

31 August 1947

Note for Mr. Semmer

The attached translation of an article carried by "LA VOCE LIBERA" on its issue of August 29, 1947, will give you some indications about a necessity which is widely felt by the local population: that is the possibility that an organization like the U.S. Relief Mission could bring an efficient contribution to the battle against the rising prices of basic food items.

This possibility has arisen in the minds of the citizens after you said in your first Press Conference that it was the intention of the U.S. Relief Mission to use the funds deriving from the sale of the supplies not only for charitable activities but also to keep low the price of space-heating coal.

That has originated the following article which expresses some wishes of the population and also gives some vague indications and suggestions.

But there are some points which come clearly out of the article and which are worth of consideration, since they really express what can be considered a general hope. Here they are:

1. TO USE the funds deriving from the sales as a financial weapon to keep down prices of basic food item and coal.
2. TO USE this weapon to intervene wherever there is a move towards the increase of certain prices, to balance the possibly rising costs of production and labor of the main food items.
3. TO MAKE SURE that - as long as the U.S. Relief Mission will operate in Zone "A" and Udine - at least the price of bread and coal will never be ~~increased~~ further increased.

Anything done in this sense will be greatly appreciated by the population and the work of the U.S. Relief Mission will considerably gain in the people's gratitude and in prestige for the United States.

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lar action could be taken in the case of bread. In the same way, the population hopes that a similar action will be taken to avoid increases in the price of those supplies which, like sugar, will not be shipped to Trieste directly from the United States. We think that if sugar will be bought in foreign countries its price will increase, perhaps redouble. This is another instance where the fund should intervene as in the case of coal.

"We hope the responsible authorities will do, together with their action of relief, this additional action in favour of that greatest part of the population which lives on its sole work. Otherwise, the enthusiasm which welcomed the news of the beginning of the Relief activity would fade away, and also would be lost a good opportunity to help a town which has been put in a very difficult situation without her will, and which certainly deserves a small compensation.

"In his recent visit to Trieste, Gen. LEE told us he was proud that his country was helping Italy and, particularly Trieste. And generous is the U.S. aid through the post-UNRRA activity; but, to become really great, its action must be intelligent and must answer the expectations and the needs of the population."

POST-UNRRA AID AND THE PRICE OF BREAD.

In its issue of Aug.29,1947, the Italian newspaper "LA VOCE LIBERA" says editorially, commenting upon the news that the price of bread is going to be increased to 44 lire as from Sept.1st,1947 :

"We understand that the post-UNRRA supplies for Trieste cannot be distributed free to the population, since this would upset the economic and financial situation of the area; we also knew that in the rest of Italy, the price of bread is even higher and that its quality is worse than in Trieste; nevertheless, we were sadly surprised when we have learned of the ~~propose~~ imminent increase of price.

"As matter of fact, we had thought that, since the wheat was being given us free of expenses, there would have been a great margin to cover any increase in the cost of production of the bread itself.

We understand that in case some part of the funds deriving from the sale ~~of~~ of the supplies had been diverted to cover the major expenses in the production of bread , the charitable activities, which are supposed to get the funds would have suffered, but, since these activities will get already from these funds a considerable amount of money, the loss would have been little while it would have been better to have such loss instead than having another increase in the ever rising cost of living.

"Everybody knows that when salaries and wages are insufficient, any increase in the cost of living brings new requests from the trade unions for new increases in salaries. So, if the Relief activities in Trieste, are aimed not only at helping to feed the population, but also at helping the population towards ~~xxxxx~~ a settled social balance, it would have been good policy not to increase the price of bread.

"And that is what we ~~think~~ think about a very important task which could be accomplished by Mr.Sommer and by the other Allied authorities. As Mr.Sommer said in his first Press Conference that the funds deriving from the sale of the supplies could have contributed to keep low the price of space-heating coal, a simi-