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DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

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ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE DURING SEPTEMBER

The following were amongst the Committee's main activities during September :

Korea: The Delegate in South Korea visited the following camps, where he saw North Korean prisoners of war and civilians: ROK Processing Centre, September 2 ; EUSAK POW CAMP No. 1, September 5 ; Pow Transit Stockade, September 30 ; MAPO Collecting Station, October 1 ; Pow 64th Section Field Hospital, October 2,

In view of the increase in the work of the South Korea Delegation, a second Delegate, M. Jacques de Reynier, was designated and left Geneva for Korea on September 23.

Indonesia: The Committee's Delegate in Indonesia sailed on board a vessel transporting Indonesian Red Cross relief supplies for the Islands of Celebes, Ceram and Buru. Possible ways were examined of sending this Delegate to Amboina, where hostilities broke out at the end of September. If he succeeds in reaching Amboina, the Delegate will begin his work of assisting prisoners of war, civil internees, and in general, the victims of the conflict on both sides.

Bengal: After a short visit to Geneva for consultation, Dr. R. Marti, head of the Committee's mission in India and Pakistan, went back to Bengal. Accompanied by Mr. Hoffmann, Delegate, he visited the Governments and Red Cross Societies of Pakistan and India, at Karachi and New Delhi. From that town he proceeded to Calcutta, and will leave to inspect the Committee's missions in West Bengal, Tripura State and East Pakistan.

Greece: The ICRC Delegate visited two refugee camps in Greece: Syra, for Albanians, Bulgarians, Yugoslavs and Rumanians, and Della Grafia, in the Island of Syros, where refugees from Rumania are living.

Greek children: On September 18, the International Committee and the League of Red Cross Societies sent to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Organisation a joint report, for consideration by the General Assembly, on their work in connection with the Greek children.

Germany: The Delegate in the French zone visited camps (including Ehrenbreitstein and Ober-Thalhain) sheltering refugees of all nationalities. These camps are under German control.

Relief to Children in East Germany: Thanks to gifts of milk powder and fats from the Danish Red Cross, the American Friends Service Committee, and *Aide Suisse à l'Europe*, the Berlin Delegation was enabled to help 105 convalescent homes, children's villages and orphanages in the five provinces of the German Democratic Republic.

The Delegation has the following goods on hand :

Milk powder (Danish Red Cross gift). . . . 12,500 kilos

Fats (gift of the American Friends and *Aide*

Suisse à l'Europe 2,100 kilos

Germany: With funds provided by the Committee, the Bavarian Red Cross purchased clothing, underwear and footwear to the value of 10,000 Swiss francs. A local Section of the Bavarian Red Cross issues this relief, on behalf of the International Committee, at Furth im Walde, on the arrival of convoys of German-speaking evacuees from Czechoslovakia.

France: The Delegation in France completed the programme of relief provided by Geneva for German detainees in France by purchases in France to a total value of 800,000 francs. This brings to more than 100,000 Swiss francs the value of the relief supplies given this year to German detainees in France.

War-Disabled: The War-Disabled Section sent forty Braille watches to French war-blind, and acted as intermediary for the Australian Red Cross in buying in Switzerland fifty Braille watches for Australian blind persons.

Medical articles difficult to obtain in Vienna were sent to hospitals there for the use of war-invalids. Material for apprentices in technical designing were sent to Germany as part of the scheme for equipping workshops for the training of German war-disabled.

Refugees and Displaced Persons:

The Committee recently sent relief supplies to Polish and Hungarian refugees in Germany, Lithuanian refugees in Austria, and to refugees of various nationalities who are detained in Italy. The goods included second-hand clothing, streptomycin, sports gear and games, for those living in camps.

HENRI COURSIER

Member of the Legal Service of the International Committee of the Red Cross

RESPECT FOR THE HUMAN PERSON IN THE GENEVA CONVENTION OF AUGUST 12, 1949, RELATIVE TO THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIAN PERSONS IN TIME OF WAR

The idea of respect for the human person is at the origin of humanitarian legislation.

It is in virtue of the principle that a disarmed adversary must still, as a man, be respected, that the Geneva and Hague Conventions extended protection to the wounded and sick of armies in the field, and later, to prisoners of war.

Civilians remained ; the Hague Regulations on the Laws and Customs of War—drawn up before the transformation of war in later years—left them practically without defence against the dangers of “ total war ”.

The military wounded and sick, and prisoners of war were covered by specific treaties, which in general gave them, during the two World Wars, adequate protection and the humane treatment to which they were entitled. Millions of the civil population, on the other hand, suffered direct attacks on their persons.

Murder, outrages on women, deportations, the taking of hostages, reprisals, torture—there is a long list of crimes which revolted humanity, and especially during the second World War.

It is thus, that, when the International Committee presented a draft Convention for the Protection of Civilians in Time of War to the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference (Stockholm, August 1948), the Conference, in order to outlaw such

crimes, proposed that the Convention should be introduced by a statement of the regulations which constitute the foundation of universal human law.

The Conference proposed the following draft Preamble with this one object in view :

The High Contracting Parties, conscious of their obligation to come to an agreement in order to protect civilian populations from the horrors of war, undertake to respect the principles of human rights which constitute the safeguard of civilisation and, in particular, to apply, at any time and in all places, the rules given hereunder :

- (1) — Individuals shall be protected against any violence to their life and limb.
- (2) — The taking of hostages is prohibited.
- (3) — Executions may be carried out only if prior judgment has been passed by a regularly constituted court, furnished with the judicial safeguards that civilised peoples recognize to be indispensable.
- (4) — Torture of any kind is strictly prohibited.

These rules, which constitute the basis of universal human law, shall be respected without prejudice to the special stipulations provided for in the present Convention in favour of protected persons.

When the 1949 Diplomatic Conference took up this proposal, with the draft Conventions established at Stockholm, a long discussion arose as to whether this statement of the principles that are indispensable to ensure respect for the human person, should not be placed conspicuously at the head of the Civilian Convention, and of the other three Conventions also.

Delegates were unanimously in favour of the affirmation, in principle. They were even inclined, on the proposition of the French Délégation, to complete the Stockholm formula by adding to the acts solemnly prohibited :

- (1) — Deportations.
- (2) — Attacks against the dignity of persons, in particular humiliating or degrading treatment or discriminatory treatment based upon differences of race, colour, nationality, religion, beliefs, sex, birth or social status.

The Conference was, however, divided as to the form the Preamble should take. It was natural that those who derived the dignity of man from the idea of God, creator of man in His image, should wish to evoke this Divine principle, and that those who denied this principle should be opposed. Agreement proved impossible. The draft Preamble was abandoned, not, however, without affirming that all the essential prohibitions, referred to at Stockholm and Geneva, should be expressly mentioned in the text of the Civilian Convention.

This is actually done in Articles 27 (Treatment: General observations), 31 (Prohibition of Coercion), 32 (Prohibition of Corporal Punishment, Torture, etc.), 33 (Individual Responsibility, Collective Penalties, Pillage, Reprisals), 34 (Hostages), 49 (Deportations), 71 to 76 (Judicial Safeguards). Moreover, the discussions at Geneva gave these provisions an exceptional value, and they may well be considered henceforth as the "universal principles of human law" to which the Stockholm Conference had referred.

In commenting the Articles, we shall see how far they do in fact complete the general principles for the protection of civilians, as established by the Hague Regulations on the Laws and Customs of War. This will lead to certain considerations on the application of the Conventions and, going beyond the domain of the laws relating to war, on the application of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Articles 27, 31, 32, 33 and 34, embodying general principles, occur amongst the provisions which refer both to the territory of the Parties in conflict and to occupied territories (Part III, Section I)—in other words, they apply on the territory of each of the belligerents from the opening of hostilities, as well as on territory under enemy occupation afterwards. Article 49 only, referring to deportations, is placed in the Section which deals exclusively with occupied territories (Part III, Section III), because the forced transfers which it implies can hardly take place except under enemy occupation.

Judicial guarantees are included in Part III, Section III, dealing with occupied territories.

Article 27 has four paragraphs ; the first is as follows :

Protected persons are entitled, in all circumstances, to respect for their persons, their honour, their family rights, their religious convictions and practices, and their manners and customs. They shall at all times be humanely treated, and shall be protected especially against all acts of violence and threats thereof and against insults and public curiosity.

This text is faithful to the Stockholm Draft, with the addition, largely on the initiative of the Irish Delegation, of the mention of family rights, religious convictions and practices, and manners and customs ; it should be compared with Article 46 of the Hague Regulations, reading

Family honour and rights, the lives of persons, and private property, as well as religious convictions and practice, must be respected. Private property can not be confiscated.

Except that references to property and to persons¹ are separate in the new Convention, the above Paragraph 1 reproduces, in slightly more detail, the principle of Article 46 of the Hague Regulations, and proclaims the fundamental idea of respect for the human person.

During discussions of the Conference, the Mexican Delegation drew attention to the fact that the Article evoked the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and expressed satisfaction that the text was unanimously approved.

Paragraph 2 of Article 27 reads :

Women shall be especially protected against any attack on their honour, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution, or any form of indecent assault.

¹ See especially Article 53, one of the Articles dealing with occupied territories, which provides : " Any destruction by an Occupying Power of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons, or to the State, or to the other public authorities, or to social or co-operative organizations, is prohibited, except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations ".

This Article, discussed at length, adapts the idea of property to the evolution which has taken place since the Hague Regulations were drawn up. With this reserve, it reproduces the same principles and provisions.

There is no precise equivalent in the Hague Regulations, and this text opportunely enlarges the general terms of the latter: "Family honour and rights... must be respected.

The clause refers to practices set up during the War which, apart from outrages during actual fighting, forced thousands of women into prostitution. The International Alliance of Women and the International Abolitionist Federation protested against such practices and proposed to the Committee the wording of the Paragraph which, incorporated in the Stockholm text, was accepted unchanged by the Geneva Conference.

Paragraph 3 is as follows :

Without prejudice to the provisions relating to their state of health, age and sex, all protected persons shall be treated with the same consideration by the Party to the conflict in whose power they are, without any adverse distinction based, in particular, on race, religion or political opinion.

There is no equivalent in the Hague Regulations. The Paragraph aims at a final prohibition of those discriminations which, particularly during the recent War, led to suffering not imagined as possible at the time the Hague Conventions were signed. The clause is carefully worded so as to exclude discrimination only in so far as it is "adverse"—women for example, should clearly not, on the plea of establishing absolute equality, be deprived of the privileges their sex allows them to claim. Except for this *nuance*, Paragraph 3 is as in the Stockholm draft.

Paragraph 4 is different both from the Stockholm text and the Hague Regulations :

However, the Parties to the conflict may take such measures of control and security in regard to protected persons as may be necessary as a result of the war.

This clause was adopted at Geneva on the proposal of the United States and is a reserve which is repeatedly expressed in the Convention. The object is to recall the control and security measures which are permitted in the vital interests of the State, provided they do not attack the principle of respect for the human person.

Article 31 runs as follows :

No physical or moral coercion shall be exercised against protected persons, in particular to obtain information from them or from third parties.

This text, unchanged from the Stockholm draft, should be compared with Article 44 of the Hague Regulations :

A belligerent is forbidden to force the inhabitants of territory occupied by him to furnish information about the army of the other belligerent, or about his means of defence.

The new wording is more general, and is a marked improvement in International Law. The prohibition is no longer limited to the population of an occupied territory, but applies also to persons who are not citizens of a State, but happen to be on its territory at the outbreak of hostilities. Again, the prohibition is absolute, while in the Hague text it referred only to "information about the army of the other belligerent, or about his means of defence". One may conclude that the practice admitted up to now of an invading army forcing the inhabitants to act as "guides" is thus abolished. The practice is in any case officially discountenanced : the French "Officers' Manual", for example, considered it as difficult to reconcile with the respect due to the individual¹.

The prohibition of coercion was adopted by the Diplomatic Conference in the same terms as it had been accepted at Stockholm.

Article 32 is as follows :

The High Contracting Parties specifically agree that each of them is prohibited from taking any measure of such a character as to cause the physical suffering or extermination of protected persons in their hands. This prohibition applies not only to murder, torture, corporal punishments, mutilation and medical or scientific experiments not

¹ "Peu conciliable avec le respect dû aux personnes". See 1884 edition, p. 110 ; quoted by Fauchille, *Traité de droit international public*, Vol. II, p. 207.

necessitated by the medical treatment of a protected person, but also to any other measure of brutality whether applied by civilian or military agents.

Discussion of this important Article was opened at Geneva by the Soviet Delegation which declared in substance: "The crimes committed against the civil population during the last World War will remain indelibly in the memory of mankind as one of the worst stains on the history of humanity".

The Delegation estimated the number of civilians exterminated in Europe alone during the War at more than twelve million, and proposed that the Article should name all breaches as "grave crimes" and provide for their rigorous punishment. The United States Delegation, while agreeing with the spirit of the Russian proposal, proposed that the question of punishment should be confined to the Section of the Convention which deals with the matter of application; this was the course adopted. (See Part IV, Section I).

Discussion of the text—designed with the idea of preventing similar cruelties in future—none the less expressed unanimous reprobation of the acts condemned.

The text does much to complete the vitally important but too brief reference in Article 46 of the Hague Regulations: "... the lives of persons... must be respected". It also enlarges upon the Stockholm formula: "Torture and corporal punishment are forbidden", because it also covers biological experiments, which, under the guise of scientific research, are really an attempt to use human beings as guinea-pigs.

An Indian amendment proposed to delete the words "in their hands" from the end of the first sentence. According to the Indian Delegation, bombardments which, from a distance, strike down individuals who are not "in the hands" of belligerents, can cause death and suffering in the same way as brutality practised on persons actually held; accordingly, no limitation should be introduced. The proposal follows logically from that which the Soviet Delegation had presented, to the effect that all other methods of extermination of the civilian population should be prohibited. The Conference rejected both amendments, not for any lack of appreciation of the humani-

tarian idea involved, but because the question was posed in such a way as to exceed its terms of reference. International Conventions on the use of arms are quite distinct from the body of law represented by the Geneva Conventions.

The same argument was applied in the case of a Soviet proposal to prohibit the use of atomic weapons ; as a political agency was already dealing with this problem within the framework of the United Nations, the Conference did not consider that it came within its particular field.

The protection of civilians against the effects of bombardments raises questions very different from those which relate to the treatment of men by other men—the subject of the Article under discussion. The point at issue was to ensure that every person arrested, for whatever reason, by a civil or military authority, should be humanely treated. In this respect, Article 32 is as general as possible and mentions only, for the sake of example, the principal categories of offence committed during the War and henceforth prohibited.

Article 33 deals in three Paragraphs with collective penalties, pillage and reprisals. The first Paragraphs reads :

No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited.

This is much more comprehensive than the corresponding Article 50 of the Hague Regulations :

No general penalty, pecuniary or otherwise, shall be inflicted upon the population on account of the acts of individuals for which they can not be regarded as jointly and severally responsible.

As the Italian Delegation remarked, a Latin conception—in questions of punishment, responsibility must be considered individually—was substituted for the Germanic conception in the Hague Regulations, that in certain cases collective responsibility can be considered to exist.

The latter conception is particularly dangerous, because it allows the prosecuting authority to decide whether or not all

persons accused must be considered as sharing in the responsibility. The authority thus becomes to some extent both judge and prosecution, and the worst abuses may follow.

The question is bound up with that of reprisals (Art. 33, Par. 3), and was not dealt with expressly by the Hague Regulations. This Paragraph reads :

Reprisals against protected persons and their property are prohibited.

Reprisals—meeting one injustice with another—are admitted in International Law ; an unfortunate exception, as the *Oxford Manual* puts it, to the principle of equity that the innocent shall not be made to suffer for the guilty. But humanitarian organizations, and the Committee at all times, have invariably protested against reprisals on the victims of war, and especially on prisoners.

The 1929 Conventions, adopting a text proposed by the Committee, said that “ measures of reprisals against them (i.e. prisoners of war) are forbidden ” (Art. 2, Par. 3). The clause under discussion corresponds, and extends the safeguard, stipulated for prisoners, to civilians who likewise are victims of war.

Article 33, Paragraphs 1 and 3, thus considerably extend the scope of Article 50 of the Hague Regulations. They are a decided advance in affirming human rights, and the Italian Delegation especially, very rightly underlined their importance at the Conference.

Paragraph 2 states, very concisely

Pillage is prohibited.

The Hague Article 47 ran : “ Pillage is formally forbidden ”. The Conference considered it better to drop the word “ formally ”, in order not to weaken other prohibitions in the Convention which are not similarly qualified. As these prohibitions are all absolute, what may appear to be expressions of degree are superfluous.

Article 34 runs :

The taking of hostages is prohibited.

This did not give rise to any discussion at the Conference, and was adopted in the form suggested by the Committee at Stockholm.

The text is new in International Law. There was no corresponding express statement in the Hague Regulations, although certain authorities considered that Articles 46 and 50 of the Regulations (mentioned above) indirectly condemned the practice. It is none the less true that, in the recent War, hostages were often taken, and even executed.

This important question will be the subject of a separate paper in a forthcoming issue of the *Supplement*.

To the number of prohibitions dealt with above, deportation is now added ; it is the subject of *Article 49*, Paragraph 1.

Individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive.

This new text will be greeted with the greater satisfaction, in view of the physical and moral sufferings of the millions of displaced persons for whom the War, and particularly the system of forced labour, were responsible. Forcible transfers were already discountenanced in theory and are condemned by all manuals relating to the laws of war.

In spite of unanimity on the principle, the wording of the first Paragraph of Article 49 gave rise to some difficulty. The Hague Regulations were silent on the subject ; the Stockholm draft proposed :

Deportations or transfers of protected persons out of occupied territory are prohibited, whether such deportations or transfers are individual or collective, and regardless of their motive.

Certain Delegations pointed out that transfers might be beneficial to the people concerned, and they should be given the option of agreeing ; hence the word "forcible" in the first line.

Articles 71 to 76, dealing with judicial guarantees, occur in the part of the Convention which deals with occupied territories but, in the terms of Article 126, they apply "by analogy" to proceedings against internees who are in the territory of belligerents, when war breaks out or during hostilities.

Article 71 (Penal Procedure) states the principle (Par. 1) :

No sentence shall be pronounced by the competent courts of the Occupying Power except after a regular trial.

Article 72 establishes the right of defence. Its provisions include (Par. 1 and 3) :

Accused persons shall have the right to present evidence necessary to their defence and may, in particular, call witnesses. They shall have the right to be assisted by a qualified advocate or counsel of their own choice, who shall be able to visit them freely and shall enjoy the necessary facilities for preparing the defence.

Accused persons shall, unless they freely waive such assistance, be aided by an interpreter, both during the preliminary investigation and during the hearing in court. They shall have at any time the right to object to the interpreter and to ask for his replacement.

Article 73, Par. 1, deals with the right of appeal :

A convicted person shall have the right of appeal provided for by the laws applied by the court. He shall be fully informed of his right to appeal or petition and of the time limit within which he may do so.

Article 74 refers to assistance by the Protecting Power.

Article 75 provides for the right of petition for pardon or reprieve, and stipulates that a period of at least six months must elapse before execution. It is true that this period may be shortened in case of grave emergency, but only after communication with the Protecting Power.

Article 76 (Treatment of Detainees) deals with medical and spiritual assistance, relief, the provision of separate quarters for women, under the supervision of women, visits from Delegates

of the Protecting Power and of the Committee—the various elements which go to make up “humane” treatment.

All these safeguards were contained by implication in the Hague Article 43, obliging the occupant to take “all the measures in his power to restore and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety, while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country”.

But this text, with its two reserves, left far too much latitude to the occupant, and carried a great temptation to interpret the wording against the interests of the persons on trial.

The new text is completely different in being detailed and precise, and it provides adequate guarantees in law.

Penal sanctions applicable to these various provisions are given in *Articles 146 and 147*.

The importance of the stipulations in Articles 27, 30 to 34, 49 (Par. 1), and 71 to 76, is shown by the fact that their violation brings into operation the clause for the repression of “grave breaches”—in other words, what are usually referred to as “war crimes”.

Article 147 reads :

Grave breaches to which the preceding Article relates shall be those involving any of the following acts, if committed against persons or property protected by the present Convention: wilful killing, torture or inhuman treatment, including biological experiments, wilfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement of a protected person, compelling a protected person to serve in the forces of a hostile Power, or wilfully depriving a protected person of the rights of fair and regular trial prescribed in the present Convention, taking of hostages and extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly.

It will be noted that this passage contains elements of the various Articles commented upon. Moreover, persons prosecuted for grave breaches are given the benefit of the legal safeguards stated in *Article 146*, Paragraph 4:

In all circumstances, the accused persons shall benefit by safeguards of proper trial and defence, which shall not be less favourable than those provided by Article 105 and those following of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War of August 12, 1949.

Thus, the safeguards which proved themselves in the especially delicate case of prisoners of war, constitute a minimum which remains due, in virtue of the fact that they are men, even to those who violate the Convention.

In this way, the regulations which contribute to safeguarding the human person in spite of war and its dangers, are built up into a coherent system.

It should be noted, however, that in civil war or any other conflict which is not "international" in character, only the provisions of Article 3 will become applicable. These, in principle, do not bring the other Articles (which, according to Art. 2, are applicable only in international war) into operation. But Article 3 provides at least, that persons shall be "treated humanely without any adverse distinction founded on race, colour, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria".

There follows a list of acts which "are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever :

- (a) — Violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture.
- (b) — Taking of hostages.
- (c) — Outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment.
- (d) — The passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgment pronounced by a regularly constituted court, affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognised as indispensable by civilised peoples.

The obligation of treating persons "humanely" is accompanied by precisely the same prohibitions as are stated in the Articles which we have examined. The result is that, in case of need, the wording of these same Articles can be invoked by one or another of the adverse Parties to complete the provisions of Article 3. This would be a logical consequence of the close

analogies which exist between the list in Article 3 and the draft Preamble, the principles of which have been translated, as had been intended (see page 181), by the essential Articles commented above ¹.

We may say in conclusion that the substance of what in time of war would constitute "humane treatment" has been defined, and the respect due to the human person becomes an article of law in those circumstances where it is most endangered.

The vicissitudes of recent years have shown that even what were once considered self-evident principles of "natural law" must now be stated in black and white, not only in the regulations relating to war, but also in International Law, if they are to be respected in all times and places. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, approved and proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948, affirms in the opening lines of the Preamble that "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal, inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world". But the Declaration is as yet only "a common ideal to be attained by nations and peoples". The translation of the ideal into practice depends on International Conventions which are being drafted at Lake Success, the headquarters of the United Nations, and Strasburg, where the Council of Europe holds its sessions. Once again, on this vital question of respect for human dignity, the law formulated in the Geneva Conventions has led the way.

Already, the fundamental rights of the person have been written into a Convention signed by sixty-one nations—including all the Great Powers—who, divided in their general policies, have nevertheless been able to find agreement in this first statement of "human rights". There is no apparent reason why nations should hesitate to write into Conventions, which will be valid for all men and in all places, that which they have already agreed upon in regard to war and in respect to their enemies.

¹ Deportations (Article 49) are not, however, covered by this remark; although mentioned in the Preamble, they are omitted from the list in Article 3.

Thus, once again, the excellence is proved of the idea put forward by Henry Dunant, when he proposed in *Un Souvenir de Solferino* that a Congress should set forth a statement of principle, by international Convention, which, once agreed and ratified, would serve as a basis for Relief Societies to aid the wounded in the various countries of Europe. It was a vision of the future. His hope has been realised, not only in Europe, but throughout the world; not only for the wounded, but for all victims of war—prisoners yesterday, and now civilians. The creative idea of humanitarian law has been thus fulfilled in practice; it seems reasonable to hope that it should be the forerunner also of the effective application of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE AND BURMA

As has also happened in other areas in the Far East, accession to independence in Burma has been accompanied by political difficulties which on occasion have led to bloodshed. The rebellion of the Karens and other political groups opposed to the central Government, especially, has brought about widespread population movements; at present, more than half-a-million displaced persons are on the hands of the Rangoon authorities, who are trying to provide reasonable living conditions for them.

A Delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Dr. Marti, who studied conditions in Burma a year ago, has returned to Geneva after a further short visit. He brought back details of needs, especially in medical equipment and supplies. Thanks to certain funds made available to it for relief, the Committee has been able to send out four tons of medical supplies—sufficient to enable the Burmese Red Cross to set up four completely equipped clinics for refugee relief.

Dr. Marti was also able to visit groups of Karens in assigned residence and satisfy himself that they were being treated in

conformity with the Geneva Conventions (which henceforth apply also in case of civil war and disturbances).

A further object of Dr. Marti's mission was to examine with the Burmese authorities the question of repatriating certain Japanese prisoners of war still interned in Burma. This matter is now settled, and the remaining prisoners were leaving shortly for Japan.

REUNION OF DISPLACED FAMILIES

On October 6, 1950 German-speaking children coming from Jugoslavia crossed the Austro-Jugoslav frontier where a delegate of the International Committee awaited them. Seventy of the children were rejoining relatives in Austria, the others, relatives in Germany. This group brings to 201 the number of German-speaking children who, following representations made by the Committee, have, since last Spring, been enabled to rejoin their families.

Negotiations undertaken by the Committee in collaboration with the National Red Cross Societies concerned have also led to the reunion in Western Germany of a number of dispersed families. Since last Spring and up to September 9, 1950, 18,260 German-speaking residents from Poland were regrouped in the British Zone, and 9,794 from Czechoslovakia in Bavaria.

Geneva, October 6, 1950.
