international as possible, with recruits from Sweden and Denmark in addition to Finnish young people and American AFSC workers.

The camp at Autti, in Rovaniemi Commune, opened June 14 under the direction of William Fredrickson and Elvi Saari. It is located in a nature preserve on the rim of a gorge through which a river races down to spectacular rapids. Nearby are fifteen families whose homes are being rebuilt.

Hirvasavaara Work Camp

The second camp, at Hirvasavaara, is directed by Mary Barclay and Ingmar Rikberg. It is on an old school ground where the Building Board of the Salla Commune built a barracks for us to use as main house. We sleep in tents down in the woods. People wander in and out of the barracks all the time, and we translate letters for them, tell them how to get in touch with relatives in Minnesota, and feed them. Little girls come in and sit on the beds by the hour, just looking, with eyes like saucers.

We are helping to rebuild four homes, two for war widows and two for war invalids. Three of the houses are up on a hill which is covered now with new-green grass, bright against a background of dark forested hills. Along the lake shore below are yellow Lapland roses and white birches.

A lovely thing happened the other day while we were working on one of the houses by the lake. Around the bend came a big rowboat of children singing at the top of their lungs. The boat went slowly across the lake and we all stopped work for awhile to look and listen. The children were singing a song about picking wild flowers in the summer sun, and the whole thing was like a scene in Paradise.

The people are supposed to do their own rebuilding, with a government guarantee of the value of their homes in 1944, a security against which they

can take out loans. One difficulty is that the mark value has dropped over sixty per cent, and a second is the expense of transporting materials. Everything except the lumber must come from Rovaniemi by truck or be loaded off and on the train twice because the railroad bridges are gone at Rovaniemi and Kemijarvi. The Quakers bring in high-priced materials which are difficult to obtain in Finland, such as nails, so that the families need to take out loans only on the cost of transporting lumber. The campers are working on the trucks which bring the lumber, and also contribute labor to the building of the houses.

People of Our Village

Our first Sunday morning we had a meeting together, and then the lady who was having the Sunday service in her house came over and invited us all to coffee before church. She must have borrowed all the china in town to feed us, and we were seated on a plank bench along one wall like chickens on a roost. People came in early to church while we drank coffee and ate wonderful cake and cookies. Then more benches were brought in and the service began. It was good that we could meet the community first in a church service, for though we all speak different languages, and have different ways, we can all meet together and worship the same God.

It is a moving experience to see the courage with which these people have come back to the ruins of their homes, building first a sauna (bathhouse) or barn to live in the first year, and now in the second year erecting houses. Their courage has taught us much about the unimportance of material things, and the all-importance of the spiritual basis of life.

* * *

BENGAL FAMINE

Famine-scarred Bengal is again at the brink of a disastrous famine. April rains, necessary for rice seedlings, were followed by winds and rains in May which badly damaged the crop. Bengal normally produces about one-third of India's rice supply, but this year only ten per cent of the crop was put in. Stocks are low, a great influx of destitute persons from other areas has added to Bengal's sixty million mouths to feed, and re-enforcements in food imports have fallen far short of expectations.

During the famine of 1943, a million and a half people died of hunger and disease. To avert a similar tragedy in 1946 there must be greater shipments of grain from other countries of the world.

Hostel on the Hudson

Sky Island, a rambling house in a quiet setting of trees and shrubs along the Hudson at Nyack, New York, was loaned by Dr. Viola Bernard to the AFSC to use as a vacation hostel for refugees and new Americans in 1939. This service was continued during the summers until June 1946, when Sky Island opened its doors as a reception hostel to some of the displaced persons from the heartland of Europe who have come from years of moral, physical and spiritual depression. To the politically cynical their hope seems bound to disillusionment, but after living with them a visitor finds more in their enthusiasm than he can give in return.

Life is planned at Sky Island, in a leisurely fashion. Its purpose is to give these persons coming in on an immigrant visa, under corporate affidavit of the American Christian Committee for Refugees, a chance to relax and rest while adjusting to American life.

Each morning begins with a meeting for worship after breakfast, in which the guests participate with Bible readings of their own selection, and thoughts are shared in both English and Russian. Some find the surge of memories out of the silence too great, and others realize a new peace of mind. There are English classes every day, and long afternoons of quiet for reading, listening to music, sleeping, tennis, ping-pong or swimming. Song-fests and skits, picnics, and educational programs where American history is taught and discussed are arranged for the evenings, and opportunities are open to everyone to visit churches in the community. There are bi-weekly "town meetings" where hostel problems are discussed, in which the new Americans learn to take part concretely in the programs of their community. The voluntary staff is available at all times to help wash dishes, interpret new experiences in democracy, encourage the use of English and help guests make contacts and friends.

Every guest is an individual, and is so treated in English classes, on work crews, and in finding positions. Most of them learn English with enthusiasm and are very eager to start earning a living in this country. A man whose architectural education was interrupted by the war has made several excellent water colors of the house; a zestful apostle tried to start Bible classes; and all the young were much disappointed that no one could teach them to jitterbug.

Needs vary from a desperate request for clothing, especially good underwear, night clothes and coats, to bathing suits and tennis rackets. Above all these people need friends who have a real understanding of what privation, uncertainty and deep suffering mean. One three-year-old Russian child had eaten only potatoes before coming to Sky Island, and is only slowly adjusting to milk and apple sauce, refusing vegetables and all sweetened foods.

All of these people have tales. A blonde fifteen-year-old boy walked three hundred miles from camp

to camp searching for his mother; they are both at Sky Island now. A young man rubbed tobacco in his eyes, inflaming them seriously, to keep from being transferred from Auschwitz to Buchenwald. Enthusiastic, serious, staunch in their new-found faith, these people are capable of enriching America.

* * *

FORGOTTEN VALLEY

When the AFSC staff in Austria was making first contacts in Vienna, they found that the province of Lower Austria was in particularly great need. The towns were suffering severely, and supplies in rural areas were so exhausted that the peasants themselves were starving. After investigating the situation, they chose one town in which to work.

Berndorf, this village of about 8,000 people, is sometimes called "Forgotten Valley," for it was formerly the site of a Krupp munitions works which was dismantled and taken away by the occupying forces. Here the AFSC is now providing supplementary food for 2,384 people, including 337 adolescents from 14 to 17, 373 children up to three years of age, and 1,674 persons over sixty.

One recipient wrote in thanks for his package: "May I be allowed to thank you most heartily for the nice food package (made up of oat flakes, dried milk, sardines and soap), handed over to me in your name by the Administration of our town. You will no doubt be interested to learn that at Berndorf all people over sixty years of age have received a food parcel and great has been the joy, because a supplement of provisions is very welcome in these times of need."

* * *

THE SOIL OF PEACE

THE SOIL OF PEACE, By Douglas V. Steere. Published by Human Events, Inc., 608 S. Dearborn Street, Chicago 5, Illinois, 1946. 20 pages. Price: 25c.

This pamphlet contains a discussion of the human factor in reconstruction based on the premise that "... enforceable laws and workable political systems grow out of and draw their nurture from the soil of existing community standards and relationships, and that laws and political institutions owe both their enforceability and their effectiveness to the extent that they draw strength out of this soil of common consent."

The author sets forth with great cogency the unique role which religiously-motivated private relief agencies can play in the physical and spiritual rehabilitation of war-stricken countries. While recognizing that nothing short of governmental and inter-governmental large-scale action can be adequate for basic relief, he makes a strong plea for governments according such private agencies far greater freedom and scope of activity than has thus far been granted.

—CORNELIUS KRUSÉ.

"This is Latvia . . ." said the Sky Island artist
of this picture. This is Latvia, or Poland, or
Hungary, or Czechoslovakia, resurgent in the
midst of storm.



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