

8B WELFARE

Conditions

COPY

April 1, 1945

Miss Jane M. Hoey, Drtr.
Bureau of Public Assistance
Social Security Board
Washington, D.C.

Dear Miss Hoey:

file Welfare *8B*

It took seven months for me to reach Jugo-Slavia, via Egypt and Italy. After leaving Egypt I spent several months in Bari, Italy, during which time I did two jobs which I think are worth mentioning. The first was done with Rhoda; a study of a Transient Refugee Camp. Rhoda probably told you about that. The other was a study of three devastated provinces of Italy, Pescara, Aquila and Chieti. I was loaned to the Italian Mission for this project. My objectives were to determine the extent of need, that is the number of people who were in need of food supplies, the number of persons in need, who fell into the categories for which the Italian mission has assumed responsibility, the amount of indigenous food available and at what prices, means of transportation available, evaluate the efficiency of indigenous private and public agencies with respect to their use as the distributing and relief units, the relationship existing between the Allied Commission and the Italian gov't. officials, and on the basis of information obtained to chart roughly an administrative structure that could be used to discharge the responsibilities of the It. Mission, in a manner which would permit greatest use of indigenous private and public agencies and personnel, develop local leadership and be reasonably sure that UNRRA supplies would not reach the black markets.

After returning from the field trip, which took me through some of the most fought over terrain in this war, where village after village had been totally destroyed, where the people who had returned had dug caves under the floor of their homes and lived there with 10 inches of snow on the ground, I was ordered to proceed to Bari to become one of the advance party that was moving forward into Jugo-Slavia with M.L. (Military Liaison).

There was and continues to be much hunger in Italy. Great need for all kinds of food and clothing particularly shoes. The people fear the future, they are discouraged. Because of the mixed up political picture, their officials are afraid to make decisions. The situation is further complicated by the relationship between Allied Comm. and the Italian Gov't. The Italian gov't. has the administrative power to make decisions, but lacks the instruments to carry them out. They have practically no communication or transportation facilities, no supplies of their own, currency issued by the military is their means of exchange, inflation has had a good start and prices are rapidly spiralling upward. AC on the other hand controls transportation, communications, and supplies, but does not have authority to make decisions. This authority was relinquished some months ago. As a result the country, at least that part of it in which I spent some time, is in a state of fatalistic impotency.

I've talked with many Italians from all strata of society and have come to the conclusion that the great majority of the m do not grasp the significance of the war, of their defeat, of the part that Italy by following Mussolini's leadership played in bringing the world to its present state. They are very angry with Mussolini and denounce him freely, but not because of his intentions to grab part

of France, or N. Africa, or for his conquest of Abyssinia, not for the Fascist doctrine he perpetrated on the country, but only because he failed to attain his objectives. His great mistake, according to many Italians, was to declare war on U.S. Sort of discouraging. This is the product of 25 years of Facism.

After making my report on my field trip, which of necessity had to be brief, I flew to the hqtrs of the Jugo-Slav mission and disembarked with 17 others for Jugo-Slavia. Incidentally we made the trip on a LCI in a rough sea. More than 3/4 of the group were sick during the entire trip which lasted 40 hours.

is waging
It is now almost two months since I arrived in J.S. Much of interest is happening here. There is a revolution in process during a period when the country is at war. From what I've seen it is a broad movement, supported by the large majority of the people; it is a shifting of power from a small well-to-do group to another portion of the population, that although small in number, appears to have been thrown up by the rigors of the last few years, who have demonstrated leadership qualities under a period of great stress and privation, and who seem thereby to have gained the confidence of large masses of the peasants.

As you know, revolution, social and economic changes, wherever and whenever they take place are not pleasant. Not everyone is satisfied. No doubt there are people in this country who do not look upon these changes with favor. Civil liberties as we know them is a professed objective of the administration. I doubt whether the administration would state that it has achieved this goal at this time. It must be born in mind that the country, is still at war and that at least one-half, the richest half, is still occupied by the enemy. We know that the conditions of war limit the development and application of civil liberties.

I am attached to the M.L. as a Technical Specialist. We have three basic functions. 1. To observe distribution to determine whether food is being distributed without discrimination as to race, creed or political belief. 2. To act as liaison between the Jugo-Slav authorities and M.L. 3. To note additional needs of the country, gather information on them in order to justify supplementary requests for just supplies.

At present food distribution operations are covering a population of approximately 1,000,000 people. About 600,000 on the Dalmatian Coast, and other parts of Bosnia, Montenegro and Herzegovina. Supplies for purposes of rehabilitation, bridge construction, agricultural rehabilitation, fishing, R.R. repair etc. is reaching the country. Transport and medical supplies are arriving in appreciable quantities. The needs however are very great. The Italians, German, Utashi, Chetniks have destroyed practically everything they could not take with them. The partisans, the British and American planes have been very effective in the destruction of those lines of communication left intact by the enemy and those factories, which were being used by the.

Food supplies brought in include, flour, grain, meat, sugar, salt, powdered milk, pulses, peanut butter, etc. Also clothing. I have been covering a fairly extensive area along the Dalmatian Coast, which included the largest city. The people are hungry. This is evident to the most casual observer. The best fed group in the population is the army.

There is inflation. Shoes are as much as 90,000 Kuna, the equivalent of the official rate of exchange of 118.00 dollars. Eggs 45¢ each; bread one kilo, a little over two pounds, about 3.00

The currency situation is most confusing. There are at least six different kinds of money in use in the country. As usual the enemy has done much to destroy the value of the national currency by working printing presses overtime and flooding the country with paper, in which the population has little faith. Nothing can be done to stabilize the currencies until the entire country is liberated. If the gov't attempted to do so now, the Germans and the Utashi could print "oodles" of the same money, pass it through the lines and the country would be no better off than they are at this time.

I have seen much evidence of the cruelty of the enemy. Small children 4, 5, 8 and 10 yrs. old with one or both hands chopped off. This was done for petty stealing of food or clothing or on the whim of an officer. Community graves, with as many as 80 bodies, who had been shot or tortured because of action by an opposing army, over whom they had no control. The general procedure was to call a general meeting in a town supposedly for the purpose of discussing some local problem, such as distribution of seed etc. When the people has assembled, the German or Italians turned machine guns on them. When all were killed or thought to be dead, the building would be set afire. I've spoken to survivors of such events. They are relatively few. They had been left as dead. Persons killed included men, women and children—just everyone who happened to come to the meetings.

There is of course tremendous destruction. Whole villages without a house standing. Miles of devastation. Often I would find all homes destroyed, gutted by fire set from within the house, with the exception of one or two or three. I asked why these homes were not destroyed. The answer was not difficult to find. The enemy had a simple method for deciding which houses to destroy. When they entered a town, they obtained data on the families, who had sons or daughters over 12 years of age. Later they checked at these homes and if these people or their father were not living at home, they assumed that they had joined the partisan army and were therefore subject to torture, and their property to looting and destruction.

The people are making strenuous efforts to plant as much acreage as possible. They lack machinery (farm), never had much before the war, and they also lack draught animals, because most of these have been destroyed or used for food by the enemy. It is not uncommon to see an entire family pulling a plow.

The people have demonstrated an ability to improvise. I saw a blacksmith making nails from bailing wire. These nails were being used to build a hospital. I saw a tractor that was being built from odd parts of cars and planes, both German and American. He had a radiator and hood from an Essex Super six (1928 vintage) a motor from a German Volk car, etc. All he needed to make this contraption go was some tires, a steering wheel (which he was making by hand) a place to sit, and a "horn."

The general population has great respect for U.S. and the American. They are almost painfully hospitable, giving so freely of what little they have, and feeling so bad if refused, that one is forced to accept their hospitality to avoid "giving them hurt".

In my travels about the country I frequently come upon graves of American flyers. It gives one a strange feeling to see a simple marking of a grave of a young American, in a lonely spot high up in the mountains, so far away from his home and the people who know of him.

Distribution of Food: It should be noted that in all probability 90% of the population, exclusive of the military, are in need of food.

In several areas all persons holding ration cards were given a ration of flour, wheat, salt, sugar and meat. They paid for this food if they were able, or signed credit notes if they declared that they had no money. Incidentally prices are not fixed on the open market, because the gov't wishes to encourage the flow of any hidden foods to the cities so that use may be made of them no matter what the cost. The price the gov't charged for the food distributed was about one-fifth the market price. As might be expected the price of similar food-stuffs on the open market dropped as a result of the distribution by the government.

The general procedure was to classify the population into three groups; I. the most needy, who were given a full ration, II. the less needy, who were given $\frac{1}{2}$ ration and III. the least needy, who were given a ration of salt and sugar. All paid if able.

The town meeting method was used to determine need and degree of need and ability to pay cash for food. A committee would draw up the lists of families and classify them on the basis of their knowledge of their financial status. A general meeting would be called, the list would be read. Persons raised questions with respect to their own or their neighbors' classification. Final determination was made at the meeting. Appeals were heard by the committee, who had the power of calling a special meeting, if the evidence presented in the appeal, indicated that a classification of a family unit might be changed.

This method of determining need leaves much to be desired. The public airing of one's poverty, the use of information obtained from persons other than members of the family, the use of the public forum to make complaint, does not in my opinion lighten the plight of people who are in distress. However that is the way the J.S.'s wished to do the job. Again I must remind myself that almost all the people, especially in towns and villages, are financially in the same condition. The giving of cash assistance is not feasible and was not even considered.

Additional welfare programs include central feeding centers, Homes for the Aged, Children's homes, Hospitals.

Central Feeding centers: the very poorest come here for one meal a day and receive the equivalent of 300 grams or about 1100 calories.

Children Homes: Orphaned children, children whose parent or parents are missing because they may be in the partisan army, or captured, or in occupied territory, in concentration camps in Germany etc. Visited three such institutions and found them all to be well run. They do so much with so little. All kinds of equipment is badly needed, but that doesn't stop the persons in charge. Beds are made from whatever wood there can be found or "scrounged." Tin cans are used as utensils, wooden spoons are carved by hand from pieces of scrap lumber. The homes are clean, everything in them is clean. The J.S.'s believe in the use of soap and water and elbow grease. Because they do not have much soap, they are applying more elbow grease.

What to me is most important, is the freedom that the children seem to enjoy. They do not appear to be repressed nor are they on the whole depressed by their experiences. They are affectionate and seek affection from those adults with whom they live. This is readily forthcoming.

Schools are open in every town and village. A tremendous drive is being made by the gov't to eliminate illiteracy. The cooperative societies, without any restrictions as to membership are being encouraged and sponsored by the gov't.

Hospitals, those that exist for civilians, lack essential equipment, but again improvisation has done wonders. Hospitals are started without beds, without blankets, without windows in buildings, and no drugs, but within one month, there are places for sleeping, etc. They are going ahead. In all probability UNRRA will bring in equipment for installing hospital units having a capacity of 40 beds each.

As you have read UNRRA will take over from M.L. in H.S. during this month. I think that this change will not effect the program very much. The most important obstacle to overcome is for UNRRA to compete successfully against the military needs, for supply, for what it will/most for its success is an assurance of a steady flow or of needed supplies.

This is a terribly long letter, isn't it? I never intended that it be so long, but as the English say, "There you are."

Sincere regards to you and my colleagues.

Jack Fasteau.

Copy.

⑥

Wash:

JUGAID

13

Welfore

ADVANCE JUGAID

UN 3. RESTRICTED. UNRA 51. FOR BALLS.
OMARA PAULEY RETURNED MISSION SEND INSTRUCTIONS. SIGNAL
FOR PAULEY FROM GREECE NOT RECEIVED PAULEY PREFERS
ASSIGNMENT JUGOSLAVIA

JUGAID

16

UNERA SPLIT

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Wash

McFarlane

UNERA/S/1. RESTRICTED. FOR BALLE. ELIZABETH GARDINER NOW
IN ROME HAS BEEN REQUESTED BY UNITARIAN SERVICE COMMITTEE TO REMAIN
THERE INDEFINITELY TO ASSIST IN ITALIAN NUTRITION PROJECT SHE IS
ANXIOUS TO REMAIN IF BALLE APPROVES. PLEASE ADVISE

(8) *YW* *CWA*
171

TELEGRAM RECEIVED ON 13TH APRIL 1945.

Gordon

FROM : UNRRA SAN SPIRITO

DATE : 10TH APR 45 *E*

TO : AMEME (UNRRA)

NO : JGF 38 D *Welfare*

TO UNRRA CAIRO FROM UNRRA SAN SPIRITO CITE JGF 38 D.

ATTENTION : HYDE.

Just as soon as is possible send Ruth Trunton YMCA.

/st.

DISTRIBUTION : FILE

MR. SIEGEL:ACTION

MR. BURT ANDREWS

COL HYDE

MR. FLOUD

MR. PIERCE

COL LIVINGSTONE

COL WEBB

COL ANDERSON

February 14, 1944

TO: Mr. M. A. Menshikov
FROM: George Xanthaky
SUBJECT: Serbia and Croatia - Provisioning and Relief Measures.

Serbia

Feeding Program

Additional children feeding programs:

1. Swiss Red Cross sending 1,200,000 food rations to Serbian children.
2. Condensed milk for babies received from Switzerland.
3. Free Sunday meal for Belgrade Refugee children.
4. Banat: one hot meal daily to aged and needy homeless children.

Specific information about rationing, social service and relief measures.

Large scale relief program in Banat and Nish (aerial bombardment victims) carried on by Serbian Red Cross and "Ethnic German and Hungarian groups".

Medical Supplies

Shipment of medical supplies from Washington distributed among 32 hospitals.

Croatia

Milk

Croatian Red Cross asking Swiss Red Cross for milk for free distribution to babies and infants, as a result: 2400 babies and children, 600 sick babies and children are receiving one-half liter per child/daily. Swiss powdered milk processed by State owned dairies.

Relief measures by the Ministry for the Provisioning of Devastated Areas.

Grants

Refugees:	450,000 kunas
Province of Ligorje:	2,700,000 "
Province of Prigorje:	1,500,000 "
Municipality of Mastar:	15,000,000 "
Ustasha Charitable Organisation (Taber)	2,600,000 " to families.

Indicative of the deterioration of food ^{supplies} mounting number of special ration requests in Brod.

This despatch should be read by staff members concerned with feeding and relief programs.

cc: *break br.*
" *Yug.* "

Source: Despatch to State Dept. from Istanbul, Jan. 5, 1944, No. 2163 (11-2008)
Olinger/an ✓