



REVUE  
INTERNATIONALE  
DE LA  
CROIX-ROUGE

SUPPLEMENT

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# INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

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## THE ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS IN THE NEAR EAST

### I. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE'S POSITION

#### APPROACHES TO GOVERNMENTS

At the beginning of the conflict in Egypt, on October 29, 1956, the International Committee appealed to the Governments of the four countries involved in the hostilities to take every possible step to ensure the application of the IVth Geneva Convention of 1949.

Three of the Governments, those of Egypt, France and Israel, were already parties to the 1949 Conventions, whereas Great Britain, while bound by the two Conventions of 1929 and a signatory of the 1949 Conventions, had not yet signed the latter. However, in reply to a telegram from the International Committee, the British Prime Minister indicated that, while official ratification of the Conventions was still pending, the British Government accepted them and had every intention of applying their provisions if the occasion arose.

On its side, the International Committee was ready to assume its traditional responsibilities, and its neutral status enabled it to gain the confidence of the parties to the conflict and to try with some chances of success to ensure that victims, both civilian and in the armed forces, received protection and assistance. For this reason, it reminded the four Governments of the task assigned to it under the Conventions and of the existence in Geneva of the Central Prisoners of War Agency

which collects the names of members of the armed forces or civilians detained or interned, transmits this information to the belligerent Governments and arranges for the exchange of correspondence between prisoners and their families. Professor Paul Carry, a member of the Committee, and Mr. Borsinger, both sent specially from Geneva to London, and Mr. William Michel, the Committee's delegate in France, were appointed to act as information and liaison officers with the authorities in Britain and France and with the leaders of the British and French Red Cross Societies in all matters concerning the traditional measures of assistance undertaken by the Committee in the Middle East.

#### THE COMMITTEE'S APPEAL TO THE COMBATANTS

The International Committee also made a point of summarizing for the benefit of the combatants some of the main rules of conduct arising from the Geneva Conventions, and on Friday November 2, the Committee broadcast on its own special wave length—and in several languages—the following appeal :

*The International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva wishes to recall that the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 for the protection of war victims are applicable to the armed conflict which is now taking place on Egyptian soil. These Conventions impose on all combatants duties which may be summarized as follows :*

- 1. The wounded and the sick, whether members of the armed forces or civilians, friends or enemies, shall be collected and protected and shall receive without delay the treatment their condition demands.*
- 2. The following may never, under any circumstances, be attacked, but should always be respected and protected by the combatants: fixed or mobile medical establishments, namely hospitals, ambulances, vehicles used for carrying the wounded and the sick (i.e. hospital trains, hospital ships, medical aircraft) and the members and the equipment of Army and Red Cross or Red Crescent Medical Services responsible for treating the wounded and the sick.*

3. *To permit the enemy to recognize their medical status, such establishments, vehicles and personnel are authorized to clearly display the red cross or the red crescent emblem on a white background; this emblem must always, and under all circumstances, be respected and never be employed for any other object whatsoever.*
4. *Every enemy soldier, non-commissioned officer or officer surrendering, or otherwise captured, must be treated as a prisoner of war, and may not, therefore, be killed or molested in any way; he must be treated as regards food, lodging clothing etc., in the same way as the military personnel of the detaining Power. As soon as possible he must be evacuated to the rear, where the appropriate authorities will become responsible for him.*
5. *Non-combatants, especially women and children, must never be attacked by the armed forces, but should, on the contrary, always be respected and humanely treated.*
6. *Torture, cruel or degrading treatment, and the taking of hostages are and remain forbidden at all times and in all places and in respect of all persons.*

#### THE OFFER OF ASSISTANCE TO THE EGYPTIAN RED CRESCENT

At the same time the International Committee invited the Egyptian Red Crescent to make known its needs of material relief and informed other National Societies of this action.

On Wednesday, November 7, the Egyptian Red Crescent accepted the Committee's offer of assistance and put in an urgent request for large quantities of medicaments and medical supplies.

The International Committee immediately applied to a large number of National Societies to take part in this action. The response was immediate and favourable. The National Societies, although their assistance had already been asked in connection with the events in Hungary<sup>1</sup>, announced further important gifts for the Middle East<sup>2</sup>. Organizations other than the Red Cross also sent relief supplies.

<sup>1</sup> See *Revue Internationale*, December 1956.

<sup>2</sup> The following is a first list of countries whose National Societies took part in this action, either through Geneva or directly:

Afghanistan; Australia; Belgium; Bulgaria; Canada; Ceylon; Chile; Colombia; Denmark; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Finland; Federal Republic of Germany; German Democratic Republic; Greece;

ORGANISATION OF ICRC DELEGATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

**Rôle of the General-Delegate.** — The International Committee was already represented in the Middle East by M. David de Traz, its General-Delegate, living at Beirut. M. de Traz immediately went to Israel to obtain from the authorities confirmation of their decision to apply the Geneva Conventions and procured their agreement to the nomination of a doctor delegate, Dr. Gail-land, from Geneva, who set up his headquarters at Tel Aviv, where there were already Egyptian wounded ; he drew attention to those provisions of international law which call for the rapid repatriation of the more seriously wounded. Immediately afterwards, he went to Cairo.

*The Cairo Delegation*, set up originally at the beginning of the second world war, had closed down at the end of 1952, but one of its former members, Mr. E. Muller, continued to act as ICRC correspondent.

The armed conflict brought the delegation back into existence and its activities extended rapidly.

II. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE'S ACTION IN THE FIELD

This conflict, short though it was, is very characteristic of the way the International Committee of the Red Cross carries out its tasks under the Geneva Conventions.

As we have already mentioned, all the parties to the conflict were willing to apply the Conventions and the International Committee took the necessary action on this assumption.

We shall now give a few details of this action as it concerned members of the armed forces (under the IIIrd Convention) and civilians (under the IVth Convention, which was applied in this case for the first time).

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Haiti ; Honduras ; Iceland ; India ; Indonesia ; Iraq ; Iran ; Ireland ; Italy ; Japan ; Jordan ; Democratic People's Republic of Korea ; Lebanon ; Liechtenstein ; Luxembourg ; Mexico ; Monaco ; Netherlands ; Norway ; Pakistan ; Poland ; El Salvador ; Sudan ; Sweden ; Switzerland ; Syria ; Thailand ; Turkey ; Union of South Africa ; Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ; United States of America ; Yugoslavia.

A. THE COMMITTEE'S ACTION ON BEHALF  
OF PRISONERS OF WAR

**General remarks.** — In Geneva, the International Committee, through its Central Prisoners of War Agency, whose activities had greatly increased during the previous few weeks, continued to assist the nationals of the countries involved in these events. It analysed and registered lists of prisoners and the information regarding releases, repatriations and deaths received in accordance with the Geneva Conventions. It forwarded family news and civilian messages sent through Geneva and investigated cases of death and disappearance.

Most of these communications regarding Egyptian prisoners of war made necessary a considerable amount of correspondence with the delegations in Egypt and Israel. Often, the names given did not agree with those on the lists furnished by the detaining Powers, this trouble arising from the difficulty of rendering Arabic names phonetically, and this caused extra research work.

**The Tasks at Port Said.** — To Port Said, completely cut off from the rest of Egypt, the ICRC sent from Geneva Mr. Maurice Thudichum, formerly departmental head in the Central Prisoners of War Agency, and afterwards Director of the International Tracing Service at Arolsen.

From November 12 onwards, Mr. Thudichum took over with great competence the Committee's traditional tasks on behalf of members of the armed forces and civilians in distress as a result of the fighting. He took the ICRC's assistance to the prisoners of war in the hands of the Allied forces at Port Said and Port Fuad, forwarded family messages and opened enquiries concerning the missing.

**The tasks in Israel.** — In Israel, Dr. Gaillard, doctor delegate of the ICRC, sent specially from Geneva at the beginning of the conflict, took steps to coordinate relief measures and to ensure the application of the principles of the 1949 Conventions.

**Assistance to prisoners of war.** — From November 13 onwards, he gave all possible material assistance to the Egyptian prisoners of war in Israeli hands, regularly visiting the camps where the members of the armed forces captured during the Gaza fighting were detained and the hospitals where the wounded or sick prisoners were being treated ; he sent a list of the names of these prisoners to Geneva.

**Repatriation of the seriously wounded.** — On November 18, he informed the ICRC that the Israeli authorities were considering the repatriation of a first group of seriously wounded Egyptians.

The final arrangements were made by the delegates of the ICRC in Egypt and Israel in conjunction with the two National Societies. This involved delicate negotiations. Two medical aircraft, kindly put at the Committee's disposal by the Italian authorities, flew from Cairo on December 3, to Lydda in Israel, and on Wednesday December 5, they brought back to Cairo 26 seriously wounded, accompanied by the doctor delegate of the ICRC in Israel, an Italian doctor and two Swiss nurses. A further repatriation of the seriously wounded was made several days later ; the two medical aircraft flew from Cairo to Tel Aviv with a cargo of individual and collective relief supplies, which the ICRC delegate in Israel arranged to have distributed among the Egyptian prisoners of war. On their return journey the aircraft brought back to Egypt a second group of seriously wounded, 22 in all, who were repatriated under the same arrangements as the first group. It should be remembered that the flights of these medical aircraft between Israel and Egypt constituted the first direct air link between the two countries since the beginning of the Palestine war in 1948.

**Negotiations for the exchange of prisoners of war and internees.** — Finally, M. de Traz and M. Thudichum made urgent representations to the British and French Commands, calling attention to the provisions of the Geneva Conventions concerning the repatriation of prisoners of war (IIIrd Geneva Convention of Aug. 12, 1949, Art. 118).

As is known, the Egyptian prisoners at Port Said and the British civilian internees at Cairo were actually released and the exchange took place on December 21; Mr. Thudichum took part in this exchange and all the parties concerned expressed their gratitude to him for the assistance received from the ICRC.

**Release of Egyptian prisoners of war.** — The repatriation of Egyptian prisoners of war in Israeli hands was discussed towards the end of the year and final arrangements were made in the first weeks of January with all the authorities concerned. On January 21, a first group of 500 Egyptian prisoners of war was handed over to the United Nations forces between Rafah and El Arish, in the presence of Dr. Gaillard and of Mr. Thudichum. Further repatriations followed at regular intervals and it was planned to finish the operation by February 5. On their side, the Egyptian authorities released the few Israeli prisoners in their hands.

## B. THE ICRC'S ACTION ON BEHALF OF CIVILIANS

**Relief to the civilian population.** — The gifts in money received from the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies enabled emergency relief supplies to be bought, but the interruption of communications made the despatch of supplies to Egypt subject to many difficulties, and extremely careful preparation therefore proved necessary. A DC-4 aircraft was specially chartered by the ICRC for the Geneva-Cairo run. Instructions from Egypt, received on Saturday November 10, indicated that the Swiss aircraft must be marked with the Red Cross emblem and follow a specific route in the Egyptian air space. The aircraft left Geneva on the evening of Sunday, November 11, loaded with 4½ tons of relief supplies and with Dr. Grosclaude on board. It landed in Egypt 24 hours later. A week later a second plane, also from Geneva and placed at the Committee's disposal by the Danish Red Cross, carried to Cairo 3 tons of medicaments and dressings.

The best possible care and precautions were taken in receiving, forwarding and distributing these consignments to make sure that they were used in conformity with the donors' wishes and the Red Cross spirit. Large quantities of goods were involved, for these first two consignments by air alone weighed 7 tons and were worth 300,000 Swiss francs.

In agreement with the Egyptian Red Crescent, the ICRC delegation decided to allocate some of the relief supplies to meet the needs of the people of Port Said and, on November 14, sent a train loaded with medicaments and clothing to that city. The ICRC obtained permission for the trains to cross the lines held by the occupation forces and, on Friday November 16, the first convoy arrived at Port Said.

Mr. Thudichum also strove to coordinate and develop the work of the various philanthropic societies working at Port Said, who elected him chairman of their Committee. Thus, he directed the distribution of relief to the families in greatest need, as part of the assistance to the civilian population and in agreement with the medical authorities.

During this period, Mr. Thudichum at Port Said and the ICRC's General-Delegate for the Near East at Cairo, worked in close cooperation to carry out on both sides of the lines their work of assisting persons entitled to the protection of the Red Cross.

**Relief convoys between Cairo and Port Said.** — At the end of November, the General-Delegate of the ICRC received permission to go from Cairo to Port Said, where he arrived on December 2 with sufficient quantities of vaccine to immunise 100,000 persons against epidemic diseases. Mr. de Traz and Mr. Thudichum discussed with the High Command and the Egyptian Government the steps to be taken to send relief, and authorization was given on condition that the convoys travelled under ICRC auspices. The delegates also succeeded in having the ban lifted on the entry of Egyptian medical and welfare workers into Port Said.

Under the protection of the ICRC, the trains organized by the Egyptian Red Crescent arrived at Port Said on Saturday

December 8, and Thursday December 13, and then at regular intervals until December 22, the date on which the last contingent of the Anglo-French expeditionary force left the port. On the return journeys the trains were used to evacuate Egyptian wounded and sick requiring special treatment in Cairo hospitals.

**Assistance to civilian victims.** — The ICRC delegate in Israel also undertook several journeys to make objective enquiries into the living conditions and needs of the inhabitants and the refugees in the occupied regions of Gaza and Sinai. In Gaza itself, he inquired particularly into the treatment of persons protected by the IVth Convention and arrangements were made for him to pay regular visits to Egyptian nationals placed in assigned residence in a residential quarter of the city. At El-Arish and Rafah he assisted persons in need and children by distributing powdered milk and eggs. In the Sinai peninsula he made sure that the people had not suffered from the events. The ICRC Delegate also took part in the repatriation of the Egyptian civilians interned in Gaza.

**Enquiries and messages.** — The ICRC delegation in Cairo also undertook at the request of the Egyptian authorities and of embassies and consulates to assist the nationals of various countries without news of their families because of the events and to reply to requests for information received from all sides. In this action, the ICRC transmitted 65,000 messages between Egypt and the occupied territories of Port Said, Port Fuad, Gaza and Sinai.

The method followed by the Central Agency consists of placing on cards the names of civilians or members of the armed Forces, contained in requests for information (information cards), and making out similar cards (inquiry cards) containing the information collected. The filing of the cards, based on alphabetical and phonetic order, makes for a more successful pairing of cards concerning the same persons (tallying) in spite of variations in the spelling of names in documents written in different languages.

Careful checking by this tallying method gives a positive result when, on comparing an inquiry card and an information card, common identity particulars are found. The ICRC is then in a position to reply immediately to national information bureaux, national Red Cross Societies and families by transmitting the information obtained from its card indexes or particulars enabling inquiries to be continued.

**Assistance to civilian internees.** — On Tuesday, November 20, the International Committee telegraphed M. de Traz asking him to take under his care all the categories of persons interned as a result of the events, in conjunction with the protecting Powers and the Consulates. According to these instructions, M. de Traz's first task was to obtain lists of the persons of various nationalities detained or in assigned residence, together with the reason for their internment. Secondly, he was to visit the places of detention and thirdly, to give the necessary assistance to the internees after consultation with Geneva.

From November 24 onwards, the delegates visited centres of internment. Relief actions were started, often in cooperation with the Protecting Powers, and Mr. de Traz, so far as possible, sought to give material aid to the internees, particularly by distributing relief sent direct by the ICRC, or sent through the Committee by the National Societies. Whenever it was necessary, the delegates informed the authorities of suggestions for improving living conditions for the internees.

**Assistance to stateless persons.** — The delegation also dealt with the cases of stateless persons, particularly Jews, and the International Committee offered to take over the humanitarian tasks which would have been incumbent on the Protecting Power, if stateless persons were not, by definition, deprived of the benefit of such protection.

Several thousand stateless Jews were obliged by circumstances to leave Egypt and the International Committee of the Red Cross took steps to help. Leaving Alexandria on January 2, on board the Egyptian vessel *Misr*, chartered by the ICRC and with an ICRC delegate on board, a first group of almost 1000 stateless Jews, including 100 children, arrived on Sunday,

January 6, at Naples, where they were met by Italian Red Cross officials and by charitable Jewish organizations which arranged for their maintenance and temporary accommodation in Italy and helped them to continue their journey. A second departure was organized on January 21, and enabled almost 800 persons to be taken to Piraeus and Naples. In Greece as in Italy, they were assisted by the National Red Cross Societies and Jewish charitable organizations. Most of the refugees are to find asylum in Israel. This important activity is continuing and a third vessel was scheduled to leave Alexandria on February 8.

These activities necessitated an increase in the size of the delegation. Mr. Busser, recruited in Alexandria and Mr. Thudichum, Mr. Huber, Mr. Jacquet, Mr. Porchet, Mr. Robert and Mr. Haas, sent from Geneva, all of them Swiss nationals, joined the staff of the Cairo delegation.

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## THE RELIEF ACTION OF THE ICRC IN HUNGARY

As we have said elsewhere, the work of the Central Prisoners of War Agency on behalf of Hungarian civilians and refugees has considerably increased, and thousands of cards, messages and requests for the opening of enquiries have been received in Geneva. There are more than twenty people working in the offices of the International Committee's Delegation in Vienna to place on index cards intended for the Central Agency in Geneva information concerning Hungarian nationals who have arrived in Austria, whether they are in transit or are remaining in that country.

The action taken by the International Committee to supply food to the Hungarian people is being continued. The following press releases have been published by the ICRC concerning its humanitarian work in Hungary :

*January 14, 1957. — On Monday the 1000th wagon-load of gifts for Hungarian refugees in Austria, and people in distress in Hungary reached Vienna. It contained a gift from the Netherlands Red Cross of 16,116 kg. of prunes. This Monday was, in general, a record day for aid to Hungary: no less than 128 goods-wagons from Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Spain and Great Britain arrived, loaded with a total of approximately 1.25 million kilograms of food, clothing, footwear, bedding, coal, toys, etc. for the relief action of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Hungary and the relief centres of the League of Red Cross Societies for Hungarian refugees in Austria. Furthermore, during the course of the day 12 aircraft*

*landed at Schwechat airport, Vienna, with consignments of medical supplies, books, clothing and other articles from Rio de Janeiro, New York, Boston, London and Frankfurt.*

January 16. — *The Spanish Government has placed at the disposal of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies one million kilograms of rice for distribution to people in need in Hungary, and the Hungarian refugees in Austria. A partial consignment, of which a portion has been diverted to the CARITAS relief actions, arrived recently in Vienna and was handed over on Wednesday morning at the Viennese railway-station, Donaukai, by the Spanish Ambassador, Sr. José Sebastian de Erice, to the representatives of the organisations entrusted with the Hungarian relief action. When handing over the long line of wagons decorated with the Spanish colours, the Ambassador said that the Spanish people's gift of rice brought a message of affection and sympathy for the Hungarian people in their hours of trial. He also said that his Government had made the gift not only to help Hungary in its distress, but also to support Austria in its stupendous efforts to carry out this great humanitarian task. On behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross, its General-Delegate for relief to Hungary, M. G. Rutishauser, thanked the Ambassador for this very generous and welcome gift. He gave the assurance that the rice would be distributed fairly and conscientiously to those in need and said that the sending of rice from Spain was a further and noble proof of international solidarity with the Hungarian people. The Viennese representative of the Hungarian Catholic Action, Karl E. Paulai, also spoke cordial words of thanks for this further token of understanding and sympathy with the Hungarian people.*

January 19. — *Lady Edwina Mountbatten arrived on Saturday in Vienna, where she expects to stay for about a week in order to visit, as Lady Superintendent-in-Chief of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, the International Red Cross organisations which are caring for Hungarian refugees. Her first visit on Saturday afternoon was to the Vienna Delegation of the International Committee*

*of the Red Cross, where she was received by Dr. Bircher, Head of the Vienna Delegation of the ICRC, who gave her information concerning the organisation of the International Committee's Hungarian relief action. Lady Mountbatten then visited the Committee's Vienna warehouses where so far 10 million kilograms of gift relief supplies have been received from all quarters and prepared for despatch to Budapest. Lady Mountbatten said that she was deeply impressed by the organisation of the International Committee's direct assistance to Hungary, and expressed the hope that further gifts and funds would be placed at the disposal of the ICRC to enable it to continue its relief action.*

January 24. — *His Excellency, M. André François-Poncet, President of the French Red Cross and Chairman of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross, paid a visit on Thursday morning to the General Delegation for aid to Hungary of the International Committee of the Red Cross, at its premises in the "Stiftskaserne", Vienna. He was received by the Committee's General Delegate, Mr. Georg Rutishauser, who described the way the relief action in Hungary had gone so far and the plans for continuing it. Mr. Rutishauser thanked his distinguished visitor for the valuable help given by the French Red Cross through its contribution of food and clothing for the Hungarian people, and added that a great volume of gifts was still needed to enable the relief work in Hungary to be continued. He said that, now the lists of persons in need had been drawn up, the various relief schemes for Budapest, which were to be extended as far as possible to the provinces also, were being put rapidly into practice. One of these, the relief-parcels programme, was of particular importance and had, to date, enabled 175,000 food parcels, each of about 4 kg in weight, to be distributed to those in need. On this point, Mr. Rutishauser once again stressed that, contrary to unfounded rumours which were being constantly put about, the supervisory system established by the International Committee and the Hungarian Red Cross gives every guarantee that the gifts reach their proper destination. After his visit to the "Stiftskaserne", M. François-Poncet, accompanied by Mr. Rutishauser, made a tour of the ICRC storage depots at Freudenuau.*

January 28. — According to an American Press report, the parish-priest of the Church of St. Stephen of Hungary in St. Louis (Missouri) recently published a letter said to have been received from a Hungarian Catholic bishop who had succeeded in making a clandestine crossing of the Austro-Hungarian frontier. In that letter the bishop stated that Red Cross relief supplies for the Hungarian people were "nine times out of ten appropriated by the Soviets".

In spite of the obvious untruth of such a statement, the Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Budapest has taken up and investigated this matter with the co-operation of the leaders of the Hungarian Catholic Church.

On January 28, 1957, Mgr. Josef Grösz, Archbishop of Kalocsa and President of the Conference of Hungarian Catholic Bishops, in a letter addressed to the Head of the Budapest Delegation, explained the views of the Conference on this matter. The English translation of the letter reads as follows:

"The Conference of Catholic Bishops, held on January 23 at Budapest, discussed the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Hungarian Red Cross and the Actio Catholica. From the statements at this meeting the Episcopate learned with satisfaction that relief supplies can be distributed without hindrance and are being shared out by the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Hungarian Red Cross and the Actio Catholica in the Red Cross spirit.

The Conference of Catholic Bishops, thus convinced of the humanitarian nature of this relief action, and certain that the relief supplies do not fall into hands for which they are not intended, gives its willing support to this relief action."

Kalocsa, January 28, 1957.

(signed) Josef GRÖSZ  
Archbishop of Kalocsa.

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

**News Items**

**Members of the Austrian Government pay a visit to the ICRC.** — *Mr. Helmer, Minister of the Interior and Mr. Grubhofer, Under-Secretary of State, were received on Monday, January 28, at the ICRC headquarters by Mr. Léopold Boissier, President of the International Committee and Mr. Roger Gallopin, Executive Director. The Members of the Austrian Government, who wished to express their gratitude to the International Committee for the assistance given during the past four months, discussed with the Directorate various problems connected with the extension of this aid, particularly as part of the relief action undertaken on behalf of Hungarian refugees.*

**The ICRC Relief Actions in Hungary and Egypt.** — *As is known, the ICRC relief actions in Hungary and Egypt have been on a very large scale and have laid a still heavier burden on the Committee.*

*In order to cope with these new tasks, a substantial increase in staff has been necessary. By January 31, the Geneva staff had been increased by fifty; 151 persons are working in Budapest and Vienna; in Egypt 21 persons have been engaged.*

**Transmission of family messages sent from Hungary.** — *In January 1957 the ICRC sent 33,239 civilian messages from Geneva to Hungary. The first replies did not reach Geneva until the second week in January. By January 31, 4,623 messages from Hungary had been received and forwarded immediately to the*

*National Red Cross Societies who have the task of reforwarding them to the addressees.*

*The transmission of family messages only represents a part of the work of the Hungarian Section of the Central Prisoners of War Agency, whose assistance numerous refugees seeking aid or advice on questions which cause them anxiety continue to ask.*

**Central Card-Index for Hungarian Refugees.** — *As stated in the December issue of the Revue internationale, the ICRC has set up a Central Card-Index for Hungarian Refugees, a step which met with the approval of the National Red Cross Societies of the countries of asylum, to which the ICRC has sent personal history cards to be filled in by the refugees.*

*Various countries of asylum—in particular, Belgium, France, Italy and Switzerland—have already sent back nearly all the cards concerning Hungarian refugees in their territory.*

*For their part, the Austrian authorities have taken a census of the Hungarian nationals who have entered their territory since the end of October. The ICRC has instructed its Vienna Delegation to make out personal history cards with the names of the refugees covered by this census. To enable this work to be done quickly two members of the Central Agency staff have been sent by the ICRC to Vienna.*

**Relief action on behalf of young Italians.** — *The Swiss authorities have placed special funds at the International Committee's disposal which will enable the ICRC, in conjunction with the Italian Red Cross, to assist Italian children and youths whose eye-sight is seriously impaired.*

*So far 5 children have been sent to Switzerland to receive the treatment required by their state of health and, after courses of treatment of varying duration, have returned to their country; they were given treatment at the Geneva Ophthalmic Hospital. Two of the children received further treatment, one in London and the other at Bonn.*

**Relations of the ICRC with National Red Cross Societies.** — *Austria. — M. Pierre Jequier, Director of the Central Prisoners of War Agency, visited Vienna in January to bring the Austrian*

*Red Cross the technical assistance of the ICRC in the work of tracing missing Hungarians, re-uniting refugee families and the transmission of family messages.*

Belgium. — *The first stone of the International Red Cross pavilion at the Exposition Universelle in Brussels, in 1958, was laid on Saturday, January 26, in the presence of Baron van Zeeland, General Commissioner of the International Red Cross for this exhibition, Prince Frédéric de Mérode, President of the Belgian Red Cross, M. E. Dronsart, its Director-General, and members of the Directorate. M. Gazay for the League of Red Cross Societies, and M. Melley, for the International Committee of the Red Cross, were also present at the ceremony.*

Hungary. — *In January, M. Jequier also visited Budapest, where M. Bovey, delegate of the ICRC, is stationed, and with whom M. Jequier was received by the leaders of the Hungarian Red Cross. He visited the section specially set up by that Society to receive persons seeking information concerning relatives or friends from whom they have been separated owing to recent events. M. Jequier offered the Hungarian Red Cross the assistance of the ICRC for opening enquiries outside Hungary, particularly at the request of families and on their behalf.*

*On his return to Geneva, on January 25, M. Jequier took up the question of extending the work of the Hungarian Section recently set up at the Central Agency to assist persons who have suffered through the events in Hungary.*

U.S.S.R. — *The Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the U.S.S.R. has just informed the ICRC of the result of searches concerning 117 persons of various nationalities for whom enquiries have been opened by the Central Prisoners of War Agency.*

Jugoslavia. — *In late December 1956, M. H. G. Beckh, delegate of the ICRC, went to Belgrade, with the representatives of the German and Austrian Red Cross Societies, M. Kristen and Dr. Kimeswenger, to take charge of 56 " Volksdeutsche " children,*

*whose departure had been arranged by the Yugoslav Red Cross. That National Society had made all necessary arrangements for the journey to take place, as in previous instances, under the best conditions possible.*

*As a result of this eleventh convoy, the number of children who have joined their families in Austria, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and other countries has now reached 2,328. It will be remembered that, as part of this action, adult "Völkdeutsche" also leave Yugoslavia at regular intervals, and that Poland and Czechoslovakia are also authorising departures for the purpose of re-uniting families.*

**The delegates of the ICRC.** — *M. M. Borsinger came to Geneva in January and has now returned to his post of ICRC delegate in Vienna, and assistant and adviser to M. Rutishauser, General-Delegate for the relief action in Hungary. M. Borsinger is more particularly engaged in liaison work with the representatives of the League and of National Societies' relief teams in Hungary.*

*M. André Durand, delegate, is back in Geneva. From January 1952 he represented the ICRC in Viet Nam (Saïgon, 1952 to 1955: Hanoi, 1955 to 1957).*

*Since June 1955, he has discussed with the authorities and Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam the various questions which necessitated the presence of a delegate of the International Committee at Hanoi, and has negotiated the despatch to that Red Cross organisation of medical supplies made available through the generosity of National Societies, or given by the ICRC.*

*The delegate's relations with the authorities and Red Cross organisation, which have enabled the discussion of humanitarian problems and the best solutions thereto, have been satisfactory. As a result of the delegate's action, co-operation is continuing smoothly and the ICRC has decided that it is possible to pursue its traditional activities directly from Geneva.*

**Relations with the British and American Press.** — *In November last the Revue internationale reported that, during a visit to Switzerland, a number of editors of great British daily newspapers*

visited the ICRC headquarters as a mark of their interest in the Committee's humanitarian activities.

In addition, on January 17, some twenty representatives of Canadian and American newspapers, passing through Geneva, made a point of seeking information on the legal work of the ICRC and its humanitarian activities.

M. Léopold Boissier, President of the ICRC, as in the case of the British journalists, received the representatives of the American and Canadian Press in person. He presented them with a collection of documents concerning the Geneva Conventions, and gave detailed information on the origin and progress of the work, as well as the operations in progress in the Old and New Worlds.

**The International Tracing Service.** — The ITS recently received substantial information from the World Jewish Congress and the Italian Government, which has been closely examined.

The nominal lists sent by the World Jewish Congress contain over half a million items of information, the majority of which were collected immediately after the closing down of concentration camps in Germany and German-occupied territories. The lists of survivors in Hungary, Poland, Rumania and the U.S.S.R. are of special interest to the ITS.

The verification of these new archives has revealed that they contain 43% fresh information; 19% supplement the information already held by the ITS; 38% are duplicates of lists recorded and inscribed by the ITS; nevertheless, several of the duplicate lists, about a third altogether, will be useful for the replacement of lists which have suffered more or less damage through frequent handling.

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The checking of the lists supplied by the Italian Government is now in progress. In view of the interest which the acquisition of supplementary information presents for the ITS, a member of the Directorate, accompanied by the officer of the Italian Liaison Office, got into touch with the various administrative offices in

Rome to study the possibility of finding further sources of information in that country.

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Towards the middle of January, M. Jaquet, member of the Directorate of the ATS, Arolsen, who had been sent to the Cairo Delegation of the ICRC to help with tracing operations on behalf of families seeking missing persons, returned to Geneva.

On January 24 he left for Poland, accompanied by M. Hoffmann, also a member of the ITS Directorate, to participate in the Annual Congress of the International Commission for Auschwitz, and to pay a visit to the Polish Red Cross in Warsaw. M. Jaquet and M. Hoffmann endeavoured, on that occasion, to increase the possibilities of procuring information for the ITS, and to supplement the documents kept in Arolsen by means of new lists to be sent from Poland.

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During 1956 the ITS received 39,572 requests for enquiries to be opened concerning deported persons, victims of racial persecution and refugees (41,498 in 1955), and 95,680 requests for certificates of detention or assignment of residence, in support of requests for compensation (77,907 in 1955).

105,107 tracing reports were made out (90,245 in 1955), i.e. 22,194 positive reports giving the information required, 30,486 reports on enquiries pending, and 52,427 negative reports; as well as 1,538 death certificates (3,178 in 1955) and 129,611 replies to requests for certificates of detention or assigned residence (144,527 in 1955); 23,617 certificates of detention were issued and 29,045 certificates of assigned residence, concerning, in particular, Germany (60.5%), the United States (12.1%), Israel (17%) and Italy (3.3%). More than half the enquiries concerning Germany were in connection with applications for compensation from persons not resident in Germany, and the United States cases were mostly connected with refugees or displaced persons who had settled in the USA in the course of the past few years.

**The Relief Action of the ICRC in the Near East.** — From early in November, 1956, until the beginning of February, 1957,

*the ICRC received 26,004 telegrams, letters, cards, enquiry cards and requests for enquiries to be opened, and despatched 25,148 sundry postal items concerning the events in the Near East.*

*It forwarded from Geneva to its Cairo Delegation 6,993 cards and letters written by Egyptian prisoners to their families in Egypt, as well as 6,216 Civilian Messages from various countries, sent to persons residing in Egypt. In addition, there were exchanged between the International Committee's Delegations in Cairo and Port Said 40,000 Civilian Messages from Cairo to Port Said, and 25,000 from Port Said to Cairo.*

*The Central Prisoners of War Agency sent to the ICRC Delegation in Tel-Aviv 6,843 requests for enquiries and Civilian Messages for prisoners of war and Egyptian nationals detained in Israel. It forwarded 4,459 messages to the French, British, Greek Italian, Australian and other Red Cross Societies, relating, in particular, to French, British, Greek and Italian nationals in Egypt, and families of refugees who have emigrated to Australia.*

*These few figures will give an idea of the work now being done by the Central Prisoners of War Agency on behalf of prisoners and civilians in the Near East.*

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