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Aid to Hungarian refugees

Communication
Committee of Ministers

1.

This document which is a continuation of Documents 620 and 642 contains the information sent to the Secretary-General on 1st October 1957 by the Governments of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Turkey and the United Kingdom concerning relief for Hungarian refugees and jDarticulai'ly arrangements made for their resettlement in those countries.

Austria

On 1st July 1957, the following international refugees were living in officially organised Austrian camps : 6,906 non-German-speaking refugees, 5,725 German speaking refugees, 14,517 recent Hungarian refugees.

To these must be added 11,456 refugees who have already been naturalised, 2,891 nationals of the former German Reich (mostly former Volhsdeutschc) and 135 South Tyroleans.

The 71 camps now in existence are distributed as follows : 24 in Upper Austria, 11 in Lower Austria, 10 in the Province of Vienna, 7 each in the Province of Salzburg, Styria and Tyrol, 4 in Carinthia and 1 in Vo-rarlberg.

Various UNREF projects for the integration of international refugees are now in operation, notably a housing programme. Steps are also being taken to establish these people in industry, thereby helping them to earn a living or improve their position.

By a decision of the Executive Committee of U. N. R. E. F. reached iri January 1956, refugees already naturalised as Austrians (Voiksdeutsche and non-German speaking refugees) could benefit under the programme until 30th June 1957, if they had not been naturalised for more than a year. It is expected that, by and large, all refugees of long-standing living in these camps will be integrated with the help of the UNREF programme.

Apart from the problem of the recent Hungarian refugees still remaining in Austria, there is also the problem of an exceptionally large influx of Yugoslav refugees, amounting, it is estimated, to some 20,000 persons this year. Such refugees likewise wish to emigrate overseas, but owing to limited opportunities only some of them achieve this aim. Here, too, integration measures must be put into operation, lest emigration finally proves impracticable in individual cases.

As for refugees naturalised by the Austrians who are unable to claim the benefits of the UNREF programme, and still need assistance, steps are already being taken to absorb them into industry. Moreover, arrangements will soon be introduced to provide permanent dwellings, without foreign assistance, for naturalised refugees.

Belgium

A thousand new Hungarian refugees have been admitted, in their individual capacity, in order to join members of their families already settled in Belgium.

The exact number of refugees who have had themselves repatriated is not yet known, but is probably between 150 and 200. The number of students granted scholarships by the Fonds national des Etudes now totals 78.

The Council of Ministers has authorised the admission of a party of 500 refugees from Yugoslavia together, with their families, the aggregate number not to exceed 1,500 persons. An official mission has been sent to Yugoslavia to put this decision into effect.

Denmark

Although integration of refugees is a difficult proposition for the Danish organisations concerned owing to unemployment and lack of housing there are no refugee camps in Denmark. It is hoped that in due course suitable occupation may be obtained for approximately 100 refugees (all Hungarian) who are fit to work, but still not permanently employed.

The authorities and private charitable organisations do their utmost to promote integration in the Danish community of the refugees received. The great majority have settled in various parts of the country in accordance with their own wishes and they are not subject to control. Information concerning refugees will only be available, therefore, in respect of those newly arrived, who are accommodated in refugee homes and those admitted to hospital, old-age homes or similar institutions.

Refugees of the latter category at present aggregate 117, including one Hungarian refugee (in a mental hospital). They are accommodated in the following institutions : 93 in-old an age home at Dragsbaek, 2 in the Nursing Home of Aarhus, 5 in the Convalescent home at Hareskovby, 6 in the sanatorium at Skerping and 11 in the mental hospital at Yiborg.

At present, there are only Hungarian refugees living in reception centres. Of the total number of 1,232 arrived, 365 have left this country. Of the 867 still in Denmark 655 are accommodated privately, 31 in hospitals or at education centres, while 181 are still living in 5 reception centres, in Engelsholm, Gravens-hoved, Hald Folkekur, Klosterhaden and Sneps-gârcl. Most of these 181 refugees are anxious to emigrate but so far entry visas have not been obtained. The Danish authorities, in co-operation with the Dansh Flygtningeh-jalp (Danish Refugee Relief Association), are continuing their efforts to provide private accommodation for them.

Of the 181 refugees still in reception centres 86 are employed, the remainder being dependants. The public labour exchange offices in co-operation with the Dansh Flygtningehjalp, who have at their disposal two special labour exchange officers for the purpose, are doing their utmost to have them permanently employed, and, pending this, special temporary work is arranged.

France

Since 8th November 1956, when the first convoy arrived on French territory, 12,052 refugees have been received, 10,350 from Austria and 1,702 from Yugoslavia.

The Inter-Ministerial Committee of Assistance to Hungarian Refugees, composed of representatives of several Ministries and private charitable organisations, has during the last eight months tackled all the problems raised by the mass arrival of people of all ages who are literally destitute and who need moral no less than material help.

The unanimous surge of generosity roused in the French people by the tribulations of the Hungarians has resulted in a considerable flow of assistance to the administering authorities, making it possible in particular to establish a clothing pool from gifts in kind.

In addition, certain of the Conseils Généraux 1 have voted credits to cover part of the cost of receiving refugees in the Departments under their jurisdiction.

It has been necessary to work out a reception plan for Hungarian refugees, part of which is the responsibility of the Government, while the rest is entrusted to the host Departments.

At Ministerial level it has been decided:

a. to place barracks at the Inter-ministerial Committee's disposal at various points on French territory. They have been converted to reception centres, the necessary alterations to avoid promiscuity being carried out;

b. to set up a Service which has been working night and day for several weeks sorting out gifts in kind assembled in premises at the Gare d'Orsay, and whose work has subsequently made it possible to supply the most urgent clothing requirements of the convoys as they arrive, through constant liaison between the Gare d'Orsay and the Ministry of the interior, in response to requests by the Prefects' Offices in the Departments;

c. to distribute among the various Ministries and Services concerned information compiled by the Ministry of the Interior (in particular, offers of employment and lodging), and to ensure liaison between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Education with regard to the lodging and support of students;

d. to publish, for use by Hungarian refugees, a bilingual handbook in Hungarian and French containing administrative information that will help them regularise their position. Similarly, radio broadcasts have been arranged and receiving sets installed in the reception centres;

e. to establish relations with various countries sheltering Hungarian refugees, with the object of reuniting scattered families, and to conduct investigations on French territory into the whereabouts of relatives;

f. finally, to establish liaison between the Ministry of Finance and all other Ministries concerned in order to arrange for payment of expenses incurred. These include, apart from lodging, food, transport and interpreters :

(i) weekly pocket-money for each refugee;

(ii) allocation of a gratuity when the refugee takes up employment, the amount depending on his family situation.

At the level of the Departement, the arrival of the convoys required, and continues to require, co-operation between officials of the Prefecture and those of the French Red Cross, under the overall guidance of the Prefect, particularly for the distribution of the first meals. Housing of the refugees in the reception centres remains a matter for the military authorities, subsequently assisted by all the departmental services representing the Government.

In the early months the resettlement of Hungarian refugees in the French economy met with serious obstacles. All applicants for trans-Atlantic emigration (of whom there were many in the first convoys) were determined not to accept work in France, lest they might then be bound by a contract which they could not break.

The task of labour officials was not made any easier by the fact that these foreigners were unable to speak French and were also inclined to be suspicious of all the reassurances given them by the authorities.

Since then, thanks to the devotion of the social welfare workers, and to the fact that time has accomplished its healing work among these beings who reached our country still overwhelmed by painful memories of the recent past, the morale of the refugees has considerably improved, and some of those who were originally fiercely opposed to settling down in France have now given up thoughts of emigration. Today, all but a few dozen of the refugees who arrived in France before the 1st January 1957 and are of working age have been provided with employment.

Resettlement operations are continuing in favour of more recent convoys arriving both from Austria and from Yugoslavia.

All Hungarian students who expressed a desire to continue the studies they had begun at home have been found places in French universities. About 300 of them whose files are being studied with a view to the possible allocation of scholarships, are being supported by the French administration. The others, numbering about 200, are being maintained by the International Rescues Committee.

It should further be noted that the Ministry of Education is taking steps to teach French to the adults in order to speed up the assimilation of all refugees in the French community.

By 30th June 1957, a number of Hungarian nationals had requested visas to return to their home country, generally on the ground that they could not live separated from their families who had remained in Hungary. About 500 persons returned home in this way.

Among the 12,052 refugees who entered France, some, mainly in the first convoys, expressed a desire for trans-Atlantic emigration, and appropriate talks were held with the diplomatic representatives of the United States, Canada and Australia. So far 2,603 Hungarian refugees have embarked for Canada and 149 for Australia.

The United States Embassy has not yet given a favourable reply to the requests of Hungarian refugees at present in France who desire to emigrate to the U. S. A.

In addition, about 150 refugees have left for other reception countries.

After throwing its frontiers wide open to the Hungarian exodus, France has received about 10,000 refugees without discrimination of any kind.

The convoys continue to arrive, though at a slower rate than in the early days; the largest groups now come from Yugoslavia, while those from Austria are not more than 50 or 70 strong.

The recent arrivals seem anxious to obtain employment as quickly as possible so that they may settle down in a new situation after so many vicissitudes.

There appears to be no serious obstacle to their resettlement within the national economy. The only difficulty is their entire lack of clothing, mainly in the case of the refugees from Yugoslavia. Many in fact arrive clad only in a worn shirt and pair of shorts and have literally no change of clothing.

Before they can be introduced to possible employers, they must be decently clothed, and this entails some delay because of the relatively large number (1,300 arrived from Yugoslavia in a single month).

The number of Hungarian refugees housed in camps, which still exist at Rouen, Montbeliard, Nancy, Metz, Cambrai and Dom-front, no longer exceeds 1,300.

The following figures give some idea of the detail of convoys of Hungarian refugees.

(a) Men about - 70 %

Women - 22 %

Children up to 14 years - 8 %

(b) Occupational Distribution :

Manual workers - 75.45 %

Whito-collar employees - 5.50 %

Executives - 1.66 %

Traders - 0.52 %

Farmers - 1.62 %

Civil Servants - 0.95 %

Liberal professions - 1.24 %

Artistic professions - 0.88 %

Soldiers - 0.02 %

Students - 6.16 %

Without occupation - 6.00 %

Federal Republic of Germany

Between November 1956 and 24th January 1957, the Federal Republic took over about 11,800 Hungarian refugees who arrived from Austria in convoys. In addition, an undetermined number of other Hungarian refugees have reached the Federal Republic by diverse means, such as individual migration, job recruitment, infiltration from other Western countries, and student convoys. As a result, the total number of recent refugee immigrants in the Federal Republic lies between 14,500 and 14,800'. Since a little over 15,000 Hungarian emigrants have already been on Federal territory since the end of the Second World War, this means that there are about 30,000 Hungarian refugees at present living in the Federal Republic

The reception of Hungarian refugees was based on purely humanitarian considerations. All those refugees in Austrian camps who applied to the German Selection Committee for permission to enter the Federal Republic were admitted to the convoys bound for Germany without medical inspection and without regard to possible employment.

Furthermore, no distinction was made between refugees of German ethnic extraction and those of Hungarian origin.

The convoys were sent to the reception centres at Piding, Schalding, Friedland, and Bocholt. The usual formalities were relaxed and provisional identity cards issued stating that the holder had the status of a foreign refugee within the meaning of the Geneva Convention on Refugees. The refugees were then immediately distributed among the various Lander, and thence allotted to the different districts (Kreise) and municipalities (Gemeinden). Reception and distribution were completed in the second half of February. The Federal Government assumed sole responsibility for the cost of their transport from the railway station of departure in Austria. No assistance was requested of any international organisation. The costs of transport, residence in reception camps and homes and, in a general way, assistance to individuals are borne by the Federal Government. Up to the end of the financial year (31st March 1957) expenditure under this head amounts to approximately DM 29 million.

By the end of February employment had been found for the great majority of the refugees (excluding members of their families). 3 % were employed in agriculture, 24 % in mines, 34 % in metallurgy, 3.3 % in building, 1.5 % in domestic service and 32 % in other sectors of the economy.

The majority of the Hungarian refugees are willing to work and have generally been able to overcome difficulties resulting from unaccustomed working conditions. Job changing, which was initially of frequent occurrence, has now ceased.

The absorption of the Hungarians into the economic life of the community has also been attended by certain linguistic difficulties, since few of them speak German. Some refugees have been unable to exercise their trade because of inadequate knowledge of the language. The resulting low wages have on occasion been the cause of misunderstanding and bitterness.

A general improvement in working discipline has been effected by special measures of assistance within the enterprises concerned, by language courses and better housing. Linguistic difficulties have meanwhile diminished.

In principle, education is a matter for the Länder. At Bauschlott, near Pforzheim (Wiirtemberg), a Hungarian grammar school subsidised by the Federal Government and Land Wiirtemberg has been in existence for several years. As the number of pupils has increased by 80 and it appears essential to extend the school, it is proposed to move the school to another building. It is expected that the Federal Government will contribute towards the cost of a new boarding-house for the pupils.

Children of school age, who are relatively few, generally attend the German elementary schools.

Travelling in the general convoys, or as individuals, or sometimes in special convoys, 1,068 university students, of whom 1,034 have been recognised as such, have been accepted in Germany. The remaining 34 proved to be high school pupils. The students, who were first admitted to the universities as guest pupils (Gasthörer) and have mostly been attending language courses, will be registered as regular students during the summer semester if their knowledge of German is considered sufficient. In view of their large numbers, they represent a substantial burden on the German universities, whose student population is already too high. The Federal Government will finance their studies for the first three semesters.

In addition, the Federal Government has declared its readiness to receive up to 200 students as scholarship-holders of the Ford Foundation; so far, however, it has only been possible to find 102 suitable students for this purpose.

Hungarian refugees have set up numerous organisations, some of which have been short-lived. The attitude of the Federal Government to such organisations, so far as they have cultural and social aims and seek to preserve Hungarian national tradition and awareness, has been essentially benevolent. The Federal Ministry for Refugees, for example, subsidises a Hungarian-language newspaper. Conversation handbooks and Hungarian works have been re-published and distributed free of charge, while universities, higher technical establishments, firms and welfare institutions have started language courses.

Assistance to individual refugees in distress has been provided from the generous voluntary subscriptions collected, amounting in all to DM. 40 million.

A certain number of persons who had perhaps left their country in a panic, and others who suddenly found themselves separated from their families, sought to return to Hungary. This tendency has been strengthened by initial difficulties in acclimatisation to the German way of life.

Another category wanted to return to Austria in order to emigrate thence to other countries. In many cases this wish was probably a pretext for a clandestine return to Hungary. In the event there were many difficulties in the way. Since the expiry of the amnesty on 31st March the Hungarian refugees seem to have been in a calmer frame of mind

As a result of the revolutionary happenings in Hungary, the Federal Government has expended the following sums :

To the German Red Cross for emergency measures - DM - 1,000,000

Wheat shipments to Hungary - 10,000,000

Carried forward - 11,000,000

Amount - DM - 11,000,00

To the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (I. C. E. M.) as a contribution to costs of transport and administration - 647,000

For the relief of Hungarian refugees in the Federal Republic during the 1956 financial year, as part of the assistance to war victims programme :

(1) Individual relief - 10,000,000 DM

(2) Reception centres - 7,000,000 DM 17,000,000

Aid to students and school-children - 400,000

29,047,000

Donations received in the Federal Republic by welfare organisations (German Red Cross, Cari-tas, Ec. Hilfswerk, Arbeiterwohl-fahrl) :

(1) Cash donations - 13,000,000

(2) Donations in kind - 27,000,000

40,000,000

Provisional budget for the 1957-1958 Financial Year :

(a) Individual relief - 20,000,000

(b) Reception centres - 10,000,000

(c) Additional 20 % supplied by the Lander - 6,000,000

36,000,000

Ireland

On the 1st June 1957, the number of Hungarian refugees in the country was 489, of whom 361 were at Knockalisheen Camp, Co. Clare, and the remaining 128 were in employment or private homes elsewhere.

The Department of External Affairs is continuing its efforts, through its Missions abroad and through the appropriate international organisations, to secure the resettlement of refugees, who so desire, in other countries.

Efforts to secure employment for the refugees have been intensified with particular reference to home craft schemes organised in the refugee camp and to approved schemes affording employment for groups of refugees.

Italy

The number of refugees in camps varies continually owing; (a) to the influx from beyond the Iron Curtain, and the particularly large number from Yugoslavia; (b) to emigration.

The monthly average total of refugees in Italy may be estimated at over 10,000, distributed among the reception centres at : Aversa, Altamura, Bari, Brindisi, Canzanello, Capua, Cremona, Farfa Sabina, Fraschette, Pontecagnano, Trieste, Udine.

There are also about 900 Hungarian refugees now in Italy. They were received by not more than two centres run by the Italian Red Cross : Vallombrosa and Ca' di Lan-dino.

In view of the present state of the Italian labour market, the most effective solution for final resettlement of the refugees remains that of emigration to countries capable of manpower absorption on a vast scale, particularly overseas countries.

Italian Government Departments are taking constant action to this end, in co-operation with such international organisations as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, voluntary organisations, I. C. E. M., U. S. E. P. etc.

The final resettlement of refugees in Italy is a difficult matter, for economic and social reasons which are sufficiently well known, but it should be borne in mind that the Italian Government is participating in the four-year programme (1954-1958) of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the object of which is to promote integration in the national economy of their host countries.

Luxembourg

Some 250 Hungarian refugees received by this country have quickly found permanent employment, particularly in handicrafts, and have been placed on an equal footing with Luxembourg workers in regard to wages, social security, working conditions and so forth. Changes of job are rare.

Netherlands

There are no refugees left in camps in the Netherlands.

Individual homes have been found for all the Hungarian refugees.

3,300 Hungarian refugees have been allowed to take up permanent residence in the Netherlands. Every Hungarian refugee able to work has found suitable employment.

Norway

Norway has admitted about 1,500 Hungarian refugees. The competent Norwegian authorities are still considering the possibility of receiving further refugees, taking into account the persistent difficulties experienced by a great number of the refugees still in camps. However, no decision has yet been taken, as the Norwegian authorities must first go carefully into the prospects of providing work and housing for any new contingent admitted. The housing problem is the most difficult one to solve.

By 1st April 1957, Norway had admitted 200 refugees from Yugoslavia.

The Norwegian Red Cross has so far sent to Hungarian refugees in Yugoslavia food and other supplies to an approximate value of 850,000 Norwegian crowns.

As a result of negotiations between the Norwegian and Yugoslav Red Cross Societies, the " Otesevo " Hotel has been converted into a convalescent home, and the Norwegian Red Cross has undertaken to raise the necessary funds to enable 200 refugees to spend 12 months there .

The Norwegian Red Cross intends shortly to give the Hungarian refugees inYugoslavia further assistance amounting to some 1,150,000 Norwegian crowns. Thus the total assistance received by these refugees will reach the figure of about two million Norwegian crowns.

Apart from food supplies, the proposed assistance will cover means of transport and medical equipment including an X-ray unit.

Sweden

Approximately 6,500 Hungarian refugees have been admitted into Sweden, mostly from camps in Austria and Yugoslavia. About 300 of them were tuberculous and have been placed in Swedish sanatoria.

On 21st September 1957 there were 348 refugees still living in Swedish reception centres—158 men, 92 women and 98 children. The National Labour Office expects that these refugees will be able to leave the centres some time this autumn.

When the refugees leave a reception centre, care is taken to find them permanent homes. As a rule, it is the employers who provide them with accommodation, but, if need be, the employment exchanges also help in this respect.

Refugees unable to work are handed over to the social welfare authorities, ff hospitalisation is not necessary they are placed in outlying localities where the housing situation is usually better than in the towns. The refugees receive regular allowances to meet their needs.

Each reception centre has a special labour exchange to help the refugees find work. Every effort is made to find them jobs in their own particular trade or, where this is impossible, a similar trade. All refugees are put inperman-ent jobs—there is no question of giving them temporary or seasonal work.

To help these refugees to adapt themselves more quickly to their new lives, language courses have been organised in the reception centres. There are also Swedish correspondence courses to enable them to carry on their studies by themselves once they have found work. Refugees who are not qualified for a trade are enabled to follow vocational training courses, and 260 refugees in all have been enrolled in such courses.

Young people who have been obliged to interrupt their studies are not usually given jobs, but are given an opportunity of continuing their education in Swedish schools and colleges.

By 15th September 1957 approximately 4,100 refugees with about 1,200 dependents had obtained work.

Turkey

By decision of the Government, the Directorate-General of Land and Housing Questions and the Turkish Red Crescent have taken responsibility for receiving the Hungarian refugees, dealing with the problem of their resettlement and helping to improve their social position. The relief and resettlement measures taken on behalf of the 505 refugees who have reached the country may be summarised as follows :

The Immigrants' Hostel at Sirkeci (Istanbul) and the Red Crescent Camp at Pendik (Istanbul), which have been assigned to the Hungarian refugees, have been improved and turned into very comfortable centres conforming to the necessary social standards.

On arrival, the refugees were immediately placed in one of these hostels according to their civil status.

The cost of feeding the refugees is borne by the Turkish Red Crescent. 2,221 articles of clothing have been supplied to them at the expense of the Directorate-General of Land and Housing Questions.

Meals are prepared by cooks recruited among the refugees themselves, each cook receiving a wage of T £300. There is no food rationing and children for whom the doctor prescribes a special diet receive up to five meals a day.

The Turkish Red Crescent gives each Hungarian refugee a monthly allowance of T£100 for out-of-pocket expenses. A number of establishments have made gifts of medical supplies to a value of T£4,000. Two major Istanbul dailies have raised about T£40,000 by an appeal to their readers, and the proceeds have been placed at the disposal of the Refugees Management Committee. Other gifts have been collected by various organisations.

A number of measures are now in progress with a view to resettling the refugees.

United Kingdom

A total of £338,000 has been committed by Her Majesty's Government at home and abroad in respect of Hungarians. This sum includes £15,000 paid to the United Nations Fund for Hungarian Refugees, £15,000 paid to the United Nations Fund for Hungarian Relief, £20,000 paid direct to the Austrian Government and £40,000 contributed to the funds of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration, which have been mainly responsible for the movement of Hungarian refugees from Austria to the United Kingdom and other destinations.

The resettlement of Hungarian refugees in the United Kingdom has so far been financed mainly by payments from the Lord Mayor's Fund, but it is likely that in future Her Majesty's Government will have to assume full financial responsibility for these refugees. Because of this additional financial commitment, together with those which Her Majesty's Government have already assumed, Her Majesty's Government informed the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Secretary-General of the United Nations last month that they would be unable to make any further financial contributions.

Over 23,000 Hungarians have been admitted to the United Kingdom from Austria including 5,000 brought in to take the place of 5,000 who wished to go to Canada.

Her Majesty's Government have decided that they cannot admit any further Hungarian refugees save where strong compassionate grounds exist, e. g. where the reuniting of families is involved. This applies both to Hungarian refugees in Austria and in Yugoslavia.

In a written reply on March 14th, however, the Home Secretary stated that Her Majesty's Government would be prepared to consider bringing in refugees to replace those who managed to get away to destinations overseas. (This arrangement does not apply in the case of the 5,000 who have gone to Canada, as 5,000 had already come in from Austria to take their place).

In view of the fact that there is still a considerable Hungarian refugee problem in Yugoslavia it has now been decided that this principle may be extended to that country. The United Nations High Commissioner was informed accordingly on June 6th.

It is not possible to say at present how this scheme will develop, since the departure of Hungarian refugees from the United Kingdom depends to a large extent on the attitude of the countries to which they want to go.

At least 2,000 wish to go to the United States but only very few of them are likely to move until the United States Congress takes steps to amend the United States immigration laws.

A number of other Hungarians wish to go to Australia but arrangements are not yet complete for moving them.

Exact figures for Hungarians who have found employment in the United Kingdom are not available, as a number of them have found employment without the assistance of the Ministry of Labour. However, it is believed that about 9,000 have found jobs in this country.

Less than 3,000 are still registered at Ministry of Labour employment exchanges as unemployed. These figures do not include approximately 2,700 miners brought to the United Kingdom by the National Coal Board who arc living in Coal Board hostels. The training and placing of these miners in British coal mines is the responsibility of the Coal Board.

Thus the majority of Hungarian refugees in the United Kingdom are now self-supporting. Many of them have moved out of camps to hostels, but the movement of family groups out of hostels is a slower process in view of the housing problems involved.