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SUPPLEMENT

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RED CROSS PRINCIPLES

XII

6. Multitudinism¹

Membership 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.

Under this heading we shall deal in turn with three notions : indiscriminate enrolment, multitudinism in the strict sense of the word, and democratic organization.

The principle of indiscriminate enrolment appears in the original " conditions for recognition " of new Red Cross Societies, drawn up at the end of the 19th century. It is expressed as follows in the most recent version of the " conditions " : " The Society shall not withhold membership from any of its nationals, whoever they may be, on grounds of race, sex, class, religion or political opinions ". Similarly, we read in the fundamental principles of the League that " Red Cross Societies are ... public organizations " and that a Society should take all possible steps to ensure that its membership " is open to all citizens ".

¹ *Multitudinism* is defined in Cassel's New English Dictionary as " the doctrine that the welfare of the many is of higher importance than that of the individual ". It is used throughout this chapter in a more general sense, to express everything which, in the words of the author, " links the Red Cross with the multitude ". It corresponds to the neologism *multitudinisme* used in the French text.

As the wording of the first passage quoted above shows quite clearly, this principle of indiscriminate enrolment does not mean that a Red Cross Society must necessarily grant membership to all the citizens of the country without exception. What is forbidden is to withhold membership for reasons of a "discriminatory nature", that is reasons based on considerations which have nothing to do with the institution and its efficient running. No one can deny a Society's right to refuse to accept individuals as members if they are dangerous or corrupt, but it would be wrong to debar them from membership simply because they belonged to a given race, class, religion or political party.

The right to get rid of undesirables is not so important in the case of the rank and file of certain Societies whose members acquire that status by paying a modest annual subscription, nothing else being asked of them ¹. But it is of greater significance when the persons concerned occupy responsible posts, and in such cases it is not only their respectability but also their efficiency which must be considered. Positions which demand special knowledge—medical knowledge, for example—obviously cannot be filled by incompetent people.

Indiscriminate enrolment allows all social, political and religious circles to be represented, and so excludes sectarianism and a partisan spirit. It ensures that there is confidence in the Society both inside and outside the country. It is the best antidote to favouritism.

One can see here the profound difference in the scale of values between the fundamental and the organic principles. While it is important for the Red Cross ranks to be open to everyone, the main point is that it should bestow its benefits without distinction on all those who need them. We are concerned there with the institution's ultimate purpose and not merely with the means of achieving it.

We now come to a second notion : that of multitudinism in the strict sense of the term. We have seen that the Red Cross

¹ In such cases enrolling members is merely a matter of collecting subscriptions.

must not reject those who wish to join its ranks. But that is not enough : it should enrol the greatest possible number of members, try to establish itself on a very wide basis, and win the masses to its cause. The Red Cross must be a conquering force. " Unity is strength " is a national maxim ; and what is true of a nation is also true of an institution. Relief action will be more effective if all men of goodwill lend their hands to the task ; that is obvious. But there is, of course, no reason for the Red Cross to arrange deliberately for the proportional representation, in the Society, of the various trends of opinion which exist in the country, or to try itself to establish a balance between the different sections of the population.

We have not made this idea one of the organic principles, because it rests on purely practical requirements. It is nevertheless a fact that if its action is to reach everywhere, and everyone, the Red Cross must be organized on popular lines. It is not an organization run by the privileged few for the benefit of the outcasts of fortune, by one class on behalf of another. Every human being should have the right to give, and not merely to receive. The Red Cross must therefore draw its members from all classes, and its leaders must be able to come from any milieu. But in choosing them what will always count will be their personal qualities and not the fact that they represent one trend of opinion or another.

Such considerations assume particular importance in countries where the native population and another more advanced population live side by side. It is highly desirable that the original inhabitants of the country should be associated to the maximum possible extent with the work of the Red Cross and, so far as their stage of development allows, allowed to form part of its working staff. Having thus gained the confidence of the native population, the Red Cross will be able to penetrate to the most remote regions, explain its purpose and spirit, and spread the benefits of modern hygiene.

But that is not all : in the event of such nations being emancipated, they will not be able to count on anyone but themselves ; they must therefore be capable of carrying on the work on their own ; otherwise it might soon cease. Lastly,

should a war unfortunately break out between the original inhabitants and the newcomers, it is imperative that humanitarian principles should be recognized by both sides, that victims of the events should be cared for, that a foot-bridge at least should still bridge the gulf between the contending parties.

The third implication is that Red Cross Societies must organize themselves on democratic lines. This requirement, formerly a tacit one, has now been expressed as follows by the League: "It is essential that a Red Cross Society should be organized on a truly democratic basis".

This solution is in true conformity with the equal treatment accorded by the Red Cross to all men. Besides, a National Society is made up of individual men and women; its existence depends very largely on the common effort of voluntary helpers and disinterested subscribers. The fact that such people can influence its fortunes and, by delegating their powers, take part in the management of its affairs, will provide the Society with the surest guarantee of its autonomy vis-à-vis the authorities, and enable it to remain the master of its own actions.

In speaking of democracy we are obviously only doing so on the analogy of a political system which only exists in its pure form in very few countries, if it exists at all¹. Furthermore, the structure of a private organisation cannot be modelled on that of a State. Since Red Cross Societies are, so to speak, the reflection of the nation which saw their birth, their constitutional system varies appreciably from one case to another. The essential thing is the democratic character of the organization. What is important is that the prevailing will of the Society's members should be able to find expression—that its general assembly should have certain powers, in particular that of electing the managing committee or at all events the majority of the latter's members.

All we have said above applies to Red Cross Societies, but it cannot of course refer to the International Committee. The latter is not an executive body and its credit rests on its moral

¹ In most countries a citizen merely has the right to elect Members of Parliament.

authority on a world-wide level ; there is therefore no need for it to be constituted in accordance with the same rules as the Societies. It has, in actual fact, chosen the method of recruitment which best suits the work it has to do, namely that of co-optation. Experience has shown that this system is particularly suitable to its role as a neutral agent in time of war and as the guardian of a doctrine. It has been recognized, after prolonged discussion at international assemblies, that the Geneva Committee could not carry out its mission if its membership were based on a system of proportional representation and it were thus subject to parliamentary instability.

On the other hand, the International Red Cross and the League are organized on democratic lines, all the National Societies being regarded as equals, as we shall see in a moment.

(To be continued.)

JEAN S. PICTET.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

Return from a mission to the Middle East

Miss A. Pfirter, Head of the Nursing Section of the International Committee of the Red Cross, has returned to Geneva after an extensive tour, including visits to Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Iraq, on which she left last January. She has brought back with her many interesting impressions of the humanitarian work being done in that vast area of the world, of which we are able to give only a brief outline in the following notes.

Her main object was to study, on the spot, the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' training of voluntary medical personnel, and in the course of her tour it became clear that this question is being handled in widely differing ways in the various Middle Eastern countries. Some countries, like Egypt, adapt their ideas to the needs of the moment. In Cairo, for instance, Miss Pfirter witnessed an exercise organized by the Ladies' Committee of the Egyptian Red Crescent, the first of its kind, which took the form of a mock air-raid; first aid for the wounded and sick, and arrangements for their evacuation were studied in collaboration with the Junior Red Crescent.

In Cairo she also had the opportunity of visiting a « rehabilitation » centre for invalids which is soon to be opened, one of the most modern to be seen. It comprises several inter-communicating buildings where all the processes of rehabilitation,

from the fitting of artificial limbs to vocational reeducation, will be carried out by qualified workers and technicians of the Social Service.

In all the countries visited, Miss Pfirter received a most cordial welcome, since the question which it was her main purpose to study is one of great current interest: the training of voluntary medical personnel is one of the more important tasks the National Societies are attempting, but also one of the most difficult, in view of the prevailing social conditions and the absence of any effective preparation for dealing with war-time problems. Miss Pfirter had the privilege of meeting Ministers of Health, officers of military medical services, directors of welfare institutions, deans of the faculties of medicine, officials of the medical and medico-social services, and ex-servicemen's associations.

Through visits to hospitals and dispensaries in each country, she was also able to see something of the training of professional medical personnel. The successful work carried out by private welfare organizations which she was able to observe in many different places showed that, there as elsewhere, such institutions are very advanced. Rehabilitation centres for physically handicapped and deficient children and adolescents—blind, deaf-and-dumb, or mutilated—show how helpful and constructive private undertakings have proved, since, when they have acquired official status, they are able to continue their work, with increased resources.

Nursing schools have an essential part to play in the training programme for medical personnel. The Public Health School at Beirut, which has public health students from all over the Middle East, is particularly interested in these problems, and invited Miss Pfirter to give a talk; she gave a short account of the work of the Red Cross and also referred to such questions as the recruiting, enrolment, and instruction, and the duties and protection of Red Cross medical personnel. Miss Pfirter was, in fact, asked in a number of places to speak on the work of the Red Cross, notably at the plenary meeting of the Lebanon Red Cross Committee, and to the Red Crescent Ladies' Committees in both Syria and Iraq.

We should mention that only those with the most distinguished records of service are elected as members of the Ladies' Committees, which all show a spirit of the greatest goodwill, and work whole-heartedly for the social development of their countries. Women are playing an ever greater part in the effort to bring about improved social conditions, and this is clearly seen in the great variety of humanitarian tasks they undertake. In Iraq, for instance, Miss Pfirter visited an exceptionally interesting institution, founded by the Red Crescent Ladies' Committee: an orphanage, the first of its kind in the country. Its organization was so good that the Iraqi Government adopted it as a model for homes which it is now itself setting up, thereby following the inspiring example given by this National Society, which is endeavouring to pursue the true work of a pioneer and seeking new fields in which its achievements may, in their turn, serve as examples.

In Jordan, the Red Crescent Ladies' Committee have, entirely with their own resources, founded a hospital for women and children, which they are extending as and when they can. Miss Pfirter paid a visit to this hospital, in Amman, and was much impressed by the excellent way in which it was run and the very welcoming atmosphere.

Humanitarian work is thus developing everywhere. The main problem, which also applies to the training of medical personnel, is to create the technical means which—in realization of a wish universally expressed—will make it possible to deal effectively with disasters of any kind. In this, the Red Cross and Red Crescent have a great task to accomplish in the Middle East.

ICRC MISSION TO ALGERIA

It will be recalled that the "Revue internationale" reported the circumstances under which the International Committee sent delegates to Algeria to visit detention camps, in 1955.

When events in North Africa subsequently took a more serious turn, the ICRC once again offered its services, in order to pursue its traditional humanitarian work in those regions. On 26 March last M. Léopold Boissier, President of the ICRC, met the President of the French Council, M. Guy Mollet, in Paris and informed him of the International Committee's desire to send delegates to visit the detention camps where persons deprived of their liberty as a result of events were being held. He emphasized that, in his opinion, the gravity of the events warranted the intervention of a neutral body.

Several days later the French Government agreed to the idea of the ICRC sending delegates to Algeria, and the mission left Geneva on 12 May, 1956. Neither their departure nor their work on the spot, however, was disclosed to the public. It was only through the statements made by M. Guy Mollet on 23 June at a reception given in his honour at the "Maison de l'Amérique latine", and a press communiqué which followed, that the general news of the ICRC mission to Algeria and the work it was doing was brought to the notice of the public.

We are now able to give some details about this mission, which returned to Geneva on 28 June after spending almost seven weeks in Algeria. The delegates forming it were M. Claude Pilloud, head of the mission, M. Pierre Gaillard and M. René Bovey, accompanied by two doctors, Dr. Willener and Dr. Gaillard.

The ICRC delegates were able to visit internment centres for persons placed in assigned residence, and also prison establishments for persons detained as a result of events.

The French Authorities placed no difficulties in the way of the delegates but, on the contrary, gave them every practical assistance, particularly by providing transport. During their visits the delegates had an opportunity of distributing small quantities of relief supplies, and proposed whatever improvements they considered necessary in the conditions, to the camp authorities and directors of prison establishments. Their observations and suggestions were embodied in a report made on their return to Geneva, which served as a basis for an official communication addressed to the French Government with a view to ensuring appropriate action being taken.

M. de Traz, special representative of the ICRC, had previously made contact in Cairo with the Algerian representatives of the "Front de libération nationale". He asked for the Red Cross to be allowed to receive and transmit news of French prisoners, and for the prisoners to be able to correspond with their families and receive parcels; finally, he sought authority for the International Committee to send a mission, similar to that sent to the French side, to visit camps and prison establishments. The ICRC awaits a reply to these requests.

As M. Boissier recently emphasized to representatives of the Press, the ICRC's role is a very difficult one, since its intervention is needed in situations which cannot be defined in terms of law, like the troubles in North Africa. It is, however, for that very reason—because we are in the midst of a period rife with disturbances and revolutions—that the ICRC is striving to pursue its humanitarian mission.

THE RED CROSS IN ASIA

A MISSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE TO THE FAR EAST

At the end of March, 1956 a mission of the International Committee of the Red Cross left Geneva for an extensive tour of Asia. Mr. William H. Michel, Special Delegate, and Mr. Eugène de Weck, Head of Section, were to follow a schedule taking them successively to India, North Korea, China, Japan and South Korea. Continuing their journey to Hong Kong, they were to separate there, Mr. Michel proceeding to Indonesia, and Mr. de Weck to Manila before his return to Geneva at the beginning of July, by way of Viet Nam and Thailand. Mr. Michel returned to Geneva a few days earlier, after making a stop in Malaya.

It will be seen what a vast area the delegates covered, on what was a "goodwill" tour, since its primary purpose was to make or renew contacts, and to bear a message from the founder body in Geneva to the National Red Cross Societies of all the countries visited, which have now reached such a high stage of development. The journey was a rapid one, and the travellers had scarcely time to recover their breath in the capitals where they alighted. It was made entirely by air, except for the stretch between Hong Kong and Canton, which was covered by train; and immediately the delegates arrived, often even at the airport, a programme was drawn up to make use of every minute. How could it be otherwise when they landed in countries of great human interest, where one constantly finds as keen a wish to give as to receive, and where, too, the scenery commands such admiration?

The principal object of the mission was thus to visit the National Red Cross Societies, and study with them a number of problems referred to in the course of the conversation with Mr. Michel and Mr. de Weck which forms the subject of this article. Also, the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Korea having recently been recognized by the International Committee, the delegates' visit to Pyongyang represented the Committee's first official contact with that Society.

It should first of all be said that, everywhere they went, the International Committee's delegates were given the most cordial welcome. They were received with the sense of human relations so characteristic of countries which have an ancient and rich civilization as their heritage: Mr. Michel, unexpectedly, had particular occasion to appreciate this quality, when he fell ill in Peking, and met with the greatest possible kindness on the part of the Chinese Red Cross. The task of the mission was thus made much easier, all the more so as the Swiss diplomatic representatives and the International Committee's delegations in the countries visited also received them with extreme courtesy. The International Committee will find the greatest advantage in having established a direct link, if it may be so described, with those who represent it in far-off places, and give such devoted service to its cause—with Mr. Mittner in Manila, Mr. Angst in Tokyo, Mr. Calderara in Hong Kong, Mr. Leuenberger in Saigon, Mr. Salzmann in Bangkok and Mr. Pfrunder in Singapore.

The number of problems, impressions and reflections resulting from such a journey can well be imagined. As we have only limited space at our disposal, however, we have had to concentrate on questions of a very general nature.

The next International Red Cross Conference is to be held at the beginning of 1957. Is it not arousing great interest, Mr. Michel, in view of the important problems to be discussed at the Conference, and also because it will take place in the heart of Asia, at New Delhi ?

All the National Societies we visited are preparing to take part in the Conference, and certain items on the agenda, in particular the " Draft Rules for the Protection of the Civilian Population from the Dangers of Indiscriminate Warfare " were the subject of comments on our part. The National Societies are very much concerned with general Red Cross problems, and are conscious that in a changing world such as ours, their tasks are bound to increase. The numbers of their members are continually growing in proportion to their needs, which are so great. The work of the Red Cross in itself constantly attracts new members, and the Asiatic Red Cross Societies who will be taking part in the discussions at New Delhi will represent an important section of the great Red Cross family.

In Peking the Chinese Red Cross kindly arranged for us to see numerous establishments, including local centres for giving and teaching first aid, advising mothers and expectant mothers, and giving individual health education. The town is divided into 8 districts comprising in all 100 basic centres each having an average of 10 first aid posts ; these posts are equipped to receive the wounded and sick, and are permanently staffed by medical assistants. Each contains a bed, a stretcher, medical supplies and instruments for light surgery.

Activities on such an extensive scale not only raise the standard of public health, but also, through the power of example and the results achieved, undoubtedly help to bring new forces under the Red Cross flag.

This is, indeed, a necessity ; for the programme for the development of health instruction and the safeguarding of

public health outlined to us by Madame Li Teh-chuan, Minister of Health and President of the Chinese Red Cross, and by the Management Committee of the Society, is a very ambitious one and can only be realized with the aid of thousands of Red Cross workers. The North Korean Red Cross has similar aims in view, and is introducing into the factories, workyards and schools, teams of workers whose task is to provide health education and assistance at a rapid a rate on a par with the great effort of reconstruction in which everyone is engaged.

Might not the considerable increase in both their activity and the number of their members prove a source of difficulty for the National Red Cross Societies? Might they not have trouble in ensuring that all their members understand the true Red Cross ideal—the call for aid to all without distinction, which was uttered by the founder of our movement?

Perhaps so, though it is difficult for me to answer questions of such great significance to the Red Cross as a whole. But should we not remember that it is action which upholds the ideal? One might say, metaphorically speaking, that there are such vast fields for the Red Cross to harvest in Asia that there will never be harvesters enough. Future generations, who will appreciate the results and enjoy better health, will become convinced—or so we hope—that the principle of solidarity extended to all without distinction is really effective.

You had the opportunity of visiting a school in Peking, where a branch of the Junior Red Cross has already set a fine example of healthy competition in hygiene work. These young people correspond with other young people abroad, and their work—like that of every Junior Red Cross in fact—represents throughout the country the makings of a better world, and the hope of peace for the future.

The Red Cross is firmly established in Asia, animated by secular or religious motives, according to the region. Political or other changes do not alter this fact, as we have noticed on

many occasions. In Malaya, for instance, the British Red Cross is still continuing its work. This territory, however, is on the point of becoming autonomous ; a Government has already been formed under the Tengku Abdul Rahman. I visited Kuala Lumpur, the capital, to meet the Head of the Government and to see whether the International Committee's assistance is required in those areas. The Tengku informed me that as soon as independence was proclaimed, his country would form a National Red Cross Society and accede to the Geneva Conventions.

Since you mention the possibility of action being taken in those regions by the International Committee, could you tell us whether you and Mr. de Weck were able to visit persons interned in camps—the traditional task of the International Committee ?

In Japan and South Korea we paid visits to the Omura and Pusan camps, respectively. It would be too complicated to explain why nationals of these two countries have been interned, in many cases for some years. Japanese fishermen are interned at Pusan, and Korean nationals, some 15,000 men, women and children, at Omura. I may say, however, that an official report on these visits has been sent from Geneva to the Governments concerned. I should add that the International Committee's delegates did not wait for this report to be sent—in accordance with certain customary rules—but immediately approached the respective Governments with our suggestions for improvements and changes which, in our opinion, should be made as soon as possible.

When speaking of Japan, I should point out that although our stay there was short, we were able to have a number of meetings with the leading members of the Japanese Red Cross and with members of the Government. The Japanese Red Cross has always been one of the most active Societies and has kept in particularly close touch with Geneva. We were able to appreciate what an important part it plays in the fields of health and social welfare when we visited one of the Society's 160 hospitals, all of which are under its own management.

Did you discuss any other problems with the Red Cross Societies and Governments of the countries you visited ?

The Geneva Conventions. We had a number of meetings with the Government authorities, always, naturally, in conjunction with the National Red Cross Societies, who are fully conscious of the importance of their countries' acceding to the Geneva Conventions. In North Korea, as well as China, South Korea and Indonesia, the National Red Cross Societies will continue to take all necessary steps to hasten their Government's accession, and we had the opportunity of explaining that accession by all countries without exception would give still greater force to the Geneva Conventions and make them more effective.

I do not wish to conclude without mentioning the many fruitful and constructive conversations we enjoyed, in each of the countries we visited, with members of the National Red Cross Committees and in our meetings with doctors, directors of centres, Junior Red Cross leaders, nurses and social workers. All this activity is a striking proof of the vitality of the Red Cross in Asia.

As stated, Mr. de Weck spent several days in the Philippines on his way back to Geneva. We will therefore ask him to say a few words about the conversations which he had there. They concerned the difficult technical problems involved in the application of Article 16 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which provides for compensation for prisoners of war formerly detained by Japan who suffered undue hardships during their captivity. Mr. de Weck had been requested to discuss this subject with both the Philippine authorities and the Philippine Red Cross; the latter will later be called upon to act as the official agency for the distribution of compensation to the former prisoners of war.

One of the objects of my visit to Manila was, in fact, to discuss with the Government authorities and the National Red Cross Society the problems involved in the application of what, in Geneva, we commonly call " Article 16 ". The " Revue

internationale" has already had occasion to mention them; I would therefore just like to say how glad I was to have an opportunity of seeing, on the spot, in the Philippines—as in all the countries we visited in the Far East—the relief work being done under conditions and in the face of obstacles which, from afar, we can hardly imagine.

On my return journey I made two more stops, at Saigon and Bangkok. In the first town, where I stayed only a short time, I visited the Viet Nam Red Cross Society, and in the second I had the opportunity of learning, among other things, of a most original undertaking of the Thai Red Cross. This Society has assumed responsibility for the production of anti-snakebite serums. I paid a visit to the institute which prepares the serum and was able to see the "snake farm" which it runs—an indispensable part of the undertaking. This is an example of the variety of tasks carried on to-day under the Red Cross flag; it also proves that the Red Cross is carrying out its true mission, which is to act everywhere and in all spheres as a pioneer, always ready to withdraw later if its work can be taken over by the official authorities.

May we recall, in this connection, that South Korea's activity in the field of social assistance particularly impressed the International Committee's delegates, who visited the Incheon sanatorium and some very well equipped health centres.

All the countries visited had suffered greatly from war and its consequences, which take so long to repair, and serious disturbances are still taking place in different parts of South East Asia. Yet everywhere one finds the same will to reconstruct; the delegates were struck by the immense needs which still exist, but they were also deeply impressed by the efforts, new ventures and achievements of minds in which the humanitarian ideal is constantly present. Mr. Michel spent a few days in Indonesia, and was able to make a detailed tour of several establishments which, in view of the extremely difficult circumstances, bear witness to the finest spirit of human fellowship on the part of both their founders and those who serve there: examples were a blood-bank, a home for old people, a blood transfusion centre, an institute for the blind and a

sanatorium—situated either in Djakarta, Bandung or the surrounding country.

India is preparing to welcome the XIXth International Red Cross Conference. When passing through New Delhi last April, the mission was able to see the special premises which were being built, and that the technical and administrative arrangements were well advanced. The Red Cross campaign in the Far East to overcome the consequences of disease, war, natural disasters, ignorance and poverty will give the Conference much to reflect upon and great reason for hope in the future.

J.-G. L.
