



**REVUE
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SUPPLEMENT

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RED CROSS PRINCIPLES

II

1. Humanity

The Red Cross fights against suffering and death. It demands that man shall be treated humanely under all circumstances.

The principle of humanity stands out on its own in the doctrine of the Red Cross, and all the other principles hang from it. It is the fundamental basis of our institution, indicating both its ideal, the reason for its existence and its object. If the Red Cross were to have only one principle, this would be it.

Nevertheless, this notion has usually remained something understood but not actually expressed, and it is not mentioned in the traditional summary of Red Cross principles. Is this, one wonders, because it was so obvious, or simply that people are ashamed to display their feelings? In any case, we shall examine it, in all simplicity, both because this is necessary for our study and for fear that its importance might one day be overlooked.

In the first place, what exactly do we mean by humanity? Littré's dictionary defines it as a sentiment of active goodwill towards mankind¹. Subjectively it is a complex motive in which kindred elements such as kindness, pity, gentleness, generosity, patience, and mercy, are present in varying degrees. The word "humanity" is so exactly suited to the Red Cross

¹ « Un sentiment de bienveillance active envers les hommes. » (Littré.)

that we have chosen it in preference to any other, to describe the movement's essential principle, although the same word can be used to denote human nature, or even the human species as a whole. The word "charity", meaning love of one's, neighbour, might have been considered as an alternative and we shall often use it in the course of this study; but it has also taken on the meaning of "alms", and that might give rise to confusion in this particular case.

Humanitarianism, for its part, is simply this attitude of humanity laid down as a social doctrine and extended to mankind as a whole. Not only are its efforts directed to fighting against suffering and to freeing the individual from his bonds, but it has more positive aims, such as a more complete assertion of the personality and the winning of happiness for the greatest number¹. Resulting as it does from meditation on the highest forms of justice, and often displaying a complete measure of indulgence towards men on the grounds that their responsibility has not been proved, humanitarianism is the fruit of wisdom. It must be admitted that it is universal, if not absolute, in its significance, because a small amount of humanity at least is to be found deep down in every human being.

Considered from the most general point of view, the sentiment of humanity thus prompts each individual to act for the good of his fellow-men. To try to explain the origin of this urge would mean analysing the inner motives which determine the actions of a human being and that is a problem of moral and social philosophy which would divert us from our subject and which others, more qualified than the author, have already dealt with². We shall therefore confine ourselves to a few brief reflections.

It should be noted first of all that it is possible for all men, and all nations, to subscribe to the watchword formulated above, whatever their conception of life may be. Everyone,

¹ Stifled by a sense of guilt, the idea of happiness had been forgotten since antiquity, as St. Just pointed out at the end of the XVIIIth century.

² See Max HUBER, *The Good Samaritan*, Gollancz, 1943; Jean-G. LOSSIER, *Fellowship*, Geneva, 1948.

be he idealist or realist, believer or sceptic, will be able to do this, adopting his own approach ¹.

It is generally agreed that the sentiment of humanity is born of man's love for his fellow-men. But here is a further example of the poverty of language, once we have to deal with abstract subjects; most modern languages only have a single word—"love" in English—to express two notions which are as different from one another as love in the sense of desire and love meaning devotion. We are therefore forced to fall back on two words taken from the ancient Greek; *Eros* and *Agape*, both of which are translated as love ².

Eros is egocentric, passionate love, the desire to appropriate something for oneself, the search for one's own happiness. This feeling, which may take a very lofty form, governs the elective affinities, such as the love of a man and woman, or friendship. Its object may also be virtue, art, pleasure, knowledge or wealth.

Agape is altruistic, disinterested love, whose object is essentially people. The person who experiences it is not thinking of his happiness, but of that of the being he loves. This feeling sometimes demands a certain amount of self-control; it may result from an effort which we have been required to make; its object may even be the enemy or a criminal.

The sense which we give to the word "love" in these pages is naturally that of *Agape*. But feelings cannot be confined within strict limits. In actual life the two emotions will often animate the same person in varying degrees, and will thus be closely intermingled. It was necessary, however, to distinguish between them, in order to avoid perpetuating a source of misunderstanding which has already confused so many minds.

¹ Although there is general agreement on the necessity of acting for the good of mankind, it is less easy to decide, by common accord, what their "good" consists of. But this question is beyond the scope of the present work, since it hardly arises, fortunately, in connection with the Red Cross.

² See Max HUBER, *The Good Samaritan*, Gollancz, 1945, pp. 44 and 46; and Professor F. LEENHARDT, *Morale naturelle et morale chrétienne*, Alma Mater, Nos. 26 and 27, 1946.

The idea of loving one's neighbour occurs in the majority of the great ethical conceptions of the world¹. It certainly does not mean self-forgetfulness; for it is only through oneself that one can know a human being. It would be impossible either to love or respect others if one despised oneself. And since loving means giving oneself, spending oneself on behalf of others, one must be able to make a gift of a being who is sane, healthy and strong. Charity is an encounter, an exchange; the giver must be worthy of the one who receives the gift.

Nor is it necessary to appeal to the emotions, in order to recognise the advantage to men of endeavouring to improve each other's lot, or to note that the satisfaction derived by the individual from mutual aid is greater than its cost. Objective consideration of the experimental data drawn from community life based on majority agreement, leads one to the idea of fellowship as the ideal which social organisation must strive to attain.

The general precept of humanity is a source from which many other precepts of more limited application are derived, all of them aimed at preserving man's existence, and ensuring that his personality is respected and his destiny fulfilled. Such precepts include the principles we intend to study here: namely the principle which governs the work of the Red Cross and that which imbues the Geneva Conventions.

* * *

We began by stating that "the Red Cross fights against suffering and death". That principle determines the real work of the institution.

The reasons are easy to see. To do so, we must start from the fact that suffering and death are evils. Suffering must be understood to mean not only all pain, but also anything that affects the health or physical integrity, even imperceptibly. Cases where suffering is inflicted deliberately, on therapeutic

¹ We may note for example that for Christians and Jews, the commandment "Love your neighbour as yourself" is a solution in itself to all the problems which arise in regard to human relationships.

or re-educational grounds, should, however, be disregarded. It is thus legitimate to cause harm in order to avoid greater harm, and it is above all unnecessary suffering with which we are concerned.

Everyone knows suffering, that ancient and intimate enemy of man ; from his birth it follows him like a shadow, and one shudders to think of the indescribable accumulation of pain which has weighed down the human race since the beginning of the world. The most odious of all forms of suffering is that, born of cruelty ¹, which man inflicts deliberately.

While it has often been said that the Red Cross fights suffering, its struggle against death has been hardly mentioned. Yet that aspect of its effort is at least as important as the other. The supreme object of the Red Cross is to save lives. It does so both by its work of relief and by the protection it gives to those in enemy hands. But since death is, ultimately, unavoidable, it can obviously only be a question of delaying its arrival ².

Since suffering and destruction afflict the human species, the man who is moved by love of his fellow-men will endeavour to spare them such evils.

But the idea of the Red Cross is also a product of experience and reasoning. The conditions of life in a community, and the resulting sense of fellowship show the necessity of combatting man's brutal instincts and substituting the ideal of mutual aid. Advantage may be taken of his natural generosity in the interests of the greatest number, his feelings may be educated, and the sense of dependence developed by social ties may be directed into humanitarian channels. In the opinion of many people, this legitimate defence of itself by society may be extended to the community of nations as a result of their mutual interests.

¹ Montaigne wrote : " I bitterly hate cruelty, both naturally and by conviction, as the worse of all vices."

² The words " you, the enemies of death..." were once written to us by a sick woman.

Let us remember that under the Romans the average length of a human life was 20 years. It had increased to 40 years by the beginning of the XIXth century, to 45 years by 1900, to 57 years by 1920 and to 65 years by 1953.

Even if men remain blind to the inherent nobility attaching to the practice of charity, they may perhaps realize that in the end it is better "business" than giving free vent to their passions.

The reasons of the heart and those of the mind would thus seem to unite most happily in building up the Red Cross and to blend harmoniously with one another in the organization's manifold activities.

The latter extend from the immediate, improvised action of a single individual to carefully thought out activities organized on a world scale. When we speak of spontaneous assistance we at once think of Henry Dunant's gesture, bending over the wounded at Solferino on the evening of one of history's most bloody battles. This aspect of our work continues today: it is personified by the medical orderly who springs forward, weaponless, under enemy fire to save a wounded man. In these cases, the orderly suddenly sees the prostrate victim. He does not act on an order or after reasoning the matter out, but on an instantaneous emotional impulse. This is pity, the "feeling which grips one at the sight of suffering and inclines one to relieve it"¹. It is also called compassion, a "movement of the soul which makes you aware of the misfortunes of others"². Pity is, as it were, the precursor of love of one's neighbour.

But the Red Cross does not merely mean sacrificing oneself when a chance case of distress comes to light. It deliberately organizes the fight against afflictions. And more than this, it seeks out their deep-sealed causes, tries to prevent their ravages and works to deliver the world from them. All this demands persevering effort, reasoned discipline and a constructive sense. The Red Cross may thus be said to be, in truth, love allied to wisdom.

The Red Cross assembles under its flag all those who wish to serve the cause, although their original reasons for joining

¹ "Sentiment qui saisit à la vue de souffrances et qui porte à les soulager." (Littré.)

² "Mouvement de l'âme qui vous rend sensible aux maux d'autrui." (Larousse.)

the movement may vary. As Max Huber so rightly said, "the most varied standpoints of philosophical and religious thinking and human experience may lead us to the Red Cross idea, to the moral principle in visible form and the deed it implies and demands ¹.

But although each of us may subscribe to the principle of humanity, that does not mean that everyone puts it into practice, even apart from those who inflict the evil. For human nature is so imperfect that charitable action is constantly hampered or compromised. The first obstacle is, of course, egoism—the source of so many evils. In case of war, and even more so in case of civil war, the thin veneer of civilization scales off, the hatred and savagery of men come out on the surface, and the supreme values are in danger of being mercilessly sacrificed. Egoism sometimes takes the form of indifference which, though less blatant, kills in the end as surely as bullets themselves. Moreover, man is a past master at justifying his inaction by reasons which are most convincing, even to himself. One of them is to make fate responsible for the misfortunes which overwhelm his fellow-men.

And the Red Cross has other enemies. Some of them are unconscious of doing harm, which results from their lack of understanding. Others have the best of intentions, but lack imagination—that invaluable quality which allows us to put ourselves in the place of those who suffer, and feel their wound as though it was open and bleeding in our own side.

Certain moralists consider the action to be of no importance ; it is its lofty motive that gives it its value. For the Red Cross, it is the action and its result that count ; the spirit in which it is carried out matters little, all things considered. But the manner in which the action is accomplished is of the utmost importance to the person who is being assisted ². Poverty makes people more sensitive ; and infinite tact is required in caring for them and bringing them gifts. There is a need here, too, for humanity and intelligence. For a benefit clumsily

¹ Preface to the *Good Samaritan*.

² "La façon de donner vaut mieux que ce qu'on donne." (P. Corneille.)

bestowed may humiliate the person receiving it, or even be taken as an insult. The one who gives or helps must not let his pity become apparent to the man or woman who excites it. He must not appear conscious of the sacrifice he is making, but give joyfully, for joy is contagious and does good. It should not be difficult to adopt this attitude if he thinks that he is bringing a little happiness into a world in which there is much pain.

The definition we have given at the beginning of the present chapter serves another purpose: it determines the aims of the Red Cross, which alone enable us to define its character. It will thus be possible to assign limits to the work of the institution, and circumscribe its field of action. Such a delimitation is most necessary. The Red Cross aims at making the world a better place, but in certain respects only. It cannot be prepared to carry out all and every task that is considered to be of a charitable nature, but must on the contrary keep to specific duties which it must know exactly. It will thus guard against the danger of dispersed effort, which would be liable to diminish the results achieved in the field in which it can be most useful and so make it incapable of carrying out to the full the duties for which it is primary responsible. It must also be constantly on its guard against the danger of being drawn into shifting terrains where it would soon lose its essential character and its credit. The more the frontiers of a movement are extended, the more vulnerable it becomes, and the danger of mistakes and abuses grows in geometrical progression. The purity of one's intentions must always be tempered by an element of caution.

The principle of humanity¹, as we have expressed it above, suffices to embrace the whole work of the Red Cross, or at least that which it is carrying out in the world at the present time. For we should not in any way wish to exclude the pos-

¹ Here, and throughout this work, the words "principle of humanity" refer to the principle, inscribed at the beginning of the present chapter, governing the work of the Red Cross, and not to the general principle of humanity, which has a much wider sense.

sibility of it being one day called upon to develop still further, and carry out new tasks, perhaps unsuspected today. But as such tasks would necessarily remain in conformity with the fundamental aims of the institution, the principles of the Red Cross would retain their full value, and be applied to unforeseen cases by a simple process of extension.

The principle of humanity determines the work done by the Red Cross in wartime—its primary and essential vocation—and also that carried out in time of peace. On the national level, it dictates its medical and social work, and on the international plane, its work for the protection of those without defence. Its activities include reparatory action—the remedying of existing illness and distress and by far the greatest part of its work—and also preventive action: for the Red Cross does not confine itself to curing ill, but aims, especially by prophylaxy and hygiene, at preventing them from making their appearance and at maintaining health¹. Under this heading, we may also include its efforts to develop international law and spread abroad the spirit of peace. Furthermore, the principle of humanity is concerned not only with physical pain, but with the spiritual anguish which the Red Cross wishes to allay² when, for example, it supplies an anxious family with news of someone near and dear to them who is missing or in prison in some far-off land. It is, finally, valid whatever the cause of the suffering may be—whether it is due to the unleashing of natural forces, inadequate living conditions, carelessness or man's ill will.

¹ Article 25 of the League of Nations in Covenant, in which Member States undertook to promote the action of the National Red Cross Societies, defined the latter's object as follows: "The improvement of health, the prevention of disease and the mitigation of suffering throughout the world".

Moreover, the World Health Organization has given the following interesting definition at the beginning of the Preamble to its Constitution: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

² The Red Cross has limited its field of action to the human being; it does not undertake the protection of his belongings, or the monuments and other works of art and civilization; nor is it concerned with the protection of animals.

On the other hand, our definition excludes the welfare work on behalf of fit members of the armed forces which certain Red Cross Societies have undertaken, especially during the Second World War, such as sending parcels to the front or organizing the spare time activities of the army. Whereas the action of these Societies, originally confined to activities on behalf of wounded members of the forces ¹, has been extended very considerably in the course of the years, it has not always been concerned with the relief or prevention of suffering. Here they are devoting themselves in wartime to persons who are not really victims of the conflict; and no longer confining themselves to the care of their health. It is certainly most useful, and perfectly legitimate, to render the combatants these small services which make their hard and dangerous life more agreeable, and which they have a right to expect from the country they are defending. But would not other organizations do this just as well as the Red Cross? And it must be acknowledged that such tasks have only a very distant connection with its essential mission and original character. There is also the danger that they may, by imperceptible stages, one day lead to the institution engaging in operations which no longer have anything in common with its basic idea and might even have the effect of increasing the fighting capacity of the army ². The Red Cross does not look after men because they are combatants; it look after them, in spite of their having been combatants, because they are suffering and have been placed *hors de combat*. If, therefore, a Society undertakes accessory work of this nature, wishing by so doing to acquire resources or popularity which will in the end benefit its humanitarian work, it is to be hoped that it will carry it out unofficially. That is, incidentally, the solution to this problem introduced, after

¹ Historical accuracy requires us to say that in the first period of the Red Cross's existence, it was apparently admitted that National Societies should distribute relief to exhausted troops, open "refuges" for soldiers weakened by fatigue and privations, bring refreshments and comforts to forward posts and, finally, set up army laundries. (See G. MOYNIER: *La Guerre et la Charité* — Geneva 1867, pp. 259-266.)

² This argument is based on the principle of neutrality which we shall consider further on.

much discussion, in the First Geneva Convention of 1949, which laid down that the red cross emblem could only be used to cover activities in conformity with the institution's fundamental principles¹.

The principle we have expressed thus truly embraces the whole of the work of the Red Cross and is in fact even more comprehensive ; for the Red Cross does not fight against all forms of suffering, but more especially against one of its forms —namely, the suffering which man, left to his own devices, cannot avoid, against which he is without defence, as a child is, and of which he is a victim in the full sense of the word. On the other hand, the Red Cross does not concern itself to the same extent about the misfortunes which man can overcome by his own efforts, or about those he brings upon himself. Nor does it engage in a struggle against scourges which the organization of society is designed to overcome and which necessitate action by the public authorities and sometimes the use of force. Among the evils which afflict mankind, but which it is not the mission of the Red Cross to overcome, we may mention as examples : slavery, class oppression, poverty, lack of education, crime, vice and social evils.

A number of other private and public institutions are, moreover, working in the same field as the Red Cross. We may mention for a start the Army Medical Service, the State health services, doctors in civil life and the medical and paramedical professions as a whole. There are in addition many philanthropic bodies, national and international, religious and non-religious. The Red Cross has points in common with all of them. But it is essentially distinct from them, as we shall see later, on account of its universal and neutral character, the fact that its services are given free of charge and, in particular, the total absence of any discrimination in the selection of those it assists.

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¹ Article 44, paragraph 2.

“ The Red Cross ”, we went on to say at the beginning of the present chapter “ demands that man shall be treated humanely under all circumstances ”. The generous idea which the Red Cross incarnates and radiates all around it, goes beyond its own direct achievements. After trying to describe what the institution itself does for men, we must draw attention to the moral obligations it lays upon them in their own interests and to what it tries to obtain for them from the responsible authorities. For while it is right that the Red Cross should relieve distress, it would be still better if relief were not necessary.

Under this heading, we have the effort made by the Red Cross to develop humanitarian law, which requires that everyone should be treated humanely, that is to say, as a man and not as a beast ¹ or a thing, as an end in itself and not as a mere means to an end. The idea of humane treatment is a completely general one ². It nevertheless implies that a being is, to some extent, dependent upon other beings. It includes, first and foremost, an element of abstention, prescribing an attitude of reserve towards man : his life, physical and moral integrity, and well-being must be respected ; he must not be ill-treated or harmed in any way, and he must be prevented from suffering. But it also includes a positive element : it is necessary to protect him, come to his assistance, give him the care his condition demands, and recognize that he is a man. Humanitarian law is concerned with the individual, because he alone is capable of suffering and the happiness of a community is, after all, nothing more than the sum of many individual happinesses.

But does the Red Cross deny its principles, we shall be asked, as soon as wholesale slaughter begins ? Is it willing to see the flower of youth cut down on the field of battle ? The truth is that the Red Cross hates war and its triumphs more than

¹ We do not mean by this that it is legitimate to illtreat animals. One cannot indeed conceive of a person with humane feelings being cruel to one of our dumb brothers ; for they are as sensitive to pain as we ourselves are.

² The word “ treat ” obviously applies to living conditions as a whole and does not here refer in particular to treatment by a doctor, although it includes such treatment.

anything else in the world. Its ideal undoubtedly extends to all human beings, including combatants. But being powerless to overcome a scourge whose outbursts, while they fill it with horror, are beyond its control, it desires that amidst the fury of these evil forces, the essential principles of humanity should at least be safeguarded in regard to those who no longer have the strength to fight. Faced with an inexorable catastrophe, it strives to save what can still be saved. And it condemns the use of cruel, unnecessarily deadly weapons, even against the fighting forces. Since the idea of killing has not been renounced, let it be done without unnecessary suffering.

The Red Cross has thus been born of the miseries of war, and it is against the increasing ravages, against the dominion of war, that its efforts to develop international law, by creating the Geneva Conventions, have been directed. In order to ensure a minimum of respect for those suffering as a result of war, the Powers have agreed to be bound by a few essential rules of humanity.

The Geneva Conventions are inseparable from the Red Cross, in their origin as in their living reality. Hardly had the Red Cross come into existence, when it led to the creation of the original Geneva Convention: for what purpose would have been served by caring for the wounded, if the enemy could kill them? And who, under such conditions, would have ventured, absolutely without defence, into the front line to pick them up? In return, the Convention afforded the Red Cross legal protection. Since that time they have always moved forward on parallel lines, the one official and the other private. The International Committee of the Red Cross continued to be the promoter of the successive Geneva Conventions, and their principal artisan. In them it found the ratification of its efforts, the consolidation of its role and also the duty of assisting in their application. The international recognition of Red Cross Societies is conditional upon the accession of their countries to the Geneva Convention relating to the wounded in time of war. This Convention, in its turn, regulates the use of the red cross sign. And there are many other examples of this interpenetration.

On the other hand, the Red Cross and the Geneva Conventions have each retained their distinctive character, their own physiognomy. The Red Cross is only partly taken up with in the Conventions, and they, in their turn, contain a great many obligations between States, which do not directly concern the Red Cross, although they relate to persons to whose welfare the institution is dedicated. Although it is incumbent on the Red Cross to assist human beings, their fate will ultimately depend on the public authorities. It is the State that strikes down or protects, that condemns or acquits. Although the Red Cross took the initiative in regard to the Geneva Conventions, the States alone give the texts their final form and at the same time their effective force ; they alone bind themselves when they ratify them, and are, consequently, in control of them. This is so true that the Conventions can include matters which are alien to the Red Cross, or even elements which are contrary to its tenets or have, to say the least, been adopted without its consent.

In order to make community life possible, the world, unable to change man's nature, recognized from the outset the necessity of curbing his instinctive reactions by means of moral rules. The community accordingly imposed a social system on its members and set up an authority capable of ensuring that the system was respected. But at the same time it was necessary to set limits to the power of that authority. For while the supreme object of the State is the free development of individual personality, it is at the same time sometimes liable to crush it. Man had therefore to be guaranteed certain rights, certain fundamental liberties which he asks for himself and can therefore grant to others. Hence emerged the principle of respect for the human person ; respect for his life, for his liberty, security and, lastly, for his happiness.

This vast and slow process of evolution, the first condition for a better social system, after being long confined to the internal economy of each State, eventually reached the level of international relations and came to grips with war itself. It was thought necessary to spare man not only when he was in conflict with society, but also, in so far as this was compatible

with military exigences, when his country engaged in a struggle with another State. A rule gradually took form: the rule, namely, of respect for a disarmed enemy, which Jean-Jacques Rousseau enunciated so clearly in 1762¹.

A century later the founders of the Red Cross, by bringing into being the first Geneva Convention, helped to transform into international law what had until then depended only on custom and goodwill. At their instance it was solemnly proclaimed that from the moment a soldier is wounded, he is inviolable and sacred, and must be treated under all circumstances with humanity. These pioneers, who knew how to temper boldness with caution, deliberately limited their ambitions to this first objective for a start, intending, in the event of success, to tackle the other aspects of the problem at a later stage. At that time, therefore, the principle already existed, in posse, in its widest acceptation. It was later extended, by degrees, to ever wider categories of persons and to new circumstances. This process is, incidentally, far from being at an end.

The authors of the Geneva Convention at the same time encouraged the general development of all humanitarian international law, which took shape by stages through the conclusion of pacts common to all States². Nevertheless, during the last few decades, one has seen individuals, in their own countries, being less well treated, and provided with fewer safeguards, than members of an enemy army, captured with weapons in their hands. By a singular turn of events, it now appears necessary for the international law which was drawn up to preserve the rudiments of civilization even in wartime,

¹ " War is in no way a relationship of man with man but a relationship between States, in which individuals are only enemies by accident, not as men, but as soldiers... The object of war being the destruction of the enemy State, one is entitled to kill the latter's defenders as long as they are carrying arms; but as soon as they lay them down or surrender, they cease to be enemies or agents of the enemy, and again become mere men, and one is no longer entitled to take their lives..." (*Contrat Social*, Book I, chapter IV.)

² The " Instructions for the government of the armies of the United States in the field ", drafted by Francis Lieber and adopted in 1863, also exerted a salutary influence in this connection. See H. COURSIER, *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, May 1953, p. 377.

to be extended to peacetime conditions and to the nations' internal affairs¹.

International humanitarian law includes, on the one hand, the law of war, consisting mainly of the Hague and Geneva Conventions, and on the other, the rules for the safeguard of human rights in general, drawn up under the auspices of the League of Nations and later of the United Nations. The law of war starts from the premise that belligerents are not to cause the opposing side harm out of proportion to the object to be achieved.

The Geneva Conventions which constitute the major part of the law of war—at any rate as regards volume—are traditionally devoted to the protection of all war victims² and, in a wider sense, to that of certain weaker elements, in no position to do harm and in need of special care, such as the sick, infirm, children, old people or expectant mothers. Indeed, the legal movement which started in Geneva has, with the 1949 Convention for the protection of civilians, actually encroached to some slight extent on the territory of the Hague provisions defending civilians as a whole against excessive use of authority on the part of the Occupying Power. It might, for that matter, be claimed not unreasonably that civilians become to some extent victims of war through the mere fact of being under military occupation.

While admitting that the legitimate self-defence of States justifies certain restrictions being placed on the free exercise of personal rights, such restrictions must not go beyond what is necessary for the security of the State. It is the special

¹ The effect of the Geneva Conventions has been extended in part to civil wars. This is a decisive step forward. Advancing one step further, the International Committee of the Red Cross has recently consulted experts as to the possibility of improving the lot of civilians arrested and detained in their own country following civil disturbances. It is to be hoped that one day the Powers will accord at all times and to all men the benefits they have already agreed to grant to their enemies in time of war.

² Although the Geneva Conventions also protect medical officers and medical personnel of the armed forces, this is in order to protect the wounded and sick. That is the sole justification for the privileged position accorded to the medical and nursing services.

function of the Geneva Conventions to fix that limit, to provide rules governing this treatment of man by man and to work out a compromise between military requirements and the dictates of the modern conscience. Their governing principle may be expressed in the following words: persons placed out of action and those taking no direct part in the hostilities must be respected and humanely treated¹. This definition covers soldiers unable to take part in the struggle, through wounds, sickness, shipwreck, capture or the fact that they have surrendered; it also covers civilians who are making no particular contribution to the war potential of their country. Indeed, on one important point, it actually goes further than the Geneva Conventions. For the Fourth Convention is more particularly concerned with the protection of civilians against the abusive use the enemy authority might otherwise make of its power in its dealings with them. It is only the most inoffensive beings, those most deserving of pity, which are protected by this Convention from the dangers resulting from recourse to arms. On the other hand, measures designed to make war more humane, involving the prohibition or limitation—even in their use against combatants—of certain weapons of a needlessly cruel nature or which cause mass or blind destruction, is another sector of humanitarian law that is included in the definition given above. And the Red Cross is by no means disinterested in this aspect².

The Geneva Conventions are, too, inspired by the sentiment of humanity. There is no call to repeat what we have already said on the subject. Here as elsewhere mere considerations of expediency undoubtedly play a role. The Conventions are not merely the expression of a moral ideal; their existence may also be explained by the mutual and clearly understood

¹ See Article 3 (1), common to all four Geneva Conventions of 1949.

² In 1950, for example, the International Committee of the Red Cross addressed an appeal to the Powers, asking them to agree to the prohibition of the atomic bomb and blind weapons. Furthermore, it has, with the assistance of international experts, resumed its work on improving the legal protection of the civilian population against the dangers of modern warfare and on the limitation of aerial bombardment. A draft International Code of Rules is in process of preparation.

interest which States have in sparing war victims and treating them properly. This is an idea on which all nations which have emerged from their primitive state of ignorance can agree. The rules of chivalry and military honour which condemn attacks on those who are unable to defend themselves, also play their part. Finally, it should not be forgotten that although modern international law came into existence under the influence of christianity, it was built up solely in the name of human reason and had many precedents in the customs of various nations of antiquity ¹.

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(To be continued.)

¹ In India, for example, the law of Manu, a legal treatise, and the Mahâbhârata, an epic poem, both very ancient, proclaim the principle of respect for a disarmed enemy. And during the Crusades, Sultan Saladin had the wounded cared for without distinction of nationality. See *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, November 1951, p. 869; April 1955, p. 250.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

News Items

M. J. de Reynier, who represented the ICRC in the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, returned to Geneva on June 28, after having introduced his successor, M. A. Durand, to the Viet Nam authorities in Hanoi.

It will be recalled that M. de Reynier's mission in that area started last summer at the time when the exchanges of prisoners took place after the conclusion of the Geneva Agreement. He had to establish contact with the authorities and the Red Cross Society of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, in particular with Mr. Pham Van Dong, Vice-Premier and Minister for Foreign Affairs, who entrusted to the National Red Cross the task of discussing with him all questions concerning his work. He pursued his discussions with Mr. Nguyễn Co Thach, Principal Private Secretary of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Ton That Tung, Vice-Minister of Public Health and President of the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, and also with M^{me} Nguyễn Thi Yên, Secretary-General of that Society.

With regard to relief supplies, it has already been mentioned in these pages that, on May 13, M. de Reynier handed over a ton of medicaments, donated by the ICRC, to the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. Mention should also be made of a gift from Indonesia, which arrived at Gia Lâm airport on August 25. Other gifts are on the way from Saigon to Hanoi.

On June 17, M. de Reynier and M. Durand were received in audience by the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ung Van Khiem, who cordially welcomed the representatives of the ICRC; the following day about sixty guests from governmental, diplomatic and Red Cross circles were present at a reception given by the delegation.

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Following the operations engaged in by the Government forces against those of the religious sects, M. de Preux, ICRC delegate for South Viet Nam, requested the Saigon Government's authority to visit prisoners in the hands of the regular troops.

While awaiting authority to assist persons thus deprived of their liberty as a result of recent internal disturbances, M. de Preux presented the Viet Nam Red Cross with a sum of 100,000 piastres, donated by the ICRC for the purpose of setting up a dispensary in Cholon. A first-aid post already existed in that suburb of Saigon, on a site near a pagoda whose officiants had lent it to the Viet Nam Red Cross, which gives treatment there to a large number of sick persons from the neighbourhood. When the building, which is being planned, has been set up, the Society will be able to pursue, in more favourable conditions, its charitable work on behalf of the sick in Cholon, which could be extended to include the care of the wounded if the serious disturbances which affected this area during the past months should break out once more.

In regard to relief for refugees—over 800,000 in number—M. de Preux has taken up the post of honorary representative of UNICEF, previously filled by his predecessor. He is principally concerned with the supervision of the vast emergency plan set up by this organisation (a specialized agency of the United Nations) to assist refugees, in particular by supplying them with milk, cotton fabric and mosquito-netting. In this connection M. de Preux recently visited several camps in the South West provinces of Cochin-China, and in Baria (in the Cape St-Jacques area).

He also visited the resettlement centre of Cu-Chi, not far from Saigon, which is, in fact, an agricultural colony and a town in the making where a few dwellings and the first school have already been erected. This hard-working and well-disciplined population

of thirteen thousand refugees, whose living conditions are still very precarious, is engaged in carrying out this large scale project which has been planned in the most minute detail. The French Red Cross Society has set up a dispensary, pending the erection of a hospital (for which the plans are ready).

Apart from his work in connection with the UNICEF emergency programme, M. de Preux has been asked by that organisation to help with its permanent programme which includes the building of a hospital for children, a child welfare centre and a series of BCG vaccination.

The ICRC has also received various gifts on behalf of the South Viet Nam refugees. The Town Councils of Neuilly-sur-Seine and Issy-les-Moulineaux each sent it 100,000 French francs. M. de Preux handed over the equivalent in piastres of these donations to the Philippine medical team of "Operation Brotherhood", which was sent to Viet Nam by the Junior Chamber of Commerce, Manilla. These two gifts will be used for the purchase of medicaments and for assisting refugees in South Cochin-China and the central area of the country.

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Seven Greek children who left Bucharest in charge of a delegate of the Rumanian Red Cross Society, in order to join their parents in Australia, arrived in Vienna on July 20. They were received in that city by M. Joubert, delegate of the ICRC, who carried out the necessary formalities to enable their journey to be continued via Trieste, where they embarked on August 8.

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Acting on behalf of the ICRC and the League, M. Pierre Jequier recently took part in the repatriation of 33 Greek children from Rumania. Joining forces with a delegation of the Jugoslav Red Cross, headed by Dr. Milorad Vljakovic, he proceeded, on August 9, to Kikinda, on the Rumanian frontier, the point of arrival of the convoy, which was accompanied by M^{me} Aurelia Papp of the Rumanian Red Cross Society. On reaching Djevdjelija,

they found a delegation of the Greek Red Cross Society, headed by Mr. G. Moustakas, Secretary-General of the Salonika Branch, awaiting them. M. Jequier accompanied the convoy to the latter city where the local Red Cross, under the direction of its Vice-President, Mr. C. Anghelakis, had made all necessary arrangements for the children's prompt reunion with their parents.

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M. N. Burckhardt, appointed by the ICRC to the directorship of the International Tracing Service, and accredited by the International Commission which administers that organisation, took up his post in Arolsen on July 25. He has been joined by two members of the International Committee's staff, M. A. de Cocatrix and M. G. Hoffmann, who will henceforth be attached to the ITS administrative services.

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During the month of August the number of persons who have benefited from the action for the re-uniting of families reached 100,000.

It will be recalled that the object of this action—launched by the ICRC in 1949, with the collaboration of several Red Cross Societies and thanks to the understanding attitude of the Governments concerned—is the re-uniting of families belonging to German-speaking ethnical minorities, established in several East European countries, and dispersed after the war on account of the mass removal of populations.

So far 19 countries, both Eastern and Western, in Europe and overseas, have taken part in this Red Cross action by facilitating the departure or the reception of these war victims.

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In order to complete various gifts of laboratory and hospital equipment, in July last the ICRC sent the Yugoslav Red Cross Society an autoclave valued at Sw. Fr. 14,000.

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Discussions have been arranged, within the League Executive Committee, on the subject of the Red Cross Societies' action in the field of civil defence. The initiative of promoting discussions among members of the Red Cross on the technical protection of the civilian population in the event of war was taken by the League on the suggestion of some National Societies. The ICRC is pleased to associate itself with the preparation of this meeting, in particular the Agenda. The latter will refer, not only to the activities which are, strictly speaking, incumbent on Red Cross Societies in the field of civil defence and their relations, in carrying out this work, with Governments and private agencies, but also to the duties which fall to National Societies under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

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M. Frédéric SiorDET, Member of the ICRC, represented the International Committee at the 22nd Congress of the World's Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations, of which the meeting held in Paris from August 16 to 22 coincided with the centenary of this vast association. A special link exists, as we know, between the Red Cross and the World's Alliance, since the latter's act of foundation, dated August 22, 1855, known as the "Paris Basis", bears the signature of Henry Dunant. Mention may also be made of the successful collaboration which existed between the two institutions during the Second World War, particularly in connection with intellectual relief for internees and prisoners of war.

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In 1944, the ICRC sent a questionnaire concerning relief for disabled ex-servicemen to the authorities and Red Cross Societies of the countries signatory to the 1929 Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armies in the Field. In 1946 it published, under the title "Documentation relative à l'assistance aux invalides de guerre", the replies received from twenty countries. An English version of this collection,

with the addition of documents received from seven other countries (Report on Assistance to War-Disabled"), was published in 1949.

Since then, replies from two more countries have reached the ICRC through their National Red Cross Societies, that is to say, the German Federal Republic and, more recently, the German Democratic Republic. An English translation of these last two replies will shortly be sent to National Societies, as a complement to the volume published in 1949.

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In the course of his mission in Guatemala last summer, M. P. Jequier, delegate of the ICRC, was approached by the Red Cross Society of that country with regard to the prostheses required by three members of the Guatemalan forces who had been seriously wounded during the late disturbances, and had recently been amputated. As soon as the War Disablement Section of the ICRC was in possession of the necessary measurements, an order for the artificial limbs was sent to a London firm of specialists. In June the President of the Guatemalan Red Cross Society, M. Roberto Saravia, presented the artificial limbs to the recipients during a ceremony which took place at the Guatemalan Military Hospital. In a letter just received, this National Society sends it sincere thanks to the ICRC and states that the artificial limbs fit perfectly—a remarkable achievement in view of the fact that the orthopaedists' work was based on measurements only.

The Guatemalan Red Cross Society also informed the ICRC of its need for artificial eyes. Fifty temporary artificial eyes were sent to it in January.

The total value of the International Committee's gifts amounted to some 2,800 Swiss francs.

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The Philippine Embassy in London informed the ICRC, in a letter dated July 27, 1955, that its Government had designated the Philippine Red Cross Society to act as the National Agency for the distribution to former prisoners of war of compensation

provided under Article 16 of the Peace Treaty with Japan. It will therefore fall to this Society, in the first place, to consult the ICRC, with a view to fixing, with the latter's approval, the procedure for the distribution of the funds to be allocated (in application of Article 16) as compensation for former prisoners of war, and then to ensure the actual distribution of the funds. The Society has thus been entrusted with a task that is important, not only on account of its special nature, but also because the Philippines were one of the States where a considerable number of nationals had been held as prisoners of war by the Japanese forces.

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For the sixth time in succession the ICRC made trial broadcasts on July 12, 14 and 16, over the wave-length (41.61 m.-7210 kcl.) allocated to it by the Federal PTT Department in Berne.

Full information concerning the broadcasts—over a thousand advices were sent to European and neighbouring countries—had been despatched to National Red Cross Societies, amateur Radio Associations, Swiss Legations abroad and private listeners. The number of listeners increases following each series of trial broadcasts, made for the purpose of testing audibility and propagation over the wave-length allocated to the ICRC.

It has been possible to make these broadcasts since 1951 thanks to the understanding attitude of the Federal PTT Administration, the Swiss Broadcasting Society and Radio-Genève. They are repeated for three days, in the morning, at midday, in the afternoon and in the evening.

At the International Committee's request, some Red Cross Societies and private listeners were good enough to make recordings of all or part of the broadcasts. The recordings were examined by various technical services in Geneva, and brought to light some extremely valuable details. Reception Reports on the last broadcasts are now being received by the ICRC Broadcasting Section in Geneva; the reports emanate, in particular, from Japan, New Zealand, Australia and the United States, but it would be premature, at the present time, to draw any general conclusions on the subject.

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Mlle A. Pfirter, Head of the ICRC War Disablement Section, took part in the annual meeting of "La Source" (the Swiss Red Cross Nursing School for French-speaking Switzerland) in Lausanne. She thus had the opportunity of conveying the best wishes and congratulations of the International Committee to Sister Julie Hofman, a recipient of the Florence Nightingale Medal, which was presented to her during the ceremony by Dr. Schauenberg, Vice-President of the Swiss Red Cross Society.

It may be recalled, in this connection, that when the relevant documents have been received, the *Revue internationale* will publish an article on the various ceremonies held in connection with the fifteenth distribution of the Florence Nightingale Medal, which was awarded this year to twenty-eight nurses of seventeen different nationalities.

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During the first six months of the present year, the ICRC has distributed or transmitted some 20 tons of relief supplies—foodstuffs and clothing—to recipients in eleven countries. The total value of this relief amounted to about 116,000 Swiss francs. The International Committee's contribution, included in this amount, was over 83,000 Swiss francs.

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The medical relief supplies distributed by the ICRC during the past half-year reached 11 tons, representing 223,000 Swiss francs in value. The distributions included collective relief (medicaments, dressings, surgical instruments, X-ray apparatus and laboratory equipment) as well as individual parcels of pharmaceutical products, of which 3,927 were despatched over the period mentioned.

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It will be recalled that, in 1954, the *Revue* published a special number in Arabic. In view of the interest which this publication aroused in the Moslem world, and the numerous messages of appreciation sent to us from Arab-speaking countries, the *Revue* decided to pursue its effort in this direction. A further edition

in Arabic has recently been published therefore, a number of National Societies having, once again, been good enough to lend their kind and valuable co-operation.

The edition, illustrated with some very interesting photographs, reveals the varied activities of Arab-speaking countries in the humanitarian field. We trust that this publication will thus enable the Red Cross and the Red Crescent to diffuse, over a continually wider field, the principles of mutual aid and fellowship among mankind.

A publication of this description also makes it possible to inform Arab-speaking countries of the work done by the International Committee, to which one chapter is devoted. An article entitled "What is the International Red Cross?" describes the formation of the international structure of the Red Cross. A study by Dr. M. H. Heykal, ex-Premier of Egypt, under the title, "Commentary on the role of the Red Cross", closes the first part of the issue.

In the second part there are various accounts by National Societies of their work in 1954, that is to say; in the case of Pakistan: assistance to refugees, flood victims, sick persons and sick and crippled ex-servicemen; for Iraq: the children's welfare centre; Afghanistan: public health and medical activities; Indonesia: the development of the blood transfusion service; Jordan: enlargement of Amman hospital; Syria: mobile medical ambulance services; Lebanon: the progress of the Nursing School; and Egypt: relief action in favour of the victims of the terrible floods which occurred in the Kaneh area.

This information is followed by news concerning Middle East States where National Societies have not so far been formed (Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Libya), but where, it is hoped, they will soon be created.
