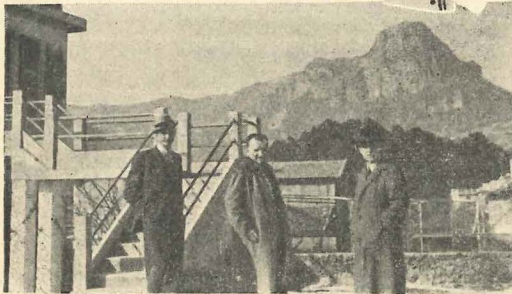
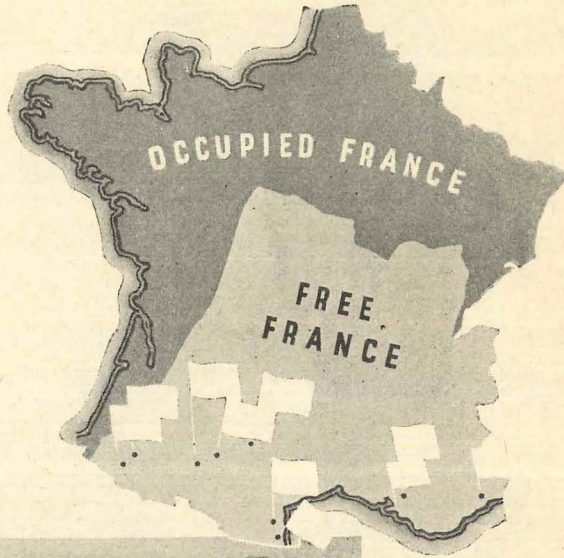


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War Conditions in the European Churches

BULLETIN No. 11, NOVEMBER, 1942

FRANCE and BELGIUM



*Colony for 100
Czech children from
internment camps,
at Vence, sponsored
by the Unitarian
Service Committee.*

This Bulletin is Issued by the
**CENTRAL BUREAU FOR RELIEF OF THE
EVANGELICAL CHURCHES OF EUROPE**
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Richard B. Scandrett, Jr., Treasurer

FRANCE AND BELGIUM

Most Americans during the First World War acquired the habit of linking France and Belgium in their memories, as co-participants in the same terrible experience and victims of the same tragedy. And again today they are co-sharers of the same dark fate: defeat and enemy occupation. Events in Belgium have not shaped themselves so spectacularly of late as they have in France; for some reason the large foreign possessions of the smaller country have not been the object of attack or the instrument of blackmail as have the African colonies of France. Yet here and there a little news seeps out which indicates the difficult adjustments which the Belgian population has bravely made, just as we are heartened now and then by a show of the old spirit of Free France even from the area most thoroughly under the heel of the enemy.

BELGIUM

The Belgian Gospel Mission, Inc., in Philadelphia, Pa. reports that of late several letters have been received from its workers in Belgium, though after long delay. We quote from one which gives many sidelights of Belgian life under war regimentation:

"The circumstances in which we live are getting the better of the physical resistance of several among us and our only recourse is the Lord.

"I do not like to think about the situation for the winter . . . God can deliver us from all our difficulties and He will do it in His way . . . The other day my wife had not succeeded in finding bones for her soup, when the butcher's wife sent word to her that she could come there in the afternoon. My wife received from the butcher bones that he had already used once for soup. Since then, my wife has used them twice for soup, and a sister who came to work in our home, took them away to use them for a fourth, and I hope, the last, time . . . My wife is in relatively good health. As she has a medical certificate, she does not have to stand in line (at the food stores). She can go immediately to the counter to be served. That is a great advantage for which we are very grateful . . ."

"God's work continues to be encouraging here (Charleroi) . . . What power there is in the Cross! We are very grateful for still being able to proclaim freely its great message . . . This second winter of occupation is very hard on many. To be without potatoes and almost without coal in Belgium is something terrible in this particularly severe season and that is the lot of many homes. The old people are truly to be pitied. One would like to be able to help them more, but we are ourselves strictly limited. This poor country is suffering more than in 1914-1918."

Two brief paragraphs—but a volume may be read between the lines!

The Gospel Mission also reports that the Protestant Vacation Center at Lustin, operated before the invasion by the Young Men's Christian Assn., has recently been turned into a home for Protestant children from 10 to 15 years of age who are suffering especially from the effects of undernourishment and malnutrition. (J. G. Winston)

FRANCE

The deportations of Jews from France have been featured in all the headlines, and no more needs to be said here about that horror, which marks the nadir of a great nation's impotence. These events make arise within one the cry: "How long, oh Lord, how long?" Gladly we observe that loud, outspoken, and even vehement protests were not lacking. From church circles, the voices of Catholics and Protestants alike were raised, though as yet in vain.

Vie Protestante, the Swiss religious weekly, gives the text of the protest addressed to Marshal Petain by the cardinals and bishops of the Occupied Zone on the deportations:

"Profoundly moved by what is reported to us concerning the mass arrests of Israelites during the past weeks and the harsh treatment which has been inflicted on them, especially at Velodrome d'Hiver, we cannot stifle the cry of our conscience.

"It is in the name of humanity and Christian principle that our voices are raised in protest and in behalf of the unproscribable rights of the human being.

"This is an anguished appeal for pity for these immense sufferings, above all of mothers and children.

"We ask you, M. le Maréchal, that you give attention to this plea in which are involved the essentials of justice and of charity."

Vie Protestante reports concerning the action taken by the French Protestants:

"The Reformed Church immediately protested the decision (to deport the Jewish refugees) and went to the aid of the victims with a view to obtaining the liberation of groups or individuals. Pastors and parishes spontaneously offered proof of fraternal Christian love to those threatened with deportation. All the welfare organizations are working night and day to save as many people as possible. According to the 'Neue Zuericher Zeitung' the French authorities have suppressed the protest of the Pope. The Catholic monastic orders have opened the monasteries to receive the refugees.

"During the transportation of the refugees, heartrending scenes of unspeakable grief were enacted, but also admirable witness of brotherly love and sympathetic aid. A Protestant pastor who, during the critical days fought unceasingly to save as large a number as possible of these defenceless people wrote in his diary:

'Night has fallen. This must all be a hallucination! I have clocked it: in thirty seconds the departure of a man is decided. Distress, humiliation, unutterable sadness and anguish . . . The witness of Israel: God has made it great and impressive. All this people has suffered with dignity, with humility and greatness . . . Wives who voluntarily joined their husbands . . . a general sense of fraternity and mutual aid . . . I ought to set down that I saw these unhappy brethren busy helping one another rather than thinking of themselves, rejoicing in the deliverance of their friends and profoundly sympathizing with their misery . . . no one tried to evade at the expense of the others. What was hideous and disgusting about this occurrence was not on their part.'

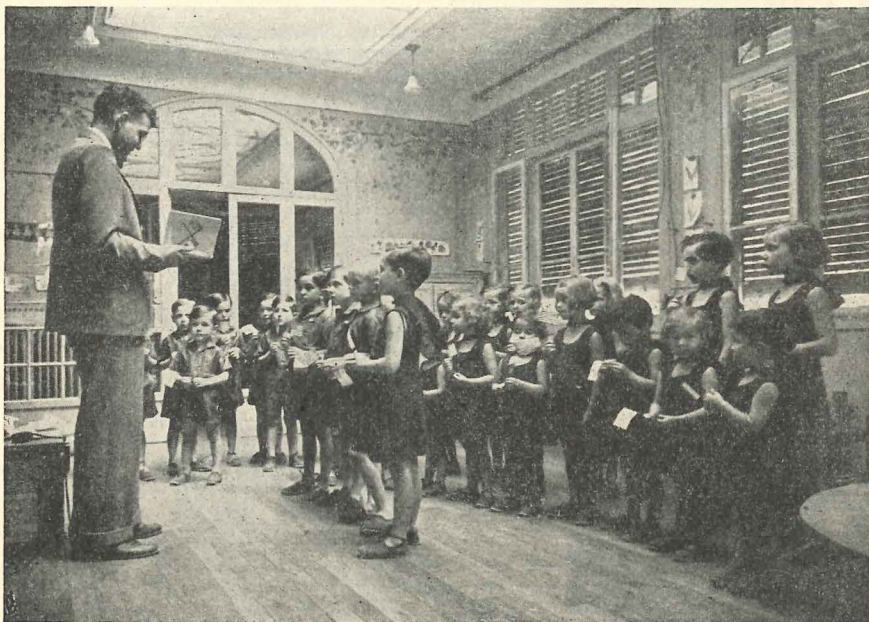
A Gift for France Helps a Man Like This to Help Others!

It is a relief to turn from the tear-drenched pages of this story of the degradation of the human race, to a microcosm of what it is capable of also in the way of generosity, kindness, healing, and consolation. One might well despair of mankind if such little islands of Christian love did not rise here and there above the flood of cruelty, indifference, pusillanimity, and cowardice, to show that redemption is still possible, that the spark of the Divine is not dead.

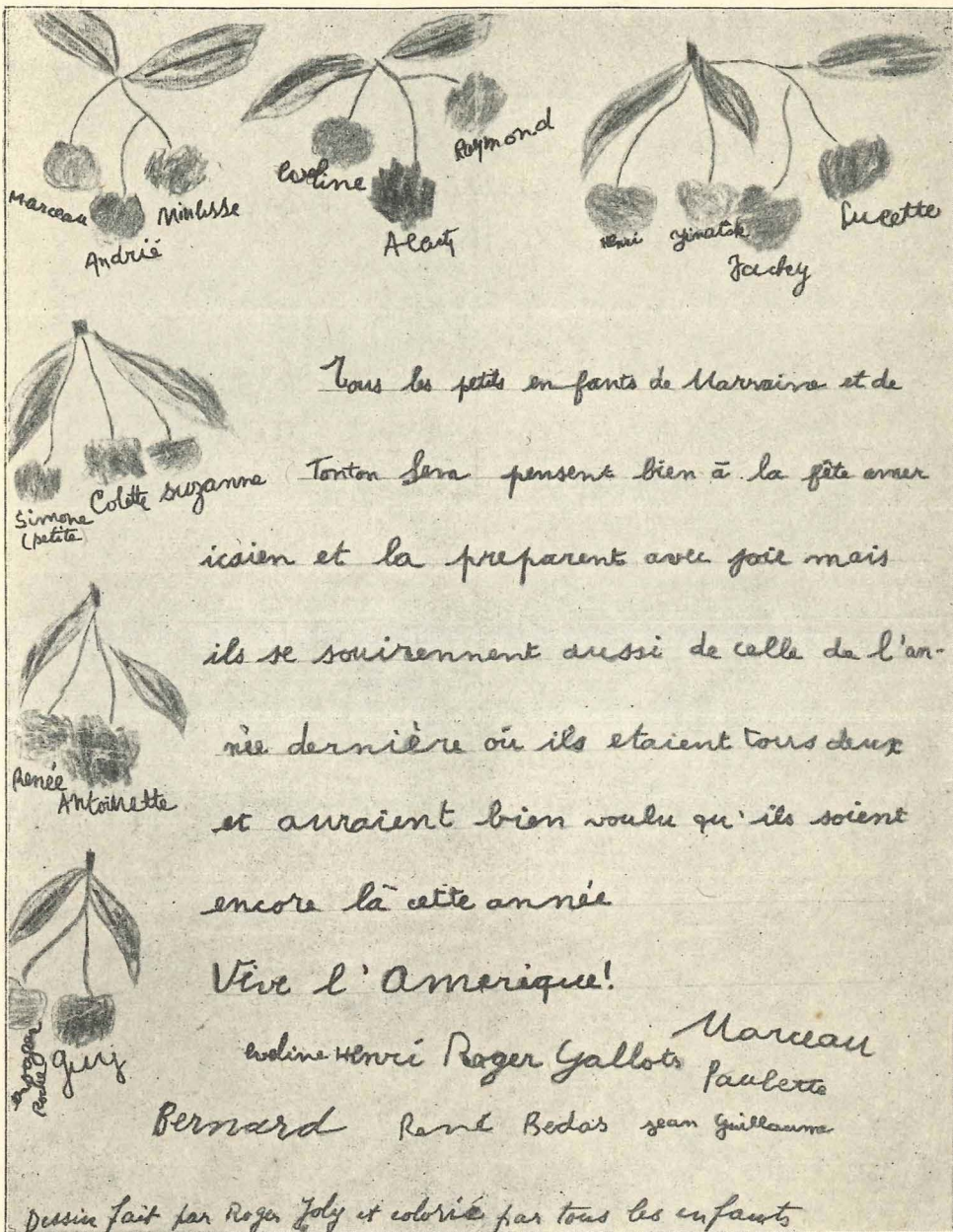
Tucked away among the deep indentations of the beautiful southern coast of France, at Hyères, its appearance and environs still that of a typical high-class pension in a fashionable seaside resort, stands

The Réfuge des Petits

a home for a few of the many hundreds of waifs who were picked up when the sorry tide of French evacuees rolled southward before the oncoming invaders. The complete story of this little haven of peace in the turmoil of a world at war is told by its founder, Mr. A. Seymour Houghton, Jr., in a beautifully illustrated booklet which we shall be glad to send free to anyone who would like to have it. We reproduce here just a childish letter composed and executed by the youngsters themselves. It was addressed to Mr. Houghton and Mme. Perret, (the former directrice, now in this country), but is intended for all the American donors who made the **Refuge** possible. The translation of the French text composed and signed by the older children, is as follows:



THE FOURTH OF JULY
"Tonton Seym" and the children celebrate Independence Day.



The Translation of This Letter from the Children of the
 Refuge des Petits is given on Page 6.

"All the little children of Mairaine (Mme. Perret) and Tonton Sem. (Mr. Houghton) well remember the American holiday (Fourth of July) and celebrate it with joy, but they also recall last year's celebration when both (Mme. P. and Mr. H.) were present and would have liked to have them here this year also. VIVE L'AMERIQUE." The signatures read: Eveline, Henri, Roger Gallots, Marceau, Paulette, Bernard René Bedos, Jean, Guillaume, Antoinette, Jacky, Lucette, Raymond, Mimlisse, André, Yannaich, Simone, Colette, Alasty, Roger Roche, Guy, Suzanne, Jacques, Jean-Pierre, Christiane, George, Elise, Jacqueline, Hubert, Roger Joly, Leon, Kiki, Marius, Lisette, Nanette, Jean-Claude, Robert, Rene Tibaut, Pierre Pierrot, Francois, Monique and Lima. American foster parents of some of the children will recognize the names, not all of which could be commemorated with a cherry. This symbol of George Washington's early career has evidently been transferred to the Glorious Fourth by the tenants of the Refuge!

A small enterprise this, and ministering only to a few of the hundreds (perhaps even thousands) of bereft and helpless tots who were cast up by the tidal wave which engulfed their native land, yet like a lighted candle it makes a little radiance in the surrounding darkness, and the Central Bureau is glad to commend it to the friends of the Central Bureau who "want to do something for France."

THE "MISSION POPULAIRE EVANGELIQUE"

Another Christian enterprise in France which owes a great deal to American support is the "Mission Populaire Evangélique"—better known in this country under the name of "McAll Mission" after its founder, Dr. McAll. The Mission operates as an evangelistic unit, supplementing the work of "La Cause" under which title the Huguenot churches of France carry on their work of evangelization, but over and above this it has done immensely valuable pioneering Christian welfare work among the slums, in small towns, and even rural districts which have not been reached by the institutional welfare work of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches of France. The war has of course cut into the normal activities of the vacation colonies, the "foyers", the Bible reading-rooms, etc., but the buildings have been quickly re-adapted to war time needs and during the evacuation served as rest shelters and centers for the re-assembling of scattered families, first-aid clinics and multifarious other emergency uses.

McAll News for September lists the following stations as still operating full time:

Paris:
Foyer Fraternel
La Bienvenue
Grenelle
Maison Verte
Paris Suburbs:
Arcueil
Bicetre

Provinces:

Amiens
Fives-Lille
Marseilles
Nantes
Nemours
Doubaix
Rouen
St. Nazaire
St. Quentin



McAll Fraternité at Marseilles, a peaceful place in a war-time port.

Another Winter for "La Mission Populaire Evangelique" (McAll News)

"As we look toward another and more desperate winter for France, it seems well to review the happenings of the past winter of the Mission as outlined in a copy of *Echos et Nouvelles* published in 1941 and from which we quote below.

"The outlook during the winter of 1941 was very dark, but the Mission must have stood out as a beacon to those unfortunates who needed its help. No matter how difficult the task, a way is found.

"'I Was Hungry, I Was Thirsty.' Our Lord might have added: 'I was cold.' The winter was terrible for the poor. No coal for the kitchen or for heat. Accordingly, thanks to the 'Entr'aide d'Hiver' (Mutual Winter help) we were fortunate in establishing heated rooms in several of our posts. There people found a hearty welcome for their trouble and misery, besides fine heat for their benumbed limbs, a hot drink, and warm Christian friendliness. The individualistic instinct of the French made some hesitate to take advantage of these

heated rooms, but little by little, the lure of these hours of Christian fellowship overcame their shyness. And it is not our least joy thus to have been able to warm benumbed souls.

"At Christmas Rouen and Grenelle organized, as usual, their meal for the poor and lonely. Nothing was lacking from the nourishment of these abandoned brethren: it was the miracle of the loaves and fishes . . . It should be noted that the members of the work had given up their tickets for the benefit of the less favored, and that no expense had been spared to ensure that nothing should be lacking: the faith of our friends was rewarded by the grateful joy of their guests.

"At Grenelle a '**Soupe Populaire**' (Soup Kitchen) is doing useful work; the attendance is growing daily . . . a second huge kettle has had to be installed. Some poor people have nothing to eat but their bread and our soup. Some empty their plates several times: generally they are penniless old people.

"We wish to thank '**Secours National**' (National Assistance) which has granted us these various installations and which has given us a large allotment of worn clothing, which has been heartily appreciated in these hard times."

Here is another concrete way in which to reach our brethren in France: those who have faced a dreadful situation with courage and self-sacrifice; who have refused to be browbeaten by either the invaders or those whom they compel to do their bidding.

Gifts for this vital connecting link between American Christians and the Christian forces of France may be sent direct to the Amer. McAll Association, 297 - 4th Ave., New York, or to the Central Bureau designated: "McAll—France."

The Unitarian Service Committee in France

Still another way to aid France is open to Americans who would like to do so. A heavy burden of refugees, political exiles, and evacuees has rested on that unhappy country for five years. We should like to call attention to the magnificent service rendered by the Unitarian Service Committee not only in the concentration camps, but in children's camps and other rescue centers of their own, where hundreds are not only being helped but rehabilitated, physically and mentally. If you want to help, send a gift to the Committee, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, or to our Bureau, for them.

Remember! Winter Is Almost Here!

A. H. Froendt, Sec'y