



**REVUE
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SUPPLEMENT

CONTENTS

	Page
ICRC radio broadcasts	238
A glance at some recent activities of the Central Agency M.K.	247
Release of French prisoners in Algeria	251
Assistance of the ICRC to Algerian refugees in Morocco	252

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

ICRC radio broadcasts

On numerous occasions the *Revue internationale* and the English-language Supplement have included articles and news items concerning the information programmes which form a major part of the activity of the ICRC Broadcasting Section.

A number of these programmes are broadcast in Arabic, for the benefit of listeners in the Near and Middle East and North Africa while others are in Spanish, for listeners in Latin America. The Spanish programmes are prepared by Mr. J. J. Gomez de Rueda, Delegate in Europe of the Mexican Red Cross; they are transmitted by the Swiss Short-Wave Service (over the following wavelengths: 25.28 metres, 31.04 metres, 31.46 metres and 19.59 metres) and the response received is very encouraging. Mr. I. Zreikat is responsible for Arabic broadcasts, which are likewise prepared in Geneva and are transmitted by the Swiss Short-Wave Service (25.28 metres and 19.60 metres); in addition these programmes in Arabic are recorded and sent to the broadcasting services in the Arab-speaking countries, in all of which the response has been favourable.

This special broadcasting by the ICRC began in 1953 and has grown in importance as time has passed. We therefore believe that it is appropriate to refer to some of the most noteworthy among these broadcasts and to publish extracts from some of the programmes which have aroused particular interest

during the past five years, and which throw new light on the fundamental concept of the Red Cross, and its place in the world today.

BROADCASTS IN ARABIC

The ICRC Radio and Television Office at Radio-Geneva has invited a number of distinguished figures in the Arab world to express their views on humanitarian thought and activity; these talks were recorded and transmitted over the Swiss short-waves and also over the ICRC's own wavelength. Important members of national Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies were interviewed in the Max Huber studio at Radio-Geneva. Other interviews were recorded in Cairo, through the courtesy of the Egyptian broadcasting service.

Representatives of Arab thought who have contributed to these programmes include the following: Mr. Taha Hussein and Mr. Heykal, both of whom are eminent Egyptian authors; Sheikh El-Bakoury, Minister in Cairo; Mr. Jamil Mardam Bey, former Syrian Primer Minister, President of the Syrian Red Crescent; Mr. El-Moussly, Professor at the University of Damascus; and Mr. Mustapha Khalifa, President of the Jordan Red Crescent.

Besides these weekly broadcasts over the Swiss short-waves, bi-monthly programmes have been recorded at Radio-Geneva and sent to the Tunisian Red Crescent for transmission by Radio Tunis. This successful joint undertaking was inaugurated at the end of May 1958 and is continuing on a regular basis.

One programme in particular deserves special comment; not only because it is of recent date and constitutes an assertion of the attitude of a theologian in regard to the problems of Islamic humanitarian thought, but also because of the author's own personality. We therefore reproduce below the text of a talk given in July 1958 by Mr. El-Sheikh Hassan El-Mamoun, Grand Mufti of El-Diar-El-Misriah, entitled "Some principles of Islam".

Islam is the religion of peace and of respect for the rights of man. In this talk, we shall point out some outstanding principles

of Islam which proclaim justice and forbid oppression. God has said: "I command justice, charity, and consideration for others, I forbid turpitude, sin and injustice. I speak thus that you may not forget it."

The following words are ascribed to Mahomet, when speaking of his God: "My people, I have forbidden oppression for myself and for you also; do not oppress one another." The Prophet is also said to have declared: "Avoid oppression, for it is the symbol of darkness on the day of resurrection. Beware of avarice, for it destroyed those who have gone before you. It has caused their blood to be shed and justified for them all that was forbidden. Give help to your brother, whether he be the oppressed or the oppressor; if he is the oppressor, endeavour to dissuade him, and if he is the oppressed, come to his assistance."

Justice forbids oppression in any form, and this is a general principle which Islam imposes on all, without exception. It is not only the basis for respect of human rights, which is upheld by the international organizations; it is also the basis of the security of the individual—of his life, his possessions, his family—and of the security of nations, so that they may live peaceably within their frontiers, neither attacking their neighbours nor being attacked by them. Any absurd, unjustified attack by one man upon another, or by one nation upon another, is considered as absolutely prohibited. In the first case, Islamic law provides that offenders shall be punished; in the second case, it orders the country which is the victim of aggression to defend itself with all the means at its command. This is the reason why Islam requires a nation to prepare for a war of defence.

God has said: "Therefore prepare against them what force ye are able, and troops of horse, whereby ye may strike a terror into the enemy of God, and your enemy, and into other infidels besides them, whom ye know not, but God knoweth them. And whatsoever ye shall expend in the defence of religion of God, it shall be repaid unto you, and ye shall not be treated unjustly. And if they incline unto peace, do thou also incline thereto; and put thy confidence in God, for it is he who heareth and knoweth. But if they seek to deceive thee, verily God will be thy support. It is he who hath strengthened thee with his help, and with that of the faithful;

*and hath united their hearts. If thou hadst expended whatever riches are in the earth, thou couldst not have united their hearts, but God united them; for he is mighty and wise.”*¹

The fact that God has commanded Moslems to prepare for war does not mean that it is permissible to attack neighbouring countries or those of another religion. The idea is to keep other nations in check by making them stand in awe of aggression. “*Al-Jihad*” (that is to say, the struggle) is an obligation for every man who can undertake it, whether by giving his possessions, his life, or by any other means; and the struggle will continue as long as the aggression lasts. If the enemy makes a sincere request for peace and withdraws from occupied territory to obey the will of God, then the war must be stopped and the appeal for peace must be answered. If, on the other hand, it appears that the appeal for peace is merely a ruse of the enemy designed to lower the morale and sap the strength of the people during a lull in the attack, then one must reject this false appeal and, on the contrary, make ready to repel a possible new aggression. But one must only repulse the aggressor, and must not kill or oppress non-combatants. The Prophet has decreed that one may not kill women, children, the aged or servants of religion, out of consideration for their weakness or their faith. One must not profane man or his mortal remains.

When the Prophet of God sent out his armies, he told them: “*Go forth, in the name of God, for the divine cause fight against the unbelievers: do not betray or profane and do not kill children or the servants of religion*”.

Yehya ben Said relates that when Abou-Bakr decided to send his armies into Syria, he was walking with Yazid Ben Sufian and said to him: «*I give you the following commandements:*

“*Do not kill women, children or the aged. Do not cut down fruit trees and do not destroy that which has been built. Do not kill sheep or camels other than to feed yourselves. Do not cut down or burn a single palm-tree*».

The struggle ordained by Islamic law does not imply that one may oppress man or make an attempt on human life, on

¹ English text from G. SALE : *The Koran*, F. Warne & Co., London-New York.

man's most sacred possessions or on the family. For the purpose of this law is to propagate Islam, to spread the spirit of charity, peace and security, so that all men may live as brothers in the shade of Islamic justice which makes no distinction between one man and another, or between one nation and another.

Moslems who have reached understanding of their religion and who follow its precepts know what they may or may not do. They have understood that God requires of them justice which must be absolute and must extend to every member of the nation. They are forbidden to attack non-Moslems, their possessions, their families or their lives. On the contrary, they must treat them as they would treat other Moslems. Those who are not Moslems, Jews and Christians (Alzima) have the same rights and the same duties as the Moslems themselves.

But Islam is still more tolerant, for it believes that those who are outside it must be treated in a spirit of charity and brotherhood, so long as they neither attack nor kill Moslems.

During their conquests, the early Moslems did not forget the advantages to be gained from having their womenfolk beside them. To the women they entrusted tasks for which they were better suited than men, such as tending the wounded, helping the combatants, and looking after supplies of food and weapons in the rear. Del-Rabiah Bent Maouez said: "We were the Prophet's comrades in war; it was our duty to slake the soldiers' thirst, to wait on them, and to carry the dead and wounded to the nearest city". For her part, Oum-Attia Al Ensaria said: "I was in the company of the Prophet during this onslaught, in order to give food, drink and care to the wounded". And Unse added: "When the Prophet won his conquests he was accompanied by Oum Salim and other women who tended the wounded and gave them drink".

All these "Hadiths", or sayings, and others which history has brought down to us, confirm that Islam has not asked women to take part in war and conquests on the same footing as men, but it has entrusted to them the humanitarian tasks which they can perform: dressing wounds and bringing assistance to the wounded in the form of food, clothing and medicaments; tending and helping the sick, as is done by organizations in both wartime

and peacetime. Islam considers this as a task of charity and welfare to which it gives constant encouragement; it calls on everyone to participate in and support the undertaking, following the example of all other initiatives designed to alleviate human suffering. We have the narration of the "Hadiths", which called on people to visit and tend the sick. According to Abi Harireh, the Prophet quoted the words of God on the day of resurrection:

" Oh son of Adam, I was sick and you did not visit me !

— But why should I visit you, since you are the Universal God ?

— Do you not know that one of my servants was sick and you did not visit him ? Do you not know that if you had done so, you would have found me beside him ?

— Oh son of Adam, I asked you for food and you gave me none !

— But why should I feed you, since you are the Universal God ?

— Do you not know that one of my servants asked you for food and you refused him ? Do you not know that if you had done it unto him, you would have done it unto me ?

— Oh son of Adam, I asked you for drink and you gave me none !

— Why should I give you drink, since you are the Universal God ?

— Do you not know that one of my servants asked you for drink and you refused him ? Do you not know that if you had done it unto him, you would have done it unto me ?"

From these quotations you may see the reward which God has in store for those who visit the sick, feed the poor and give drink to the thirsty. For all these actions show a truly noble spirit and a consciousness of the humanitarian links which bind each and every one of us together; these links know neither frontier nor barrier, for their origin is in the heart, in charity and the soul without hatred or jealousy which desires to harm no-one.

The Prophet said to his wife, Aïsha: " Each charitable deed beautifies things and removes what was ugly in them". And of his wife he said: " Oh Aïsha ! God loves charity and generosity,

but he grants no reward to violence". And according to Jarir: "I heard the Prophet say that those who forbid charity forbid all good for themselves".

In presenting these few principles of Islam, my hope is that you may learn them and put them into practice, for my dearest wish is to exhort you to that charity and peace which must inspire all men and all nations so that all may live in harmony and security.

BROADCASTS IN SPANISH

As we have already said, these weekly programmes are prepared by Mr. de Rueda. They are on a variety of subjects, all relating to the Red Cross and to current trends in humanitarian thought and activity in the world. To give a few examples, they have included problems such as action by the Red Cross during internal disturbances, the significance of Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, and the guiding concepts of the Red Cross in the world of today. The following extracts from broadcast talks will indicate the diversity and the importance of the subjects chosen.

One of the essential features of the Red Cross as an international institution is indoubtedly its universality. This universality does not mean merely that the Red Cross exists everywhere and that the flag which bears its emblem is flown on the five continents. If one may consider this, graphically, as the horizontal aspect, there is, to my mind, another aspect of universality which is no less important and which one might call the vertical aspect.

In the first place, the idea of the Red Cross sprang from a lofty ideal. This idea gave inspiration to Henry Dunant and it has a direct impact on society at every level. Secondly, it is possible for everyone, without exception, to assist the work of the Red Cross. Through the national Red Cross Societies and their members, the countries, as well as the governments and the States bound to the Geneva Conventions can all contribute to bring mankind into harmony in the world in which we live.

The Red Cross emblem under which we work is therefore not sectarian in nature and it has no national significance. With remarkable insight, it was chosen as a simultaneous token of suffering and consolation and, as we have seen, it also signifies the horizontal scope of Red Cross work in the world and, vertically, the profound quality of that work.

I would add that the choice of red as the colour of the emblem is the result of a very special intuition, for red is the colour of the blood which sustains our bodies and it symbolizes the community of man in suffering and brotherhood.

These are a few subjects for reflection as to the symbolic significance of the Red Cross emblem which inspires the present and future achievements of humanitarian action in the world.

* * *

It is generally held that policy is the art of governing people. For our part, we can assert that the Red Cross action in which we take part is the art of strengthening the links which bind mankind together.

These two concepts constantly meet on common ground. What is more difficult is to put them into practice, for although they are themselves permanent and are not affected by the passage of time, their practical application depends on prevailing circumstances. In my opinion, it is essential to take account of "evolution", that important factor which is bound to modify the way in which ideas are implemented, even though the basic ideas may themselves remain unchanged.

As regards policy, for instance, history relates the changes in methods of government which have so far occurred in the various countries. Every government has endeavoured to find the best means of governing people and each has upheld its own theories which have often led to what we term today an "ideology", and have caused innumerable difficulties and disturbances throughout the ages.

The Red Cross, whose principal aim is at all costs to prevent suffering, has existed for only one century but although its purpose is still the same, one can already see changes in its methods of

action. It is obvious that the methods used by Henry Dunant when the Red Cross was founded are no longer appropriate today. Now more than ever before, "evolution" is a factor to be reckoned with, for in the past century the world has evolved at an unforeseeable pace.

The present era seems to be more particularly a scientific age; the tendency is to make a thorough study of effects in order better to understand the causes. And to my mind, although the Red Cross derived its impetus from a purely emotional impulse, if one is to strengthen the bond between those who wish to alleviate suffering and continue to be of service, one must now consider carefully how the Red Cross should adapt itself to present circumstances in order not to lose sight of the basic concept on which it is founded. And then will emerge the spirit of conciliation which is essential so that mutual understanding may more and more prevail among men of goodwill.

A glance at some recent activities of the Central Agency

As is well known the Central Prisoners of War Agency at Geneva had a very heavy workload during the last few months of 1956 and throughout 1957, largely due to the events in Hungary and the Middle East.

During the first six months of 1958, its activities slowed down to a more normal rate, and the Agency received 40,000 postal items as compared with 103,800 during the corresponding period of the preceding year. This decrease was due to a considerable extent to a reduction in the flow of work for the Hungarian section, which nevertheless continues to deal with from 800 to 1,000 cases each month. On the other hand, activity in the other sectors of the Agency continues at a steady rate and the cases which have to be dealt with are of a particularly diverse and complex character.

A great many former prisoners of war and military or civilian internees ask the Agency to obtain for them certificates relevant to their hospitalization during captivity for reasons of illness or because they were wounded. In order to obtain a disability pension from their Government, they must furnish proof that their physical impairment is a direct result of the war and of captivity.

After the end of the Second World War some Detaining Powers, immediately handed over to the Power of origin all the documentation relevant to the medical treatment of prisoners

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

of war who had been in their hands. Others, however, retained these records, which are still filed either in the official information bureaux or in hospital files.

Needless to say, the Central Agency does its utmost to assist those who ask for its help in order to retrieve their medical history or, failing that, to obtain supporting evidence for their own assertions. This requires long and difficult research, but the Agency's efforts are frequently crowned with success.

In this connection one can cite the case of an Italian soldier, Michele C., who was captured in Greece in September 1943 by the German Forces. His health had already been weakened by the time spent in the armed forces and the exhaustion of active combat and he had not the necessary resistance to stand the living conditions of captivity. He soon fell ill with a pulmonary infection of a tuberculous kind. He was first treated for several months in a civilian hospital in Greece which had been requisitioned by the occupation forces and was then transferred to Germany, where he had to enter hospital once more.

Michele C. was freed in 1945 and returned to Italy. He believed himself cured and it was only several years after his return that he again felt symptoms of the illness which he had suffered during captivity. An X-ray examination showed that he was so seriously ill that he could no longer work and was unable to provide for his four children. He had no documentary evidence, he could not remember exactly the names of the hospitals in which he had received treatment while he was a prisoner of war; how could he provide the necessary evidence in order to qualify for a war pension?

The Italian Red Cross referred this unfortunate case to the Central Agency which, in turn, began its research. The responsible German authorities, after careful search, were unable to find any trace in Germany of the medical records of Michele C.

Should one try to find some evidence in Greece? There was little chance of success, since the patient had been treated in a Greek hospital which had been requisitioned and was directed by German authorities and, consequently, his files must have been transferred to Germany. Nevertheless, at the request of

the Italian Red Cross the Agency made a further appeal to the Greek Red Cross, emphasizing the great physical and material distress of the person concerned.

Despite the great difficulty of the task, the Greek Red Cross instituted a careful search and, although it was unable to find relevant medical record, it was able to contact the former head nurse of the hospital at Patras, where Michele C. had been treated when he first fell ill. After fifteen years, this Greek nurse still remembered well the Italian prisoner, whom she had looked after for several months. To give more weight to her evidence she had an affidavit prepared by the justice of the peace, in which she specified the nature of the illness which had led to the hospitalization of Michele C. With this affidavit, Michele C. was at last able to substantiate his entitlement to a disability pension.

Once again, thanks to the active co-operation of all those who work under the Red Cross emblem, the Central Agency was able to assist a victim of war.

Among the many activities which the Agency pursues, we have already had occasion to refer to the evergrowing number of enquiries which it receives concerning persons originating in Eastern Europe, who were separated from their family during the war. Long and complicated research is required in these cases and they sometimes seem doomed to fail.

In 1951, an emigrant of Russian origin appealed to the International Committee of the Red Cross in order to obtain news of his mother, who used to live in a small village in the Caucasus. She had been taken away in 1943 by the German forces and had not been heard of since. Enquiries were made in co-operation with the responsible organizations, but they did not provide an answer and it seemed probable that the poor woman had lost her life during the hostilities.

As is its custom, however, the Central Agency kept this enquiry on file. In early 1958, a refugee wrote to the ICRC relating her tragic wanderings and asking for assistance. She had been taken away from the Caucasus in 1943 by the German forces and, finally, after much journeying she had reached

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

France. She had lost all contact with her son and did not know where he was, since he was enlisted in the Navy at the time of hostilities. They had been separated for fifteen years; was there any hope that he was still alive? The records of the Central Agency indicated some similarity between the case of the missing seaman and the information supplied by the emigrant who, seven years before, had appealed to the Red Cross to trace his mother. On the other hand, his mother's first name as given by him in no way corresponded to that given by the refugee who had written from France. Perhaps she had adopted another first name during her exile and this might have hindered the research. The Agency immediately contacted her in France and was able to establish that she was the same person. One can easily imagine the joy of this mother and son who found each other again, thanks to the index cards of the Central Agency in which are recorded thousands of items of information received from all parts of the world.

Thus Michele C., who was disabled, obtained the certificate proving his entitlement to a pension and an emigrant was reunited with his mother, whom he never thought to see again. Two files can be closed, while the Agency continues to receive hundreds of similar requests, hundreds of other cases to examine and to solve, hundreds of cases of suffering to be eased.

M. K.

RELEASE OF FRENCH PRISONERS IN ALGERIA

October 10, 1958. — The International Committee of the Red Cross has been officially informed of the decree issued by the provisional Government of the Algerian Republic concerning the unconditional release of French military personnel held prisoner by the ALN.

The International Committee—which has made constant efforts for the past three years to give assistance to all victims of the Algerian conflict—is prepared to take action as soon as possible and is now waiting to receive practical suggestions for the handing over of the released prisoners to its delegates.

October 17, 1958. — Last week the International Committee of the Red Cross announced that it was prepared to co-operate in the operations for the release and repatriation of French prisoners according to the recent decree of the provisional Government of the Algerian Republic.

In response to an appeal received today, the ICRC has instructed two of its delegates, Mr. Pierre Gaillard and Mr. Jean de Preux, Swiss nationals, to leave for Tunis on Saturday, October 18.

October 20, 1958. — At the headquarters of the Tunisian Red Crescent, four members of the French forces captured on January 11 during a combat at Sakiet Sidi Youssef—Jean

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

Jacob, Vincent Morales, Henri Relea and Jean Vialaron—were handed over to the two delegates of the ICRC, Mr. Pierre Gaillard and Mr. Jean de Preux, by the representatives of the “Algerian Red Crescent”.

This operation was carried out under the auspices of and in co-operation with the Tunisian Red Crescent. The representatives of the ICRC were accorded every facility by the Tunisian Government in this connection.

The former prisoners were taken immediately by a car (bearing the flag of the International Committee of the Red Cross) to the private residence of the French Ambassador. A little later they were taken back to their country by a French civilian plane.

ASSISTANCE OF THE CICR TO ALGERIAN REFUGEES IN MOROCCO

November 10, 1958. — A further mission of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the sixth since spring 1957, has just arrived in Morocco.

This mission is composed of Mr. Camille Vautier, resident delegate in Casablanca, and Mr. Germain Colladon, a delegate from Geneva.

As the winter season is drawing near, they will distribute to the Algerian refugees in Eastern Morocco relief supplies of food-stuffs made available by donations received from National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies.

In carrying out this further mission the delegates of the ICRC will again work in co-operation with the local authorities and the Moroccan Red Crescent, the National Society recently constituted.