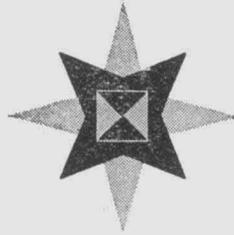


FOREIGN SERVICE BULLETIN



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VOL. III, No. 10

NOVEMBER, 1946

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

Italian Hill Town

by IRWIN ABRAMS

A small rebuilding project in Italy, begun by the Friends Ambulance Unit and the American Friends Service Committee in 1945, has expanded with the assistance of UNRRA and the Italian Government. In seven devastated areas, British and American personnel are working with representatives of the Brethren Service Committee, the International Voluntary Service for Peace, and Italian volunteers in a reconstruction program. They are utilizing some five hundred UNRRA trucks and are repairing more than seven thousand rooms a month.

Marciaso is one of those isolated, Italian hill towns, dating back to medieval times. Its peasants lived quietly even during the war years, until in 1944 the Germans dynamited and burned the town in reprisal for partisan sabotage of a German truck on the Marciaso road. Thereafter the inhabitants lived in the hills for several months. They could not cultivate their terraced fields and the wheat and grape harvests were lost. They did collect the chestnuts, and had chestnut flour during the winter of 1944-45. When Robert Barrus visited the town this spring, he found that about eighty per cent of the homes had been destroyed, but that there was not much evidence of rebuilding. He not only extended the transport program to the town, but explored the idea of a voluntary work camp.

This camp, made up of Swiss, American and Italian volunteers, had a lively spirit. Its members were enthusiastic and enjoyed working together and camping out. Their tent was pitched across the valley from the town, where the devastation was visible. A primitive roof of burlap was put up over the dining room table, and cooking was done over the open fire, all taking turns. Water came from a spring down the hill.

In the midst of the ruined village one house was going up, the pile of bright red tiles a happy contrast to the rubble. The boys had wanted to work here in the center of the destruction, as a symbol of what could be done. They spent a month digging out the basement of this house, and then took turns helping the bricklayers.

Farther down the hill was the church where the priest had to climb over the rubble to reach the altar and the people stood and knelt in piles of broken stones and dirt. The volunteers set to work and cleared out more than half of the debris in that church.

At first the villagers wondered about these young men who had come all the way to their little town to do such dirty work. They thought that they were prisoners of war, guarded by a Swiss and an American; or sons of Fascisti, doing penance for their fathers' sins. Then as they began to work with them in clearing the church, they saw that these young men worked hard, and gradually realized the meaning of their sincerity and goodwill. At the time of my visit I walked through the narrow old streets with the volunteers. They were greeted with smiles of welcome and friendship. They were invited to fiestas and threshings, they were part of the family.

★ ★ ★

MISSION TO HUNGARY

Quaker work in Hungary should finally be underway by November. A team of eight workers has been granted permission to enter the country. Three trucks and three jeeps have been assigned to the Hungarian Mission and will go to Budapest with the team.

Food and clothing shortages in Hungary are among the most critical in Europe. There has been an almost total absence of fats, milk, sugar and meat from the average diet, which amounted last winter to only 780 calories per day per person. Adolescents have been particularly neglected and are generally reported to be in poor health.

The program in Hungary will start with the distribution of food and clothing to the group between twelve and twenty years of age. Distribution will be through schools, trade schools, and universities.

It is proposed that the supplementary rations start with six hundred calories per day for approximately ten thousand adolescents in Budapest. Expansion into other cities and rural areas and into other relief projects will be considered after the team is established in Hungary. Assistance to orphanages and homes for delinquent children, and work among displaced Hungarians from Slovakia, are hoped-for developments.

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A Deep Need in Germany

by HERTHA KRAUS

The American Friends Service Committee is one of fifteen private relief agencies operating through CRALOG (Council of Relief Agencies Licensed to operate in Germany) in the British, French and American Zones of Germany. Relief supplies, including some from the Service Committee, have been distributed in the Russian Zone by the International Red Cross. Hertha Kraus recently spent three months in Germany as a representative of CRALOG. Her proposal that neighborhood centers for self-help projects be established has been approved, and the centers are being set up in the British, French and American Zones.

We are beginning to read in the papers that there is great need in Germany. We have been hearing of stark needs now for many years, and find it increasingly difficult to respond to such statements. Our senses are dulled. Tragically, we have become accustomed to wholesale suffering, wholesale death, wholesale destruction, and we feel helpless in the face of such realities.

Perhaps we feel as helpless as many Germans did during the Hitler regime, when they allowed cruelties and persecution, loss of property and of life, gross injustice and terror to take their course. They also were busy defending their own personal islands of security and decency. Now all of them are swirling in the dark and turbulent waters of the maelstrom, fighting silently for a last chance of survival.

Many Families Resisted

Millions of children are caught in the flood. Many of their parents supported a regime which gave them full employment, low-cost recreation, a new pride in a prosperous, efficient and well-organized economy. Too late, they realized their mistake. Young children have no way of judging whether their parents have been right or wrong. They can only stand by quietly, with deeply serious eyes in pinched faces and accept the world's judgment without understanding it.

Children of the anti-Nazis understand even less why they must now be hungry, without warm clothing or shoes, living in rubble, crowded into unheated schoolrooms without books or pencils or paper. They can remember the years of persecution and their own families' courageous and stubborn resistance during a period when Nazism was most powerful. Many families did resist. It is unfortunately true that they did not succeed in overthrowing the Nazi regime; but there was no lack of valiant effort, no lack of careful planning against desperate odds, no lack of torture and execution when they failed. German resistance was active and alert, repeatedly seeking alliance with the forces of the Western Democracies and requesting support for building more effective resistance from within. We were not allowed to know about these efforts during the war, and even now the American public has not been trusted with the full story. We are not aware of the millions of Germans who fervently hoped for an Allied victory, who welcomed the armed men of the Allied nations as their liberators.

Innocent and Guilty Alike Must Pay

Defeat has closed down on Germany, burying under the rubble of her cities and towns a tragic era. Now the penalties of defeat touch innocent and guilty alike. They have been jointly sentenced to perish for want of shelter and food, for want of encouragement, understanding, sympathetic, practical support in their desperate struggle to rebuild family and community life. They recognize the necessity for military government, but had hoped such administration might be realistic and efficient, based on positive and cooperative policies geared to rebuilding and rehabilitation.

Germany Asks for Our Thinking

American public opinion must recognize that the task of building a German democratic community is far too important and serious a task to be monopolized by any one group. Military Government needs to be supplemented by a wealth of talents, by generous contributions of voluntary leadership from different fields of specialization. There are many people in this and other countries who want to give their services in the wide area of spiritual and material rehabilitation, but the present military policy will not admit them.

It is not true that the Germans are able and willing to work out their own rehabilitation. They do have technical efficiency and skill, but are desperately and sincerely asking for information, for knowledge, for ideas that have matured in an atmosphere of free communities. They are asking for the stimulus of thorough and fundamental discussion of basic problems in educational planning, human relations, the interaction of individual and state.

Their own leaders are tired physically. They are more tired spiritually because they are becoming painfully aware of the isolation in which they have been held for so long, breathing in an atmosphere poisoned by totalitarian concepts. They wish to expel the poison. They wish to check their attitudes and behavior against those of free men and women whose integrity and moral caliber they can respect. They are calling, not so much for additional hands, as for minds, for planners and educators, for people concerned with fundamentals and willing to enter into a spiritual fellowship in which we can find and confirm together eternal values.

That is their call. What is our answer?

Outlook for the Winter

Unexpectedly good crops in the four leading food-producing countries of the world—the United States, Canada, Argentina and Australia—have given some people a false sense of optimism as this winter approaches. Actually hunger is a reality for millions of people. The Copenhagen Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, held in September, made central in its report the fact that although the good harvests of this year improved the food outlook for a few months, there will be a shortage of about eight million tons of bread grain this winter.

Fragments of the World Picture

The picture in Asia is serious. Twenty-one per cent of the Japanese are estimated to have lost their homes. Damage to Japanese cities reaches eighty per cent. Living costs have risen 350%, and in many areas the daily ration is 1200 calories.

The American Food Mission to India reports that though the well-organized food procurement and rationing system in southern India has thus far averted a serious famine, two million tons of grain are needed to meet a crisis in December, when it is estimated that remaining food reserves will be sufficient for only seventeen days.

In China the extended war, civil upheaval, inadequate and disrupted transportation, flood, famine and disease, have crippled many areas. The Director General of China's relief program was reported in the press on September fifth to have said that twenty million Chinese died from hunger within recent months.

Needs in Central Europe are critical. Lack of inter-zonal exchange in Germany makes it impossible to transport supplies from the large agricultural area under Russian control to the other zones. The influx of "Volksdeutsche" from Eastern Europe adds to the problems of food, shelter and clothing.

A medical examination of young people in Vienna, Austria, in May of this year, showed that fifty-two per cent of the girls and seventy-two per cent of the boys are in impaired health. The Allied Council for Austria reports that the 1200 calorie ration can be maintained only until the end of November. Then this year's harvests, intended as a reserve to cover any crisis that might develop after UNRRA ceases functioning, must be used.

Food and clothing shortages in Hungary are among the most critical in Europe. Fats, milk, sugar and meat are almost totally absent from the diet. Last winter the caloric ration averaged 780, though workers received 1300.

In Poland, four hundred thousand school children are without shoes. The height, weight, age ratio of

children in Poland is the worst in Europe, and the number of tubercular and crippled conditions from vitamin deficiency are higher than in any other European country. Thousands live on potatoes and potato soup. Eighty thousand children are living in the ruins of Warsaw, crowded with their families into dark, damp, rat-infested cellars.

The outlying countries of Europe also face hunger, cold and discouragement. In Italy the destruction of entire villages, the lack of transportation, food deficits and advancing prices hamper recovery. Young people in the congested areas of France are seriously malnourished. A spreading plague of tuberculosis, temporary dwellings, inflation, and refugee problems add to the discouragement of a war-weary people. Finland is facing the urgency of a second winter without adequate housing, and her children must be fed and clothed on a precarious budget.

Europe's coal output has deteriorated generally. Since coal is needed to operate plants producing fertilizer, agricultural and industrial recovery will both be delayed. The shortage of young men in Europe is apparent. War casualties and forced labor details have left only women and old men to do the work. Proper distribution of food is severely affected by great population shifts. Exchange and export trade is at a standstill, and internal transportation has been almost completely destroyed.

The End of UNRRA Approaches

Devastation resulting from the war was greater than expected, and the hoped-for degree of recovery has not been achieved. UNRRA goes out of existence in December, though it will continue to care for displaced persons until June 1947. Welfare work for the bewildered, crippled and orphaned children of Eastern Europe will be taken over by the Temporary Welfare Commission of the United Nations, not yet established.

An abnormally small harvest in the Ukraine excludes the possibility of adequate help from Russia. The United States, Canada, Argentina and Australia combined will have 450,000,000 bushels of grain less carry-over this year than last, though crops are at peak levels. Unless very careful management is exercised and the food resources of all countries used widely and cooperatively, the wage-earners and productive-workers of several countries will be faced with starvation this winter. Against these facts it is startling to realize that Americans are eating an average of 3360 calories per person per day. Though it is difficult to see human eagerness and individuality behind blanket figures, it lies heavily upon each of us, and upon all of us as a nation, to act upon the realization that we are our brother's keeper.

Above the Arctic Circle

This summer Finnish, Swedish, Danish, English and American young people gathered together in two work camps in Finland directed by the American Friends Service Committee, and in a third camp in Lapland which was set up under the direction of the Swedish International Work Units. These camps grew out of relief work undertaken during the winter and spring of 1945-46 in war-damaged areas of Finnish Lapland. The relief mission ministered to the food and clothing needs of the people; the work camps were built around the possibility of making some small contribution to the provision of shelter. Since work camps were not new in Finland nor in Quaker planning, it was thought that through a synthesis of Finnish and Quaker ideas a contribution beyond material aid might also be made.

Whirr of the Buzz-Saw

A visitor to the camps in Hirvasvaara and Autti, Finland, saw the background against which the young people were working:

"'Children are the wealth of Lapland,' runs the saying. They are produced in great numbers, and if the mortality rate could be lowered it would not take long to restore the numbers of the population reduced during the war. Passing the Finnish graveyards with their row on row of shiny white crosses, one is reminded that one in six Finns were killed during the war years.

"Along the road to Rovaniemi the signs of destruction begin—the methodical, relentless destruction which extends to tiny homes and barns far off the beaten track. Only brick chimneys are left, standing in queer and grotesque shapes, their silhouettes gaunt against the sky.

"But everywhere these reminders of past tragedies are being replaced by the whirr of the buzz-saw, the sound of saw and hammer. Everywhere Laplanders are building. In the summer of 1945 they built their bathhouses known as saunas, and lived in them during the winter. This past summer they tried to rebuild their homes. The government provides some help, based on the value at which the houses were insured before the war. But inflation has reduced the value of this contribution, thereby increasing the burden of the individual family. The

work campers tried to help the most needy, where men folk had been killed or disabled or where family resources were too slender."

Building in Three Communities

Each of the camps undertook to do some home reconstruction and child feeding. At Kittila, Lapland, additional community services were also added, including nursery care, the operation of a sewing room, and shoe-repair instruction for two war invalids. The campers, boys and girls together, hauled lumber, sand, rocks and cement, dug foundations, mixed mortar for ovens and chimneys, tarred roofs, made bricks. They learned that even the task of straightening nails helps to build homes.

As they evaluated the summer's work, one of the girls commented, "The spirit of the camp was so strong that on occasions when I otherwise would have become angry, here I couldn't;" and another added, "All the big countries ought to build houses in the other countries, then they wouldn't want to bomb the houses they had built."

Through the silent meetings, a new experience for many, the discussions, the attempt to understand and work with people speaking different languages, the campers tried continually to lift their sights above national boundaries. A letter from one of them, written from Copenhagen this fall, epitomizes the concern that brought these young people together, that bridged their serious language difficulties: "More than a year has gone since the peace. But still large areas in Europe and on other continents are lying as dead spots. The war has destroyed the houses and the fields. But it has also destroyed the hearts of the people, and there is not yet any signs of reawakening. It has been said many times before, but it must be repeated again and again: This must not happen once again.

"To avoid a new war is required untiring work of all people of good will in all countries in the world. Each of us is responsible. Here in Europe our way of thinking is bound by traditions of nationalism and hatred between the people. We ourselves, and others, must learn again to acknowledge an authority, which is above man and above the states. We must work for reconciliation and international understanding."

Editor's note: Figures used in the article OUTLOOK FOR THE WINTER are from the following sources: FAMINE CAMPAIGN ROUND UP, PMA Information Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Sept. 13, 1946, Vol. XXVI; THE CHILDREN ARE HUNGRY, Famine Emergency Committee, U. S. Department of Agriculture; FOOD FOR FREEDOM, Weekly News Service of Food for Freedom, No. 33, Oct. 4, and No. 34, Oct. 11, 1946; EUROPEAN RELIEF BULLETIN, No. III, Sept. 1946, Central Famine Relief Office, London; NEW YORK WORLD TELEGRAM, Apr. 26, 1946; NEW YORK TIMES, Oct. 12, 1946; INFORMATIONAL SUMMARY ON THE FOOD SITUATION, presented to Church World Service, Inc., Sept. 18, 1946.

A Long Pull in France

France is recovering slowly from years of war and occupation. Some families who were bombed out of their homes in 1944 are still living in temporary shelters. Young people in the cities and southern coastal areas are malnourished. It has been estimated that seventy-five per cent of the returned deportees are infected with tuberculosis. They in turn infect their families. The combination of close contact with tuberculosis and protracted malnourishment is responsible for the fact that in some communities twenty per cent of the children have the disease.

Inflation is a serious problem. Georgette Galland, who recently returned from Quaker Service in France, reports that in spite of a slight increase in consumer's goods, such as small hardware, textiles and shoes, the quality of the goods is poor and prices are out of the financial reach of most consumers. Budgets must be balanced precariously by skimping on food and not buying new clothing. The problem becomes impossible when there are growing children to clothe or illness strikes.

Institutions on the Southern Coast

Conditions are especially critical in the south. In 1945 Quaker service to institutions along the southern coast was begun, and a survey is now under way to determine which of the institutions are still in the greatest need. Quaker Service plans to continue supervising the distribution of food supplies in these centers this winter. When this work was first started, a Quaker relief worker drew the following picture of the situation: "Southern France is famous for its dry and sunny climate. Many institutions—tuberculosis sanatoria, old people's homes, rest centers for returned deportees, orphanages and creches—have been established there. But the food shortage which holds all of Europe in its grasp has made this section of France suffer as has no other part of the country.

"The dry climate, fine for sick and tired bodies, is too dry to produce food. The soil is too thin for the cultivation of crops other than grapes, olives, a few fruits and vegetables. The grass is too sparse for the raising of anything but sheep and goats. While the country as a whole is short of coffee, chocolate, sugar, wheat and other cereals, the distance of the Cote d'Azur from the fertile cattle-raising country in the north makes it also difficult to obtain meat, eggs, milk, butter, cheese and potatoes. These shortages are particularly tragic in the case of institutions which care for children, convalescents and those suffering from tuberculosis and other diseases."

Along the Moselle

Erwen Graber became vividly aware of the needs in France while working with Quaker Transport in the Moselle district. He writes: "I have moved twenty families back to their homes. Most of them have been away from their land for seven years, and return to live in barracks. There is a great shortage of tools and farm animals. One village of fifty families owns ten wagons, an equal number of plows and half as many horses. Milk cows often have to serve as beasts of burden. Haying is done by hand. Very little grain was planted for this year, and there are few machines to thresh it. Some villages have no machines at all, and few have electricity. Fuel is at a premium and hot water is almost non-existent. One spring must often suffice for an entire village.

"Many women have goiters. A number of the children are cross-eyed and a few have curvature of the spine. The hospital nurses say tuberculosis is prevalent due to lack of essential foods. Scanty supplies of meat and few potatoes lead people to buy and eat large quantities of bread, though often they do not have enough coupons even for that."

Picture of the Future

After six years with Quaker service in southern France, one of the workers evaluated the picture of the future: "To renew the courage and the hope of a people weighed down by physical fatigue, spiritual depression and malnourishment, is a great task. The situation is no longer a dramatic one. It will be a long hard pull from now on. To rebuild, to put one's house in order after the demoralization of occupation is over, when physical conditions are almost as bad as they were in 1943, requires great vigor and resourcefulness."

In order to meet some of the material and moral needs in France, Quaker Service, directed by the British Friends Relief Service and the American Friends Service Committee, is supplying supplementary food to children and old people, providing community centers in Le Havre, Toulouse, Montauban and Perpignan, equipping and staffing workshops and training programs for refugees. Transport teams are hauling building materials for bombed villages. In recognition of the extent of relief and rehabilitation work yet to be done, the Service Committee is making a considerable increase in its budget for France for the coming year.

Quaker Transport in Poland

On July 27, a seven-truck convoy from Paris rolled into Gora Pulawska, Poland. It began hauling stone, lime and cement from railheads to building sites in destroyed villages in the Kozienice area south of Warsaw. In this area destruction was great and the Anglo-American Mission had already started relief feeding. In addition to this transport and relief work, a relief team is operating in Olsztyn, north of Warsaw. The following report was prepared by the staff in Gora Pulawska.

We had planned to haul two loads of lime per day per truck to Lucima, but that is out of the question because of the roads. Three hours of driving time is the minimum for a round trip of thirty-five miles, and the best we can achieve with each truck are three loads every two days. Springs are breaking, fenders are cracking from vibration, flats cause many delays. Since ours are the only motorized vehicles on the road to Lucima, we find we are also operating a bus service. The trucks often come in loaded with people, furniture, and baskets for the market.

During our first three weeks we lived in the open. Cooking was done on two primos stoves, then on the one sent from Sweden. The stove pipe continually came down with the wind, until we tied a bucket of water to it. Even then it was difficult to get the stove hot if there were a wind. Rain often drenched us at meal times, and dogs stole our meat until we learned to hang it on a telephone pole.

Trucking Projects

Lime-hauling will be stopped during the cold months, but cement and stone can still be delivered. We realize that people may still be living underground in the winter of 1947-48 if we use our trucks for other purposes, but it is a temptation to divert the use of the trucks to other needs. For example, each barn requires ten cubic meters of lumber, which must be hauled from a mill twelve miles distant. Unless we do it, each peasant would have to send a wagon for it. Considering the fact that there are only seven horses at Lucima, it would take several months to transport enough lumber for the ninety-four barns. An allotment of food for needy families is made each month from Kozienice, but hauling costs are prohibitive. We plan to carry these supplies each month, and also some tin for the roof of the church which is under repair.

We should also like to haul phosphate from Kozienice. This past spring farmers could not get enough for their fields for lack of horses and wagons to haul it. They need eighty tons this fall.

We see the size of the rebuilding job, the overworked horses and the obstacles to adequate transportation, and we wish we had brought fifty trucks and a road grader with us.

Needs in Kozienice

We recently talked with several officials from this district, who emphasized the need for building foremen. Villagers are handicapped because they do not know how to cut rock, mix cement, plan construction or follow diagrams.

Farm equipment is needed, though it is of little value unless someone can show these young boys how to maintain and operate it properly. In this district alone, there are more than seven thousand acres of unplowed land, much of it still mined. Another need is for small portable sawmills with enough trucks to transport the logs and lumber to and from each mill, although bullets and shrapnel imbedded in the logs are continually ruining saw teeth. Many of the forests cannot be used yet because they are still mined.

It is heartening to see Lucima today. The village is bustling with activity—men digging holes for the lime, women mixing lime and water for slaking, boys and girls driving wagons to and from the river with barrels of water. Lime has been hauled for eighty of the ninety-four barns to be built. It makes us glad that we are a part of this, yet it is a disappointment that we cannot get the barns finished before winter. Without additional help this will not be the last winter that people will be sleeping under ground. This project, like so many others, is but a token when compared to the enormous reconstruction needs. It is a token humbly offered in a spirit of sympathy and goodwill.

* * *

ARMY OF RECONSTRUCTION

"Un esercito di ricostruzione!"—an army of reconstruction! Those were Fonzo Vincenzo's final and somewhat triumphant words. Vincenzo had probably been quite puzzled at the way truckloads of materials had flooded in for his new house, and because he hadn't paid a thing for the transport or the materials.

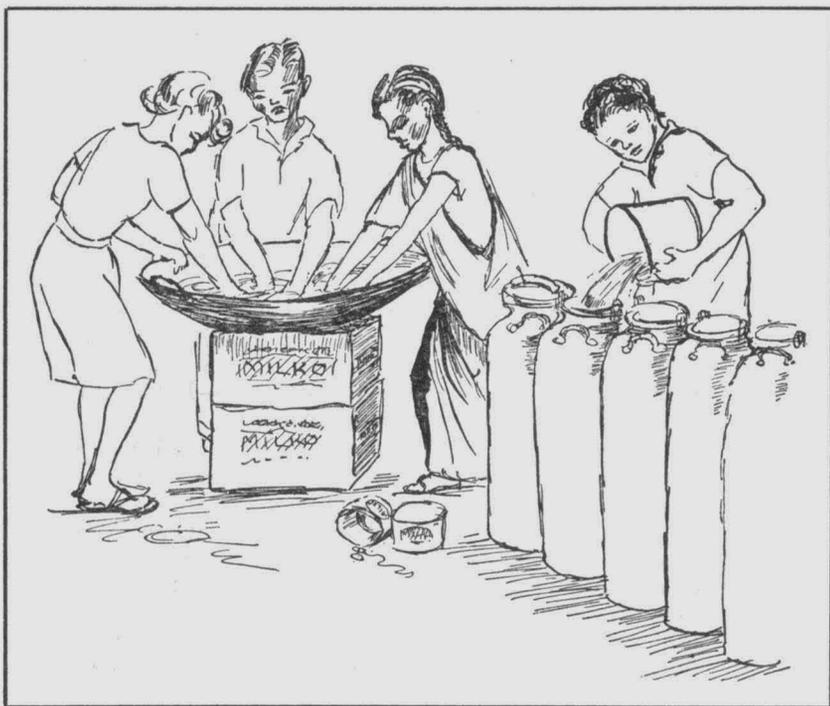
The conversation had started while I was eating my lunch in his wine shop. Vincenzo came over to the table and after a few words about the progress of his house, picked up my notebook with the red and black star on the front. He slowly read the words, "American . . . Friends . . . Service . . . Committee." "Gli Amici"—the Friends—I said, trying to simplify that imposing name.

"It seems," I said, "that the English and American armies came over here and destroyed almost everything, and now we have come to rebuild some of what they destroyed." That was when Vincenzo's remark about the army of reconstruction came out. We parted, each richer for the whole experience, he in materials and in the realization that some Americans and British are sorry for what they did, and I richer in understanding of what we are doing here.

—From Robert Forsberg,
AFSC Representative, Italy.

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Indian, Chinese and British hands mixing milk.

—Mary Rogers, FSU, India

During the four days of rioting in Calcutta in August, five thousand people were killed and thousands more injured. Members of the Friends Service Unit stationed in the city helped distribute milk in the refugee camps, evacuated Hindu and Moslem families from tense areas, carried the injured to medical centers.