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RELIEF WORK OF THE B.S.C.

INTRODUCTION

The Brethren Service Committee is an official agency of the Church of the Brethren. It was created in 1940, and became a permanent committee of the church in 1941. Members of the committee are elected by the Annual Conference or are appointed as representatives by other boards of the church. The work was begun when Civilian Public Service demanded church support on a national basis, and when the war created relief needs around the world.

A charter for Brethren Service reads as follows:

- (1) To relieve human distress and suffering around the world without regard to barriers of race, creed or nationality...refugees, exiles, prisoners, orphans, widows, the aged....
- (2) To represent the Church in the area of creative citizenship and Christian testimony on issues of national and international significance...Civilian Public Service, peace and war, freedom of religion....
- (3) To arrest and eliminate those forces in human society which contribute to the disintegration of personality and character and to social instability ...war, intemperance, political corruption, the breakdown of the family....
- (4) To develop, organize and apply the spiritual and financial resources of the Church to these areas of service as a practical expression of the spirit and teachings of Christ as the Brethren understand and interpret them...world reconciliation, the preservation of goodwill....

MATERIAL GOODS RELIEF IN EUROPE

Heifers

Sea-going cowboys are probably better acquainted with the Brethren initiated heifer project than any other relief activity. They are key links in the shipping program on which BSC and UIRRA cooperate.

The heifer project dates back to 1938 in a city in southern Spain. Dan West, Brethren relief worker, saw daily the destruction of war and the suffering that accompanies it. He saw, too, how the little relief that was arriving would be only temporary and inadequate. If only relief could be provided that would be of lasting aid--and so the idea of sending heifers to the hungry was born. They would have cows that would give rich milk day after day, milk that was now so scarce yet so desperately needed; and soon there would be calves, and more cows, and more milk.

Brethren set to work raising and shipping those heifers. And they found they were not alone; many groups from all over the country began to help. First they made contributions and then they began to actively help in raising money and in caring for and shipping the heifers. Now 2100 heifers have been sent overseas to Belgium, France,

Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. They have been contributed by many groups and individuals all over the nation. Best news, though, is that the campaign is still growing, still gathering momentum. Ahead lies the promise of milk for many more children of Europe. And, taking a larger perspective, there is the prospect of helping to rebuild the basis of agricultural independence, security, and self-respect.

Cooperative Efforts in Relief

In many of its activities the Brethren Service Committee cooperates with other like-minded organizations. For example, the BSC is a member of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service, Inc. This council includes 58 national agencies, all with overseas programs of relief and rehabilitation. It provides a medium through which the voluntary agencies together plan to achieve their purpose. BSC has been approved by the President's War Relief Control Board, and was appointed as one of the eleven agencies on CRALOG.

"Church World Service" is the stamp that goes on by far the great majority of goods shipped from New Windsor. Church World Service is an interdenominational organization set up by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, American Committee for the World Council of Churches, and the Foreign Missions Conference of North America. Relief centers originally established as Brethren units have been changed to Church World Service Centers, though they are still managed by the Brethren. More Church World Service Centers have been established and are operated by other Protestant groups. There are now eight such centers in operation, located in Boston, Brooklyn, New Windsor, Md., Dayton, Ohio, St. Louis, Seattle, Modesto, Calif., and Los Angeles.

Clothing

Clothing and bedding have been the principle items these centers have handled. They have done a remarkable job of processing a large quantity of this material. During the period from June, 1944 to May 22, 1946, 18,477 bales of clothing were shipped to Belgium, Holland, France, Italy, Greece, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, Germany, and Hungary. Estimated value of this amount of clothing is well over one and one-half million dollars. In addition to this, 231,917 pairs of shoes were sent to Europe during the same period. The New Windsor center has a complete shoe repair shop where all shoes are put in good condition before being shipped. New clothing has also been sent abroad. Over 120,000 garments have been cut and sewn for Greek, Russian, and Holland relief under the auspices of the New Windsor Center.

No less necessary than food is this clothing. With their homes demolished, or even if only damaged to the extent of having irreplaceable window glass blown out, without fuel for heat, millions of Europeans families are exposed to the chill of European winters. Warm clothing and bedding and good shoes are essential in such circumstances. But bombings destroyed most of Europe's wardrobe and during the long war the rest wore out. People are unable to buy more.

Food

For hungry people, food is the only answer to any question. All other considerations become subordinated to this one insistent demand. To what depths hunger can drag people we are beginning to hear today. Knowing the Christian, democratic world they desire cannot be built on such conditions, the Brethren are striving to feed the hungry.

They are raising more food in their gardens. In their canneries at Wenatchee and Sunnyside, Wash. and New Paris, Ind., and in their homes, Brethren people are canning their food for Europe. From their grain harvests they are sending carloads to the hungry, and they are getting their neighbors to join in the relief effort. With their money and the contributions of many other groups and individuals they are buying more grain, dried milk, and other foods. These goods are being handled largely through the New Windsor relief center operated by the Brethren.

From June 1944 to May 22, 1946, 162,869 bushels of wheat, seven carloads of flour,

eight carloads of special relief cereal, two carloads of rolled oats, 17,000 lbs. of corn, and 71,250 lbs. of rice and beans were shipped to Europe. 73,250 lbs. of dried milk and a total of 704,665 lbs. of other foods (mostly canned goods) were sent across the Atlantic from the New Windsor center.

Other Goods

The Brethren have not overlooked some of the other less glaring, but just as significant needs, of European war sufferers. Soap is a very scarce commodity in Europe today, yet cleanliness during a period when infectious disease is prevalent is more necessary than ever. The Brethren have undertaken to make soap and send it abroad. New Windsor had shipped 62,228 lbs. up to May, 1946. Soon a Brethren soap factory will be in production in Indiana.

Another way Brethren are helping war sufferers help themselves is to send them garden seeds so they can plant their own gardens. Fresh nutritious vegetables over and above the regular rations of food will be a real help to many. 68,939 lbs. of seed had been shipped from New Windsor up to May, 1946.

Other small but important items have not been overlooked. The Brethren are sending badly needed garden tools and carpenter tools overseas so that people can look after their gardens and make simple repairs on their homes. They also are collecting and shipping kitchen utensils, candles, sewing supplies, and toys.

PERSONNEL AND SERVICE WORK IN EUROPE

England

Thousands of Italian and German prisoners of war, many of whom have spent years behind the barbed wire in England during this war, owe what hope and happiness they have been able to keep to John Barwick, who since 1940 has been in charge of this work for the YMCA. Barwick also represents the Brethren Service Committee and has been helpful in many ways in furthering our relief work in Europe. We do not sponsor relief work as such, in England, except for the services rendered through the YMCA. Ernest LeFever has been assisting in this work also since the fall of 1945.

Poland

While the Church has no resident relief worker in Poland at the present time, we have been greatly interested in that country and its needy condition. Several shipments of heifers have gone there, and other relief goods as well. We expect to continue shipments, and this fall a group of men headed by L. W. Shultz of the BSC will remain for few weeks to distribute relief materials and provide other services.

France

Late in the summer of 1945 Martha Rupel was transferred from England, where she had been working with the Mennonites, to Paris, France, to be in charge of the combined office and home for the Mennonites and Brethren. At first this was the official office of the Brethren in Europe, but since most of the work seemed to be in other areas the office was moved and just recently was closed entirely. As hostess and manager, Martha has done a very efficient piece of work, and on limited rations, fed many visitors to the city. After a well-earned vacation in Switzerland, she will go to Holland in another Brethren project.

In May 1946 Charles and Ruth Webb went to France to work with American Relief for France in a community social service project. They are located at Dunkirk at the present time, representing both BSC and ARF.

Possibilities of further projects are being investigated for France, but no announcement is ready at this time.

Holland

In the fall of 1945 Lois Rupel was assigned to work as a visitor among the Children's Homes of Holland, in cooperation with the YMCA. In June Mrs. Eldon Burke arrived and is now in the process of beginning what is actually the first independent

Brethren Service Project. With Martha Rupel and perhaps others, a community center will be established at Flushing, in Zeeland. All the houses in this village were damaged, and many of the people have lost everything. While most of Holland is in a fairly good condition, this section is still badly in need. Our work there will be in the nature of social work, community health, etc. Since this is just getting started, there is no report of work accomplished.

Belgium

Church of the Brethren personnel first entered Belgium in the summer of 1945, when Luther Harshbarger, working for the YMCA in the Prisoner of War program, was stationed in Brussels. As other workers arrived, it seemed convenient to cooperate in establishing a joint office, living quarters, etc. and early in 1946 Brussels was made the Central Office of Brethren Relief in Europe.

One shipment of heifers was made to Belgium and some relief clothing, but since other areas appeared to have greater need, most of the distribution of supplies has been made to other countries.

At the present time Dr. Eldon Burke is Director of Relief for Europe and Luther Harshbarger is Personnel Director. Dwight Horner is helping carry on the program of the YMCA, while Isaac Earhart and Roscoe Switzer are driving trucks distributing relief goods. Emma Grace Ritchey is secretary to Dr. Burke in the Brussels office of the BSC.

A recent arrival in Belgium, Mrs. Peter Kruger will be working there temporarily until she is able to enter Germany to assist with the program for displaced persons.

Italy

The Brethren Service Committee is represented in Italy at the present time by Mark Ebersole, leader of the group who is located at Carrara, Merlin Frantz at Arce, Robert Mays at Ortona, Eugene Lichty at Abruzzi, and Walter Bowman at Scauri. These men are now working with CASUS, supervising the hauling of materials for the Italian people to rebuild their destroyed homes. Early in 1946 these men were sent to Italy as the first representatives of the Church of the Brethren. It is hoped that they will soon be able to start a Brethren Unit.

RELIEF TO CHINA

Introduction

The church has for many years combined relief with mission work in China. The major field has been Shansi Province, though work has been carried on in South China also. All the missionaries were forced to leave during the war, but since the fall of 1945 five missionaries have returned to China and have been doing relief work until the mission stations can be opened. Personnel in China now include: Ernest Ikenberry, Ernest Wampler, Rolland Flory, Mary Schaffer, and Velma Ober. A number of others will be going shortly.

It is the plan to establish a mobile health unit in order to be of greater service to large numbers who have no access to medical aid.

Plowboys

Most recent and extremely significant in the field of relief and rehabilitation is the China Tractor Unit. In cooperation with UNRRA, CNRRA, and the Agricultural Department of China, the Brethren Service Committee has plans to send 50 men to assist in the reclaiming of two million acres of land for farming purposes.

This territory in the Honan Province, along the Yellow River, was inundated by flood waters which swept across China's wheat bowl in the early days of the Sino-Japanese war. Retreating Chinese armies dynamited the dikes of the Yellow River, changing its course in such a way that the heart of North China's wheatland was

covered with flood water. The area has consequently suffered from chronic famine, and the Brethren unit is expected to help the Chinese increase their agricultural production at a rate which will greatly increase the wheat crop next spring.

One of the most important phases of the Brethren China Unit is that it represents the first time that modern farm equipment has been introduced into China in any large scale. What this will mean to the future of the Chinese farmer with his hand tools is a subject of great speculation, but the members of the Unit are planning now to introduce village industries along with tractors to absorb the farm labor which will be displaced by American tractors.

Vacancies still exist for men interested in the China Unit. Many of the men in the first group have served on cattle boats to Europe and have chosen, as a result of that experience, to spend a year and a half with the Chinese people, helping them battle against their old enemy hunger in this new and dramatic way. The first group of fifteen men, a third of them veteran sea-going cowboys, from across the continent began their training in Elgin this week. They will spend the following three weeks in a tractor factory in Chicago learning simple repair for field operations in China. Following are the names of these volunteers: Harvey O. Accola, Wayne F. Bowman, Gordon K. Brand, Lester R. Brumbaugh, Oliver B. Eckles, Richard M. Hacmac, Levi R. Hoff, Robert R. Joyce, Joseph B. Mow, Robert T. Pannabecker, Ivan N. Patterson, Gustave N. Schoenherr, George S. Snyder, John C. Thor, and Forest E. Whitcher.

Material Goods Aid

The need for clothing and food in many areas of China is overwhelming. Coupled with almost constant turmoil in the political and military situation for nearly a decade, with a complete breakdown of transportation facilities, and considering the great distances involved in a country China's size, the relief job is one that will require the best of efforts for many years to come.

For their part, the Brethren have been collecting clothing and operating the Modesto, Calif. shipping center for Church World Service. Clothing has also been sent to the Far East from the New Windsor Center. 3,651 bales of clothing valued at well over \$300,000 had been shipped to China by May 22, 1946. 105,536 pairs of shoes and 3,095 lbs. of soap were also shipped in that period.

China's neighbors in the Far East have also received some help. To the Philippines have gone 1188 bales of clothing, to Siam, 100 bales, and to Burma 25 bales and eleven boxes of surgical dressings. Also, 56,974 garments have been cut and sewed for Phillipine War Relief.

RELIEF TO LATIN AMERICA

Puerto Rico

Since late in 1942 when the M. G. Brumbaugh Unit was started in Castaner, Puerto Rico, the Brethren Service Committee has carried on a significant community project in the field of health, recreation, education, and related work. In addition to the 32 bed hospital at present, clinic work, as well as community social service has been a major activity.

Started as a Civilian Public Service Unit, this project has developed to where some 40 or 50 workers are now serving, many on the volunteer service basis. Less than a dozen CPS men remain in the unit, and the BSC expects to continue this project indefinitely.

Dr. and Mrs. D. M. Parker, Dr. and Mrs. Carl Coffman, Dr. and Mrs. Franklin Cassel, have served in the hospital. Dr. and Mrs. Everett Myer, and Drs. Sylvia and Francis Helfrick are there at present, with Dr. and Mrs. Homer Burke to sail soon.

Rufus King is the present Director of the Castaner Unit, having formerly been

Director of the entire CPS work of Puerto Rico. Qualified personnel in certain fields are still needed for his work.

Ecuador

In 1943 Paul Bowman, Jr. and Kurtis Naylor and their wives were sent to Ecuador to investigate possibilities of establishing some type of service work for the church. At Quito, Ecuador, they found hundreds of boys on the streets with nothing to do, so they got permission to establish a Boys' Club, which has been a very successful and helpful venture. Thru this channel the BSC has contributed clothing and soap for the underprivileged and recreational equipment and leadership for hundreds of these boys. Mr. and Mrs. Claude Wolfe are the present leaders of CLUB BROTHERS.

Also in Guayaquil, Ecuador, Miss Reta JaneGrady is teaching in the Reed Mission School. Other teachers have given service in South America.

Mexico

The work of Mr. and Mrs. H. D. Michael in Huitzilac, Mexico, is greatly appreciated by the people there. They spend much time trying to alleviate some of the sickness and disease which is so prevalent.

Material Goods Aid

Material goods aid has not been the major emphasis in the Latin American area of Brethren work. Services have had a higher priority here, but some goods have been sent. Puerto Rico has been sent 68 heifers, five bulls, ten bales of clothing and bedding, thirteen bales of hospital supplies, and 670 pounds of soap. To Mexico has gone twenty-five bales of clothing and eleven boxes of surgical dressings. 487 pounds of soap were recently sent to the Brethren center in Ecuador.

U. S. REHABILITATION

A series of Work Camps and Volunteer Service projects are established throughout the United States to provide service in areas of need. Relief Centers, particularly at New Windsor, Maryland, Modesto, Calif., and Nappanee, Indiana, as well as BSC canneries at New Paris, Indiana, Wenatchee and Sunnyside, Washington, provide opportunities for dozens of interested people to contribute their time and talents in the interest of building a better world.

Growing out of the interest in the Hookworm Eradication Projects of CPS in Florida work in the Public Health Department has been carried on for the past year. Ann Heckman has made an excellent contribution along this line in Volusia County.

Confronted with the growing problem of juvenile delinquency in this country, the BSC agreed to provide personnel for such a project initiated by the Southwestern District of Kansas and McPherson College. Mr. and Mrs. Jack Kough have begun work in Salina, Kansas, where they have started boys' and girls' clubs in the underprivileged section of the city, and are working on other phases of the problem as well.

When heifers could not be shipped overseas because of lack of shipping facilities, some animals were given to sharecroppers in the South. It is possible that more help will be given our Southern friends.