



**REVUE
INTERNATIONALE
DE LA
CROIX-ROUGE**

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

News Items

M. J. de Preux, delegate of the ICRC in Saigon, paid a brief visit to Pnom-Penh on December 7 last. He had several discussions with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health, and met a number of eminent persons. He made a special point of bringing to the government authorities' notice the desirability and necessity for the accession of Cambodia to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and supplied them with useful data on the subject. Moreover, as his predecessor, M. N. Burckhardt, had already done in the previous year, he enquired how the movement in favour of the creation of a Khmer Red Cross had progressed. He met, in this connection, Dr. Riche, delegate of the French Red Cross in Cambodia, who, for his part, is endeavouring to promote the setting up of a National Society in that country.

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With a view to assisting the war disabled in South Viet Nam, the ICRC has just presented the Saigon Government with the necessary equipment for setting up a complete workshop for the supplying of artificial limbs. The gift includes 200 standard peg legs which will be finished and adjusted on the spot. Two British technicians, engaged by the ICRC, arrived in Saigon on December 14, 1955. For three months they will train six Viet Nam apprentices who, when they leave, will be able to carry on the work of adjusting artificial limbs and teaching the disabled the exercises required to re-educate the muscles.

The workshop comes under the Ministry of Ex-Servicemen in South Viet Nam, which has appointed a Saigon orthopaedist to manage it.

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The action started by the ICRC in 1949 for the re-uniting of families separated by the events of war and the post-war period, in particular those of German origin or German-speaking, is being continued. In 1955 about 15,000 persons, from East and South-East European countries, have been united with their relatives, principally in Germany and Austria, thanks to the efficient co-operation of National Red Cross Societies of the countries of departure and destination, and the understanding attitude of the Governments concerned.

The rate at which this activity is progressing shows the growing interest it is arousing.

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On December 12, 14 and 16, the ICRC resumed its trial broadcasts over the wave-length (41.61 m.-7210 kc.) allocated to it for the purpose. The Broadcasting Section of the ICRC is now dealing with the first batch of reception reports.

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In 1955 the ICRC received 100,611 letters and telegrams and despatched 119,626.

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A gift of X-ray equipment, valued at 15,000 Swiss francs, has been made by the ICRC to the Yugoslav Red Cross Society.

The equipment, which arrived in Belgrade last December, is intended for use in the Titograd Children's Hospital now being built. The hospital, which will contain 100 beds, will provide treatment for children of the town and neighbourhood, and also for those from a large area of the Montenegrin territory.

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The convoy of Greek nationals, organised by the Rumanian Red Cross in conjunction with the ICRC and the League, whose early departure from Bucharest to Australia was referred to by us in November last, arrived in Vienna on November 15. The thirty-eight persons who made up the convoy were received in that city by M. Joubert, delegate of the ICRC, and members of the Austrian Red Cross Society. The representative of the ICRC attended to these persons' accommodation and vaccination against cholera, and made arrangements from them to continue their journey. A first group of 22 persons left by sea from Trieste, on December 17. The other travellers were sent on to their countries of reception, either by air, or via Genoa where a delegate of the ICRC was present when they embarked.

Moreover, two further convoys of Greek nationals in Rumania are now being prepared; the first will proceed to Greece; the second will also be leaving for Australia.

With regard to the latter, it has been arranged that the emigrants will wait in Switzerland until the necessary preparations for them to continue their journey have been made. The Swiss Red Cross was requested to provide temporary accommodation for these persons, and has been good enough to lend its services in the matter.

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Miss A. Pfirter, Head of the Medical Personnel and War Disablement Sections of the ICRC, left Geneva on January 6 for Cairo. The object of her mission is to make contacts with National Societies and authorities in the Middle East countries, in order that the ICRC may obtain information on the organisation of their relief activities and, in particular, the training of the various formations of medical personnel which ensure the carrying out of emergency services in the event of conflicts.

The information collected by Miss Pfirter will serve for the drafting of a report on medical personnel which is to be submitted by the ICRC to the next International Red Cross Conference in New Delhi.

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The International Committee's action on behalf of the disabled held under detention in Greece came to a close in 1955. It was started in 1949 and has enabled 76 beneficiaries to be supplied with 58 artificial limbs, 13 orthopaedic aids and 10 pairs of surgical boots. The contribution of the ICRC to this action amounted to 20,000 Swiss francs.

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Towards the end of last year, four new official translations of the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, were made: in Spanish by the Spanish and Ecuadorian Governments, and in Italian and Siamese by the Governments of Italy and Thailand. At the present time, twenty-three States have already published similar translations and versions of the texts exist in twenty languages. The Korean version, however, only concerns the Third Convention.

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With its 410th Circular of June 27, 1955 (see last July issue of the Revue, p. 443), the ICRC distributed to National Societies the "Draft Rules for the Protection of the Civilian Population from the Dangers of Indiscriminate Warfare". It is, no doubt, superfluous to emphasise again in these pages the importance of the questions raised in this document.

The circular requested that National Societies should make their remarks and suggestions known to the ICRC before November 15, 1955. The ICRC proposes to prepare, on the basis of those comments and its own study of the question, a more detailed draft text, which will be submitted to the XIXth International Red Cross Conference. Over twenty Societies have already sent replies to the ICRC; many of them have made a close study of the matter, and have sent most detailed observations to the ICRC. Other Societies have informed it that, on account of the complex nature of the subjects dealt with, they could not finish their studies within the time-limit first indicated. On account of the adjournment of the XIXth International Conference to January 1957, the International Committee was pleased to be able to inform them that it

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could take into account comments submitted to it before the end of February, 1956.

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The ICRC Delegation in Vienna recently received from M. A. Riedl, Federal Councillor, President of the Burgenland Branch of the Austrian Red Cross Society, a remarkable report on its work over the past ten years. This work gives a very objective survey of the early difficulties of a branch which today renders all services which a local Red Cross centre can be expected to give, and which was congratulated by M. Joubert on behalf of the International Committee, which he represents in Austria.

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Following various approaches made by the ICRC, there have been several departures for new countries among the Trieste refugees and members of their families: the former had been under treatment in Leysin hospitals until cured, and the latter accommodated in Morzine. On January 4, fifteen left for Belgium accompanied by a social worker of the ICRC. They have been taken over by the "Entr'aide socialiste belge" which will help them to return to a normal life. Their resettlement will only be considered as definite, however, after a period of three months, as a trial period is necessary to ascertain whether they will be able to adapt themselves to changed conditions. Another couple has just been admitted to a Caritas catholica home, also in Belgium, with the help of the Government authorities. Moreover, a family of three persons left for Australia on January 17.

Mention may be made of the fact that in September, thanks to help of the Swiss Confederation and various charitable organisations, twelve persons suffering from incurable or chronic diseases were given a permanent home in Switzerland.

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On the death of M. François Ehrenhold, the ICRC received from all parts numerous tokens of sympathy from those who met

its late lamented delegate in his work, or collaborated with him during the last few years. In this connection, messages were sent from Dr. Weitz, President of the Red Cross of the German Federal Republic, M. Bargatzky, Vice-President, and the Secretary-General, M. Hartmann, also from Dr. Wagner, Head of the Tracing Section in Bonn, and M. Ohlsen, Head of the Tracing Section in Hamburg. Dr. W. Ludwig, Head of the Red Cross of the German Democratic Republic, transmitted the condolences of that Society. The sympathy of the Austrian Red Cross was expressed in a message from its President, Dr. B. Breitner. M. G. Gospodinov, Vice-President of the Bulgarian Red Cross, Dr. V. Mirza, President of the Rumanian Red Cross and Dr. O. Milosevic, Secretary-General to the Yugoslav Red Cross, sent messages of condolence on behalf of their respective Societies. In the absence of its President, Mme. Domanska, the Polish Red Cross associated itself with the homage paid to the memory of the late M. Ehrenhold.

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The ICRC has just published, in French and English, a handbook entitled "Training Course for Red Cross Nursing Auxiliaries and Voluntary Aids". The author, Mlle. H. Nussbaum, who was at the head of the ICRC Medical Personnel Section in 1954, gives in a condensed form the basic theoretical and practical knowledge which is essential for auxiliary personnel, without neglecting in any way the moral formation which is inseparable from the work of those who devote themselves to the care of the sick and wounded. This work, which includes a preface by Mlle. Odier, will render great service, in many countries, to nurses entrusted with the training of auxiliary medical personnel.

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M. D. de Traz, Deputy Executive Director of the ICRC, left Geneva early in November on a mission to the Middle East as the special representative of the International Committee, and has visited in succession the authorities and National Societies of the Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Israel. During his interviews he

discussed all the questions which are of common interest to those States and the International Committee.

In view of the frontier incidents between Israel and the Arab States, M. de Traz had been instructed, in particular, to remind all the parties concerned that the Geneva Conventions of 1949 were applicable in their entirety, and that the ICRC was prepared to assume the various humanitarian tasks for which the Conventions provide.

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During his visit to Israel, M. de Traz was specially concerned with the welfare of the Egyptian and Syrian prisoners of war captured by the Israeli forces. He visited, in particular, a camp where 77 prisoners of war (including 3 officers and 16 non-commissioned officers) were interned. As is customary, the delegate of the ICRC was able to converse without a witness with the prisoners' representatives. In addition, he took with him on leaving family messages and photographs for transmission to the relatives of the captives in Egypt. The Israel authorities also authorised M. de Traz to visit Egyptian civilian detainees serving sentences for espionage and sabotage.

From Israel the delegate of the ICRC returned to Egypt for the purpose of visiting, also, the Israeli prisoners of war held in that country. The every case he was courteously received by the authorities concerned.