



REVUE  
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DE LA  
CROIX-ROUGE

SUPPLEMENT

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# RED CROSS PRINCIPLES

## XIV

### 10. Foresight

**The Red Cross must always be ready for the tasks with which it may be faced.**

To forestall possible objections let us say at once that we do not intend to make principles out of mere recommendations or sound administrative axioms. But the requirement with which we are now dealing has been recognized ever since the Red Cross was founded and is, in fact one of the most characteristic features of the Red Cross. To-day the principle of foresight seems to us as important as ever, and we are therefore leaving it the place given it by the founders of the institution.

Henry Dunant did not become the founder of the Red Cross through the mere fact of having looked after the wounded : others had done that long before he did. His stroke of genius lay in grasping the fact that relief work to be effective must be prepared in peace-time on a permanent basis. Realization of that truth led to the birth of the Red Cross, and to the improvement which took place at the same time in Army Medical Services ; thanks to it millions of lives have been saved<sup>1</sup>. Previously

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<sup>1</sup> During the Crimean campaign (1854-1856) 60% of the wounded died for lack of adequate care or because it was given too late. It is estimated that during the First World War 7.5% of the wounded succumbed, while the same figure for the Second World War—for armies organized on modern lines—was only 2.3%. And we must not forget that during the campaigns of the XIXth Century, the army death rate from disease was from 3 to 5 times as high as the casualties caused by arms.

arrangements concerning the wounded had sometimes been made in agreements concluded between the commanders of the opposing armies ; but agreements of that kind only held good for the one campaign, and when there was a great battle, the medical services were unable to cope with the heavy casualties, no one having been willing to face the possibility of such a situation occurring ; and each time this cost the lives of thousands of men, who died of infection, although they could have recovered if cared for in time.

In order to be ready in advance, Red Cross Societies set to work in peace-time, working without respite, training the staff and preparing the equipment they would need if war broke out—practising, improving their methods, following scientific developments and above all ensuring that they could mobilize without delay. Permanence<sup>1</sup> and rapidity are essential to the work of the Red Cross. The Scout motto “ Be prepared ” might well have been adopted by the Red Cross too.

In 1874, G. Moynier wrote as follows on the subject of foresight : “ The necessity of not waiting until war has actually broken out before hastily improvising means of assisting the wounded and sick, and the advisability of making use of periods of peace to prepare for war, are now axiomatic. Hence the permanent character of relief societies and their duty of displaying foresight.”

It was, in fact, this requirement which during the last century caused Red Cross Societies to carry out charitable work, in peace-time, on behalf of the civilian population. Red Cross workers could not be left with nothing to do ; they had to practise and fill in their time. So National Societies started looking after sick civilians, opening nursing schools, and taking action when natural disasters occurred. Since then, the peace-time work of the Red Cross has become an end in itself.

The instance we have just quoted shows clearly enough, however, that the wartime work of the Red Cross, for which

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<sup>1</sup> This requirement makes one wish that the directing staff of Red Cross bodies could remain in their posts for long periods and that they should not be constantly changed, as is often the case. They must give dedicated service, and men of experience, with a thoroughgoing knowledge of facts and theory, are needed.

it was originally created, still takes precedence. Its other activities, which may be the most extensive to-day, nevertheless come second owing to their nature. Other charitable organizations can look after sick civilians, cripples and children, but for the Red Cross the crucial test is war. In wartime it reverts to its original, specific role. When distress suddenly becomes widespread, when international relations are broken off, and sometimes even the machinery of government breaks down, then it is that the Red Cross and its protective sign are irreplaceable and may, perhaps, come as a last hope. Under these exceptional circumstances, when suffering and destruction are deliberately brought about by men, the Red Cross defends interests of supreme importance <sup>1</sup>.

The Red Cross must therefore be prepared for any contingency. It should, moreover, always prepare for the worst. It disapproves of war more than anyone else does, since it must try to snatch its victims from it even in the very thick of the struggle, but the outbreak of war must never take it unawares. The fact that States have powerful armies, even for purely defensive purposes, clearly means that they do not regard war as an impossibility.

One must at least draw a lesson from tragic experiences, and an example will show us what the consequences of a want of foresight may be. In 1907, the Hague Conference decided not to enact detailed provisions improving the position of civilians in wartime, since it was felt that the immunity they enjoyed was not open to question. The First World War refuted that opinion in the plainest possible fashion. In 1921, the International Committee of the Red Cross proposed that a separate Convention for the protection of civilians should be concluded. But official circles felt that this was not expedient, with the result that the Diplomatic Conference of 1929 merely defined the status of members of the armed forces. In spite of further efforts by the Red Cross, a Diplomatic Conference to discuss the protection and status of civilians was only arranged for

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<sup>1</sup> In 1888, the International Committee adopted the motto *Inter arma caritas*. Several Red Cross Societies have also adopted it, while others have added to it, their motto being: *In bello et in pace caritas*.

1940. That was too late, and during the whole of the Second World War the civilian population, once again without any form of protection, endured indescribable sufferings. The Convention finally appeared in its present form in 1949.

The conditions for the recognition of new Red Cross Societies refer to foresight in the following terms : " Become prepared in time of peace for wartime activities " <sup>1</sup>. The former version of this text added : " If necessary include all branches of the Army Medical Service in its programme ". This last provision has been dropped, as medical services have made such progress that they sometimes no longer need assistance. Besides, a requirement of that kind has become too restrictive in view of the way the field of activity of Red Cross Societies has extended since that time. Since there can only, as we have seen, be one Red Cross Society in each country, it follows that that Society's activities must embrace the whole national territory, and also that it must undertake all the duties for which it is qualified, provided nobody else is doing so. Its action on the national level is therefore total, just as the action of the Red Cross on an international level is universal.

Efforts have been made to give an even tenor to the work of the Red Cross by providing it with regular peace-time occupations, but the temporary character of its primary function—its intervention when crises occur—is still its dominant feature. It rises to special occasions ; it has sudden bursts of activity. Although it has a permanent staff, trains voluntary workers in advance and keeps them ready for immediate action, they only take the field when the need arises.

This means that the Red Cross will stand aside if any other organization can settle a given humanitarian problem satisfactorily. For if the Red Cross is to leave no suffering without a remedy, constantly on the alert to detect new cases of adversity, if it must be ready to intervene when no one else can do so and the victims have no natural protector, it must take care not to dissipate its strength without any necessity.

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<sup>1</sup> The same idea is expressed as follows in the League's principles : " A Red Cross Society must be able and ready to carry out those services in war which are the special duty and privilege of the Red Cross ".

It must not be worried, as so many organizations are, at the thought of losing its "customers". For it must pay that price for keeping its resources intact, its weapons always sharp and ready primed for the great humanitarian conquests which one day it alone may be in a position to undertake.

It is certainly most useful when the Red Cross itself sends relief to a place where destitution is rife. But that is not, usually, enough : it is also necessary to approach the authorities concerned and get them to solve the problem once and for all, making further relief action superfluous.

We thus pass quite naturally from the subject of foresight to that of prevention. The best way of fighting suffering is to prevent its occurrence—to find out the real trouble and nip it in the bud. Prevention is better than cure. The Red Cross therefore takes preventive as well as remedial action.

In medicine, prevention is known as prophylaxis or the prevention of disease and includes vaccination, instruction in hygiene and the early detection of diseases. The National Societies engage in these activities, which are becoming more and more general.

In the legal field, "prevention" means drawing up international rules to protect human beings from the dangers of war. From its inception, the International Committee of the Red Cross has, as we know, endeavoured to extend and improve the provisions of humanitarian law in the light of experience, and the Geneva Conventions are mainly its work.

It is, finally, under this heading that we must consider the part played by the Red Cross in promoting peace<sup>1</sup>. As the pioneers of the movement wrote, "the great collective iniquity called war is only one of the forms of evil in the world"<sup>2</sup>. The coming of peace may be regarded by the Red Cross as a final goal, an ultimate consequence of its ideal. When discussing neutrality, we saw that there are limits to what it can do in this sphere. The actual means it can employ for eliminating

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Red Cross and Peace*, by Jean-G. LOSSIER and Jean S. PICTET, Geneva, 1952.

<sup>2</sup> G. MOYNIER and L. APPIA, *La guerre et la charité*.

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war from human relations are limited. But in this crusade against war, the Red Cross nevertheless represents an important moral factor. It symbolizes peace. In its own field, it creates an atmosphere which lends itself to agreement, spiritual harmony and reconciliation.

We have spoken of the work of the Red Cross in war and in peace ; its actions in the very thick of the struggle are still acts of peace. When it raises the standard of charity in the midst of battles, it represents the promise of a better world, which the combined efforts of all men will one day make it possible to build.

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## Final Summary

Having now come to an end of our survey, we feel that it will be well to set out here the different principles we have formulated and discussed. Our doctrine may be summarized as follows :

### FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

1. **Humanity.** — The Red Cross fights against suffering and death. It demands that man shall be treated humanely under all circumstances.
2. **Equality.** — The Red Cross is ready to come to the help of each individual, equally and without any form of discrimination.
3. **Due proportion.** — The help available shall be apportioned according to the relative importance of individual needs and in their order of urgency.
4. **Impartiality.** — The Red Cross will act without favour or prejudice towards or against anyone.
5. **Neutrality.** — It must observe strict neutrality in the military, political and philosophical spheres.

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6. **Independence.** — It must be independent of all authorities and free from every influence.
7. **Universality.** — The work of the Red Cross must extend to all men, and all countries.

## ORGANIC PRINCIPLES

1. **Selflessness.** — The Red Cross must not reap any advantage from its activities ; it is only concerned with the humanitarian interest of the persons who require help.
2. **Free service.** — It offers its services free of charge.
3. **Voluntary service.** — It is an expression of private charity and a spirit of service, an institution for the provision of voluntary relief.
4. **Auxiliary.** — It cooperates with the public powers.
5. **Autonomy.** — It must have a sufficient degree of autonomy in its relations with those powers.
6. **Multitudinism.** — The ranks of a National Red Cross Society must be open to all the citizens of the country concerned. The Society must be organized on a democratic basis.
7. **Equality of the National Societies.** — All National Societies have the same international rights.
8. **Unity.** — In each State there can only be one Red Cross Society, directed by one central body. The activities of the Society must embrace the whole country.
9. **Solidarity.** — Having the same aims, Red Cross Societies have established mutual relationships and recognize that it is their duty to help one another.
10. **Foresight.** — The Red Cross must always be ready for the tasks with which it may be faced.

SUMMARY

The fundamental principles of the Red Cross are : humanity, equality as between men, the principle that relief must be proportionate to the needs, impartiality, neutrality in the military, political, denominational and philosophical spheres, independence and universality.

The movement's organic principles are : selflessness, free service, voluntary service, auxiliarity, autonomy, multitudinism, equality as between the National Societies, unity, solidarity and foresight.

JEAN S. PICTET

# INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

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## Red Cross action in Hungary

*October 27.* — In reply to the appeal launched from Budapest by the Hungarian Red Cross Society the International Committee of the Red Cross has despatched to its permanent delegate in Vienna, Mr. Guido Joubert, 600 units of human albumine ready for transfusion as well as a quantity of field dressings. This gift, which was transported to Vienna by the Swiss Red Cross, will be conveyed to the Austro-Hungarian frontier, where it will be handed to the Hungarian Red Cross as soon as it had been possible to establish contact with it. Mr. H. G. Beckh, special delegate of the ICRC, left Geneva early Saturday for Vienna with a view to establishing this contact.

*October 28.* — Communication was established by phone, in the course of Sunday afternoon, with the Central Committee of the Hungarian Red Cross in Budapest, which confirmed the need for urgent assistance and requested blood plasma, medical supplies and food for many thousands of victims. The spokesman of the Hungarian Red Cross moreover underlined that all necessary steps would be taken to allow a Swiss plane to land at the civil airport of Fery-Hegy near Budapest on Monday morning.

The International Committee of the Red Cross, in close contact with the Swiss authorities and the Swiss Red Cross, has immediately taken all necessary steps towards this end. A special Swissair plane with a crew of volunteers, aboard which a delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross Mr. René Bovey will also travel, is scheduled to leave Kloten Airport near Zürich in the course of Sunday night, arriving Monday morning in Budapest.

This plane will touch down in Vienna where it will pick up the International Committee of the Red Cross's special delegate on the spot Mr. H. G. Beckh. These two delegates have as their mission to convoy the supplies donated by the International Committee of the Red Cross and also by various other national Red Cross Societies. These supplies are at present being centralised by the Austrian Red Cross Society, which for its part is organising a shuttle service of trucks in the direction of the Czech-Hungarian frontier. Two Hungarian planes, also loaded with relief supplies, will escort the Swiss plane from Vienna to Budapest.

The International Committee of the Red Cross will continue to pursue its efforts with a view to assisting, without distinction, all victims of events all over Hungary.

*October 29.* — In the course of Monday, the International Committee of the Red Cross initiated and established an air-lift between Vienna and Budapest by means of a Douglas D.C. 3 freighted from « Swissair » and also two Hungarian planes which flew in from Budapest, Sunday evening.

The International Committee's plane made two trips, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. On the first trip, as well as relief supplies, it flew two delegates from the International Committee ; Messrs. Bovey and Beckh into Budapest, where they arrived at 11.15 a.m. and immediately took contact with representatives of the Hungarian Red Cross.

In the course of their trips the planes rushed over five tons of urgently required relief into the city : 2600 kg of blood plasma, donated by the International Committee, 1674 kg of various medical supplies (human albumine, antitetanos and antigangrene sera) donated by the Swiss Red Cross, as well as 680 kg of concentrated foods. The value of these gifts is about 60.000 Swiss francs.

Gifts have been flowing in to the Austrian Red Cross and the permanent Delegation of the International Committee in Vienna all day and will be shipped on to Hungary tomorrow and on subsequent days. One of the most important of these gifts is from Britain : 72 tons of various relief supplies flown in to Vienna on 24 aircraft from München-Gladbach airfield.

In the course of the last 24 hours the following have announced considerable gifts : the American, Liechtenstein, Irish, Danish, Belgian, Swedish, Finnish, Netherlands, Canadian, British, New Zealand, East German, Italian, French and Luxemburg Red Cross Societies as well as various other private Relief Agencies in Europe and overseas. These gifts include blood plasma, dressings, antibiotics, sedatives, food and also gifts in money to a value of over 450.000 Swiss francs. As this release is being drafted new gifts and offers of help are being received every hour.

The International Committee has just received a preliminary report from one of its delegates on the spot, according to which supplies of blood plasma now appear sufficient for present needs in Budapest. On the other hand the hospitals and dispensaries in Budapest and in the provinces have been hard hit by events and there is a serious lack of hospital equipment and supplies including ambulances, and also of powdered milk and foods especially for small children. This report has been confirmed by the Hungarian Red Cross which again phoned to Geneva on Monday.

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The International Committee of the Red Cross will continue to keep the Press informed, by means of daily news releases, of the development of its action which it will now seek to extend to the whole of the country.

*November 1.* — The air-lift set up by the ICRC between Vienna and Budapest continued to function all day Tuesday and Wednesday. Five return flights took place, enabling the ICRC to hand over to the Hungarian Red Cross approximately 15 tons of relief, made up more especially of food, special foods for infants and children, tonics and various medical supplies, including antibiotics and antigangrene serum. The ICRC plane, in the course of its third trip, on Wednesday afternoon, unfortunately had to return in mid-flight as permission to land could not be given.

Independently of this operation the delegates of the ICRC have continued to endeavour to extend their action of assistance and protection to other regions in Hungary. For this purpose one of the International Committee's representatives went into the Győr region on Tuesday.

The ICRC has, moreover, decided to recall by means of an appeal, which will also be broadcast, to the forces of the various factions in presence, the elementary rules of humanity contained in the Geneva Conventions.

In the light of its delegates' first reports and also of more recent information supplied by the Hungarian Red Cross, the ICRC addressed a second appeal in Tuesday to 26 National Red Cross Societies giving them supplementary information on needs and the relief required to meet them.

Finally, with a view to reinforcing its delegation on the spot the ICRC has now sent Mr. Ch. Ammann and Mr. J. de Preux. They arrived in Vienna on Tuesday and Wednesday.

*November 2.* — Considerable gifts for the victims of the events in Hungary continue coming in at the same rhythm as in the course of the past few days, which clearly shows the importance of the feeling of fellowship engendered by these events, and the efficacy of the Red Cross' appeals. Since it has not been possible to use the Budapest airport since Wednesday evening, the International Committee' airlift was suspended all through Thursday. The International Committee of the Red Cross has, however, kept the plane it chartered for this purpose in Vienna, as it still hopes to be able to resume the dispatch of consignments by air in the very near future.

With regard to the province, one of the ICRC delegates will today endeavour to establish the necessary contacts with a view to the trans-shipment of medical supplies and food which will be distributed according to needs.

In view of the recent development in the situation, the International Committee has requested the National Red Cross Societies to suspend the dispatch of consignments of fresh blood plasma and all perishable goods; existing stocks in Vienna will be rapidly distributed as soon as the situation in Hungary allows.

*November 3.* — Since the interruption, on Wednesday, of the air-lift set up by the ICRC for carrying relief supplies from Vienna to Budapest, its delegates in Austria have been obliged to limit their activities to the area near the Austro-Hungarian frontier. One delegate again went to the Győr district, where his presence prevented summary executions from being carried out.

Owing to the speed at which the situation has developed, the position has become more and more confused, and the transport of relief supplies by road may also be stopped. Nevertheless, three convoys, made up of lorries belonging to the Austrian Red Cross and to other National Societies which have sent teams to Vienna, are to attempt to cross the frontier on Saturday at three different points, and to penetrate as far as possible into Hungarian territory. Their mission, which is being carried out under the auspices and on responsibility of the ICRC, is primarily to supply hospital with foodstuffs and medicaments.

Furthermore, the ICRC Delegation confirms that a German Red Cross medical team has succeeded in reaching the Hungarian capital, where it is already engaged in relief work.

The ICRC has, for its part, approached all the authorities concerned, with the request that Red Cross convoys be respected and that its representatives suffer no interference in carrying out their work.

*November 5.* — By reason of the great influx at Vienna, of Red Cross relief arriving from the different countries for the Hungarian people, new measures were announced today by the ICRC and the League to assure the efficacious operation of this Red Cross action.

The delegates of the ICRC have instructions to direct the distribution of relief on Hungarian territory, as soon as the border is reopened. The League has appointed a delegate-coordinator at Vienna, Henrik Beer, General Secretary of the Swedish RC, assisted by representatives of the Canadian, Finnish and Norwegian Red Cross Societies, who will undertake the administration of relief already at Vienna and en route. Consequently, Mr. Beer will coordinate the arrival in Vienna of Red Cross personnel as well as the storage, such sorting as may be necessary, and daily inventories of stocks.

He will put at the disposal of ICRC delegates, according to needs, the relief intended for distribution in Hungary.

As concerns Red Cross aid to Hungarian refugees arriving in Austria, the Austrian Red Cross in giving emergency assistance to

## INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

these persons. Should it prove necessary, the ICRC and League will make available supplies from the international stocks assembled at Vienna to aid in this task.

Should the relief sent to Vienna, or announced, appear insufficient to meet the needs of the Hungarian population, or refugees, the ICRC will address a further appeal to National Societies for additional aid.

*November 7. — (Joint communication ICRC and LRCS).* The International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies announced today that they have assumed responsibility to meet basic needs of 10,000 of the Hungarian refugees who have crossed the border into Austria in the past few days. This includes provision of foodstuffs, blankets, sheets, cutlery, etc., for the next 30 days.

A part of the Red Cross supplies sent to Vienna by numerous National Societies for the Hungarian people is being utilised—with the consent of the donor Societies—for the refugees in Austria who are being accommodated in camps established at Traiskirchen, Graz and Judenau. Red Cross staff of a half-dozen nationalities are working in the camps round-the-clock, distributing supplies, operating field kitchens and assisting doctors and nurses in medical clinics.

Governments of various countries offering relief to the Austrian Government for the Hungarian refugees on Austrian territory, are being asked by that Government to channel emergency relief through their respective National Red Cross Societies.

*At the time of going to press, we received the following announcement to the effect that a ICRC relief column has crossed the Austro-Hungarian frontier.*

*November 11. — (Joint communication ICRC and LRCS).* The second phase of the International Red Cross relief operation for Hungary began today with the departure of a convoy bound for Budapest.

The 15-vehicle unit crossed the border at approximately 11 o'clock this morning. The convoy carried 27 tons of food, drugs, and hospital supplies. It is expected that representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Budapest will meet the convoy and arrange distribution of the relief supplies.

## The Red Cross and the Suez Conflict

On hearing of the events in Egypt, the International Committee of the Red Cross requested the Governments of the countries involved in the conflict to take all necessary measures to ensure the application of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 for the protection of the wounded, prisoners of war, and also civilians.

Egypt, France and Israel are already bound by these Conventions. As regards the United Kingdom, the Prime Minister informed the International Committee that, pending their formal ratification, the British Government accepted them and intended to apply their provisions, should the occasion arise.

In its broadcast of November 2, 1956, the International Committee, for its part, stated its readiness to assume the duties assigned to it under the Geneva Conventions, and to take any humanitarian action made necessary by events. It drew attention, in particular, to the existence in Geneva of the Central Prisoners of War Agency, to which nominal rolls of captured members of the armed forces, and information on any civilians arrested or interned, should be sent, so as to enable it to relieve the anxiety of their families.

Lastly, in a broadcast message in several languages, the International Committee gave a summary, for the use of all combatants, of the essential principles of the Geneva Conventions, in regard to the respect due to human beings.

The ICRC also asked the Egyptian Red Crescent whether it was in need of relief supplies or wished an appeal to be sent to the various Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. At the same time, it took all necessary measures to strengthen its delegations in the Middle East, and opened a special relief fund for the benefit of the victims of the conflict in Egypt into which the donations already received, and those still to come have, or will be, paid.

The Egyptian Red Crescent has accepted our offer and asks for blood plasma, antibiotics and dressings. With the assistance of the Red Cross Societies and the League, the ICRC is now collecting the relief supplies needed to make up a first consignment for despatch by air.

On November 8, Dr. Gaillard, doctor-delegate of the ICRC, left Geneva for Israel, where it will be his duty to visit prisoners of war in the hands of that country's forces.

In Cairo, where enquiries for news of relatives are flowing in, an Information Office is being set up with the help of workers recruited locally by the delegate of the ICRC; the latter will also give his assistance to prisoners of war in Egyptian hands.

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

**News Items**

**Repatriation of Germans.** — *Some official agencies, including the Tracing Service of the German Red Cross at Munich and Hamburg, are so good as to pass on the ICRC the names of former prisoners of war or civilian internees returning from the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, as and when they arrive in their home country.*

*The latter are mostly people in whose interests the ICRC has been working for many years. Without going into details, mention may be made of the following activities undertaken on their behalf: the transmission of messages for civilians; efforts to obtain news for relatives; the dispatch of parcels with food, clothing or medicaments to make captivity more tolerable, and so forth. In some cases, the persons on whose behalf the ICRC has been working have been freed and repatriated; in others, no reply has been received, or alternatively negotiations have been resumed with the governments concerned after long correspondence with the national societies concerned.*

*Notifications of repatriation are of the greatest use to the ICRC, since they enable it to keep its card-index up to date, and to complete the personal files kept at the Central Prisoners of War Agency.*

**The return of Spaniards to their country.** — *At the end of September and at the beginning of October of this year, two convoys, comprising 513 and 461 persons respectively, arrived at Valencia*

*from Russia, accompanied by representatives of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR. The returned prisoners, whose health was good, were welcomed by the President of the Spanish Red Cross and the ICRC delegate in Madrid was informed of their arrival by the Spanish Red Cross.*

**Greeks leave Albania.** — *Following on the successful conclusion of negotiations between Albania and Greece, 217 Greek ex-prisoners of war or internees, held in Albania for a number of years, were able to return to their country in August.*

*At its request, nominal rolls of the persons repatriated were supplied to the ICRC by the Greek Red Cross.*

**Japanese freed in China.** — *Notification has also been received of the embarkation at Tientsin on 25 August of 345 former Japanese prisoners of war in China, who have now been permitted to go back to Japan.*

*The ICRC had approached the appropriate Red Cross Societies on many occasions on their behalf.*

**Further ratifications of the Geneva Conventions of 1949.** — *During the interval between the two International Red Cross Conferences at Toronto (September 1952) and New Delhi (January 1957), the ICRC intensified its efforts for the general ratification of the Geneva conventions of 1949. As a result of its approaches to National Societies, considerable progress was made. To the twenty ratifications or accessions obtained prior to the Toronto Conference, must now be added thirty-eight more received during subsequent years; ten since the beginning of 1956. During the current year, the Swiss Federal Council has notified the International Committee of the following ratifications of, or accessions to the Conventions: Panama (10 February), Venezuela (13 February), Irak (14 February), Peru (15 February), Liberia (22 May), Greece (5 June), Morocco (21 July), Argentine (18 September), Afghanistan (28 September), Laos (October 29). This brings the number of States parties to the Conventions up to 58. The International Committee of the Red Cross hopes that other ratifications or accessions will be announced prior to the*

*meeting of the XIXth International Conference of the Red Cross in January of next year.*

**Preparations for the XIXth International Conference of the Red Cross.** — *The preliminary documentation, and nearly all the reports to be submitted to the Conference by the ICRC, have already been circulated to National Societies and Governments, members of the Conference, in the three working languages, that is to say: French, English and Spanish. This is also the case as regards the Draft Rules for the Limitation of the Dangers incurred by the Civilian Population in Time of War; at present being published in the Revue Internationale.*

*The ICRC has noted with interest the information provided in the first number of an information bulletin, issued by the Indian Red Cross for the benefit of the participants in the Conference. This booklet provides general information on the organisation of the Conference: agenda, commissions, reports of National Societies, conference premises, participants, working languages, translation and interpretation, etc. It also provides practical information on living conditions at New Delhi: climate, currency, hotels, restaurants, means of transport, passport regulations, rates of exchange, custom regulations, etc. A black and white map will be found very useful in preparing journeys inside the country itself.*

**Visitors to the ICRC.** — *During a brief stay to Geneva, the President of the Republic of Liberia, His Excellency Mr. William V. S. Tubman, honoured the International Red Cross by visiting ICRC headquarters. He was welcomed on behalf of the ICRC by Mr. L. Boissier and Mr. F. Siordet, President and Vice-President respectively; and by Mr. Nicholson, Vice-President of the American Red Cross and Mr. Pachkow, of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR, both Vice-Presidents of the League, supported by Mr. de Rougé, Honorary Vice-President and Secretary General, for the League.*

*The President of Liberia—a country which acceded to the Geneva Conventions in 1954—was very interested in the account given him of the two organisations' activities and paid a long visit to the Central Prisoners of War Agency.*

**Meeting of the Standing Commission.** — *The Standing Commission of the International Red Cross met at headquarters in Geneva on 30 October 1956, with Mr. André Francois-Poncet as chairman. The object of this extraordinary meeting was to examine various requests for additions to the agenda of the XIXth International Conference of the Red Cross, to be held at New Delhi at the beginning of next year.*

**Medical personnel and care of the sick.** — *At the ICRC headquarters Dr. Amamou Abdel Kader, who directs the "Ecole professionnelle d'assistance aux malades" at Sfax (Tunisia), had discussions with Miss Pfirter on various questions relating to the status of Red Cross and Red Crescent nurses, the role of the National Societies as regards the training of medical and nursing personnel, and care of the sick and wounded.*

**Visit of British journalists to ICRC headquarters.** — *On 22 September, the ICRC had the pleasure of welcoming the editors of the following newspapers: Manchester Guardian, Glasgow Herald, Birmingham Post, Birmingham Gazette, Newcastle Journal. They were received by the President of the International Committee, Mr. Léopold Boissier, who was particularly anxious to answer their questions personally, and gave them a very comprehensive description of what the ICRC was doing in the field of law and humanitarian work. During their visit, the British Press representative learnt a great deal about the ICRC's past and present activities and the way in which the Committee's work had developed. They were also given detailed information on the Conventions of 1949*

*The International Committee very much appreciates this fresh evidence of the interest taken by the British public in its functions and humanitarian work. Such contacts always help to strengthen the almost century-old bond of mutual understanding between the United Kingdom, the native land of Florence Nightingale, and the Geneva organization.*

**War veterans' congress.** — *At the XVth Congress of the "Fédération Française des Anciens Combattants", held at*

Nice from 20-22 September, 1956, the ICRC was represented by Mr. Frédéric Siordet, Vice-President.

**ICRC delegates in various parts of the world.** — Mr. David de Traz, ICRC delegate in the Middle East, left Geneva by air on 19 September for Cairo. He returned to Geneva on 1 October, and, after making a report to the International Committee, left again for Beirut.

Mr. Pierre Gaillard, head of section, Executive Division, and Dr. Alexis Louis Gaillard arrived in Algiers on 17 October, on a third tour of investigation in Algeria. This does not mark a new phase in ICRC activities, but forms part of a series of visits paid by delegates of the International Committee to various parts of North Africa to investigate conditions in detention camps.

Several ICRC delegates have recently visited Geneva to report on their work; among them was Mr. G. Joubert, ICRC delegate in Vienna, who was here from 30 September to 10 October. The delegation in Vienna is continuing its work of reuniting the dispersed members of families belonging to German ethnical groups, temporarily in Austria on their way to Germany or other European or overseas countries—Yugoslav nationals separated as a result of war conditions, or Greek nationals repatriated from Eastern countries, for instance. Mr. Joubert personally accompanied a number of convoys between the Hungarian frontier and Vienna. Welfare work on behalf of the Austrian population itself is mainly concerned with the war disabled and child victims of war, to whom our delegate distributes relief supplies sent direct from Geneva. During the last few months, the ICRC delegation has made helpful contacts with various authorities represented in Vienna. Mr. Joubert reported that the International Committee's humanitarian work was meeting with very great sympathy on the part, not only of the Austrian authorities and Red Cross, but also of other organizations working in the same field, and of foreign Government representatives and missions.

Mr. Pfrunder, ICRC delegate in Singapore, received permission from the authorities to visit detention camps in that area. From his report on his visit to the Ipoh camp and his investigation of

*the living conditions of the detainees, it appears that the latter are humanely treated.*

**Relations with various countries.** — *At a seminar on the status of women in the USSR, held in Moscow from 15 to 30 September, the ICRC was represented by Miss Pfirter, Head of the Nursing and War Disablement Section.*

*Miss Pfirter also visited the Alliance of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. She returned to Geneva on 2 October.*

*Mr. H. G. Beckh, member of the ICRC Executive Division, left Geneva on 7 October for Bucharest, by air, where he had further conversations with the authorities and Rumanian Red Cross leaders on the subject of reuniting "Volksdeutsche" families. On the outward journey he stopped at Prague, and on his return journey both at Prague and Budapest. He thus had the opportunity to exchange views with the leaders of the Hungarian and Czechoslovak National Red Cross Societies. He arrived back in Geneva on 17 October.*

*Mr. Horneffer, of the Executive Division, left Geneva on 3 October for Budapest, and returned to ICRC headquarters on 11 October.*

**Aid to Greece.** — *Mr. C. Amman, of the Executive Division of the ICRC, left Geneva at the beginning of October by "Swissair" for Athens, where he is distributing relief supplies to the civilian population (political detainees). He is spending about four or five weeks in Greece.*

**End of the Trieste refugee scheme.** — *During the last three years the Revue internationale has on several occasions given prominence to the ICRC's activities on behalf of 102 tubercular refugees from Eastern Europe, who were transferred from a reception centre in Trieste to Leysin, in Switzerland, for medical treatment.*

*The resettlement of the refugees when cured, and of their families, in several West European and overseas countries, carried out throughout with the devoted assistance of Miss Marion Rothenbach and other social assistants, meant the conclusion of this work.*

**The Red Cross on the air.** — *Radio Interredcross, Geneva, has started broadcasting on the wave-length allotted to the International Committee of the Red Cross (41.61 m. 7210 kc.). At 7 a.m., 12.30 p.m., 4 p.m., and 9 p.m., Central European Time, it broadcasts Red Cross news, information on the latest developments, with particular reference to relief work undertaken or co-ordinated by the ICRC, and also appeals issued by the International Committee.*

*The broadcasts are in Russian, Hungarian, Hebrew, and Arabic, and occasionally in French, English or German.*

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