

Italy - 7 nights, Repatriation journey

VX 3164

UNITED NATIONS  
RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

ITALIAN MISSION.

AUG - 3 1946  
26th July 1946

*R.W. Cohen*

TO: UNRRA H.Q.  
WASHINGTON D.C.

FROM: UNRRA ITALIAN MISSION

SUBJECT: REPORT ON CZECHOSLOVAK FLIGHT FROM CAIRO TO  
ITALY FOR PRAGUE.

Following are the essential factors concerning the repatriation of 340 Czechs from Palestine to Prague via Italy (port of entry Naples, Italy).

1. Upon notification that such a move was to take place, UNRRA Italy clarified with AFHQ and UNRRA, Prague, that it was an UNRRA responsibility. UNRRA Prague was responsible for clearing the train from Austria into Italy to coincide with the arrival of the s.s. "Tripolitania" from Cairo on May 2 or 3. Train timing and movement was the responsibility of AFHQ.
2. A great deal of confusion centered around the train movement. At one point AFHQ stated conclusively that the train had not yet left Prague when in fact it had just arrived in Rome. This state of affairs required a constant and close attention of the Registration and Repatriation Branch to keep themselves informed of the location of the train. This train was bringing personnel from Czechoslovakia into Italy for Repatriation to Palestine and was scheduled to carry the UNRRA refugees on its return trip from Naples to Czechoslovakia.
3. By agreement with AFHQ the train was to meet the ship at dock-side which arrangement was known to the Czech representatives who worked closely with UNRRA and AFHQ throughout. Upon arrival in Naples the train was stopped at the station and not permitted to go to the docks.
4. It was the understanding, after clearance by the Repatriation Branch Movements Officer, that the Liaison Officer for Movements AFHQ would meet the ship and would assist in the entrainment.
5. In analysing this entire situation before proceeding further with this report, we consider that paragraph 4 contains the key factor in any three or four hours hold-up that is reported to have occurred in disembarking and entrainment of the Flight. If our Repatriation Branch Movements Officer Rome was not personally present at dock-side in Naples it was because he had definite assurance that the Liaison Officer of Movements AFHQ would meet the Officer in charge of Flight from Egypt.



UNITED NATIONS  
RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

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TO: UNRRA WASHINGTON  
FROM: UNRRA ITALIAN MISSION

6. In the meanwhile our Repatriation Movements Officer was fully occupied by a quite erratic train move which in no way maintained its agreed schedule.

7. One of the Czechoslovakian representatives from Rome, whose presence at dock-side had been arranged for by this Mission's Repatriation Movements Officer, then called on our Regional Office at Naples, who promptly made available sufficient trucks to transport the refugees from the ship's side to the train, still standing in the station at Naples, which by prior agreement should have been at the dock-side.

8. We are being held responsible for the delay in the sailing of the "Tripolitania" from Naples because of "failure to supply personnel to unload the refugees' heavy baggage", according to communication from Office of Principal Sea Transport Officer, Mediterranean (Caserta), GHQ, CMF. Attached is copy of communication of 27th June to the above mentioned office from this Mission setting forth our position concerning removal of heavy baggage. Also attached is 3rd July answer to this Mission from the Office of Senior Sea Transport Officer, advising us that we were correct in the assessment of our position as set forth in paragraph 3 (a) and (b) of the 27th June letter to Office of Principal Sea Transport Officer.

9. We should mention at this point UNRRA Prague gave us to understand that Mr. Stevens of Cairo, as Officer in charge of Flight, was scheduled to remain with the refugees as far as the Austrian border; the town mentioned was Villach. We wish to question why Stevens did not stay on his assignment from Naples to the Austrian border, and, if he was acting under other instructions, why was this Mission not informed.

10. The summary at this stage is that this Mission assumes responsibility for any minor breakdowns at disembarkation point which was caused in the main by failure of APHQ Movements Liaison Officer to follow through on a direct commitment and innumerable breakdowns and disruption of train movements schedules over which we had no direct control or direct responsibility. Also the delay in the removal of heavy baggage for which we were at first held responsible but were later cleared by the Office of Senior Sea Transport Officer (see copy of letter attached).

/11.

UNITED NATIONS  
RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

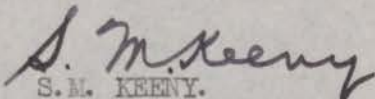
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TO: UNRRA WASHINGTON  
FROM: UNRRA ITALIAN MISSION.

11. Once the refugees were placed on the train and started their movement on to the North it will be found that they received excellent care including rations, medical care and other welfare services. They also received assistance from the various UNRRA Missions en route to their destination, due to information supplied by our Movements Officer.

12. Perhaps our efforts in this entire move would best be summarised by a letter addressed personally to the Movements Officer expressing appreciation for the manner in which we overcame difficulties beyond our control and the manner in which we provided for the refugees on their way North.

13. We trust that this will clear this matter up to the satisfaction of all interested and to quote from the letter sent to our Movements Officer by Dr. A. Dutka, Counsellor of Czechoslovak Legation: "As it is, the refugees are already in Czechoslovakia in good health and this is, after all, the most important".

  
S.M. KEENY.  
CHIEF OF MISSION.

cc: E.R.O. - attention Director Welfare and Repatriation Div.  
Bureau of Relief Services  
Displaced Persons Division.  
Keeny File.

Encls:

1. Letter from Chief of Mission - 27 June 1946
2. Letter from Senior Sea Transport Officer - 3rd July 1946
3. Letter from Dr. A. Dutka - 5th June 1946.



ROME.

UNRRA/3-6/RW

27 June 1946.

TO : Office of Principal Sea Transport Officer,  
Mediterranean (Caserta)  
C.H.Q. C.M.F.

FROM : Chief of Mission.

SUBJECT : "Tripolitania", : Port Said - Naples, 2 May 1946.

1. Reference is made to your 4456/SP dated 23 May 1946, and our previous communication dated 3 June 1946.
2. The inconvenience that was caused by the delay in disembarking Czechoslovakian refugees from the ss. "Tripolitania", which arrived in Naples on the 7th May, is very much regretted. It was due principally to the breakdown of the locomotive provided for the train by the Czechoslovakian Government to lift the refugees. In attempting to solve the difficulty, our representative failed to reach the dock in time to meet the ship, and eventually emergency transport was laid on by our Naples office. The Mission was at fault in not making arrangements to meet such unforeseen difficulties.
3. Regarding the delay in unloading passengers' heavy baggage, in the past we have been given to understand -
  - (a) that passengers' heavy baggage is always stored between decks or in a hold provided and the discharge of same is the sole responsibility of ship or ship's agent;
  - (b) that on no account will civilian personnel be allowed to enter a Military-controlled port or area to discharge baggage from a ship, unless requested to do so by Military Authorities.
4. In order to prevent a recurrence of such difficulties in the removal of baggage, we shall be grateful if you will inform us whether the position as set out in para 3, (a) and (b) above, is correct.
5. Again apologising for the inconvenience and trouble caused in this matter.

S.M. KEENE  
Chief of Mission

SMK/jms.

cc : Bur. of R.S. (Repatriation Div)  
C. of M.

C O P Y

Office of  
Senior Sea Transport Officer  
Caserta  
C.H.Q. C.M.F.

3rd July 1946

Ref. 4836/S.F.

CHIEF OF MISSION, UNRRA

ROME.

"TRIPOLITANIA"

Port Said / Naples 2.5.46

Receipt, is acknowledged of your letters of 3rd and 27th June regarding the delay of the above vessel and it is noted with satisfaction that the matter has been taken up with your Naples Office in order to prevent a recurrence of such an incident.

2. With regard to the question raised in para 4 of your letter of 27th June, my original letter enclosed a copy of the completed voyage report and the question of baggage, although included in it, was not one for you to answer and your assessment of the position as set out in para 3 (a) and (b) is correct.

Sgd. A??????

for COMMANDER R.N.V.R.

(Absent on duty)



copy

CZECHOSLOVAK MISSION  
cc to Displaced Persons & Repatriation  
Sub/Comm. HQ.AC - APO 394.

Rome, 5th June 1946.

No. 518/46

Dear Captain,

Following our talk about the transport of Czechoslovaks repatriated from Palestine via Italian I would like to add few words.

First of all one has to keep in mind that the refugees waited many months actually from the end of the war to be transported home. The long waiting did not add naturally to their good humor and forced stay in Egypt in a camp under given climatic conditions did in no way better it. Crossing of sea in a crowded ship was no pleasure. As the transport consisted mainly of intelligentia, of which our Country is in need of, the Czechoslovak government keeping this in mind and the conditions of the people and known transport difficulties in Italy, sent out a Czechoslovakian train in order to help out UNRRA and hasten the return journey of the refugees.

Speaking about Naples I take this opportunity to thank you, dear Captain as representative of UNRRA for all the kind help which they received while taking them from the port to the railroad station by lending twentyfive trucks and mobile canteens.

This readiness of UNRRA made a great impression on all of them and certainly bettered their humour. Also my warmest thanks for your very great help and personal attention in given food to the refugees in Rome. During the whole of the journey the help of UNRRA, as I have been informed in Verona, has been very satisfactory and well organised and continued to be so till the end.

Even if some difficulties have arisen for all the care of UNRRA of which I was a witness from Naples to Verona I do not think the fault lies with UNRRA but the lack of cooperation between the Italian railway organisation and the R.T.O.

I have myself found out in Naples that the notice about departure of the train for all personal care of R.T.O. officer in Naples was not given in time and this was done independently of UNRRA. For this same reason probably the provisions, sent out by dispositions given out the departure were being changed continually from hour to hour almost from minute to minute.

I can state the reason for this as I do not know about the organisation of railroads. I only know that when I arrived to Verona in order to arrange with the help of UNRRA for further food and fresh bread the train has already left although I was assured it would wait in Verona as promised in Caserta to the liaison officer of the Czechoslovak Military Mission Capt. Beck. As you yourself know we also sent in addition further refugees to Verona who were even unable to get to the railway station in Rome given the continually changing and finally sudden departure of the train from Rome.

Although I do not want to criticize I think that if there would have been a better cooperation between the concerned technical offices and if UNRRA and I as the head of Czechoslovak Mission acc. to Displ. Pers. & Repatr. Sub/Comm. in Italy have been informed in time of the departure of the train from each station many troubles and incidents could have been avoided. As it is the refugees are already in Czechoslovakia in good health and this is after all the most important.

■ To you, dear Captain, I want to give my thanks and also of my government for all your great help and kindness shown during the repatriation and I am looking forward to further cooperation with you.

I remain,

faithfully your

sgd/ Dr. A. DUTKA,  
Counsellor of Legation,  
Head of CZECHOSLOVAK MISSION to  
D.P. & R.S.C.-

The UNITED NATIONS RELIEF &  
REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION.

to the attention of Capt. WEGHORN  
Head of Repatriation Section of  
UNRRA

R O M E



PM/W/4

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UNITED NATIONS  
RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

Warsaw,  
15th November, 1946.

TO: Unrra Washington.  
FROM: Welfare and Repatriation Division, Warsaw.

We enclose, for your information, reports  
by the following people, on their journeys with  
repatriates to Poland:- Mr. H. Gray, Mr. M.M. Schwartz,  
Mr. T.J. Lindsay, Miss E.R. Harnett, and Mr. D.R. Hunter.

*Roland Berger*  
Roland Berger,

WELFARE AND REPATRIATION OFFICER

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REPORT BY HUGH GRAY, WELFARE OFFICER, ITALIAN MISSION.

Subject:            Repatriation Train Incident.

On October 10th the repatriation train from Rome to Dziedzice was controlled for contraband articles at Piding station, American Zone, Austria, by a detachment of 66 Constabulary Squadron. Every piece of American Army origin clothing, shirts, trousers, pullovers etc., was confiscated, whether being worn by the refugee or in his baggage. The origin of this clothing was not taken into consideration and, to my certain knowledge, much of it had been given to the refugees by UNRRA Italian Mission. All American cigarettes were taken and, also, a lady's watch from the wrist of a male refugee. The control was carried out by American enlisted men, under the command of a sergeant, who spent his time banging his truncheon against the side of the coaches and swearing at the refugees. Among items of khaki clothing confiscated were those belonging to Poles who had been discharged from the Polish Army and held documents proving their entitlement to them. I demanded to see the Officer Commanding and was driven in the back of a truck to the Headquarters of the unit responsible. I formally complained and after the O.C. had returned to the station with me the watch was restituted and also the cigarettes after I had demonstrated that they were part of the rations issued by opening a new ration box.

Under the supervision of the O.C. the control proceeded in a more reasonable manner. The refugees were then treated with D.D.T. by German nurses, which was a waste of time and energy as only the hair of the head and outer clothes were sprayed.

During the control Miss Price, a nurse supervisor accompanying the move, witnessed kitbag being slit open by knives as soldiers were too impatient to wait until refugees opened them.

The last truck of our train, containing Red Cross parcels and two refugee guards, also disappeared in the American Zone sometime during the night before we arrived at Piding. On arrival in Prague I reported the incident to Capt. Chaney, R.T.O., and said that he would take the question up to American G.5, and that this was not the first complaint against 66 Constabulary Squadron.

The conduct of the refugees throughout the control was exemplary and thus no incidents were provoked.

These soldiers carrying out the control appeared to think that they were dealing with criminals rather than human beings and, although I have seen many train controls I have never witnessed anything as brutal as this one. Damage to the American prestige is incalculable.

Our train was accompanied by a Polish diplomatic coach which carried, among other officials, Madame Walentyna Rolofs, Director of Personnel, Polish Foreign Office, who assured me that the incident would receive full publicity in the Polish press on her return to Warsaw.

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To:- UNRRA Mission to Poland  
Welfare and Repatriation Division.

From:- Mr. M.M. Schwartz  
OC Flight of the Polish Movement  
from Naples to Dziedzice.

Having handed over all the records re the move from Naples to Dziedzice, I now wish to make the following report on the conditions of the journey and offer some suggestions regarding the repatriation from the Middle East and Italy to Poland:

Firstly, most of the people are coming from warm countries and it is now impossible to move them in box cars without heat and with only a small number of blankets. (Each repatriant received in El Shat. Egypt, two blankets for the journey).

Secondly, it is impossible to repatriate under these conditions, sick people and small children. The Polish Mission at Villach put on our train two T.B. people who were running temperatures. I objected, but they told me it was their responsibility. There is no accommodation in the box cars for sick people and in the future, arrangements for a hospital car must be made.

Thirdly, the people coming from Italy had enough food for their journey, but for these people it is very important to have tea, warm water, and bread and we had no supply of these three very important things. It is therefore important to arrange points on this line to supply hot water, especially in the winter.

People going through Italy have a chance to buy on their journey, wine and alcohol, which is very cheap there and very easy to obtain in exchange for cigarettes which they receive from us for their journey. Plenty of people were drunk the whole journey and made a lot of trouble. One of them fell down under the train and was cut in two parts and died in Italy. His name was Stephen Olsewski. The people did not learn from this case and drank more and more. It was the same in Czechoslovakia. Wood alcohol was sold to them, which is a dangerous poison for the eyes. Neither my explanations nor the Committee's helped. It is necessary to have this properly explained and to take steps to prevent such occurrences.

In Villach a group of 80 Polish DPs repatriating through Dziedzice was attached to us. These people received rations according to the rules in Austria - 2100 calories a day, whereas our people received rations according to the rules in Italy - 2600 calories a day. That gave us a lot of trouble. In the future it would be advisable not to collect people from different parts, who would be receiving different rations.

/Fourthly... ..



Fourthly, we had on our journey a lot of trouble with the British and American Military Authorities. They hadn't received any message about our transport and we stood sometimes for 12 and 14 hours awaiting our clearance at the British and American Zone borders.

Disposition was very difficult at train time, especially as we had a large number of children, some little babies, sick people and old people.

We waited a long time for clearance at the Polish border at Zebrzydowice, where we arrived on the 20th of September at 1605 hours. People remained for the night in the box cars and the conditions were very bad. The people were very bitter over this beginning in their old-new home. Even the UNRRA staff could not leave the box cars. There was no accommodation for food and lodging. There must be some arrangements made for the reception of so many people. UNRRA should establish a point there to help these new repatriants. We need there a Welfare Officer and medical staff. People are coming from several countries without Polish money and they have no chance to leave the cars and arrange themselves after 8 days hard journey.



Statement obtained from Miss W. Visscher, Nurse, and Mr. T.J. Lindsay, Principle Welfare Officer, regarding conditions on train No.7802 bringing repatriates from Wels and Salzburg. The train arrived in Dziedzice on Sunday, September 15th, 1946.

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The train left Wels for Austria on September 10th, carrying 196 people. The entire train was supplied with only 25 blankets, which were quite inadequate.

When we cross the border and come into Germany a check was made by the U.K. Military. Numerous people claimed that cigarettes, chocolate and underclothing issued to them by UNRRA were removed from their possession. A Polish priest, father Ryiel from Linz claimed that his property was searched and at the point of a pistol he was robbed of 2 shirts, 2 under pants, 85 cigarettes (leaving him with no cigarettes), and chocolate, issued by UNRRA.

On arrival at Munich it was discovered that the people from Wels had not been issued with American Red Cross packages, as had the people from Salzburg. We communicated with UNRRA ~~xxxxxxx~~ in Munich and had parcels sent out for these people, but it was discovered that all chocolate and cigarettes had been removed from the packages. Here also we discovered 20 sick people on the train from Linz.

There were 58 young children up to 6 years of age, and the parents claimed that no suitable food had been supplied. Even had milk been supplied, there were no facilities for preparing and heating food, neither could facilities be obtained at stations en route.

There were no medical supplies, and no accommodation for sick people. A paralysed woman had to be carried to and from the train. A pregnant woman taken ill on the train was removed to hospital immediately on reaching Poland. There were absolutely no facilities for dealing with such cases on the train. It was discovered that the old lady of 64 years had no sleeping accommodation and was lying on bare boards. She was unable to sleep, and consequently was tired and ill.

On 11/9/46 we arrived at Freilassing, and were forced to wait 48 hours for rations for the American guards. It was found that no orders had been issued for these rations and we were told they must be obtained from Salzburg. There we were informed that we must obtain the rations at the Czech border. Finally we were told that we must continue the journey without the rations but the guards refused to do so. It was then arranged that the rations should be sent from Ravensburg. At 3 p.m. the R.T.C. officer stated that he had made telephone inquiries and that the rations were on the way by truck, but this was false information. By midnight the rations still had not arrived. A man was sent to make enquiries the next morning, and he was told that no one knew anything about these rations. They finally arrived at 4.30 on the afternoon of the 13th September.

During the long wait for the rations the repatriates had become restless and annoyed, and armed reinforcements were called out to deal with them.

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## Protocol

Statement of the Rev. Father professor Rygiel  
Joseph, repatriate, living in Zabrze, Henryka  
Street, No.61.

... ..

I was taken from the hospital in Linz to Wels (Upper Austria) with my luggage. After the luggage had been inspected I was obliged to return to Linz for my bicycle and my personal documents. When I returned to Wels I found that all my luggage had been opened with sharp tools. Several repatriates had put what remained of my things into the damaged valises. Going through the things left I noticed that 300 American cigarettes, 550 German marks, school diploma, and personal documents, were missing. My photographic plates, films, photographic paper and photographic materials were ruined. One of my watches was broken.

The Repatriation Commission in Austria was informed, as well as the American Officer. They arrived at the camp in the early morning and investigated this case. As a result the American officer refused to admit that American people would behave so, but three books were returned to me, as well as 450 marks, by an American Officer. The repatriates stated when speaking with the American Officer that they had seen an American soldier with my boots and he had delivered them to the Greek police of the camp.

While resorting my things on the journey, I noticed that further items were missing: 50 cigarettes, a new gold watch, 5 cases of soap, 3 bars of chocolate, 5 pairs of socks. The last three items I had received for my work with UNRRA. One suit of clothes, one microscope Zeis-Ikon with 3 magnifying glasses, value when purchased in 1939 2,400 German marks, one camera "Kontaks", value when bought 450 German marks, were also missing. Also 2 cassocks were ruined and one cross broken.

On the German-Austrian frontier at night 5 soldiers noisily invaded the car, although it was a hospital car. One of these five was the Chief of the American convoy. Again one of my suitcases was opened, and 185 cigarettes, three and a half bars of chocolate, 2 shirts, 2 pairs of men's pants and one UNRRA uniform were taken. Another American soldier forced me to open a box which was closed with an iron band. They had no special tools to open it and a soldier broke the box with a bayonet. I asked to see the American officer, but one of the soldiers, holding fire arms against me said "Du hier bleiben" (Stay here). In the same moment one of the American people lighted my face with a flash-light, and noticing that I am a priest asked me "Du Chaipain"? When I said "Yes" they withdrew, taking with them what they had already taken.

Rev.Professor Rygiel Jozef.



Statement of DUDA Joseph, repatriate, born on  
July 4th 1906, at Wojaschowice, living in  
Ostrowiecielecki

.....

On September 10th I left with the transport Wels (Austria) for Poland. I am sorry to state that my present journey has been much more unpleasant than the one I was obliged to make as a prisoner of O.E. from Oswiecim to Matthaussen.

Trouble started already in Wels. After having arrived in Wels which was a Reception Camp, the American soldiers went through our luggage; they stated they had orders to do so. The function was more in the nature of robbery. Cigarettes, chocolate, boots and other things of American origin were taken away. Some of these things after a questioning an American Officer were returned but many of them disappeared. All our valises were damaged completely as well as the boxes and other packing. A second inspection of the luggage took place at the Austrian-German frontier. At 11 at night the convoy people together with local people came into our car and we had the same trouble as in Wels.

They did not wait until we opened our valises and trunks; they simply opened them with knives. During the inspection they took from me, 2 pairs of warm underwear, which I received from UNRRA and 1 packet of cigarettes. On my remark that I received this from UNRRA I heard the words "Garden" (probably God dam). I must mention that I was in a hospital car, because I was ill. During the whole journey which lasted a whole week, because the American convoy stopped the transport as they had no food, our food was not only bad but also insufficient. We had no medical care, except one nursing sister who was repatriate. This was the only help we received - and really a very previous one.

Duda Jozef.



COPY

Protocol

Written on September 16th 1946 with Dehman Leon,  
repatriate, arriving with the transport from Linz  
to Dziedzice.

.....

On the 23rd August I was released from the hospital in Linz. On September 9th 1946 I went to Wels, where I was put in camp. In the evening American soldiers and the Greek police arrived and made inspection of our things. I was absent at that time. When I came back I found all my valises opened and the following things were missing: 8 packets American cigarettes, 5 bars of chocolate, camp document (index D.P.)

During the transportation I noticed that members of the American convoy treated the repatriates very badly.

On the Austrian-German frontier the American convoy inspected our things once more. During our journey we did not get warm food.

The bad treatment of repatriates by American guards was as follows:-

At 11 o'clock at night the American guards entered the cars making inspection of our possessions and they behaved very badly. taking some things belonging to the repatriates, such as clothing, footwear, linen, cigarettes, chocolate etc., for themselves.

Dehman Leon,  
Walbrzych, Joscilunski Str. 37.



copy

Losa George  
Ruda, Upper Silesia  
Barbary Street No.15.

Dziedzice, September 16, 1946

Protocol

Statement of Losa George, born on September  
15th, 1917 at Ruda, Upper Silesia, Barbary  
Street, No.5.

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I was lying in bed sick with TB in the camp at Wels. On the 9th or 10th of September during my absence an inspection of my things was made by the American soldiers. My valises were completely ruined, because they were opened by force; some of my things were stolen viz: 20 packets of American cigarettes, 2 big bars of chocolate, 8 cakes of soap, 2 packets of raisins, one packet of plums. On the Austrian-German frontier an inspection of luggage was made for the second time; we were forced to open the valises and the following things were taken: 35 packets of cigarettes, 4 warm under-shirts, 2 warm shirts, 2 shirts, and 2 pairs of pants. When I asked the soldier to leave my things, he hit me on head. We were ill but without help and medicine; we were not even given anything to drink. Parcels received from UNRRA were also taken away from me, and they represented for me a great value. As I am ill I could not profit from cigarettes and food but I hoped that my children would profit of them.

Losa George.



21st October, 1946.

REPORT ON JOURNEY FROM WELS TO DZIEDZICE

BY MISS E.R. HARNETT

.....

Train under military escort - 1 corporal, 3 G.I.'s from Infantry Division - Ebelsberg.

Train scheduled to leave Wels, Austria on Wednesday October 9th at 10 a.m. Considerable delay experienced because some wagons were found to be badly in need of repairs. Rain was pouring in and the floors of the wagons were inches deep in water.

Stoves also had to be adjusted at the last minute.

Not sufficient wagons were supplied to accommodate the number of people and more had to be obtained.

Prisoners who were being transported to Poland, under military escort, claimed that they had not previously been notified of their departure, consequently they had no belongings with them. Five of them had wives living in the Linz-Salzburg area - and most of my time was spent contacting their various camps, and having wives and families put on the train with only an hour's notice to pack their belongings, and get transportation to the train. One man who claimed that he was not Polish, anyway, had a wife living privately in Linz. When I reported this matter to the M.P. they were reluctant to do anything about the matter, and their attitude throughout the day was of complete indifference. The man was taken to Salzburg in a state of great agitation. I was able to contact the civilian police and at least have his wife come to the train. At Salzburg I contacted the Polish Liaison who had the man taken off the train, handed over to civilian police and sent back to jail in Linz. Much work and time could have been saved if the Military Police at Wels and Salzburg had investigated my story and had the man turned over to civilian authorities. Their attitude was, that they had "signed" for 21 prisoners and 21 prisoners they would take to Poland - no matter what!

Train left Wels 7 hours late - pulled into another siding just outside Wels for two hours. When the train was ready to leave, one G.I. and one prisoner were discovered to be missing. They had gone to Wels in search of liquor. The departure of the train was held up one and three-quarter hours until they returned. The 3 G.I.'s then shut themselves up in the prison van with the prisoners and the liquor and remained there for the rest of the night; in spite of the orders of the Corporal in charge - they refused to do guard duty. During the night the stove in my wagon which was the food stove, completely collapsed. Burning coals were flung over the floor of the wagon. The chimney and fitting were also flung loose and a fire immediately started. I quelled the fire with blankets, but for a short while was very frightened because the heavy slide door of the wagon had jammed, making it impossible to get out.

/Delay.....



Delay was experienced at Salzburg (during which period doors and stoves were checked) owing to the last minute order to issue ration cards before departure. Train left Salzburg, Friday at about 10,30 p.m. Arrived across the German border at a small siding - Piding - and at 12.45 a.m. an "inspection" of all goods, wagons and people was made by the 66th Constabulary Squadron. The Constabulary were armed with fixed bayonets, and, owing to this fact and their ruthless attitude, the crowd very quickly became abusive, and refused to return to their wagons. Chaos followed. As far as I could make out there were about 10 young G.I.'s of the Constabulary who seemed to be thoroughly enjoying themselves at the expense of the D.P.s. My inquiries as to who was in charge of the raid, led me to believe that a certain Sergeant was responsible for the "inspection of goods". At my request of this "official authority" for this inspection I was told, not too politely - "lady if you don't want to get hurt, get behind the guards if you mix with the D.P.'s anything is liable to happen to you."

The Lieutenant who was in charge of the train said there was nothing he could do about it - "He was only the Commander" - His five men were called to help restore order and were extremely helpful.

Later, a reinforcement of Constab. arrived in a truck with headlights blazing - which roared up and down the platform, blinding, confusing and scattering the D.P.'s in all directions. During this period of chaos two D.P.'s were slightly wounded by bayonet thrusts. This caused much hysteria among both men and women. The men, it turned out later, were not very badly hurt, but one had a considerable amount of blood on hands and face.

Fear spread, and later a Lieutenant arrived, and order was somewhat restored - the search continued.

A remark passed by one Constab. man was that "Because the Poles had been difficult and troublesome - now the American Army would be troublesome." They were! A long and thoroughly intensive search was made, even of clothes being worn, including underclothing.

All G.I. clothing, some of which to my certain knowledge, had been issued by UNRRA was taken away. When I queried this, I was asked why UNRRA had not also issued a signed statement to the receiver of the clothing. It was useless to argue or even to try to explain, that it was not the normal procedure of UNRRA to issue signed statements of goods issued.

All khaki blankets were taken, irrespective of the fact that these were the only blankets some D.P.'s held.

Some 14 watches, films and a lighter were also taken, and one man had to hand over a pair of civilian leather gloves.

When I queried this, I was again told that it was neither my business or UNRRA's.

/To my.....



To my knowledge, no food, candy or cigarettes were taken.

The raid ended at 4.45 a.m. and at 5.30, everybody was called out again to be dusted with D.D.T.

The psychological effect of this raid on the people was bad, and the majority were nervous, highly strung, discontented and abusive for the rest of the trip.

Much trouble was experienced continually throughout the trip with the distribution of food. In spite of my continued telephoning in advance to scheduled stopping places the only hot coffee or soup that was served was at Prague, five days after the commencement of the trip.

This was due to the fact that the train never stopped where the driver had previously told me it would.

On Sunday 13th, the train had to be stopped to transport a pregnant woman to hospital, and later the same day to call a doctor to another pregnant woman who fell, and refused to leave the train so near the Polish border. She was taken on to the border, and sent to hospital immediately on arrival at Dziedzice.

Incident of raid at Piding reported to R.T.C at Prague.

Out of the 40 American Red Cross parcels which were issued for breakdown for children on the journey, 140 packs of cigarettes were extracted. My orders from UNRA at Salzburg were, that owing to the fact that there were so few, they were to be handed over to the Polish Red Cross at Dziedzice. A riot started when I carried out these orders and refused to issue them en route. The men of the transport became abusive, crowding around the food wagon and shouting for their rights etc. Arrived at Dziedzice the R.T.C. said they were to be given to the people and NOT the Red Cross. They were distributed to the men at the rate of approximately 3 per man.

Train arrived at Dziedzice in the early hours of Monday 14th, where it remained for 2 1/2 days awaiting disembarkation. Once processing started, it was dealt with in a quick efficient manner and within a few hours people were on their way to their destinations.

The 60 days' rations came I think as a pleasant surprise to most D.P's as during the trip they had regarded the ration cards with misgiving and suspicion.

The ration issued per person, including children is:-

Fats	2.81 lbs.	Flour	49.09 lbs.
Oats	3.75 lbs	Milk	29.02 - (32 tins)
Salt	1.88	Fish	4.54 - (22 tins)
Pulses	3.75		

E.R. Harnett  
Welfare Officer  
Austrian Mission.



5th November. 1946.

REPORT ON REPATRIATION OF POLES FROM ITALY

David R. Hunter

Flight Team: D.R. Hunter o/c  
C. Borggreve m/o  
B. Kenny nurse.

<u>Schedule:</u>	<u>Arrived</u>	<u>Departed</u>	
Rome		10:00	Oct. 26
Bologna	01:00	01:30	27
Udine	17:00	23:00	27
Villach	08:00 Oct. 28	22:00	29
Salzburg	17:30	23:00	30
Munich	07:00	09:30	31
Filsen	11:00	13:00	Nov. 1
Prague	17:00	19:00	1
Clemenc	09:00	11:00	2
Dziedzice	15:00 Nov. 3		

Narrative

On Saturday Oct. 26 128 Polish displaced persons entrained at Rome. In addition to the box cars assigned for the people the train carried three cars loaded with parcels from the Polish embassy, one hospital car, one ration car, and one escort car. Loading was orderly and expeditious. The staff of the Repatriation Branch and Cine Citta have the routine of entrainment very well organised.

Toward the end of the first day it began to rain. Six of the ten personnel cars leaked. The spirits of the people were remarkably high in spite of the cold and discomfort resulting. One large family which had been moved into the hospital car because their original home on wheels had been removed from the train because of a burnt out box had now to be transferred again from the hospital car to the escort car as the hospital car was wetter inside than out. In the present season it is imperative that all CARS MUST BE CERTIFIED RAIN PROOF before departure of the train.

At Bologna in the pouring rain hot soup and bread was served by Mr. Bean from the Milan transit camp. Because Bologna is so far from Milan and the time of arrival of the train is always uncertain it may be wise to work out an arrangement with the military or the Italian Red Cross to feed the repatriates at this stop instead of requiring that the food be brought from Milan. One mother and small baby left the train at Bologna because of the difficult conditions. Next stop was Udine where the DPRSC staff served hot tea.

At Tarvisio Italian border officials carried out a courteous and cursory customs examination of some of the baggage. No undue delay was experienced here.

The train arrived at Villach early in the morning of the third day. The Austrian employee of the RTO was expecting the train but thought four hundred people were involved instead of the correct number. After about an hour representatives of the Polish Repatriation Commission, Capt. Woszcyski, Lt. Myslatycki, and Mr. Vincenc arrived at the RTO office. There was a misunderstanding between them and

/the .....



the RTO as to the number of box cars which were to be laid on and the number of repatriates for whom provision had to be made. However this was straightened out and the Polish representatives arranged for hot tea and bread to be brought to the train.

At Villach the Italian group was to be joined by approximately four hundred repatriates from Villach and Graz. As they would not arrive until the next day the train was placed on a siding hot soup or tea and bread was provided three times a day by the Polish Repatriation Com. and the people settled down to wait. Later on in the first day the entire group was transferred from the ten Italian box cars to seven heated box cars which made the balance of the journey many times more comfortable.

Up to this time sufficient ten in one rations had been distributed to each car for two days. During the lay over in Villach each individual was issued with one box of ten in one rations and given to understand that these rations were for the entire journey. This method of issue satisfied the people as it allowed them some flexibility and choice of what they would eat when. With the stoves in the new box cars the rations could be heated and quite presentable meals prepared.

At Villach three hospital cars and one kitchen car were attached to the train. Sick people and mothers with small babies were transferred to the hospital car and the escort also moved into one of the cars set aside for it. On the second day Major Montgomery, military commander of the train arrived with his guard of five British soldiers. Miss Easto, UNRRA Austria also arrived with the group from Villach. Lt Myslaticki represented the Polish Repat. Com. on the train. All rations were moved into the kitchen car and two cooks from the Italian contingent and two ration guards appointed. This personnel cooked for the hospital car and kept hot water available at all times for the repatriates.

At Salzburg Miss Warner of the Austrian Mission and Dr. Childs joined the train. Dr. Borggreve remained in charge of the hospital however consulting Dr. Childs when necessary.

At Schwansdorf a baby was born with no difficulty. Dr. Borggreve had examined the mother about an hour before but did not believe the birth was near. However the child was born an hour later with all hands assisting. The birth was a rapid and easy one.

In Salzburg a woman was removed from the train and sent to the hospital in process of aborting. Later on in Czechoslovakia a suspected acute appendicitis was also removed from the train to hospital.

The Austrian contingent was issued during the journey with biscuits and meat and vegetables in cans. This issue had to be made every day and was quite difficult. The ten in one rations issued in Italy are far superior in variety and convenience. The only hitch about the ten in ones was the fact that some boxes contained 200 cigarettes some 100 and a few none at all. We attempted not very successfully to redistribute cigarettes from childrens rations to smokers who did not get them.

/Special.....



Special commendation should go to It. Myslatycki for his untiring work during the journey at all hours of the day and night for his interest in the job to which he was assigned.

The Polish border was reached late in the afternoon eight day. At Ziebdzidovice, the border station on the Polish side the train was greeted by music from loud speakers erected on the platform and by the usual rain. The Polish officials completed the necessary paper work with dispatch and then informed us that we should have to wait quite a few hours for an engine to take us on to Dziedzice as there are very few available in Poland. The night and next morning were spent in the station before a locomotive finally came.

During this wait the remaining five days rations were distributed to the Italian contingent.

It was extremely revealing to observe the reactions of the repatriates at this first glimpse of their homeland. Some of the men formerly with the Anders army in Italy marvelled at the fact that none of their baggage was being taken away. One man asked me "Where are the Russian soldiers " Another, the interpreter for Mr. Masojc, leader of the group remarked that it was obvious that they had been told lies in Italy about what would happen to them when they returned to Poland. I encouraged members of the group to write letters or postcards to their friends in Italy telling them what they had found and I should be glad to mail them on my return to Italy.

At this station we learned that in the month of October 10,000 people had passed by returning to their homes from France, Germany, Austria, and Italy.

On the afternoon of the ninth day we arrived at Dziedzice. There were already three other repatriation trains waiting on the sidings to be unloaded. At this point nominal rolls were handed over, surplus medical supplies etc., to the Polish Repatriation Commission and the mission completed.

The difficulties with American military police which had been experienced by earlier trains were not repeated. No clothing was taken from repatriates. In sum total the journey was a smooth one.

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Recommendations:

1. Box cars MUST be rain proof. They should be inspected by a representative of UNRRA before acceptance.
2. With small coal or wood stoves in the box cars the journey can be very comfortable regardless of the weather. The possibility of such arrangements should be explored in Italy with the Italian State Railways.
3. A doctor should accompany all transports.
- 4 The medical kit should be examined and re-evaluated by the Medical Branch as certain needed items were not included.
5. If possible all ten in one ration boxes should contain the same items...the same number of cigarettes.
6. Arrangements should be made at Dziedzice for money to be available in small quantity for repatriation escorts. The UNRRA representative there had to dig into his own pocket to pay for rail tickets for the escort from Dziedzice to Katowice.
7. Negotiations should be carried out with AFHQ Caserta to secure the issue of sixty days rations to repatriates from Italy the same as are given repatriates from Austria, France, and Germany.

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