

[Machine translations:]

SUOMEN PUOLUSTUSVOIMAIN
YLIPÄÄLLIKKÖ

[Supreme Commander of
Finnish Defence Forces]

Headquarters, 1 March 1942.

The President of the International Committee
of the Red Cross,

Geneva.

Mr. President,

As a result of the current war, triggered as a result of the provocation of the USSR, the Finnish Armed Forces captured a considerable number of Soviet prisoners. Although the USSR has not acceded to the Geneva Convention and Finland, therefore, has no guarantee that Finnish prisoners of war in the USSR will be subjected to fair and humane treatment, Finland, despite many difficulties, has strictly observed the stipulations of this Convention, regulating the treatment of prisoners of war and all other related issues.

As a consequence of our two wars, Finland is currently experiencing a severe food crisis. In fact, the territories surrendered by Finland to the USSR under the arbitrary peace of Moscow in March 1940 were, in the time of their resumption by our troops, almost entirely fallow. In addition to that, the country has had under two successive years crop deficits. For the moment, it is impossible for us to envisage an improvement in this food crisis, since, as a result of the war and the blockade directed against our maritime trade, all imports from abroad are practically non-existent. Even in times of peace, Finland is dependent on foreign countries for the import of grain and feedstuffs for livestock. We have therefore been forced to strictly rationing our meager stores of food and to reducing to a minimum the rations of each inhabitant.

The caloric value of rations for prisoners of war is currently about the

same as that enjoyed by manual workers. In relation to their calorie content, these rations are more or less sufficient if it is only a question of preserving the normal state of health of a healthy person. On the other hand, they are clearly insufficient with regard to the quantity of vitamins they contain. It has been found that, because of their diet, the physical condition of the Soviet soldiers has worsened considerably as the war was prolonged, and that many of them suffered, at the time of their capture, from under-nourishment and vitamin deficiencies. By maintaining the current rations it is no longer possible to obtain an improvement in the condition of these prisoners, and despite all attempts at the hygienic protection and all the care to which they are subject, many people eventually succumb to from complete exhaustion or various infections.

The prisoners, captured during the winter of 1941-42, were for the most part considerably hungry. During the interrogations they declared, that for a long time their rations were very meager and little varied, and that they received, for the most part, only bread and oil cakes. Sometimes, exceptionally, they were given meat of killed horses. Several cases of cannibalism by the confession of certain prisoners occurred.

We are desirous of respecting the requirements of international treaties and humanitarian laws in the treatment of our prisoners of war, but we are facing a crisis which we can not overcome by our own means. The critical situation of our country as regards due to the food supply, does not allow to improve the quality and quantity of food for the prisoners. Unfortunately, we are not even able to guarantee that today's level can be maintained in the long run. Any increase in prisoners' rations should be to the detriment of our civilian population.

In bringing this situation to the attention of the International Committee of the Red Cross, we hope that it will be interested in the fate of our prisoners and that it will find a way to help them. The most urgent need we have right now is food and medicine. On our behalf, we would be very pleased to receive a delegate from the Committee from which we would be given every facility to control that the consignments destined for prisoners are wholly and exclusively put to the use of Soviet prisoners of war in Finland.

In view of the current state of war in Finland, I would ask you to treat the above issues in a confidential manner.

Please accept, Sir, the expression of my highest consideration.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE FINNISH RED CROSS
[sign.] Mannerheim

[Telegram April 1942]

8001 HELSINKI 227 63/60 15 2104 ETAT =
INTERCROIXROUGE GENEVE

Thanks kindness consideration of request stop number
Soviet war prisoners about 47000 stop
Would like to receive 20000 million international units
concentrated vitamins 500 kg. C vitamins
200000 kg food greases 500000 kg canned food
of meat 200000 kg sugar stop calculated quantities
for six months stop can wire this information to
Amcross stop highlight need urgent assurances

Liaison/YG

C o p i e

Division des Secours

Secrétariat

RM/KE

3.1.54.21/I

Genève, le 14 Octobre 1942.

No.

NOTE FOR THE DELEGATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
OF THE RED CROSS IN BERLIN

Relates to: relief shipments to prisoners of war

Russian in Finland.

In response to your note No. 1630 of 9 September 1942, we inform you that we are waiting currently 3733 standard food parcels of La Croix-American Red for Russian prisoners of war in Finland. In addition, a shipment of 500,000 capsules of the Canadian Red Cross is expected for same prisoners of war

For the International Committee
of the Red Cross

H.Wasmer
Director ad interim
of the Relief Division

Translation from French

TELEGRAM

From Geneva
July 25, 1942

His Excellency
MOLOTOV,
People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs.
Moscow

The Finnish government asks us to address once again the Government of the USSR in order to obtain information about Finnish prisoners of war who are in the power of the Soviet forces. Lists that we have already received from the Finnish government can be immediately exchanged with our mediation, as soon as lists of Finnish prisoners of war are also received. The principle of reciprocity, adopted in accordance with the declarations of the Soviet and Finnish governments in 1941, could thus in fact be secured in accordance with the Hague Convention of 1907 and the Geneva Convention of 1929 on the wounded and sick.

In view of the fact that all its various proposals for sending delegations to Moscow to facilitate the commencement of this work have remained unanswered, the International Committee of the Red Cross is now limited to proposing a reciprocal and simultaneous sending information about prisoners of war and providing itself with full authority as an intermediary for the exchange.

The International Committee of the Red Cross, at the same time as this telegram, sends a letter to Your Excellency to give additional information on the whole set in question.

[Max] HUBER.
[President of] International Red Cross
[Committee]
4073.

Sent to:
(t.t.) Molotov
Vyshinsky,
Dekanozov,
Lozovsky,
Sobolov,
Pavlov A.,
Orlov,
in the case.