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German first aid to Kiev

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Kiev — Members of the Bavarian Red Cross will today finish distributing their first shipment worth DM1.8m (£630,000) of food and medical aid in the Kiev region, and board eight empty articulated lorries for the return journey to Munich, writes Susan Viets. GERM/USSR

"The situation is much worse than we expected," said Rudolf Cermak, one of the Bavarian workers. "We can't even begin to help enough here. We've bought milk and honey, food for babies . . . it's only for hospitals and orphanages though we wish this could be for the shops as well."

The 180 tons of goods were hand-delivered by the Germans to institutions in Kiev and yesterday they drove a shipment to the hospital in Slavutyich, a town 100 miles to the north recently built for Chernobyl evacuees.

At the children's hospital Number 14, near Kiev central Victory Square, the medical director, Labsina Vurvara, was yesterday scrutinising a box of in-

stant Italian mashed potato. "They brought these this morning along with scalpels, bandages and vitamins . . . yesterday was baby food, 60,000 jars in all, which should be enough for three to four months."

Asked whether the hospital needed more aid, a non-committal and slightly puzzled Mr Vurvara said: "We have our own food . . . but if they do come back, they know our address."

Peoples' deputies at the Congress in Moscow this week pointed accusatory fingers at Mr Gorbachev for asking for aid when aid is not needed. Ukrainian authorities last week turned down an offer of Canadian food credits, calling it unnecessary. In Kiev, eggs, matches, coffee, tea, alcohol and cigarettes are just some of the items in short supply. Queues for state shops are long and variety is limited; most fruits and vegetables are available only in markets.

But most Kievites will not admit to a crisis.

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