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AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE
FOREIGN SERVICE SECTION

News from Germany

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The people of Germany have had a lean summer and are facing a cold and hungry winter. One of the British workers for the Friends Relief Service reported in June from the British Zone

"Things out here are still very bad indeed. One of the biggest food problems at the moment is potatoes. As the Germans' two main meals, dinner and supper, seem to consist of potatoes and vegetable soup, it is extremely hard when there are no potatoes. At Whit week-end some of our team attended a German Young Friends Conference in Rudesheim and for four days lived on German rations. I'm afraid they did not find the eternal soups very filling and returned home ravenous.

"We are arranging to hold a Camp over the summer months for refugee children in Hannover Kreis and children in bunkers in Hannover Stadt. We have practically all the plans made but can not get the Camp started, because we are unable to obtain potatoes for it. In the Hannover area the bread coupons are mostly honoured, but very rarely do the people get the cereals to which they are entitled. Everyone finds it extremely difficult to manage on the 2 ozs. of fat per month.

"Recently German people have given our team presents of rhubarb and gooseberries. When we protest and say that the German people need them more than we do, the answer is they have not enough sugar to cook them or make them into jam. We know how difficult it is in England and here they get half our sugar rations."

We have also a report from a German surgeon at the University of Bonn Clinic, dated July 17. Speaking of the food, he says -- "This week we get two pounds of bread per person. (My little boy, three years old, doesn't get any.) There are no potatoes. You get 75 grams, 3 ozs. of butter per person for four weeks. That is all the fat you are allowed according to the latest law. A pound of butter costs 250 marks on the black market, which is more than a month's salary. The little meat we get is now 200 grams per month (that could be less than a half pound), and when we do get it, it is usually not meat at all. To get the bread my wife has to queue up and wait for hours on end and then mostly don't get real meat -- (a wurst which consists of water, flour, some spices, and is flavored with a meat taste)."

A third report is from Walter Mohr, one of our workers in Duesseldorf. He says--

"On Friday I visited the towns of Hagen, Schwelm and Luenen to inspect our child feeding projects there. I left at six thirty in the morning and returned at six thirty in the evening. It was a most inspiring experience. Public Welfare has the wholehearted cooperation of the Private Welfare Agencies and in every community visited things were in excellent shape. Most of the feeding centers are in Kindergartens and I wish you could see the little rascals eat. Some of them -- especially the children of refugees -- are pathetically undernourished but one can already see real results. Naturally they like the sweetened cereals a little better than the soya but they eat the latter surprisingly well. In most of the places the kiddies sang songs for us telling how much they enjoyed our 'Suppe' and how grateful they were to our Friends in America.

"That brings me to another problem to which I have already referred. We are facing another grim winter and with a population greatly undernourished because of inadequate food it may be a disastrous one.

"I was most depressed yesterday to see the rations which are fed to the dependent groups in some of the areas where we are feeding the children. Thus for example our kiddies get as much fat in three days as grown ups get in a month. The daily ration in one of the towns I visited was two pieces of bread, 1 spoon of cereal and one cup of skimmed milk. As the Christian Century has pointed out recently that if the British people are slowly starving because they get less than three thousand calories a day - what is happening to the Germans on less than one thousand."

A fourth report is from Bernhard Fedde in Oberhausen dated June 10th:

"Food. Since the middle of April the food situation has become increasingly worse. The average daily diet for the month of May amounted to 890 calories. Many times a day we must turn away gaunt folks who have absolutely nothing to eat, this morning a mother of eight who has not the strength to struggle from shop to shop and queue to queue for the sake of a few grams, meat, rancid butter, or bread. The fact is plain. Many are starving."

From a report from Dan Force, an AFSC, transport worker, we take the following summary of food situation in the French zone.

"Fresh food is slowly coming in at last, and while some of it disappears into the black market, a part, at least, is being sold in the open market and free of ration points. Lettuce is not too hard to obtain, asparagus may be found in Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg (but not in Coblenz), rhubarb is on the market, and other vegetables are appearing.

"But on the dark side of the picture are these facts. Potatoes have almost disappeared in many cities, the winter supply being gone and the new harvest not in sight. Fruit is not yet ripening, and many areas will feel a severe shortage for another month or so. One can see children and women searching in the fields and the lanes for certain herbs and greens that grow wild. Actually, the situation is acute. A midsummer drought has scorched the Northern French Zone, drying and killing the immature grains, pears, and beans before they can produce. In the French Zone persons are still getting about 1300 calories a day, but in some parts of the British Zone, only 800 calories are available. Add to that the fact that there is no variety, that starches (potatoes and bread) are the main articles of diet, and that sugars and fats are so rare as to be almost non-existent, and one has a truer picture of what is going on.

"In addition, people are tired and discouraged. They have had more than two years of this, and they see no end, and they see no improvement. They are willing to work, and they work hard, but they are beginning to believe there is no use in work when it only prolongs the agony of semi-starvation.

"Almost anything in the way of food is welcome. Fats, sugars, and proteins are more scarce than starches. Dried milk and powdered eggs, tins of baby foods, clothing, blankets, sheets, medical supplies, and sewing materials are urgently wanted. Black market articles, and rare even on the black market, are sugar, salt, all spices, pepper, vanilla, cinnamon, and mustard, meat, many

vegetables, fats and cooking oils. Chocolate is always welcome, as is any kind of candy or gum. The Lord forgive us Americans! We take our gum wherever we go, and the children here love it--one of the more doubtful advantages of the New World--but perhaps the youngsters can get some nourishment from the sugar it contains."

From the American Zone where the American Friends Service Committee has been co-operating with CRALOG to give 200,000 children supplementary meals, we have the report of the Military Governor:

"The food situation in the U.K. - U.S. Zones of Germany remained critical during May. Ration scales based on a level of 1,550 calories per day for the normal consumer were continued for the combined area, but low stocks of potatoes, grain, and cereal products made it impossible to meet the full official ration. During the 101st ration period (28 April - 25 May) the normal consumer in the U. S. Zone actually received only about 1,040 calories of rationed food per day. Beginning on 26 May, substitutions of miscellaneous foods from wholesalers' and retailers' stocks were authorized for major rationed items and steps were taken to vary the quantities of bread and other cereal products called up for distribution in the various Länder in order to maintain an equal calorie level throughout the combined area. Supplemental rations were generally provided in full, but reductions in the amount of food distributed on the normal consumer ration reduced the total rations of workers as well as those of other consumer categories."

A later report from Berlin dated July 28th, quotes Dr. John B. Canning, OMGUS assistant food and agriculture chief, that the food stock situation has been greatly alleviated by the importation of 80,000 tons of foodstuffs from the United States.

On the less cheerful side of the picture is an announcement that the Bavarian potato crop is expected to be only one third of the normal crop on account of the continued dry weather.

From the French Zone we quote the following report from the Baden Ministry of the Interior, date Freiburg, June 12, 1947.

"The food situation during the time of our report has undergone a further deterioration. On the one hand, circumstances were already almost unbearable even before owing to the lack of potatoes in all circles of the population - with the only exception of the farmers ('Selbstversorger'). Now, on the other hand, the promised increased ration of fat that had been announced to be 320 grams for this month, was not only actually not handed out but the quantity given out was even considerably inferior to that of the preceding months. During the whole month the normal consumer received only 50 grams of butter and 60 grams of oil, i.e. about a third of the promised quantity. Moreover the bread ration amounting till now to 250 grams per day, will be reduced to 125 grams with the beginning of the new month, which corresponds to 2½ slices of bread per day. Instead of the cancelled 125 grams of bread people shall get 90 grams of corn meal."

"It is absolutely an open question whether under such distressing circumstances a hunger catastrophe can be avoided."

"According to statistics from all districts of the French Zone of Occupation in Baden the caloric values of the food given out to normal consumers amounted to 935 calories per day during the month of May."

"The average daily calories during the month of May for South Baden was 915."

From Ludwigshafen in the French Zone, our workers report of food distribution, remarking on two new categories which they have found it necessary to help.

"In spite of many varied time and energy consuming activities, food distribution is, and we feel should continue to be, our major concern in Ludwigshafen. People are still frightfully undernourished, individuals succumbing to the heat, and fainting on the streets virtually every day. There has been virtually no change in the ration from preceding months, nor is any important change in sight.

"June was a bumper month for our food distribution, 13,892 children being fed, the largest number we have yet had. All this number did not come from Ludwigshafen: as in May, we had a small distribution for the neighboring town of Limburgerhof, where we distributed to 227 children under six years of age. These children, with the exception of the children under one year, had been selected on a medical basis by Dr. Lehr of the Gesundheitsamt, Ludwigshafen. She is urging us to include a similar town, Altrip, which from a nutritional point of view is equally badly off.

"Two innovations entered into this June distribution. In May we had taken 200 of the very worst of the children between one and three. During June, the Gesundheitsamt completed an examination of the children from one to six, plus all children over six, who cannot go to school. On the basis of this examination we included in our distribution 1427 children between one and three who are in categories three and four of undernourishment. Percentage-wise, this is about 50% of the children in this age group, indicating that our previous program had erred in omitting this group entirely.

"The second innovation in the distribution was the beginning of a program for sick people, especially cases of hunger oedema and stomach trouble, who cannot obtain the special diet they should have. Although in June only a dozen or more of these cases were included, we expect to expand this program until 500 people are being served (or more if supplies are available). In general, they will get the regular ration of a pound of sugar, a pound of fat, and two pounds of cereal, although at the discretion of the physician this may be varied to meet the individual need of the patient. Certification of these persons is done through Dr. Hammer, head doctor of the city hospital, who examines them after they have first been recommended by their own physicians. We will also help patients sent by other hospitals in town, but only a limited number. The duration for which a patient will receive the Quaker ration varies, a hunger oedema case from a prison camp requiring it for a longer time, for example, than a typhoid case recently released from the hospital. We have the cooperation of the city Doctor's Association in recommending to us only a limited variety of cases. (We could never hope to cope with the complete roster of sick people needing supplementary food rations)."

From Koblenz our workers make a more cheerful report:

"Locally the food situation is slowly improving. Last month in Koblenz the Jugend II group (10 to 18 years) actually received 1450 calories per day on the ration.. In March this group had 1378 calories and in April 1461. There is a good crop of cherries just now ripening and other fruits will soon follow. But proteins and fats are still very scarce. The official figures for actually distributed rations of proteins and fats to the Jugend II group Koblenz for the last three months follow:

	March	April	May
Fats	140 grams	105 grams	320 grams
Protein	1325 "	1825 "	2025 "

These are the total amounts by weight received by each individual during the months and do not include our distributions."