

CZECHOSLOVAK RED CROSS

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MAR 18 1944

My dear Mr. Ryan:

I have for acknowledgment your letter of March 15th to which was attached an Aide Memoire submitted to your Mr. Hubbell by the Czechoslovakian Ambassador in the U.S.S.A.

The Board appreciates the courtesy extended by the American Red Cross in making available reports of this nature.

Sincerely yours,  
(Signed) J. W. Pehle

*J. W. Pehle*

J. W. Pehle  
Acting Executive Director

Mr. Philip E. Ryan  
Director, Civilian Relief  
Insular and Foreign Operations  
American Red Cross  
Washington, D. C.

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# AMERICAN RED CROSS

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS  
WASHINGTON 13, D. C.

March 15, 1944

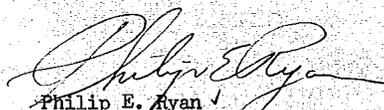
Mr. J. W. Pehle  
Acting Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Washington, 25, D. C.

My dear Mr. Pehle:

In compliance with my assurance to Mr. Ward Stewart of your staff I am attaching herewith a copy of a report which Mr. Ralph G. Hubbell, Director American Red Cross in the U. S. S. R., transmitted to me recently.

Mr. Hubbell tells me that this report is the result of a request which he made to Ambassador and Mrs. Fierlinger. Mrs. Fierlinger is the President or Chairman of the Czechoslovak Red Cross Committee in the U. S. S. R. I hope that this report will have something of interest to the War Refugee Board.

Sincerely yours,

  
Philip E. Ryan  
Director, Civilian Relief  
Insular and Foreign Operations

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AIDE MEMOIRE

CZECHOSLOVAK CITIZENS IN THE SOVIET UNION who, in one degree or another, require assistance of the CZECHOSLOVAK RED CROSS may be divided according to degree of their necessity, and the character of their needs, into the following four (4) groups:

- (1) Czechoslovak citizens in the Czechoslovak armed forces, in the U.S.S.R.

Difficulties in the organization of the Czechoslovak armed forces in the U.S.S.R., appeared in the first months of 1942, when Czechoslovak citizens from all corners of the Soviet Union arrived. These difficulties were gradually overcome and soon Czechoslovak citizens, who became members of the Czechoslovak armed forces in the U.S.S.R., were supplied, in principle, on the same level as the troops of the Red Army.

There are, however, a group of very necessary items, which it is impossible to obtain locally, and to obtain which the unit turns to the Czechoslovak Red Cross, which has already been consigned to it from England and the United States about twenty (20) different sorts of package, mainly medicines and medical instruments, and items for the sick. Among this material were shipments of most needed vaccines and, also, a completely equipped field ambulance. Moreover, the Czechoslovak Red Cross regularly purchases abroad for the Czech Armed Forces tobacco, cigarettes and toilet articles.

- (2) Czechoslovakian citizens living individually, or in small groups, in various parts of the Soviet Union.

Insofar as Czechoslovak citizens already residents of the Soviet Union, for a long time, are concerned, the Czechoslovak Red Cross has no special problems.

It is, however, a different situation in cases concerning Czechoslovak citizens, who arrived in the territory of the U.S.S.R., after the occupation of the Czechoslovak Republic by the Germans. These citizens arrived in the Soviet Union, usually, without their possessions, and in a great majority of cases could not adjust themselves quickly, and sufficiently to conditions to which they were not accustomed and impossible for them to find bearable living conditions.

In view of the great distance, and the difficulty of transport, the Czechoslovak Red Cross has, till now, had little opportunity of extending materials aid to them, promptly. Following the ban on mailing packages to civilians, it was possible to offer these citizens, only in those cases when those in need of it presented themselves at the Embassy in person, material aid. Thus, for instance, in Moscow, the Czechoslovak Red Cross Committee helps regularly every month about fifty (50) children of Czechoslovak citizens, giving them objects and articles, of prime necessity; and, also, to the family of soldiers in the Czechoslovak troops living in Moscow in these cases when the

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troops go to them on leave. There is no doubt that with the gradual return to more normal living conditions these tasks of the Czechoslovak Red Cross Committee, in the USSR will be expanded and deepened. Anticipating the betterment of conditions, steps are being taken gradually to concentrate these citizens in definite points, which would substantially facilitate the extension of aid to them. There are already two (2) points where considerable numbers of Czechoslovak citizens are arriving.

(3) LARGER GROUPS OF CZECHOSLOVAK CITIZENS IN THE USSR:

Czechoslovak organs and the Czechoslovak Red Cross Committee, of the USSR, have long recognized that it can offer but insignificant aid to Czechoslovak citizens unless they are concentrated in one or more points, to which packages from abroad can be directed and where it would be possible to organize special organs for the giving of medical, or other help, and for distribution of articles of first necessity. Such a concentration would also considerably lighten quick, efficient and convenient repatriation of Czechoslovak citizens after the end of the war.

Until now, only two (2) such groups have been formed, one in Buzuluk (Chkalov Oblast), the other in the neighborhood of Dzhambul (South Kazakhstan). According to the data of the Czechoslovak Embassy there is still quite a considerable number of Czechoslovak citizens living in various parts of the Soviet Union. They are all trying to be transferred to either Buzuluk or Dzhambul, as places of milder climate, and as places with better possibilities of finding for themselves suitable work, and of living in their own "milieu". However, the Embassy has come to stop this concentration as at present it has no means of helping these new arrivals.

A. BUZULUK

Simultaneously, with the beginning of an organization of the military unit in Buzuluk, at the beginning of 1942, old men, incapable of military service, wives and children of Czechoslovak soldiers, and other non-military Czechoslovak citizens began to arrive. In the course of time the Embassy helped quite a number of these citizens, for one reason or another, to transfer to Buzuluk. Thus at present there are in BUZULUK approximately 700 Czechoslovak citizens. This number is not fixed, but is being gradually increased by those released from military service, for one reason or another, or arriving from other parts of the Soviet Union.

It is also necessary to consider that in consequence of the taking part in military operations of the Czechoslovak Unit, it is necessary to be prepared to handle quite a number of war invalids. Among the above mentioned 700 persons are about 350 men, 200 women and 150 children. About 300 men and women are employed in Soviet institutions, the remainder are exempted from work for various reasons - age, sickness, large families, etc.

(A) BUZULUK - (Continued)

The task before the Czechoslovak Red Cross committee was not easy. Especially, at first. It was not possible to find work for all able-bodied persons, and thus to get them a ration. But in addition, the Red Cross Committee had to care for them and to provide them with food in view of the generally unsatisfactory state of their health, as a result of the hardships they had undergone. The same is true of those who could not work, or who did not work regularly, ... the Red Cross Committee, indeed, was faced with the difficult task of how to supply this category with regular help and even partially to feed them, since Soviet organizations will not supply the non-working with a normal diet.

In individual cases, there were persons whose Czechoslovak citizenship was not clear; additional persons not yet cleared by the military medical committee; persons released from the Czechoslovak Armed Forces, etc. In general, all Czechoslovak civilians in Buzuluk are urgently in need of clothing, linen and especially shoes.

In BUZULUK there has been set up a Czechoslovak Division of Supply, representing the Czechoslovak Embassy and, also, the Czechoslovak Red Cross Committee, in the USSR. This office carries on both administrative and practical aspects of providing help to Czechoslovak citizens. It works under the general leadership of the Embassy and in cooperation with the Red Cross Committee, in Moscow. It keeps a general record of all Czechoslovak citizens in Buzuluk, looks for work for them, deals on their behalf with the local Soviet organs, and manages the Red Cross supply.

Clothing, which enters the Red Cross warehouse and which is far from adequate for all those in need, is usually now distributed among the more needy. This is also true of foodstuffs received so that they are given out only according to the degree of need to the common kitchen, which also receives all the foodstuffs allotted by the Soviet authorities to the organization. Thus, foodstuffs received are used most rationally. The common kitchen feeds mainly those who receive no ration at all, or only limited rations, and, secondly, according to the amount of stocks available; gives some food to the remainder as a supplementary ration.

In view of the necessity of conserving stocks, the organization gives out foodstuffs in dry form only to the sick and for small children, so that they can eat at home. The quality and nutritiousness depend of course, on what foodstuffs are given out by the Soviet organs, but mainly on the composition of the Red Cross Committee's stocks.

There have been periods, especially during the summer of last year (1942) when for nine months (9) no real help in the form of foodstuffs was received from abroad, and when the feeding of Czechoslovak citizens in BUZULUK led to great difficulties, which the Embassy tried with great energy to overcome, mainly by the purchase of foodstuffs at a high price in the open market.

IV.

(A) BUZULUK (Continued)

The situation, significantly, improved at the beginning of this year (1943) after the arrival of foodstuffs from Teheran, received on the basis of an agreement between the AMERICAN RED CROSS AND THE POLISH RED CROSS SOCIETIES. A shipment weighing about thirty-five (35) tons, consisting mainly of flour, fats, dehydrated milk and dry fruit, was an invaluable aid to the CZECHOSLOVAK RED CROSS COMMITTEE, in the USSR. However, a considerable part of this shipment, in some types of food - two-thirds (2/3) by quantity was given to the Czechoslovak armed forces, to whom at this particular time considerable numbers of new soldiers were arriving at various camps, and whose physical condition demanded supplementary strengthening of diet. This was an exceptional case. In the future, all incoming shipments of foodstuffs will be completely turned over to the feeding of civilians.

During this year, a shipment of food has arrived from Beirut and of clothing from Teheran, acquired by the Czechoslovak Red Cross Committee, in London; and Czechoslovak citizens in BUZULUK at present are especially in need at the moment of supplies of clothing, linen and shoes. A small supply for new arrivals is also necessary, as well as regular shipments, especially, flour, vegetables, fats, dehydrated and condensed milk, soup concentrates, vitamin preparations, etc.

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(B) DZHAMBUL

During this year (1943) there has been formed a new, compact group of Czechoslovak citizens concentrated in the neighborhood of DZHAMBUL, in southern Kazakhstan. This group consists to a large extent, of Czechoslovak citizens from the Carpathians, who arrived in the Soviet Union not long before the beginning of the German-Soviet war; they escaped mobilization into the Hungarian army by flight from Hungarian territory.

This group is estimated at present at about twelve-hundred (1,200) persons (men and women, and about one hundred (100) children. Since concentration of this group was begun considerably later and could be well organized with the help of the Soviet organs, the movement to Dzhambul Oblast went off considerably more easily than that a year before (1942) to Buzuluk. The members of this group, mainly farmers accustomed to physical labor, could be assigned to work relatively fast, and thus could be supplied with a ration by Soviet organs. Likewise, the Embassy send a representative to Dzhambul to arrange accommodations for the citizens, and under the direction of the Embassy, and in cooperation with the Czechoslovak Red Cross Committee, directs the organization of local help. In spite of the fact that in a majority of cases the Dzhambul group is composed of young and able-bodied people, it has been necessary to help them by the regular giving of foodstuffs, especially sugar, fats, milk, vitaminized soups, etc., since as result of their transfer, the state of their health left much to be desired.

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## (b) DZHAMBUL (Continued)

The Czechoslovak Red Cross Committee was able to satisfy their needs only to an insignificant degree, since its small stock on hand of the above mentioned products had to be mainly reserved for Buzuluk, where there is a considerably larger percentage of old people, sick invalids and children. Thus, for instance, seventy (70) persons suffering from a more or less acute form of tuberculosis are in need of special treatment. All foodstuffs, and some clothes in Buzuluk, where the main Red Cross stores are kept, have several times been sent to Dzhambul.

If in relation to food, the situation in Dzhambul is somewhat better than that of the Buzuluk group, on the other hand, the situation with respect to clothing and shoes, it may be said, is downright catastrophic. According to the latest report of the Red Cross representative in charge of the accomodation of the Czechoslovak citizens in Dzhambul, only an insignificant number of members of this group are decently dressed, and no one has proper shoes. In general, the needs of Czech citizens in Dzhambul are the same as those of Buzuluk, but the lack of supply of clothes and shoes is especially and acutely felt.

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Looking over these difficulties, the Embassy, from the very beginning of the war, has been in contact with the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Red Cross in London, and with various foreign organizations, striving to supply itself with significant shipments of the necessary items.

At the beginning of 1942, there was founded a Committee of Czechoslovak Red Cross in the USSR, which took on itself the maintenance of relations with the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Red Cross in London and, also, the disposition of shipments received at the Embassy. However, all the efforts of the Embassy and of the Committee have had to the present only partial success. The cause of this lies mainly in the transport difficulties caused by the war. In addition to small special shipments, such as medicines, medical equipment and instruments, shoes and clothing, there has been received up to the present only an insignificant part of what is actually necessary to fulfill the urgent needs of Czechoslovak citizens.

In possession of the Committee of the Czechoslovak Red Cross is a list of about twenty-five (25) different shipments dispatched by various Czechoslovak organizations in the United States from time to time during the autumn of last year (1942) and the spring of the present year (1943). But no word has come to us up to the present time about any one of these shipments and it seems that one must reckon with the fact of their possible loss through war activities.

In September of the present year (1943), apart from the articles mentioned above, the American Red Cross had dispatched two (2) lots of clothing, one (1) valued at \$17,700, and the other at \$55,700. The Committee has no list so far of the materials sent, but they suppose

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that the shipments comprise the articles of prime necessity about which the Czechoslovak Ambassador, Mr. Fierlinger, wrote to the Director of the American Red Cross in the Soviet Union, Mr. Hubbell, on behalf of the approximately two thousand (2,000) Czechoslovak citizens in the Soviet Union. This memorandum, in addition to listing articles necessary for everyday life, such as, towels, sheets, toilet and kitchen accessories, wool for knitting, repair material for shoes and clothing for as many as 1000 men, 600 women and 400 children. The early arrival of these necessary articles will be of great assistance to the Czechoslovak Red Cross in solving one of its most difficult problems.

The provision of transportation, at least so far as concerns movement on Soviet territory, is the subject of an agreement between the Embassy and the Soviet authorities whereby all shipments addressed to the Czechoslovak Red Cross Committee, in the USSR, wherever they pass into the USSR, will be forwarded immediately to Buzuluk. Agreements have also been concluded with Transvosttrans regarding the transportation of materials passing through Teheran. For the reception of and further dispatch (to Buzuluk) of freight coming from Teheran addressed to the Czechoslovak Committee, the Embassy is sending a special receiving agent to Ashkhabad, the border station.

Thanks to these measures, transportation from Teheran is progressing satisfactorily; and as a consequence of this the Committee of the Czechoslovak Red Cross, in the USSR, has always maintained, in its intercourse with the Central Committee in London, that it would be desirable and advantageous--with a view to hastening the assistance by the American Red Cross--to arrange for the materials allotted to the Czechoslovak Red Cross to be dispatched from American Red Cross warehouses in Teheran. The Committee, for this reason, deeply regrets that the second shipment for the Czechoslovak Red Cross in the USSR, comprising 30 tons of foodstuffs, regarding which the Central Committee in London reports an agreement between the American and the Polish Red Cross, in Teheran, has not yet materialized.

The Committee of the Czechoslovakian Red Cross in the USSR must remember that not less than 2000 Czechoslovakian citizens (among which are 1000 men; 600 women; and 400 children) are in need of immediate aid. Not less than 600 people will be added to that amount in the next six (6) months, due to the fact that invalids and the physically weak are being released from the Czechoslovakian Army, and because of the continued tide of Czechoslovakian citizens to Buzuluk and Dzhabul, where the Embassy proposes to concentrate all their citizens until the end of the war, with the object of hastening and conveniencing their return home to their native land.

According to information received by the Embassy, it would be desirable to direct to Buzuluk not less than 300 Czechoslovakian citizens who are living under exceedingly difficult conditions in the places which they have reached.

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VII.

The urgent needs of the Czechoslovakina citizens are the following:

- (1) To provide each with an imperative, indispensable suit of clothing, shoes and underclothes (1000 men, 600 women and 400 children)
- (2) To provide them with foodstuffs of the first necessity which demands the regular receipt of no less than 30 tons of nutritious foodstuffs every three (3) months. Regular aid could be given from that amount to approximately 500 sick and old people, invalids and children; the rest according to their needs be helped with supplementary food to that which they would receive from their places of work

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Translated from the Russian into English - December 2, 1943-

American Red Cross  
in the USSR  
Moscow  
USSR

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