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## THE CENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF THE RED CROSS IDEA

### The present portent of Henry Dunant's message

*Our movement is on the threshold of an important year since it will mark the anniversary of the Battle of Solferino where, in June 1859, Henry Dunant was moved by an impulse which was to lead to the creation of the Red Cross movement throughout the world.*

*Henry Dunant's experience at Solferino reached a culminating point by giving practical and unstinting effect to the great principle of the Red Cross: to help all those in need, whichever side they may be on, just because they need to be helped and because, beneath the uniform of the enemy, one sees a fellow-man. The women of Castiglione were justified in saying "Tutti fratelli!". Every hope may be placed in mankind since brotherly feeling emerged where merely hate and cruelty seemed to prevail.*

*During this commemorative year, the Revue internationale will publish articles and features relating to the history of the Red Cross. We are pleased to begin the series now with an article by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and one by Mr. H.W. Dunning, Secretary-General of the League, to whom we are very grateful. (Editor's note.)*

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The monument which will be erected in Geneva in memory of Henry Dunant will take an allegorical form—an angel with wide-spread wings. The wings will no doubt give an impression of movement, of flight towards places where the wounded of conflicts, whom the great Genevese wished to help, are to be found. This signification goes even farther.

If the sole object of the Solferino Memorial was to arouse pity for war victims, it would merely have been a repetition of what has been so often said, *bella matribus odiosa*.

From its birth the Red Cross has represented the affirmation of certain principles and deeds whereby the thoughts and experience of mankind have been linked together for mutual support and inspiration. In this will be found the reason for the remarkable success of Henry Dunant's suggestion to adopt a Convention for the amelioration of the condition of the wounded and sick in armed forces in the field, and the creation of auxiliary societies to assist the army medical services in conflicts.

In 1859 the Holy Alliance had come to an end and had only left unpleasant memories. Europe was at the time in a state of upheaval on account of the dangerous principle of nationality which, as opposed to the legitimacy of ruling houses, proclaimed the right of people to unite according to their natural affinities which, in Bismarck's opinion could only be done "by fire and sword". The consequence was Solferino and Sadowa.

The century had almost reached the last quarter before the idea of arbitration for the pacific settlement of international conflicts came into being and began to develop. It was not until 1899 that the Permanent Court of Arbitration was instituted at The Hague, to which States were timorously invited to bring their disputes. The law of nations was asserting itself and seeking to rise above national sovereignties.

At the time when Henry Dunant made his appeal it was a new departure and entirely his own idea. The research now being done in this field confirms this fact which has so often been questioned by sceptics. The Red Cross did not emerge from a diplomatic congress; it was born in the heart of a man who was no doubt influenced by the beliefs and ethics of his

own particular class but who found his own means of helping his fellow-men and took the sole responsibility of saying what he wished to say on the subject.

Moreover, when Dunant launched his crusade, States were not the huge anonymous bodies they have since become. Europe was governed by monarchies with princes and princesses at the summit who—like the Genevese bourgeois—were the product of their times. Many had come under the sway of the religious revival which caused a great stir in very varied circles. They were also influenced by the romantic movement, always eager to extol the hidden virtues of the weak, the persecuted and the victims of the mighty.

Whereas political and military men were only concerned with the interest of the State, some great ladies wished to engage in good works and were as compassionate as their position allowed them to be. They could hardly understand the nationalism which stirred the middle classes and was opposed to the traditions of their upbringing. Thus they lent a sympathetic ear to Henry Dunant's message; they saw therein the means of introducing a little charity into the wars which lay not far ahead. The intervention of those who reigned in Berlin, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe and elsewhere was discreet but certainly efficient.

Now that this society has gone for ever, it can be seen how much is owing to it by the Red Cross which, faithful to its origin, will continue to pursue its humane task and to follow the fortunes of men.

This is of utmost importance. If the new institution had come under the control of governments, it would not have fulfilled its purpose: to be independent of public authorities and a free agent. These essential qualities have marked National Societies since their foundation; they have given impetus to their mission throughout the world and enabled them to perform their duties in most difficult circumstances, in particular during conflicts. In increasing their peace-time activities to still wider fields they continue to be animated by the Red Cross spirit. The public is aware of this and looks upon the Red Cross as an institution whose great guiding principle lends it authority and prestige.

The International Committee has always been careful to maintain the independence which enables it to take action simultaneously in each of the opposing camps, to cross frontiers which give way before it and to lend its assistance in the elaboration of humanitarian law. We have already compared the Geneva Conventions to the way which leads to the victims of conflicts and makes it possible to assist them. Way signifies movement, namely the continual progress of delegates who go forth to visit the wounded and prisoners and the thinkers who embody in legal texts the experience gained by workers in the field.

However, life may bring forth circumstances which man cannot foresee and which call for new and different effort on the part of the Red Cross. For National Societies it is a question of distress caused by ethnical or economic changes; for the International Committee the ever-changing nature of armed conflicts is the cause. From these situations have emerged protection for political detainees, as well as Draft Rules for the Limitation of the Dangers incurred by the Civilian Population in Time of War.

In its search for new channels the International Committee may have to go beyond the limits set by the Conventions. In conjunction with National Societies it advances towards the future with a momentum far greater than it was at the outset in Henry Dunant's day. As the eminent French leader, Jean Jaurès, once said: "A river remains faithful to its source by flowing towards the sea."

LÉOPOLD BOISSIER  
President, International Committee  
of the Red Cross

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## Solferino

“ From now onwards Solferino will be the goal of an everlasting human pilgrimage of all men who feel that they are united in a great hope for a better world—a world without violence and anguish ”.

These words were spoken four years ago by Professor Mario Longhena, then the President General of the Italian Red Cross, who first proposed the erection of a monument at Solferino to mark the centenary of the Red Cross idea born on the battlefield on June 24, 1859, to perpetuate Henry Dunant's charitable impulse on the actual site of one of the most appalling tragedies imaginable.

In 1957, following a recommendation of the League Commission for the Centenary of the Red Cross, the Board of Governors invited the National Societies to participate in the Italian plan by sending cash donations and blocks of stone typical of their own countries. So far some sixty National Societies have contributed or announced that they will participate in setting up a monument which will be symbolic of our movement as a whole and will be the first of this description in the world to be raised by the Red Cross.

The battle of Solferino where the Franco-Sardinian and Austrian armies were at grips, and 40,000 men were killed or wounded, was one of the greatest slaughters of the 19th Century.

In his book *A Memory of Solferino*, Henry Dunant wrote : “ Here is a hand-to-hand struggle in all its horror and frightfulness; Austrians and Allies trampling each other under foot, killing one another on piles of bleeding corpses, felling their enemies with their rifle butts, crushing skulls, ripping bellies open with sabre and bayonet. No quarter is given; it is sheer butchery—a struggle between savage beasts maddened with blood and fury. Even the wounded fight to the last gasp. When they have no weapon left, they seize their enemies by the throat and tear them with their teeth ”.

Dunant’s action on the battle-field evokes another memory than that of a bitter but decisive conflict which finally crowned the campaign for Italy’s unification and independence.

From June 24 to 30, 1859, Henry Dunant was in the neighbourhood of Solferino (a small town situated at some ten kilometres south of Lake Garda and about twice that distance from Mantua) and witnessed the sufferings of the wounded. He was immediately stirred by that humanitarian impulse to which Alexis François refers in his book *Le Berceau de la Croix-Rouge*, due in part to his family environment and the spiritual guidance he received in his native town. Dunant relates in his *Memory* : “ I succeeded, by the Sunday morning, in getting together a certain number of women who helped as best they could with the efforts made to aid the wounded... I sought to organise as best I could relief in the quarters where it seemed to be most lacking, and I adopted in particular one of the Castiglione churches, on a height on the left coming from Brescia, and called, I think, the Chiesa Maggiore ”. Help for the wounded was badly needed; they were famished, parched with thirst, covered with mud and vermin. They were given water to drink; their wounds were washed; broth and soup, body-linen, oranges, lemons, tobacco and cigars were distributed. The spirit of the Good Samaritan once more became reality. The Red Cross had come into being and its proud motto “ Inter Arma Caritas ”, although it had not yet been adopted, was already being followed. The theory that the wounded on the battle-field were no longer enemies but fellow-men in need of compassion and assistance was put into practice at Solferino.

A monument will be erected to commemorate the centenary of a time of great suffering and hope, and the memory of the humanitarian impulse of the "man in white" who has already been the subject of a film and numerous books. This monument, the work of the Italian architect, Alfredo Lambertucci, is extremely simple in design since it is unthinkable that an institution such as the Red Cross should devote a large sum for the purpose. It consists of a raised incline in the form of a half-circle, about 100 metres in length, framed by tall cypress and rising to the summit of the famous hill and to a belvedere bearing a great bronze cross; from this point the whole of the Solferino countryside can be seen.

The Italian Red Cross was anxious to associate its sister Societies with this undertaking in order to place it on a truly universal and international footing. At the foot of the monument recesses will contain 82 blocks of stone presented by the National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies now in existence, one hundred years after Dunant's act of charity. This mass of stone and cement will be a permanent symbol of the Red Cross ideal throughout the world, a bond between peoples in a tangible form which would certainly have met with the approval of the founder of the Red Cross.

To all who make a pilgrimage to Solferino these stones will recall the figure—now legendary in all continents—of the Genevese pioneer who showed compassion for suffering mankind, and enable them to measure the growth of the idea of universal fellowship which was born on that spot.

Every day the Red Cross raises innumerable milestones in the form of mutual aid, assistance and kindness, thanks to the devoted efforts of all those who work under its flag; it was appropriate therefore that a memorial should be erected as a token of gratitude to Henry Dunant whose humanitarian impulse, one hundred years ago, set the Red Cross movement in motion.

HENRY W. DUNNING  
Secretary General of the League  
of Red Cross Societies

## Anna Nery

### Mother of the Brazilian people

*Our attention has recently been drawn to a number of articles published, not only in the magazine of the Brazilian Red Cross, but also in those of other National Societies, in particular those of Chile and Argentina.*

*The subject of these articles was a woman whose memory is held in great esteem and around whose monument in Rio de Janeiro a large number of well known public figures of Brazil and other American countries gathered on December 29, 1956. She was Anna Nery, who has been hailed as the "Mother of the Brazilian people" and "the personification in Latin America of the ideals of Henry Dunant". The monument was financed by contributions from a large number of Red Cross Societies in that part of the world and this fact too shows the unanimous regard in which she is held.*

*Anna Nery is no newcomer to our readers: in 1927, the Revue internationale published translated extracts from two articles which had appeared in the magazine of the Brazilian Red Cross for May-June 1925 and April-June 1927. The first article concerned the ceremony at which a portrait of the Brazilian heroine, painted by a Brazilian artist, was placed in the headquarters of the Red Cross Society at Rio de Janeiro. The second article described the inaugural ceremony of the "Annual Nurses Day", at which the memory of Anna Nery was marked by the institution of an "Anna Nery Medal" which is awarded each year to "Nurses who have achieved distinction during their training".*

*We always endeavour to present to our readers articles concerning those who, in one way or another, have succeeded in making the humanitarian ideals on which our movement is based prevail; we therefore asked the Secretary-General of the Brazilian Red Cross, General Benjamin Gonsalves, if he would be good enough to send us some biographical notes which would give our readers a fuller picture of Anna Nery, to whom an ever-growing number of tributes are today addressed. General Benjamin Gonsalves kindly responded to our request and we extend our warm thanks to him for the following article, which he wrote in French. (The Editor.)*

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The headquarters of the Brazilian Red Cross is a beautiful square in Rio de Janeiro, which has been completely restored and is called "Red Cross Square". It was here that, on December 29, 1956, the monument to Anna Nery was unveiled.

This name is of great significance to the Brazilian people; it touches their hearts and is, moreover, well known in Red Cross circles. But until this December day, it has not been possible to demonstrate the admiration felt for her, and which she so richly deserved.

Let us glance at the history of this monument, which today adds to the beauties of our capital and represents a sacred duty which we have at last been able to fulfil, in accordance with our long established traditions of respect and devotion for those who have ennobled the history of Brazil, of the world, and particularly of the Red Cross, which is our other world of human kindness and fellow feeling.

In September 1935, the square, to which we have already referred, bore another name; it was given its present name in recognition of the achievements of the Third Pan-American Red Cross Conference. In September 1935 as in December 1956, this square was decorated and adorned with flowers on the occasion of an important ceremony : the laying of the foundation stone of the monument commemorating a great Brazilian lady, Anna Nery.

The ceremony was a great success and was attended by members of the Conference in which all the Red Cross Societies of America and some from other continents took part, as well as representatives of the two international institutions who had come from Geneva; the Brazilian authorities were also present, giving the ceremony added significance.

Speeches were made which warmly commended the undertaking and sang the praises of Anna Nery, who was such a remarkable public figure, as well as of the Red Cross. For lack of space we shall not quote them here but they are precious kept in our archives.

This tribute to a great Brazilian nurse had been proposed at the plenary session of the Pan-American Conference by the Peruvian Delegation, led by Professor Guillermo Fernandez Davila and supported by the Chilean Delegation, which was led by the late General Edouard Ostornol. The proposal was approved unanimously; in order to execute it, an agreement was concluded between all the delegations by which each of the Societies concerned undertook to make a contribution; a committee was appointed to study ways and means of meeting the general wishes.

Everyone hastened to pledge their support, but despite the sincere desire in every heart, many obstacles arose.

The years went by and our unfortunate world suffered events which were so numerous, so serious and so unexpected that it seemed that because of the political and monetary difficulties which were prevalent, the foundation stone of this monument might remain on the site indefinitely, without the Anna Nery Memorial being erected. Nevertheless, Fernandez Davila, with his noble faith and gentle tenacity of a staunch crusader, remained confident that, despite transient difficulties, the Memorial would rise some day.

Our own Red Cross Society and those whose assistance was essential for us were all affected by the events which occurred.

Finally, last year, there was an opportunity to co-ordinate once more the efforts of our kind friends and we succeeded in collecting sufficient funds for the monument to be erected.

A great Brazilian sculptor, Luiz Ferrer, showed so much understanding that we decided to accept his offer. After having consulted the committee to whose establishment we have already referred through the good offices of Fernandez Davila who is an unflinching friend and who was the prime mover of the idea, we realised that it would be impossible, because of the inordinate expense involved, to organise a large-scale international competition, as had been intended when the foundation stone was laid. Consequently, after studying the model, the photographs and the estimate submitted by Mr. Ferrer, it was agreed to commission the work from him. The total cost was divided into one hundred shares and each Red Cross Society gave a pledge for the number of shares which it would be able to subscribe. All our fellow Societies in the American continent without exception sent their contribution and, on one face of the monument, engraved on the bronze, is an alphabetical list of them.

The façade of our headquarters building makes an admirable setting for the figure of Anna Nery. Above the words *Cruz Vermelha Brasileira* can be seen a stretcher carrying a wounded man who is held by a Red Cross nurse; this also the theme of one of the two bas-reliefs on the monument, the second of which depicts a turbulent scene during the Paraguayan war, in which Anna Nery gave the full measure of her heart and her clear conception of what the Red Cross should be.

The ceremony of December 29, 1956 was a touching reminder of that which had taken place on September 26, 1935. After many difficulties, it was the happy fulfilment of a dream which so many "Red Cross" hearts had cherished for twenty-two years. It was a proof of the perseverance of these participants in a new crusade, and this perseverance leads us to hope that the day will come when many other dreams will at last become glorious realities for the world of the Red Cross, which still keeps a steadfast and perhaps even ingenuous confidence in a better future.

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Who was this heroine of whom we speak here, and to whom we pay a tribute of admiration and gratitude?

Her name was Anna Justina Teixeira Nery (Anna Nery, according to the old spelling, Ana Neri in the modern version). She was born on December 15, 1815 at Cachoeira, in the State of Bahia, and married Isidoro Antonio Nery, a commander in the Brazilian Navy. Her family life was very happy and she was an admirable wife and mother.

She was already a widow when the Paraguayan War was declared. She lived only for the well-being of her sons, one of whom was a doctor, one was in the sixth year of his medical studies and the third was a soldier. They all went off to battle as did her two brothers who were lieutenant-colonels. Anna Nery's humanitarian feeling was very strong and after enduring innumerable difficulties of every kind and overcoming all the prejudice of the day, particularly relating to the fact that she was a woman, she at last obtained permission to go to the front as a nurse, and fulfilled her desire to ease the sufferings of those who were going to fight for their beloved native land.

In those days — 1865 — there were no nurses as we understand the term; Anna Nery, however, who was in the first place the most perfect of mothers, worked as a trained nurse would have done; she had no diploma but she followed the dictates of mother love. That love brought her to the battlefield but there is no doubt that Anna Nery also had the true nursing spirit, which not very long before had inspired Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War. That was why she was to be found in the camps, visiting the soldiers and bringing comfort, care and assistance to whoever needed her services.

Her absolute devotion and unselfishness won the hearts of all who came near her; her smile, the least gesture of pity captivated those to whom they were addressed. And in this way she gained the title "Mother of the Brazilian People".

We must however make one small correction to this name, for Anna Nery never neglected to assist a sufferer from the enemy side. Like Henry Dunant, she held the firm conviction that all men are brothers, and this is borne out by ample evidence from many sources.

As a member of the Fourth Volunteer Battalion, which was commanded by her brother, she was at the front on many occasions and did a great deal to support the moral of the troops; in particular she gave much assistance at Humayata, Corrientes, and Asunción.

At the end of the war, when she was already tired and had aged considerably, one of her sons died before her eyes on the battle-field; after a short prayer, with her eyes full of tears, she calmly continued tending the other wounded.

Her task finished with the end of the war in 1870; she then returned to Brazil, taking with her six young Paraguayan boys who had been lost on the battle-field.

The Government wanted to reward her services by a large sum of money but she refused to accept it. She assigned all her possessions to charity. She died on 20 May, 1880, after sixty-five years of hard work, of self-sacrifice and of devotion to others. On her coffin shone the "Imperial Cross" which she always wore pinned to her black dress.

Anna Nery was crowned with laurel by the ladies of Bahia, her native State; this shining crown symbolized the brightness of her qualities as a heroic mother and a fearless Brazilian, a great lady of charity and a woman worthy of a great and strong country. Military honours were accorded to her along the entire route of the funeral procession to her last resting place. The Brazilian people have not forgotten the merits of this voluntary nurse whom they have immortalized and placed among the ranks of true national heroes.

An expression of the love which everyone felt towards her may be found in these lines which her grieving family received: "When those who fought in the shadow of the national flag were wounded by enemy fire, woe betide them if, far from their native land, they did not receive the support of this tender, warm-hearted mother. And not merely towards a Brazilian soldier; for her, pain had no frontier, suffering knew no distinction and charity had no national flag. Everyone, whether friend, ally, neutral or enemy, was alike in misfortune and all were brothers. Each man wounded in the service of his

country, each prisoner from Paraguay will confirm spontaneously that during the five years which she spent alongside the allied army, Anna Nery was every day " the personification of charity in the hospitals of Corrientes, Salto, Humayata and Asunción ".

There is no need to say more in order to justify what has been done in honour of Anna Nery. That sunny day of December 29, 1956 was a historic moment when the hearts of members of the Red Cross Societies and many others, too, warmed to her who was, above all—and only through the greatness of her spirit—a true nurse of the Red Cross.

The Red Cross Societies, led by our great friend Professor Guillermo Fernandez Davila, Secretary-General of the Peruvian Red Cross, and his wife, made a noble gesture towards this great lady of Brazil, which she had deserved for so many years. The monument was covered with flowers, and many speeches of gratitude were made.

The speakers included the Governor of the City of Rio de Janeiro, Ambassador Negrao de Lima, our President, Senator Vivaldo Lima Filho, Professor Fernandez Davila, Professor Ivolino de Vasconcellos, President of the Brazilian Institute of the History of Medicine, our Director for Foreign Affairs, the Municipal Administrator Dr. Indalecio de Araujo Iglesias and a charming student from the Anna Nery School for Nurses which, like the other nursing schools of the capital, was present at the ceremony. All these speakers found the right word to commend Anna Nery and the Brazilian Red Cross, of which she will always be a part; before the Red Cross headquarters this statue now stands proudly on its pedestal, to bless every activity undertaken by our Society and to encourage each of its charitable activities.

MEDICAL GENERAL, DR. BENJAMIN GONSALVES,  
Secretary General  
of the Brazilian Red Cross

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# INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

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## A MISSION OF THE ICRC IN MOROCCO AND ALGERIA

As we stated under *News Items* in our December issue, a delegate of the ICRC, Mr. Pierre Gaillard, went on a mission to Morocco at the end of November 1958, for the purpose of taking into the International Committee's hands eight French prisoners released by the A.L.N. Mr. Gaillard was accompanied by Mr. Camille Vautier, Honorary Delegate in Morocco of the ICRC, and the operation took place at Rabat on December 3, 1958.

After carrying out this short mission in Morocco, Mr. Gaillard proceeded to Algeria to make the sixth series of visits to camps, accompanied by Mr. Roger Vust, Honorary Delegate in Algeria of the ICRC.

From December 5 to 23, the two representatives of the ICRC visited two prisons in Algiers (Alger-Barberousse and Maison-Carrée), two assembly centres (Douera and Tefeschoun), four screening centres (Beni-Messous, Camp-du-Maréchal), Bordj Menaiel and Rio-Salado), as well as eight military internment centres (Tigzirt, Boghar, Ksar-Thir, Bône, Tiaret, Lamoricière, Hamman-bou-Hadjar and Point Zéro near Mostaganem); sixteen visits were made in all.

We wish to point out that the visits to military internment centres were the first made by the ICRC to those camps which were only set up recently, subsequent to the fifth mission of the ICRC (spring 1958).

The delegates of the ICRC, as during previous missions, were granted every facility for visiting camps; they were able to converse without witnesses with prisoners of their choice. Relief supplies and comforts were distributed in several detention centres.

As usual the delegates of the ICRC made comments on their visits to the camp commandants and local authorities; a detailed report will also be sent to the French Government.

It is interesting to note that while the representatives of the ICRC were visiting two military internment centres at Kasr-Thir (December 15) and the Ferme des Anglais, Bône (December 16) the French military authorities released ten Algerian prisoners captured while bearing arms.

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## THE ICRC AND THE CONFLICT IN CUBA

For nearly a year the International Committee has followed the events in Cuba with careful attention, and sought to assist all the victims of the conflict without distinction.

Early in July 1958, following a request received from the leader of the rebel forces for assistance in the evacuation of the wounded and sick of the regular armed forces in his hands, and which he proposed to hand over unconditionally, the ICRC took steps to perform this humanitarian task which took place under its auspices and in the presence of its delegates, Mr. P. Jequier and Mr. J.-P. Schoenholzer, on July 23, 1958; 253 prisoners, including 57 wounded, were thus evacuated during a truce arranged between the two parties concerned by the ICRC.

A little later the rebel forces again asked the International Committee to assist in the release, for health reasons, of a number of prisoners who had fallen into their hands. On August 12 and 13 therefore another intervention of the ICRC enabled 170 prisoners and wounded to be handed over by the rebel

forces to the representatives of the Cuban Red Cross. During this operation, at the request of the ICRC, emergency medicaments were handed over to the rebel forces following a request for these supplies.

As it continued to receive appeals for assistance, the ICRC re-opened negotiations with the Cuban Red Cross and the Cuban authorities for sending a further mission to Cuba. Its delegate Mr. M. Thudichum, went to Havana in September to ascertain, on the spot, to what extent and on what basis the ICRC could lend its assistance over the whole of the Cuban territory to all the direct and indirect victims of a conflict which was becoming more and more serious. However, as the numerous approaches made by the delegate met with no response on the part of the former Government, he was obliged to leave Cuba without completing his mission. The ICRC nevertheless continued its efforts and sought in vain during the ensuing weeks to find some means of affording assistance in the areas under governmental control as well as those controlled by the rebel forces.

On January 1, 1959, having received an appeal from the new Red Cross Society constituted in Havana, the ICRC immediately sent a delegate, Mr. P. Jequier, who left Geneva on January 3 for Havana, with instructions to lend his services to the Cuban Red Cross now under the direction of Dr. Rodolfo Enriquez Lauranson, and to carry out the traditional activity of the ICRC in behalf of all victims of the events. Mr. Jequier was cordially received by the Cuban Red Cross, of which the directorate, as well as the Cuban authorities, showed a most co-operative spirit. Thus the ICRC is finally able to perform its duty in accordance with its humanitarian principles and the provisions of Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions. It is this article, and several resolutions of the International Conference of the Red Cross, that the ICRC takes as a basis for its action in armed conflicts not of an international character. The ICRC is acting in Cuba as it has already acted on many occasions during internal disturbances in other countries.

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## A MISSION OF THE ICRC IN CENTRAL EUROPE

From November 26 to December 18, 1958, Mr. H. G. Beckh, Delegate of the ICRC, was engaged in a further mission in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Rumania. He discussed various questions with the Red Cross Societies of these three countries in connection with their activities and the work of the ICRC; the problem of the re-uniting of families was also a subject of discussion.

In Belgrade, the Delegate of the ICRC was received by Mr. Pejovic, Under-Secretary of State, by whom he was informed that the Government of Yugoslavia had granted authority to the ICRC to visit prisons in order to ascertain the conditions of detention and to converse with political detainees.

Mr. Beckh, accompanied by Dr. Olga Milosevic, Secretary-General of the Yugoslav Red Cross, visited prisons at Stara Dradiska and Pozarevac-Zabela, where he spoke without witnesses with about twenty political detainees. He ascertained that the detention conditions in the prisons visited were in conformity with normal humanitarian practice; the prison at Pozarevac-Zabela, in particular, is run on very modern lines.

As customary, the Delegate's reports on his mission will be sent later to the Yugoslav authorities. It has been arranged for other visits to take place in 1959.

This further proof of the confidence placed in the ICRC by the Yugoslav Government marks an important stage in the Committee's action in behalf of political prisoners.

When he visited Bucharest, Mr. Beckh was received by Mr. Dumitrescu, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs. On his way back to Switzerland, the Delegate of the ICRC had conversations in Budapest with the representatives of the Hungarian Red Cross.