

Letter from Germany

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25 October 1923

Dear Volksblatt,

In October we had much rain with warm weather. The mushrooms grew well. It was not as warm in June as it is now. Turnips and feed are in abundance. Everything is becoming much more expensive. One dollar now stands at 1,000,000,000. The weekly wage of a laborer amounts to 40,000,000,000. There is a shortage of labor. Weaving companies work 3 or 4 days. There is plenty of cloth available but it is too expensive. Coffee, beer and wine are very expensive.

People joke that they drink water and thin it down. Husbands and wives quarrel. During the summer foreigners come to Germany. In Hirschberg alone you have 7 thousand Americans I am told. They like the German girls.

Regards to all readers of the Volksblatt,

H. D.

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Shocking Conditions in Germany

One million German laborers are unemployed and two million laborers only have a few hours to work per week in the unoccupied region of the country. In the occupied regions of Germany, especially in the densely populated Ruhr area known for its coal industry, 2 million people are without work. Many millions of people suffer from shortage of food, clothing and coal for heating. A very cold winter has started.

Sickness, hunger and pestilence move through Germany like skeletons through the once flourishing country, our motherland where our cradle stood.

The republic is looking at its saddest winter in its shortest history. A high percentage of children die. A young generation dies of hunger.

We here in the democratic and highly civilized America have a good harvest of wheat, have corn, cane and meat in abundance enjoying the good life. We are the strongest nation on earth financially and materialistically. We allowed for those conditions in Germany to develop which before WWI was our friend and receiver of our surpluses.

The news of the collection of funds in the USA for the relief of suffering in Germany caused most of the desperate people in Germany to respond with apathy. People are wanting to say: Which children shall be selected, how and by whom?

The situation is so shocking that apart from about 100 children of the war profiteers and farmers, a child in Germany does not have enough to eat or has enough clothing to wear.

Thousands of newborn children have never tasted milk not even the mother's milk.

Millions of school children leave for school without breakfast. All that they get to eat every day is a slice of bread with mashed potatoes spread on it.

Today the middle class is starving which once was the rich class of people. Women sew and knit in return for one meal a day.

Many families don't know anymore what meat and fat taste like.

Suicides are commonplace.

Laborers earn 4,000,000,000 Marks per week. According to the dollar “Valuta” exchange rate this is a value of 60 cents.

Many people die of tuberculosis. In the last three months this illness increased by 14% in 40 of the largest cities in Germany. In Berlin alone 39,000 children of a total of 500,000 children have caught this disease. 77,620 children are undernourished.

In a school frequented by 30 boys only 12 have shoes to wear, and only one has socks.

An example out of Rosenheim, Bavaria:

It has 18,000 inhabitants, 38 children don't get breakfast or evening meal; 150 only soup or coffee; 220 are totally undernourished; many of these have lung disease. 38 don't have a shirt; 50 no underwear, 48 wear torn shoes; most children are barefoot; 93 have no bed and sleep on straw on the floor; 6 children of one family sleep in the workplace of the father on the floor on top of rags; 6 children share 3 shirts and rotate them;

World democracy, “Where are you?” Civilization. You are praised much, but are you alive?

Translated by Margot Hendricks