



• REFUGEES

DECEMBER • 1952

# BULLETIN



AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

*Ted Castle*



"On August 7th, my wife Gertrude returned home, beaming with joy, and told me she had been lucky. When she unpacked and put one article of clothing after the other on the table, we could not help crying with happiness. We were completely speechless, and can still hardly believe that all those beautiful and valuable things should now be our property. We had expected to receive a polite refusal . . . Now we have got rid of a great deal of our worries. We have really been in great need. We lost our home and all belongings east of the Oder-Neisse line, and I have been unemployed since October, 1948. Because I am 53 years of age it will be difficult for me to find a job, and we can only hope our situation will improve some day . . . I am only a simple craftsman and cannot express my feelings and thanks as well as an educated man, but I would like to request you to accept our hearty and sincerest thanks for your valuable assistance.

"Your very sincere and most thankful family,

"My daughter Erna, aged 12, who has started to learn English at school this year, would like to send you the following:

God bless you  
and keep you."

THIS LETTER is one of many received by a Britisher who distributes AFSC clothing in Wilhelmshaven, Germany. He also sent us the pictures: (1) One of the two rooms in which six children and their parents live. (2) A family salvaging bricks from a bombed building, with which to build a new home. (3) One corner of a room in which a family of 13 live. There is nowhere for them to sit down. (4) Children who have come to school thinly clothed on a cold day. One little girl has on a heavy coat, but no shoes and stockings. Another is wearing an old pair of boy's trousers. A boy (center, back) has on a light jacket too small for him. (5) If you have counted the members of this family, nine is right. Their single room serves as living room, kitchen, and bedroom for them all as well as for the workshop of the father, who is a watchmaker. The last three pictures were taken in 1950. But you can see in the first two, which are recent, how little conditions in western Germany have improved since then. On farms and in cities, expellees like these from Silesia and Pomerania have added to the appalling overcrowding that wartime destruction began. (See page seven.)



*IN THIS CHRISTMAS ISSUE, devoted to the homeless the world over, patrons and members of the American Friends Service Committee remind themselves of the indispensable motive, without which giving is only an injury to giver and receiver alike:*

**I**F I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends; as for prophecy, it will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

*At this season, we have turned to Paul, the apostle, for our editorial: the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, in any form one of the most beautiful and penetrating passages in the Bible. This translation is taken with permission from the new Revised Standard Version, recently published by Thomas Nelson and Sons (National Council of Churches of Christ, copyright).*

Ted Castle







AFTER WORKING in the Philadelphia warehouse all 35 years of its existence, Oliver Myers retired last June. He is shown here in the first warehouse, an old horse shed on the grounds of the Race Street Meeting House. You can see the boards that were laid over the bare dirt that made up a large part of its floor. Oliver is stenciling clothing bales by hand, an especially difficult job when it came to the two colors of the AFSC red and black star. He also reduced the size of the bales for shipping with a hand press. The bags were sewn by hand, sometimes by members of a week-end work camp and finished off at the warehouse. No machinery was being used even in 1941 when more than 100 tons of supplies were processed in the horse shed and shipped overseas.

## The Philadelphia Warehouse Story

by MYRON PILBROW and RACHEL J. COOPER

*From an old horse shed to a modern loft building, from apron patterns in 1917 to 1,133 tons of gifts-in-aid in 1947-48, the history of the AFSC warehouse in Philadelphia has paralleled world-wide disasters. It is told here by the AFSC Director of Material Aids and the warehouse Clothing Procurement and Office Manager.*

AN OLD SHED on Cherry Street in Philadelphia, now torn down, was the first AFSC warehouse for processing clothes and shipping them overseas. Members of the Race Street Friends Meeting, arriving in their carriages and buggies, used to hitch their horses in the shed. But by 1917 it had fallen into disuse. After boarding over its front, putting in a row of windows, and building doors in either end, the Committee's clothing workers, organized that year in response to World War I, moved in.

The full story of the warehouse will never be written. No records were kept between 1917 and 1932, and the memories of many who worked there then are failing now. But a BULLETIN, the first publication of the AFSC, called on its readers in 1917 to start sewing and knitting clubs. Committee workers, already in France, had seen the desperate need of clothing in that invaded country. Later BULLETINS gave instructions, including patterns, for making the black sateen aprons worn by French school children. Also in 1917, the Committee sent a team of six American nurses to Russia to help the British Quaker doctors there; and following their descriptions, BULLETINS printed directions for making smocks for Russian peasants.

### The First World War and the Depression

The following year, the first ANNUAL REPORT related that 400 communities in 32 states had sent the warehouse 80,000 garments to be shipped abroad, and that 3,200 articles of clothing were coming in every week. This account mentions the cooperation of the Mennonites. In 1919, 12,000 Poles received clothing, according to the ANNUAL REPORT. In 1920-21, over 382,000 garments and a large quantity of yard goods had been sent to seven countries, including clothing for 250,000 Germans. These early reports tell of help sent to Japan after the 1924 earthquake and of the children of unemployed American coal miners, whom President Hoover asked the Committee to feed in 1931 during the worst of the depression. Since these children needed clothing, too, boxes of shoes and bales of clothing and bedding were sent to the coal fields of West Virginia, Kentucky, Illinois, and western Pennsylvania.

All this time the warehouse was the horse shed, heated by a potbellied stove, with the old hitching rings still in the wall, and boards laid over the bare dirt that made up much of the floor. The sorting tables were boards on trestles. One expressman and four freightmen (who sometimes prepaid

shipments on the sly) were ample for all transportation. But in 1941, after the outbreak of World War II, when more than 100 tons of supplies were processed and shipped, the horse shed began to seem decidedly cramped. Two years later, the workers moved into the old gymnasium of Friends Central School after the school took up new quarters in the suburbs.

### The Second World War

Like the horse shed, the old schoolhouse was on the grounds of the Race Street Meeting house. Here one memorable project was the sending of a gift to every new mother in the Japanese relocation centers set up in the western states. Volunteers sorted out at least four baby garments for every package, usually a briarstitched blanket, a sacque or a kimono, a cap, and a pair of booties, wrapping them in tissue paper and tying the package with ribbon or colored string. So many baby clothes were contributed that another room in the front of the building had to be taken over to store them in.

Meanwhile the war went on, leaving behind it the helpless and the destitute. The warehouse, outgrowing the schoolhouse too, moved in 1946 to its present location at 23rd and Arch Streets where it occupies most of two floors in a loft building. In 1947-48, it reached its peak output: 1,133 tons for that year. Five other AFSC warehouses, established in New York, Pasadena, San Francisco, Seattle, and Chicago, were shipping out comparable amounts of clothing, food, and medical supplies. The Committee is grateful to have taken part in sending help when so much help was needed. It is profoundly grateful to those whose gifts of time and energy and money and material made this part possible. But it was—and is—somewhat in the position of a doctor in an epidemic. It regrets the necessity of that help. And beside the evil of two world wars and a world-wide economic depression, the Committee's total output of material aid for the 20 years during which its records have been kept is small indeed: about 6,500 tons or close to 14 million pounds.

### The Warehouse Today

Poverty and war and their results are with us still; and the Committee's capacities are far too small for keeping pace. After remarkable performances, mainly using volunteer workers, the warehouses in Chicago and New York closed. But in the Philadelphia warehouse, these days, the burlap bags in which supplies are packed are sewn and stenciled by machines; an electric press is used to reduce the size of the bales for shipping—all work that was formerly done by hand. Three women and two men work

steadily at the sorting troughs, and nine work there off and on. Thousands of work hours a year are contributed by volunteers, including children of elementary and high school age. Manufacturers and trade associations give materials in bulk—textiles, plastics, shoe findings, tons of buttons, leather, wool, yarn, felts from paper mills, finished garments. Hotels give guest soap, unclaimed articles from their lost-and-found departments, and slightly worn uniforms that are especially valuable to hospital staffs abroad. Men's service clubs, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts have conducted widespread clothing drives. A Philadelphia trade school repaired about 10,000 pairs of shoes. Thousands of pounds of laundry and dry cleaning have been handled free of charge.

About half of the clothing, however, arrives in immaculate condition, and 80 per cent of all contributions comes from individuals. The mainstay of the warehouse is still the women the country over who sew and knit and collect new and good used clothing. The AFSC supplies knitting yarn at cost. The sweaters from the knitting groups are often works of art. The lacy bed-jackets for hospital use, the afghans in bright squares, the scarves are gifts whose beauty goes beyond their practical value. And the mittens—a separate project of the Educational Materials for Children program—come in by thousands in all colors of the rainbow.

Women overseas, sometimes in refugee camps, make presents in return. A woman's sweater was knit from rayon yarn, used in this country for drapery material, that a manufacturer had given. A child's sweater was made with the waxed thread a manufacturer has been donating in huge amounts—38,000 pounds of it only recently. When the wax is soaked off, it is also used abroad for knitting children's underwear, it is so soft and durable.

### This Year's Record

Food and medicine are needed still, especially in India and Pakistan, but clothing for the millions of refugees in western Europe and Japan is now the urgent need. This year, clothing, shoes, and textiles made up nearly nine-tenths of all four warehouses' output. Its total estimated value was \$1,243,803. Food and medical supplies to the value of about \$214,000 went directly from storage to shipside. Recipients were in 13 countries, in addition to Korea. Total poundage was about a million and a half—far beyond the capacity of the old horse shed, but far too little for a world in want. As the Committee's chairman, Henry J. Cadbury, wrote in that peak year, "The Committee's present size is partly a result of the gigantic evil that has been in our world. Much that we are doing ought never to have been necessary."

*This year, for the first time since its beginnings, the AFSC, at the request of a contributor, has estimated its total output of material aids during the 20 years for which its records have been kept. Some milestones in production are given here as well:*

**1917 through 1931—No Records**

**1941—First Year Production Exceeded 100 Tons**

**1947-48—Peak Year (Six Warehouses) 1,133 Tons**

**1951-52—This Year (Four Warehouses) 713 Tons**

**1932-1952—Twenty Years' Total, About 6,500 Tons**



## Refugees—The Third Dimension

*Some of our reports from other countries suddenly add the third dimension of reality to the flat pictures of people and places we have never seen. Here are a few such vivifying reports, condensed and incomplete although they are.*

### Japan—"You can't say too much about the courage of these people."

A MEMBER of a Philadelphia Friends Meeting has recently returned from spending a year in Japan where he and his wife were doing Committee work with LARA, the Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia, now discontinued. His long experience in practical farming caused him to take a special interest in the resettled refugee farmers in the Amori Prefecture. He says one of the most moving events of his life was a meeting where delegates, representing 500,000 of these farmers, assembled in the clothes they had received from LARA to thank this organization for what it had done for them. About 25 per cent of the clothing it distributed had come from the Committee.

According to the figures given him, there are six and a half million of such repatriated people in Japan, from Manchuria, Siberia, Korea, and the South Pacific Islands. They had moved into these conquered territories after the Japanese armies. They were required by the terms of the armistice at the end of the war to go back to Japan. The suffering that many of them have undergone is incredible. One man, under pressure from the Russians, lost his wife and five children in Siberia, and had to hide in the mountains for thirty days before beginning his long trek back to Japan. The Japanese government has given those of the refugees who are farmers small plots of ground which are often in the highlands formerly considered uninhabitable even in this overpopulated country.

Out of the hillsides they have carved their farms, averaging perhaps two acres each, where they grow soy beans mainly, but also some upland rice, sweet and white potatoes, and plenty of greens. Although they would like to grow more rice, there is not enough water for its cultivation. They are dependent on the rainfall for their water. They catch the rain that drains off the roofs in barrels for household use. They have no wagons and almost no domestic animals. Once in awhile you see a horse hitched to a two-wheeled cart. The roads they have cut through the thick brush are used as footpaths. They have built their houses from the slender crooked pines they felled in clearing their land, slicing these into thin planks without planing the edges because they admire the natural curves of the wood. They thatch their houses with rice straw. (See pictures above.) Their only cooking and heating arrangement is a firebox sunk into the floor of every house. The smoke escapes from louvers under the rafters at each end.

The refugees' first winter after their return was passed in temporary grass huts in bitter cold. But, in the words of the recently returned Committee worker, "you can't say too much about the courage of these people. They have the broadest smiles and not a *yen* to go on. Nobody looks beaten. And the children—there's not a one of them you don't feel like picking up and hugging." He says there are 125,000 pounds of clothing in the Philadelphia warehouse to be sent to Japanese refugees as soon as some means of paying the shipping charges are worked out. The U. S. government no longer pays for transportation of relief supplies as it did during the occupation.

### The Netherlands—"Victims of world events."

The strangest sight in the Netherlands for nearly two years has probably been the 46 refugee camps in which Ambonese refugees from Indonesia live. Dressed in brilliant prints, calling out to one another in a strange language, with their golden skins and jet black hair and small slender bodies, they are like a flock of parakeets turned loose in the farmyard that is Holland. But a length of pink and orange calico wrapped around the waist, however beautiful under those gray skies, is not much protection against the cold. Dutch Quakers have distributed many bales of warm clothing from the AFSC among the Ambonese who are understandably ill equipped to earn their livings in a European country. Besides, Holland is so overpopulated that on an average 30,000 Dutch a year have been emigrating to Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. Even for them, there are not enough jobs and houses to go around.

A staff member of the Committee, who spent some time in Holland not long ago, has furnished this account. She quotes from the letter of a Dutch Friend who visited two of the refugee camps, one at Galleen and the other at Vught: "These Ambonese are victims of world events. People of good will are seeking a solution, but it seems to be a problem fraught with great difficulties on both sides."

### Western Germany—"Unemployment, growing hopelessness."

A British Friend writes, "If ever an unlikely tourist strayed as near the East Zone as Landkreis Braunschweig, and drove through any of the small villages clustered in this rich sugar beet district, he would never guess the misery and primitive poverty housed in the farmsteads. In spring, the approach is through avenues of white-blossomed fruit trees, along cobbled ways between asparagus beds and young wheat. Statistics had told me that hordes of expellees from the East German Provinces, now Poland, and later infiltrates from the East Zone must have gone to earth somewhere in these borderlands. Yet nothing had braced me for the appalling overcrowding where the tide of refugees had flowed in and then, in six or seven years of unemployment and growing hopelessness, had settled into a low-water ebb of apathy and animal-like resignation. You shall judge for

yourself whether that brown coat or the checked dress you thoughtfully repaired was worth sending." Conditions there closely parallel those shown on page two of this issue. One social worker has between 13,000 and 14,000 of these people to care for in 11 villages.

About nine million is the usual estimate of refugees in western Germany alone. The same report describes a bunker in a city: "We threaded our way through the slightly quarrelsome and slightly drunken group in the dark entrance, and wound our way up the spiral ascent to the top floor devoted to homeless vagrants, not necessarily refugees. The next floor housed transit refugees, new arrivals from the East Zone. The lowest three levels were the permanent homes of about 460 refugees, some of whom had been there as long as four years. One can scarcely describe the sight of those massive whitewashed walls, broken by no windows, and the unreal effect of fluorescent lighting in the ceilings." One mother said bitterly that all the children get tuberculosis. An AFSC staff member, who visited such a bunker last summer, tells us that in the whole building there were only two kitchens, which were also used as laundries.

### Austria—"Not all have committed suicide or stayed in barracks camps."

Letters from Vienna report on the Committee's small revolving loan fund. It has, for instance, enabled a 58-year-old refugee from Yugoslavia to operate his 90-broom-a-day factory at a profit. But such loans, averaging about \$500 each, have mainly been made to farmers, personally reliable, but unable to meet the credit requirements of the banks. One young couple from Rumania repaired their truck with some of the money they borrowed, and now can drive the produce of their vegetable farm to market. Another Rumanian, forced to work in the mines during the war, bought two pigs with his loan, planning to go into pig-raising as a business. One farmer bought a bicycle. He rides it to the nearest village where he works as a part-time plasterer.

The leader of the AFSC unit in Vienna remarked of those few to whom the Committee had been able to make loans, "We would not say that all of them would have committed suicide or stayed in barracks camps if we hadn't come along. But we believe we have really helped."

(1) SIXTEEN THOUSAND AMBONESE have arrived in overpopulated Holland, forced to leave their native island because they had remained loyal to the Dutch government, the losing side in the recent Indonesian revolution. Warm clothing has been distributed among them . . . (2) There are about 300,000 refugees in Austria. Of German descent, they have been driven out of Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria or have escaped from there. The AFSC has been able to help only a few, like this farmer, with small loans for buying baby chicks or some pigs.



Margaret Jones



Ted Castle



The American Friends Service Committee, representing the religious Society of Friends, attempts to relieve human suffering wherever it is found and to ease tensions between individuals, groups or nations. We believe that God lives in every person, and that love in action can overcome hatred, prejudice, and fear.

The Committee works in Europe, Asia, Mexico, and the United States. Our undertakings include relief and rehabilitation, education in community relations, work and study projects for young people, self-help housing projects, and seminars and institutes on international relations.

All parts of the work are open to anyone regardless of race, religion or nationality. We are dependent upon your contributions. Checks may be sent to the American Friends Service Committee at any of its offices.

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