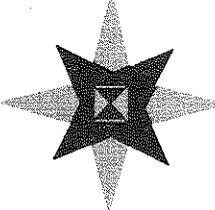


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BULLETIN

Thirty-first year of service  *under the Red & Black Star*

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE



Commission for Children's Relief

This little Polish girl, pictured at a distribution of food in her country, symbolizes the way in which thousands of people, young and old, are looking to the United States for help. At this Christmas time, let us remember first the ones who need us most.

GERMANY IS HUNGRY By **JOHN S. HOLLISTER**

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Germany Is Hungry

by John S. Hollister

British and American Quaker workers are distributing food to about 100,000 people in the American, British and French zones of Germany. They are operating four Neighborhood Centers and two Youth Centers, and are engaged in a variety of other services in clinics, camps and rest homes, prison visitation, ambulance transport and salvage work, aid to expellees and displaced persons, clothing and medical supply distribution.

John S. Hollister, former head of the German Area Desk of the Service Committee, recently returned from a two-month survey of Germany. His trip took him to fifty of Germany's largest cities as well as to the country areas, in each of the four zones.

Germany today is knotted with problems. And every problem involves at least a million people, a million tons of rubble, a million pairs of shoes, or a million tons of coal. Nothing is small, nothing uncomplicated.

Sixty-seven of Germany's 73 large cities are almost completely devastated. Industry that was not bombed out is largely dismantled or without adequate coal. Several million key workers are being denazified. Twenty-five per cent of Germany's best farmland is now a part of Poland.

The German population is a growing and moving population. There are nearly 1,000,000 displaced persons in Germany. About 4,000,000 evacuees who fled from the cities to the countryside during the bombings are unable to return to their homes. Twelve million expellees from the Eastern countries are being moved into German homes, 18 to 20 of them to one small room, unwanted by the Germans, unable to get employment. Many have been living this way for two years now. Several million prisoners of war are still being held by the Allies. Tens of thousands being released each week are returning to Germany in poor physical condition, their clothes in rags, penniless, bitter after six or seven years imprisonment. Almost 1,000,000 men in the occupation forces increase housing and food problems.

Add to this picture the fact that there are four Germanies rather than one, with resulting slow-downs in action taken in behalf of the German people as a whole. Experts speak of 10 years to solve the displaced persons problem. Mechanical engineers have estimated 15 years of work are needed to clear rubble from Berlin alone, before rebuilding can commence. Guesses on the occupation run up to several generations.

To expect to see results month by month, to say that "things should be much better now, two and a half years after the war," is to expect too much. Decade, not year planning, is indicated. And this long view is hard—particularly if you are one of the 69,000,000 directly involved in this race with hunger, disease and social decay.

All Are Hungry

There is almost no one in Germany who is not hungry. Anyone who says there is no appreciable hunger in Germany is un-Christian. We have not the moral right to trifle with the lives of millions of people by such inaccuracies.

For two and a half years the highest allowed ration, except for heavy workers, in any zone of Germany, has been 1550 calories per person per day. This is the medical minimum to maintain life. Below this the body lives off itself. But this maximum has not generally been maintained during the past year. In many areas bread or potatoes simply could not be bought, even though the ration card said they could. In most sections of Germany today no one thinks of meat, butter, milk or eggs as being regularly available except on the black market. And the black market prices are so high that few can supplement their diet appreciably through it. By sheer necessity, however, almost every German patronizes this market at some time.

City gardens produce some greens and root vegetables which improve summer conditions a little. But there are no real winter benefits. City people in great numbers flock to the country with rucksacks to gather what they can. The supplies thus available are diminishing, and it is frequently true that the nourishment in the sack is less than the energy expended to get it. There is intense preoccupation with the daily business of staying alive. Queuing for bread or milk rations begins at five and six in the morning. By 10 the meagre supplies may be sold out.

The cities display undernourishment most obviously. In no area is there yet open famine, with people dropping dead in the streets. Now it is a more subtle hunger. It can be seen in the pallor of the mothers and the old people, the slow measured step of pedestrians; in the thin bodies of children, with bones knobby from rickets. It is evident in the swelling of legs from hunger oedema, in the obvious strain of men at heavy work, in the patients in hospitals dying of simple operations, in the ever-present desire to sleep, in the alarming increase of tuberculosis, in the loss of weight, in the stunted growth of adolescents; in

the aged losing the will to live, in the inability of officials to concentrate on discussions, in the stomach ulcers of anxiety and fear, in irritability, in the overpowering absorption with food.

One Million Will Die

Thousands died last winter from causes directly related to lowered physical resistance. An estimate from Swiss sources states that 10,000,000 Germans will probably die of starvation this winter. A German says this estimate is an exaggeration, that not more than 1,000,000 will die of starvation. One million people.

It would seem in certain sections where the people have been living for a year on 1,000 calories a day, that they are defying the laws of nutrition. Weight loss has been gradual, however, over a period of three years. The metabolism of the whole nation has been slowed down. Clinical autopsies performed throughout Germany show reduced organs, atrophy of the muscles and other malnutritional defects. Bad diet lacking minerals, fats, vitamins, is as disastrous as insufficient calories.

Why The Food Shortage?

Why is there such a shortage of food? An industrial nation, Germany in her best years produced only 60 per cent of her own food, relying on exports and foreign investments to bring in the balance. Today, 25 per cent of what farmland she once had lies east of the Oder-Niesse line under Polish control. The producing land left to Germany has been devastated by the worst drought in generations. Everywhere I saw corn drying on the stalk, grain scorched and stunted, potatoes wizened at half size, fruit small and very sweet. Land reform in certain areas has reduced total area production. Fertilizers and seeds were short in the spring. Lack of labor and mechanical equipment contribute to poor yield. The potato supply will be exhausted by December and the grain by January.

More Than Critical

To add that the food problem of Germany is more than critical is hardly necessary. To add that we must evaluate United States resources with German needs in mind is essential. To feed nearly 70,000,000 Germans, even on the low level of 1500 calories a day, requires that about three-fourths of the total food be brought in from outside German borders.