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AID GIVEN BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE TO THE PALESTINE REFUGEES

Readers of the "Revue internationale" will already have learnt of the agreements reached between the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations, under which the International Committee distributes aid to Palestine refugees. They will also know that the area allotted for the Committee's activities comprise Northern and Central Palestine, whilst the League of Red Cross Societies is responsible for refugees in the contiguous countries of Syria, Transjordan and the Lebanon, and the American Friends Service Committee concerns itself with refugees in the Gaza region.

The International Committee has entrusted a "Commissariat for Aid to Palestine Refugees", under the direction of M. Alfred Escher, with this new task. M. Escher has under him 29 delegates, twelve doctors, 24 nurses and five secretaries, making a total of 71 persons in all. There are two principal centres of action. One is at Beirut and controls all the regional offices in the Arab area—in other words, the delegations at Jericho, Hebron, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Ramallah and Nablus. The Haifa centre deals with refugees in the territories under the Israeli Government. Each of these offices is directed by a regional Chief, who is himself assisted by one or several delegates and nurses, and sometimes by a doctor-delegate.

Such is the geographical outline of the new relief scheme. The issue of supplies is not, however, the sole duty of the Commissariat: it must, in addition, ensure a proper level of hygiene amongst the refugees, maintain order in the camps, with the assistance of the local authorities, and, as a prerequisite to effective aid, determine as accurately as possible the total number of those entitled to benefit under the United Nations scheme.

This last requirement presented the Commissariat with serious difficulties. The total number of Palestine refugees was originally computed at about 600,000 and this figure was divided equally between the International Committee, the League of Red Cross Societies and the American Friends Service Committee. Practical experience, however, showed this "allocation" to be quite arbitrary, and that the total number of refugees was greater than the initial estimate suggested.

After exchanges of view with the representatives of the three organizations, the United Nations Director of Relief decided to accept an estimated total of 855,000, and to entrust 40% of the supplies at his disposal to the International Committee's Commissariat, 32% to the League of Red Cross Societies, and 28% to the Friends. There is no doubt, however, that the above total is too high and that it includes persons who should not, properly speaking, be classified as refugees, such as the poor inhabitants of townships containing refugees or Bedouin Arabs.

The Commissariat therefore decided to distribute its available supplies in accordance with the following estimates :

Jericho region	60,000	refugees	
Ramallah region	65,000	„	
Nablus region	120,000	„	
Jerusalem region	20,000	„	
Bethlehem region	30,000	„	
Hebron region	70,000	„	
State of Israel	<u>45,000</u>	„	(including 17,000 Jews)
Total	410,000	refugees	

The above total thus exceeds the estimates made in the agreements already mentioned, but the Commissariat decided, at least during the month of April, to abide by the figures obtained from the delegates in the regions assigned to it. The difficulties of an exact census should, furthermore, not be overlooked. The most exact possible total not only of those genuinely entitled to relief as refugees, but also of the categories into which they fall (that is, babies in arms, infants from one

to five years, children from five to ten years, children from 10 to 15, expectant mothers, nursing mothers, adults) must be obtained. A census is at the moment being taken, despite the extremely arduous nature of such an operation in regions where government has broken down and where the number of refugees fluctuates in accordance with daily migrations. More or less accurate figures have been obtained for the Nablus and Ramallah areas comprising 200 and 97 villages respectively. The census is going on in the other distribution areas and will no doubt be greatly simplified by the recent introduction of a food ration card.

**UNRPR ¹ SUPPLIES ALLOTTED TO THE COMMISSARIAT
OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE**

The figures already quoted for the total number of refugees may usefully be compared with those given below for tonnages of relief assigned to the Commissariat during the early months of its work in 1949 :

<i>UNRPR Supplies</i>	<i>Jan.</i>	<i>Feb.</i>	<i>March</i>	<i>Estimate April</i>
Flour	2,156	2,255	2,900	3,684
Dried vegetables	240	250	225	332
Oil	140	150	58,5	79
Sugar	—	100	64,5	87
Dates	425	200	200	267
Animal proteins or substitutes	—	—	112	146
Total in tons	2,790	2,955	3,560	4,595
UNICEF ² flour delivered direct to Israel (tons)	144	144	144	144

Over and above these staple commodities, the Commissariat has received and forwarded the following quantities (in tons) :

¹ United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees.

² United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

<i>Article</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Jan.</i>	<i>Feb.</i>	<i>March</i>
Tents	UNRPR	—	150	—
"	Turkish Red Crescent	—	500	—
"	Swedish Red Cross	—	—	250
Blankets	UNICEF	—	29,600	—
"	Irak Petroleum Company	48,500	—	—
"	American Red Cross	—	1,500	—
Dried vegetables	UNRPR	—	15 t.	8 t.
Sweetmeats	American Red Cross	3,3 t.	—	—
Salted fish	Danish Red Cross	—	27,6 t.	—
Dates	UNRPR	—	—	100 t.
Dried figs	UNRPR	—	—	26,5
Sundry supplies	Various Red Cross Societies	—	—	27 t.
Medicaments and hospital equipment	Local purchases, World Health Organization	—	—	25 t.
Children's underwear	American Red Cross	—	0,55 t.	—
Educational equipment	American Red Cross	—	1,19 t.	—
Used clothing	Canadian Red Cross	—	—	15 t.

Under a special agreement, the Commissariat also distributes supplies given by UNICEF for the relief, in particular, of children, and expectant or nursing mothers. During February and March 1949, UNICEF has each month consigned the following foodstuffs direct to the distribution centres in Arab Palestine :

	<i>Feb.</i>	<i>March</i>
Powdered whole milk	22,5	22,5
Powdered skimmed milk	192	192
Sugar	48	48
Margarine	50	50
Meat	50	50
Total in tons	362,5	312,5

These quantities provided the following daily ration :

Infants, up to one year	}	skimmed milk	50 grams
		sugar	10 "
Children aged 1-15, expectant and nursing mothers	}	skimmed milk	40 "
		sugar	10 "
		margarine	10 "
		meat	10 "

In addition to these, varying amounts of supplementary foods, such as rice, raisins and cheese were sent.

For the transport of these goods throughout the six regions in Arab Palestine and in the Israeli territory, the Commissariat has a park of 69 vehicles, consisting of the following : 24 lorries (two for use in Israeli territory), 12 vans (two for Israeli territory) 31 motor cars (two for Israeli territory), two motorcycles. These do not include four ambulances presented by the American Red Cross, and of which two were assigned to the delegates in Israeli territory and two to those in Arab territory. In this way one or several vehicles are available for extended or local travel in each region, to isolated doctors and to hospital physicians.

There are several transport problems. In January, half of the deliveries were taken at Beirut, and half at Damascus. In February, the flour and dried vegetables arrived at Damascus ; the dates from Bagdad, as well as the oil from Nablus were forwarded direct to the distribution centres, whilst all other foodstuffs and relief supplies were received at Beirut. In March, the flour, oil, sugar and 100 tons of dates were delivered in Beirut, whilst some of the dried vegetables arrived in Damascus, and 200 tons of dates were sent direct from Bagdad to the distribution centres. All heavy transport is handled by a shipping firm : the actual work of distribution is done by the Commissariat, often by difficult and hazardous roads. The following are the distances covered : Beirut to Jericho (nearest centre) : 415 kilometers ; Beirut to Nablus (farthest centre) : 527 kilometers.

* * *

In carrying out this distribution, the Commissariat has had to solve a number of very delicate administrative and organising problems. It took up its work almost at a day's notice, before the end of December, 1948, and before it had the full expert staff required. The most urgent needs awaited its attention, and it had to move to the distribution centres a large volume of goods warehoused at Beirut by the first United Nations relief mission. Extempore measures of various kinds had to be

devised to provide for the urgent needs of the refugees. Transport was impeded by the exceptionally heavy rains of last winter, which for days at a time rendered impassable the roads from Beirut to Arab Palestine. At the same time, the Commissariat has had to contend with ill-will from certain groups of refugees who tended to saddle it with misplaced blame for all difficulties, particularly those in transport. In spite of these obstacles, the Commissariat staff has made, with most noteworthy goodwill, every effort to carry out its duties, and to give the refugees the utmost assistance in their present critical situation.

THE RED CROSS AND THE INTERNATIONAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations at Paris approved the text of the "International Declaration of Human Rights", framed by a United Nations Commission at the request of the Economic and Social Council; and resolved to give its contents the widest possible circulation. In his letter of January 28, the Secretary-General of the United Nations requested the International Committee of the Red Cross, together with other non-governmental organizations, to publish this Declaration and to acquaint their members with its contents.

The French text of the document was accordingly published in the April edition of the "Revue internationale". It has not been found possible to include the English text in the present Supplement. Nevertheless, we feel we may usefully publish the following essay which stresses the profound significance of the Declaration for the whole Red Cross movement.

(Ed.)

* * *

The International Declaration of Human Rights which was approved at the last General Assembly of the United Nations, is no more than the initial phase of an international effort to secure effective guarantees for the fundamental rights of each human being. Whereas the Human Rights Commission, in fact, chose to prepare both a Declaration and a formal Convention, it is none the less intended that the latter instrument, drawn up no doubt in the form of a multilateral pact, shall be ratified by the States shortly after the Declaration itself is adopted.

It is therefore difficult at present to visualize the full ethical benefit of this dual enterprise and its repercussions in inter-

national law¹. Nevertheless, as was rightly observed by the late Nicholas Murray Butler, it is clearly in the natural line of development, from Magna Carta in the thirteenth century, to the American Declaration of Independence and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man.

Mention might also be made of the international Humanitarian Conventions, which show the immense expansion of the aims of the Red Cross since its early defence of fundamental human rights on the battle-field. It has in peace-time taken up entirely novel duties and has become increasingly an agent of social reform.

In the disordered world of today the Red Cross indeed represents one of the few sources of aid to which the unprotected may turn. The concepts of individual dignity and freedom which its moral influence and practical achievements have helped to impress upon the public mind now find their overt expression in the International Declaration adopted by the United Nations.

The emergence of the international Humanitarian Conventions, of which the International Committee of the Red Cross is the author, together with the manifold and ever widening social activities of the National Societies, exemplify the Red Cross as one of the founders of the better world for which we hope. Created in the middle of the last century, the Red Cross is, historically, one of the most striking manifestations of the great moral movement which, during the last two centuries, taught men to respect their fellows as human beings, regardless of their nationality, or political, religious or other beliefs.

Hence the Red Cross welcomes the United Nations' success in giving international sanction, through the medium of a Declaration acknowledged by the majority of States, to the principle of Human Rights. This Declaration is doubly impor-

¹ With this should be associated, in particular, the work of the United Nations Economic and Social Council for the prevention and repression of "genocide". (Cf. "The International Protection of Human Rights" — United Nations Information Department.

tant : primarily, because it is the first essay of this nature in the international field ; and secondly, because the more firmly these rights are joined with the moral and legal heritage of men, the less is the risk of their being cast away in times of stress and conflict.

The compilation of this text and its approval by the General Assembly of the United Nations therefore mark an important stage in the evolution of international law—important as much for the world community as for its member nations. This Declaration has perpetual and universal validity ; therefore, in time of war or domestic conflict, the rights acknowledged today will in principle remain effective, at least insofar as they ensure respect for the human person and aid for the maltreated, no matter who they may be.

Those who in the future render aid and seek to reduce the effects of violence and adversity will thus find their efforts strengthened and ordained by law. Moreover, the nations which adhere to the Declaration will give greater heed than before to the Conventions for the moral and physical protection of the individual in war, and greater support to those institutions which, like the Red Cross, uphold the dignity and responsibility of man in the midst of turmoil.

Countless privations and horrors in our own experience have demonstrated the indifference of unnumbered individuals to the fundamental rights of man ; and the many appeals made to the Red Cross have shown, and still show, the constant need for institutions which can, in all impartiality, affirm and act upon the ultimate fellowship of human beings, in a world which technical ingenuity has too often made inhuman. The Red Cross therefore, to which this role has many times fallen, will devote its full energies to the ever plainer recognition in international law of those Rights of Man that it has steadfastly upheld in compliance with the moral law which inspired Henry Dunant.

* * *

The Red Cross is bound, by the very principles it avows, to lend its support to any policy for peace, justice and human

brotherhood¹; yet it does not itself seek a political end; it serves no national interests; it is actuated by no image save that of dispossessed, suffering and defenceless mankind. Regardless of belligerent responsibility, the Red Cross is bound to go to the relief of the victims of violence and to treat with the authority concerned.

It is precisely when the Rights of Man are most gravely imperilled that action by the Red Cross is most required. In the recent war, even the most civilised and humane States placed the Rights of Man under many and weighty disabilities—adding to these, indeed, in the same measure in which the public conscience was indifferent to the claims of human dignity and personal responsibility. Nevertheless, these claims must at all costs be satisfied, for on their efficacy depends the building of a better society.

The Red Cross attaches supreme value to its task of preserving respect for the human person, the victim of conflicts between nation and nation, and between man and man—that is to say, at a juncture when an appeal to humanity is beset by particular psychological difficulties. The Red Cross alone is capable, at such a time, of acting as a neutral intermediary, of aiding the stricken of both sides and of linking those who are separated by a battlefield; for it has accepted the fullest implications of the principles which animate it, and the Geneva Convention, the first of the humanitarian agreements, provides for equal treatment of the sick and wounded, whether friend or foe.

The prime duty of the Red Cross is not to protest against illegal, unjust or disputable acts, but to assist the victims of such acts, and to affirm the unconditional immunity of a fallen enemy. It believes that its limited achievements are a token of what mankind must eventually establish—unvarying respect for essential human values. All those who work under the Red Cross emblem chafe at the limitations placed on their

¹ Reference need only be made to the Resolutions passed by International Red Cross Conferences, particularly by the XVIIth Conference held last year in Stockholm.

efforts, and accordingly demand, more insistently than others, the attribution of the broadest rights to each individual.

* * *

The Red Cross indeed works for peace, since, by its moral and practical efforts, it contributes to greater understanding amongst men: it is a medium through which they perceive their intellectual and spiritual affinity. But—and here the whole difference between the Red Cross and international social and political institutions is seen—the Red Cross is only concerned with this reconciliation in its moral aspect. Thus, having adopted this standpoint, the Red Cross must vehemently proclaim the horror of war: for war is the utter negation and destruction of that noble and fraternal humanity which the whole economy of the Red Cross is designed to protect and restore.

And so it is seen that the Red Cross Conventions are not, as some have thought, the concurrence of the human conscience in the rule of force. They are the rebuttal of that rule of force, since it was the purpose of their authors to set a limit to the fearful consequences of war and to take issue with fate, under the guise of a legal text.

The humanitarian Conventions are not letters-patent for war: they are its denunciation. It was because he cherished an ideal of wise and noble humanity, inviolate in war and peace, that Dunant called into being the institution of the Red Cross. Whenever a human being falls helpless, or becomes the victim of others, the mission of the Red Cross is to aid him to his feet, and to renewed life. Always, and in all circumstances, a call for help, no matter who utters it, must be answered.

In reminding men of their fellows in distress, and enjoining them to give aid, the Red Cross clearly helps in the creation of that spirit of human unity which is radically opposed to war. For unity brings a sense of collective responsibility—a moral concept above all law and polity which can only serve cooperation and peace.

The principles which guide and inspire any charitable act cannot be too often reaffirmed, for man must be taught to respect the humanity in each of his fellows. Hence the individual must be invested with certain essential rights, not merely by reason of his nationality, his religious faith, or his political belief, but by reason of his intrinsic humanity.

It is to be hoped that the International Declaration of Human Rights, approved by the United Nations General Assembly, will be widely disseminated, since it is a further undoubted step in the direction of that just and peaceable world to which the Red Cross, together with the eighty millions of its members, aspires. It is a profession of good intention. Even though today it may seem too large a claim to be speedily fulfilled, too fragmentary to be fully effective, it remains an ideal towards which the forces stubbornly working for a new-built world, must strive.

Jean G. Lossier.

RED CROSS MESSAGE

On May 8, 1949, the 121st anniversary of the birth of Henry Dunant, the Swiss Red Cross published the following message:

* * *

The Red Cross is one of the few institutions which inspire the peoples of the world with new hope. More than any other, perhaps, it can guide into the ways of peace a humanity whose sense of kinship has increasingly dulled.

The Red Cross personifies a lofty moral concept—that of the sacred worth of each human being. Those in distress may, regardless of the camp or country to which they owe allegiance, confidently turn to the Red Cross for assistance, simply because they are in distress and because they are human beings. This perception of human brotherhood, to which the people of Solferino, aiding Dunant to save their wounded enemies, gave utterance in the words “*Siamo tutti fratelli*”, is at the very heart of the Red Cross movement.

Our estranged world needs this doctrine of brotherhood, now more than before. The mental, moral and material devastations of the last war stand witness to the fearsome unity of man as a destroyer. It has yet to be realised that, if he is to survive, man must unite to do good.

Today we are celebrating the 121st anniversary of the birth of Henry Dunant, and, at the same time, the fourth anniversary of the last armistice in Europe. Let us hope that this double occasion will foretell a better world, and that it will, in these divided times, hasten understanding between men of good will. That is today the earnest prayer of the Swiss Red Cross.