



**REVUE
INTERNATIONALE
DE LA
CROIX-ROUGE**

SUPPLEMENT

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THE CENTENARY OF THE RED CROSS IDEA

Voluntary Red Cross workers

In his study of nursing throughout the ages, L.R. Seymer relates that nursing care in the olden time was entrusted to slaves. If the patient did not recover, the unfortunate slave was put to death and as there were many slaves and few masters, his death was of little consequence.

For a long time medical care was in the hands of priests of all religions. It was only during the era of Ancient Greece that a body of doctors, quite distinct from the community of priests, was instituted (Homer 1000-1200 B.C.). Doctors were assisted by medical students or by slaves who apparently gave nursing care. The great Hippocrates courageously maintained in his teaching that sickness was due not to «demons» but to neglect of the laws of nature and was of a physical origin; he recognised the need for giving «intelligent care» to sick persons.

The first military hospitals were founded in Rome and it was apparently Augustus (B.C. 27-A.D. 14) who instituted the army medical service. From the writings of that period it may be deduced that assistant doctors or orderlies acted as nurses.

Christianity opened an era of love and charity, from which the wounded and sick were naturally to benefit; then for century after century a shocking state of ignorance prevailed. However, some great examples were outstanding events in the history of charity; the Reformation in England led to the secularisation of hospitals and nurses, but there was still a lack of nurses. In

France also, the Church took a firm stand; poverty and suffering were so great that Saint Vincent of Paul, a forerunner of Henry Dunant, appealed to the mighty for help. He was a shining figure in a dark period; he founded the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity and the Lazarists. He was the first in history to put a little order into medical care and to organise the work of sick-room attendants.

Nevertheless, hospitals continued to be badly organised and nurses worked in appalling conditions. England was the first country in Europe to change this state of affairs and to institute better conditions for nurses, which were soon adopted by Germany and France. However, nurses were badly housed, poorly fed and very few were paid for their services.

It was not until the XIXth Century that science and liberalism enabled some real progress to be made. Two names recall devoted services and perspicacity in the treatment of the sick; Florence Nightingale in the Crimean War and Henry Dunant at Solferino. But it was Dunant who launched throughout the world the words of the women of Castiglione—the words which have crossed all frontiers, which rise above the quarrels of peoples, races, religions and political parties: “*Sono tutti fratelli*”. It was he who brought nurses into the scene in Lombardy. Even if their simple aid in sponging the bodies of wounded men and placing them on beds of straw may seem to be a primitive and somewhat ineffectual gesture, it was nevertheless a symbol of the work represented today by the badge of the nursing profession—a red cross on a white ground. The nurse has kept intact the spirit of self-denial, sacrifice and duty to a greater extent even than the doctor. Yet God knows the bad treatment suffered by nurses in the past and even today.

The position of nurses is still different to that of members of great modern social organisations; they have no trade-unions to protect their interests and it was only quite recently that hospital boards introduced a working schedule which does not lay too heavy a burden upon them, but even this is optional and does not exist everywhere. There are not enough nurses because young girls of today are reluctant to take up a career

which offers less advantages than for those who become stenographers, secretaries or skilled factory workers. A nurse's salary is in fact inadequate, her professional training is long and possibilities of promotion are few. Nevertheless, great progress has been made. I have read recently a very interesting document published on the occasion of the 139th Session of the International Labour Organisation concerning working and employment conditions of nursing personnel. Nurses associations are certainly becoming more and more important every day; the majority continue to be linked with National Red Cross Societies by natural bonds of professional training and the implementation of the Red Cross principles. Other and fairly numerous groups are affiliated more or less with hospitals and form part of the hospital personnel on the same footing as the administrative staff. Since Florence Nightingale's time women nurses have been able to give their services to the armed forces and, through Henry Dunant's efforts, Red Cross Societies act as auxiliaries to Army Medical Services in time of war. In civilian service nurses assist doctors in fighting the effects of disease, storms, floods, famine and all the forces of nature which threaten the health of men. This battle has been going on for all time but it is now an organised and a systematic effort which is developing day by day. In war-time combatants are more and more aware of the useful aid given by the Army Medical Services. The view is held by some today that one-tenth of the armed forces of a country should be allocated to the medical service because of the destructive power of modern weapons. Therefore, when planning their armed forces Governments are careful to make available the essential medical personnel required for the care of the wounded and sick of those forces.

One duty of the National Red Cross Societies is to help to alleviate the sufferings of the victims of conflicts, so far as their means allow. They must be prepared to face human violence, either between nations or inside their own country. I remember Hiroshima where, in a fraction of a second, four fifths of the doctors and the nurses in the city were killed outright. From the ruins of the stricken city came forth a few hundred girls (voluntary Red Cross workers) from 14 to 16 years of age, who

VOLUNTARY RED CROSS WORKERS

had to cope with the catastrophe. When reading once more *A Memory of Solferino*, *The Good Samaritan* by Max Huber and *Red Cross Principles* by Jean S. Pictet, this vision of Hiroshima leads me to appeal for Red Cross voluntary workers, just as Solferino inspired Henry Dunant to act.

In this world, there are always unknown factors. The joy of peace may at any time give way to the horrors of war. Men's incessant quarrels and ferocious struggles would leave a world devoid of any hope of restoration if the spirit of the voluntary workers at Hiroshima and the women of Lombardy did not surge up again.

Dr. MARCEL JUNOD

Vice-President
International Committee
of the Red Cross

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

SEVENTEENTH AWARD OF THE FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE MEDAL

GENEVA, May 12, 1959.

426th Circular
to the Central Committees of National Red Cross
(Red Crescent, Red Lion and Sun) Societies

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

In its Circular No. 420 of August 23, 1958 the International Committee of the Red Cross had the honour to invite the Central Committees of National Societies to send in the names of nurses and voluntary aids whom they judged qualified to receive the Florence Nightingale Medal. This invitation, which quoted Article I of the Regulations, was accompanied by questionnaires bearing various headings for the candidatures.

The first object of this Medal is to honour nurses and voluntary aids who have distinguished themselves exceptionally by their devotion to sick or wounded in the difficult and perilous situations which often prevail in times of war or public disasters. The Regulations also provide that a maximum number of 36 medals shall be awarded every two years and that the candidates' names must reach the International Committee before March 1 of the year when the distribution takes place.

In accordance with these Regulations the International Committee, after a careful study of the files submitted, made a choice among the candidates presented.

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The International Committee is happy to announce that for the Seventeenth Distribution the Medal has been awarded to the following nurses and voluntary aids :

AUSTRALIA :

1. *Miss Phyllis Mary Daymon*, Voluntary Aid.
2. *Miss Patricia Downes Chomley*, Voluntary Aid, Midwife and Sister Tutor.

CHILE :

3. *Señora Amanda Brieba de Lorca*, Voluntary Aid.

DENMARK :

4. *Miss Signe Henriette Vest*, Professional Nurse.
5. *Miss Dorothea Frederikke Bengtzen*, Professional Nurse.

ECUADOR :

6. *Señora Maria Elvira Yoder*, Voluntary Aid.

FRANCE :

7. *Mademoiselle Hélène Rouvier*, Professional Nurse and Sister Tutor.
8. *Mademoiselle Emma Ruidavetz*, Professional Nurse and Matron.
9. *Madame Marguerite Patrimonio*, Professional Nurse and Matron.

GERMAN FEDERAL REPUBLIC :

10. *Frau Generaloberin Luise von Oertzen*, Professional Nurse.
11. *Louise Sophie Freifrau Knigge*, Professional Nurse.

INDIA :

12. *Miss Mary Edith Mckay Buchanan*, Professional Nurse, Midwife and Sister Tutor.

JAPAN.

13. *Miss Aki Oku*, Professional Nurse.
14. *Miss Koto Imaru*, Professional Nurse and Midwife.
15. *Miss Oshie Kinutani*, Professional Nurse, Midwife and Social Worker.

JUGOSLAVIA :

16. *Madame Milica Zeković*, Professional Nurse.

KOREA (SOUTH) :

17. *Mrs. Frances Lee Whang*, Professional Nurse and Midwife.

NETHERLANDS :

18. *Miss A.E.W. Chr. Engelberts*, Professional Nurse and Midwife.

NEW ZEALAND :

19. *Miss Flora Jean Cameron*, O.B.E., Professional Nurse and Midwife.

NORWAY :

20. *Miss Borghild Kessel*, Professional Nurse.
21. *Sister Karen Lovise Naess*, Professional Nurse and Matron.

PAKISTAN :

22. *Mrs. Salma Tarin*, Professional Nurse and Superintendent.

PHILIPPINES :

23. *Mrs. Patricia E. Intengan*, Professional Nurse.
24. † *Miss Catalina Evangelista*, Professional Nurse and Pharmacist.

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UNITED STATES :

25. *Miss Effie J. Taylor*, Professional Nurse and Sister Tutor.
26. *Mrs. Lucile Petry Leone*, Professional Nurse and Sister Tutor.
27. *Miss Ruth Sleeper*, Professional Nurse and Sister Tutor.

The medals and diplomas, accompanied in each case by a photogravure reproduction of the portrait of Florence Nightingale, will be sent as quickly as possible to the Central Committees. The International Committee of the Red Cross would like to receive acknowledgments of receipt in due course.

The Committee would be grateful if the Medals could be presented in the course of this year and requests the Central Committees to give the ceremony a character of solemnity as the founders of this distinction desired. It would be pleased to publish in the *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge* an account — if possible with photographs — of the ceremonies organised in this connection.

Yours faithfully,

FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
OF THE RED CROSS

Léopold BOISSIER

President

**THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
OF THE RED CROSS
AND THE CONFLICT IN CUBA**

The civil war in Cuba which came to an end on December 31, 1958 following the flight of President Batista and the principal leaders of the regime, broke out on July 26, 1953 hence the title adopted by the insurgent forces, the " Movement of July 26 ". It started as an underground movement and was to spread throughout the whole island. In this typical internal conflict the forces of the government in power were opposed to the rebel forces led by Fidel Castro.

For nearly a year the International Committee of the Red Cross had followed the events in Cuba with close attention and had sought the means of assisting all the victims of the conflict without discrimination. Its action was based on Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions which defines the humanitarian regulations which must be respected " in a conflict not of an international character ". The International Committee's intervention in other internal conflicts, Algeria and Lebanon in particular, was also based on this article.

FIRST INTERVENTION OF THE ICRC IN CUBA

On July 4, 1958 the ICRC received a telegram from Caracas signed by Fidel Castro, stating that a considerable number of wounded prisoners of the Cuban regular armed forces were in

his hands, to whom he was unable to give the medical care they required on account of strict measures taken by the Government to prevent the sending of supplies to rebel areas. As it was impossible to continue caring for these wounded men, he suggested that they should be handed over unconditionally to a Commission of the Cuban Red Cross. Since he had received no reply to his offer he was appealing to the ICRC in the hope that the Committee could use its authority to obtain the necessary safe-conducts for performing this humanitarian action.

The same day the ICRC transmitted this message to the Cuban Red Cross asking to be informed of whatever action this Society could take in the matter, and offering its services and those of a delegate who was ready to leave immediately. Being unable to send a direct reply to the appeal received from Caracas, no exact address being known, the ICRC informed the sender on the same day, over the Swiss Short-Wave Service, that it was transmitting his message to the Cuban Red Cross. On July 7, Fidel Castro sent another telegram to the ICRC in which he stated in reference to his first cable that he was prepared to hand over 37 wounded men to the other party. This further information was immediately transmitted to the Cuban Red Cross.

DEPARTURE OF A DELEGATE FOR HAVANA

In view of the urgent nature of the matter the ICRC, which had not yet received a reply from the Cuban Red Cross, decided on July 9 to wait no longer and to send one of its delegates, Mr. Pierre Jequier, to Havana. His departure was arranged for the evening and the Cuban Red Cross was advised by telegram. The ICRC informed this Society that it considered it was its duty to give it all assistance in its power for the settlement of the humanitarian problem raised in the messages of July 4 and 7, that it had therefore instructed its delegate to visit the Cuban Red Cross and requested that he should be accorded whatever assistance he required.

About one hour before the delegate was due to arrive at Havana, the ICRC was informed by the Telegraph Service that its three telegrams had been held up by the censorship authorities

who wished for an explanation concerning the numbers—merely reference numbers—following the signature “*Intercroixrouge*”, which was immediately given. The ICRC was finally informed on the same day that Mr. Jequier had duly arrived and had been received by the President and members of the Cuban Red Cross, with whom he had already discussed various points in connection with his mission; further discussions were to be held the following day.

FIRST PLANS FOR THE EVACUATION OF THE WOUNDED

The delegate of the ICRC cabled to Geneva on July 12, stating that, following his interviews with the President of the Republic in the presence of the President of the Cuban Red Cross, the Cuban Government had agreed to give the necessary instructions for the Cuban Red Cross to take over, in the presence of the delegate of the ICRC, the prisoners and wounded whose unconditional transfer had been proposed by the other party. This transfer was arranged to take place on Tuesday July 15, in the neighbourhood of Bayamo (Oriente) and Mr. Jequier asked the ICRC to inform the rebel forces accordingly.

As he was not in direct contact with the commander of the insurgent forces, the delegate was unable to carry out the negotiations himself and they were conducted between Caracas, Geneva and Havana by the ICRC, which acted as the intermediary for transmitting the two parties' proposals and counter-proposals.

The message of Mr. Jequier to Fidel Castro of July 12 was transmitted immediately by the ICRC to its correspondent in Caracas, whom it requested to forward the message at once to the addressee, to confirm its agreement and to give the necessary details for proceeding with this operation. The ICRC added that it relied absolutely upon all security measures being taken on both sides, in order that this humanitarian operation might be performed with its delegate's assistance without any hindrance and in the sole interest of the victims concerned. As no reply had been received to the Cuban Government's proposal of July 13, the ICRC telegraphed to Fidel Castro on July 14, asking

him to acknowledge receipt of the message and reminding him that it was waiting for a reply. The reply arrived in the night on July 14. Fidel Castro informed the ICRC that he was not opposed to the plan suggested but that it was impossible to transport the wounded to the neighbourhood of Bayamo, which could only be reached by a journey of four days in the mountains. He therefore proposed another meeting place of which he gave a precise description and which was apparently situated in a remote area of the Sierra Maestra mountains. In the interval the delegate of the ICRC informed Geneva that on July 15, with some members of the Cuban Red Cross, he had visited Bayamo, a town situated in an area near to the territory under the control of the insurgent forces from which the Government convoy was to set out. It was evident from what he has seen and his discussions with the chief of the military operations in the district that the transfer, as proposed by the other party, could not be undertaken by the Cuban Red Cross. The operation would have been similar to mountain rescue work and this Society had neither the equipment nor the personnel required for the purpose. The place indicated was far away from any means of communication and could only be reached after a march of three or four days in the mountains.

The chief of the military operations therefore proposed to evacuate the wounded by military personnel trained for this work. He undertook not to interfere with the rebel escort by which the wounded men would be brought to the meeting place indicated. In spite of the difficult nature of the expedition (eight to ten days' march with the return journey), the delegate of the ICRC considered that it was the only possible solution. He therefore accepted this proposal after having received the assurance that the Government troops would bear no arms.

Further, to assist Mr. Jequier in his mission the ICRC had decided to send a second delegate, Mr. J.-P. Schoenholzer, immediately to Cuba.

The ICRC transmitted the Cuban Government's proposal to the other other party and mentioned that one of its delegates, with the agreement of all concerned, would escort the unarmed convoy supplied by the Government forces from Bayamo to

the place where the wounded were to be handed over. The ICRC again recalled the security measures which were to be taken on both sides to enable this humanitarian operation to be carried out in a satisfactory manner.

The reply from the insurgents reached the ICRC on July 20 and contained the following counter-proposals: the wounded could be transported by a rebel escort showing the white flag to a new meeting place named which was nearer and could be reached by road vehicles. The wounded would be handed over to the delegates of the ICRC and, if the chief of the Cuban forces accepted this offer, the operation could take place on July 22 in the afternoon. It was also stated that the commander of the rebel forces wished to have an interview with the delegate of the ICRC to discuss the handing over of a number of prisoners of the Government forces in his hands of whom several could not stand the climate of the Sierra and were ill.

On being informed of this new proposal, the International Committee's delegates immediately got in touch with the Cuban Red Cross and the Cuban authorities. Following their approach the insurgents' proposal was accepted but the operation was postponed until the next day, July 23. The ICRC at once made this decision known to the rebel forces who accepted it.

HANDING OVER OF WOUNDED AND SICK PRISONERS

The delegates of the ICRC had received the assurance that all facilities would be granted by the Cuban armed forces and the Cuban Red Cross and that the necessary precautions would be taken for the safeguard of the persons engaged in the transfer operations. All arrangements were made for the operations to take place from Bayamo and the delegates of the ICRC stated that they would leave next morning for this town, situated at the other end of the island near the area under the control of the rebel forces.

Numerous technical difficulties had still to be overcome: the choice of a precise spot in a mountainous and inhospitable region, appropriate means of transport, practical details, etc., and finally on Wednesday July 23, at Las Vegas de Jibacoa, in

the presence of Mr. Jequier and Mr. Schoenholzer, the actual handing over of a few wounded men was started; the operation was to be continued the following day. The delegates of the ICRC passed the night on the spot in good conditions. They had had a first meeting with a representative of the rebel forces whom they would be seeing on the following day and the start of the operation was successful. The transfer of the wounded lasted two days. The units of the Cuban army and the Cuban Red Cross flew the red cross flag while the insurgents carried white flags. The truce was respected by both sides throughout the operation.

The wounded, numbering 57, were then evacuated by helicopter. In addition the rebel commander released 196 other prisoners who were in poor health, thus a total of 253 victims were assisted in the presence of representatives of the ICRC.

A few days later the delegates returned to Geneva. This humanitarian action is an event in the history of the Red Cross. It was in fact the first time that opposing sides have met face to face to effect the release of wounded and sick prisoners under the direct auspices of the ICRC.

SECOND INTERVENTION OF THE ICRC IN CUBA

Soon after this first transfer of prisoners, heavy fighting took place in the island and on August 8, 1958, the insurgents proposed a further transfer of 170 prisoners and wounded who had fallen into their hands.

The ICRC immediately took the necessary steps to facilitate the operation and on August 12 and 13, the rebel forces handed over 155 prisoners and 15 wounded to the representatives of the National Society. In the course of this operation some emergency medical supplies were, at the request of the ICRC, handed to the rebels who had asked for these supplies.

A great many Cubans in exile and various associations sent appeals to the ICRC for its intervention in the Cuban conflict in accordance with its traditional humanitarian activities. The Cuban Revolutionary Front in Exile, which grouped all parties opposed to the Batista Government, sent an official delegate

to the ICRC, Professor Agramonte of Havana University. Professor Agramonte, who was later appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs in the new Government, submitted a detailed report on the events in Cuba and appealed for the intervention of the ICRC. Several groups of Cubans in exile, who had set up Relief Committees in various countries, offered to make medicaments and foodstuffs available to the ICRC for transmission to the areas under the insurgents' control.

In view of all these appeals in behalf of the direct victims of the conflict and in order to obtain precise information concerning the general situation—of which the contradictory news received in Geneva gave a confused idea—the ICRC considered that it was its duty to send a further mission to Cuba and negotiations were opened for this purpose with the Cuban Red Cross. The delegate appointed, Mr. Maurice Thudichum, left Geneva for Havana on September 9 in order to ascertain on the spot to what extent and on what basis the ICRC could lend its assistance throughout the whole of the Cuban territory for the direct or indirect victims of a conflict which was becoming more and more serious. However, as the numerous approaches made by the delegate met with no response on the part of the Batista Government, he was obliged to leave Cuba without completing his mission.

* * *

Despite this lack of success the ICRC nevertheless pursued its efforts to respond to the numerous appeals which it continued to receive from opposition circles in behalf of the victims in the fighting area. Numerous approaches were made and exchanges of views took place with the representatives of the rebel movement and those of the former Batista Government. During the following weeks, the ICRC sought in vain to obtain the agreement of the authorities in power to enable it to pursue its humanitarian task in accordance with its principles of neutrality and impartiality, and to assist the victims of the conflict on either side in the areas under the control of the Government forces and those occupied by the insurgents.

Just before the downfall of the Batista regime, on De-

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ember 30, the ICRC launched an appeal by cable and radio to the two parties concerned, urging them to respect the spirit of the Geneva Conventions and the implementation of Article 3 in particular. The Cuban Revolutionary Front had already stated its agreement, which it confirmed in a telegram dated December 31. Article 31 common to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and several resolutions adopted by International Conferences of the Red Cross were the basis of the International Committee's action in Cuba and for several interventions in other countries during armed conflicts not of an international character.

FURTHER MISSION OF THE ICRC IN CUBA

On January 1, 1959 the ICRC received an appeal from the new Red Cross Society constituted at Havana and decided to send at once its delegate, Mr. Pierre Jequier, who left Geneva once more for Cuba on January 3. The delegate had been instructed to lend his services to the Cuban Red Cross, now under the direction of Mr. Oscar Cossio del Pino, and to carry out the traditional work of the ICRC in behalf of all victims of the events.

Mr. Jequier was warmly welcomed by the Cuban Red Cross and he ascertained that the new directorate of this Society and the new authorities in power were anxious to give their useful co-operation. On January 10 the new President of the Republic, Dr. Manuel Urrutia, received the delegate of the ICRC, accompanied by the President of the Cuban Red Cross. The Head of State informed Mr. Jequier that he was prepared to encourage the work of the Red Cross and stated his intention to observe the provisions of the Geneva Conventions in regard to military prisoners. In conformity with these Conventions, Mr. Jequier visited various places of detention, in particular the Columbia Military Camp, where several hundred officers and men were held. In agreement with the authorities and the Cuban Red Cross he set up a relief programme in behalf of the civilian victims of the recent military operations. Mr. Jequier was also received by Mr. Fidel Castro, the new Prime Minister

of Cuba, and various other persons including the new Minister for Foreign Affairs, Professor Roberto Agramonte.

Various problems were discussed during the delegate's numerous interviews with the new President of the Cuban Red Cross: re-organisation of the National Society, emergency relief actions and assistance over long periods, the sending of medical and welfare missions of the Cuban Red Cross to rural districts, etc. In connection with the relief actions started in Cuba, the Cuban Red Cross sent to Santiago, capital of the Oriente province, which was particularly devastated by the disturbance, 30 tons of various commodities including a gift of 2,000 blankets from the ICRC for the first emergency relief action in behalf of the direct victims of recent events. On February 20 the Minister for Foreign Affairs again received Mr. Jequier and the President of the Cuban Red Cross. During the interview Mr. Agramonte confirmed that the delegate of the ICRC was authorised to visit all places where civilian or military partisans of the former regime were under detention. In conjunction with the authorities concerned Mr. Jequier established a programme of these visits which started early in March. Accompanied by the President of the Cuban Red Cross his first visit was to the Cabaña Fortress, Havana, where some 1,000 political detainees were held, and he was able to speak without witnesses with detainees of his choice. Following this visit the President of the National Society and the delegate of the ICRC considered that a medico-pharmaceutical relief action should be undertaken in behalf of sick prisoners to give them adequate medical treatment, and to supply the medicaments required.

The ICRC has made a first gift of \$ 1,000 to the Cuban Red Cross towards the development of this humanitarian action. A few days later Mr. Jequier returned to Geneva to give a report on his work. After a short stay in Switzerland, he left once more for Cuba to continue his mission. Further visits to places of detention are being planned. This new action marks another and important stage in the International Committee's activities in Cuba.