



**REVUE**  
**INTERNATIONALE**  
**DE LA**  
**CROIX-ROUGE**

**SUPPLEMENT**

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# INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

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## THE ICRC RELIEF ACTION IN HUNGARY

“The events in Hungary have deeply moved the world. From all sides generous and spontaneous offers of assistance are flooding in to the central organizations of the Red Cross”, said the President of the ICRC on 29 October, 1956, in a statement on Radio Geneva, after the Budapest rising, explaining how the Committee would assist the victims of the events through Hungary. “Already”, he added, our delegates are in Budapest. The information they obtain on the spot will enable us to bring to the victims, whatever their origin or opinions may be, the plentiful supplies coming in from all sides and particularly from the National Societies of the Red Cross, advised by their federation, the League. Thus the universal urge to help will find expression in rapid and effective action based on the desire to assist the suffering”.

However, while the International Committee wished to bring to the Hungarian people immediate assistance on the scale their needs required, it realised that seriousness of the situation would probably make it difficult to accomplish its traditional tasks of assistance and protection. To try to ensure that at least some of the principles of humanity were observed when force was unleashed, from 31 October onwards it broadcast on its own wavelength reminders of some of the fundamental principles embodied in the Geneva Conventions and binding on all peoples.

In the last number of the *Revue internationale* we were already able to include various items of information regarding the ICRC relief action in Hungary, but now that we have more information at our disposal and that the action has developed considerably in scope, we consider it a suitable time to publish a general review of the ICRC's activities since the end of October 1956.

## THE VIENNA-BUDAPEST AIR LIFT

During the afternoon of Sunday, 28 October, the ICRC in Geneva received an appeal from the Central Committee of the Hungarian Red Cross asking for immediate assistance for several thousand victims and stating that preparations were being made to permit a Swiss plane to land next morning at the aerodrome of Ferihegy-Budapest.

The International Committee forthwith appealed to twenty-six National Societies of the Red Cross, and, after making the necessary arrangements in agreement with the Swiss Federal authorities and the Swiss Red Cross, which was to play a very active part in all these events, chartered an aeroplane, the crew of which volunteered for the task. It was decided to take off that very evening. Late on Sunday, 28 October, the ICRC plane, loaded with supplies and accompanied by an ICRC delegate, left Klotten for Vienna. It had been arranged that two Hungarian aircraft, also carrying supplies, would escort the Swiss plane from Vienna to Budapest. On the morning of Monday, 29 October, the first consignments from the International Committee reached Budapest. During Monday and Tuesday the ICRC Vienna-Budapest airlift worked satisfactorily and on the evening of the 30th the Hungarian Red Cross announced that it had already gratefully received 90 tons of blood plasma, dressings, medicaments, foodstuffs and blankets, all carried by the Swiss plane and its two Hungarian escorts.

Another two-way flight took place on the Wednesday morning, but that evening during its sixth run the ICRC plane was unfortunately obliged to turn back, since permission to land had not been granted.

From that time onwards the Budapest aerodrome could not be used and on Thursday the airlift ran no more. However, the DC3 remained on the airfield at Vienna ready to take off if it should again become possible to send supplies, but the route was no longer free. With some misgivings the International Committee decided on Saturday 3 November to send the plane back to Switzerland.

## THE ICRC DELEGATES

The ICRC in Geneva was in constant touch with Vienna, where the Austrian Red Cross has shown untiring devotion, and with Budapest. In Austria it was represented by Mr. Joubert and it was intended to send several delegates to Hungary. Mr. Beckh arrived in Vienna during the afternoon of Sunday, 28 October; Mr. Bovey

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had followed immediately in the ICRC plane and reached Vienna on Monday morning. The task of these two delegates was to accompany into Hungary the consignments sent from Geneva by the ICRC and the supplies from various sources assembled in Vienna by the Austrian Red Cross.

On 29 October Mr. Beckh accompanied Mr. Bovey on the ICRC plane's first flight to Budapest-Ferihegyi, where they handed over the supplies to members of the Hungarian Red Cross. Information obtained on the spot enabled them to draw up a preliminary list of the needs of the people of Budapest. The Swiss and Hungarian aircraft were sent back to Vienna for further supplies, of which the Hungarian Red Cross took immediate charge each time.

The two ICRC delegates thus made several return trips by air between Vienna and Budapest to accompany relief supplies. They also visited in Hungarian hospitals persons wounded in the recent fighting.

On 30 October Mr. de Preux who had been sent from Geneva, Mr. Ammann, head of the Relief Section, who had interrupted his mission of assistance in Greece, and Mr. Meyer, a former delegate who had offered his services temporarily to the International Committee, came to reinforce the delegation in Vienna, while Mr. Beckh and Mr. Bovey strove to extend their activities to the various parts of Hungary.

Mr. Beckh drew up a complete list of the requirements of the people in Western Hungary and established a preliminary plan for sending relief columns. In the regions near the Austro-Hungarian frontier at Győr, his presence prevented summary executions and he obtained a written undertaking from the leader of the Hungarian combatants that the Geneva Conventions would be respected. At Sopron he visited detainees and then went back to the ICRC delegation in Vienna to deal with the refugees who were beginning to flood in.

After the frontier had been closed, he visited all the refugee reception centres or camps of any size in Austria so that by 4 November the ICRC representatives were able to state what would be required. On 7 November he returned to Geneva.

At Budapest Mr. Bovey had remained in touch with the Hungarian Red Cross and the representatives of other Red Crosses. There was much remaining to be done in supplying the hospitals with medicaments, foodstuffs and medical stores. The situation in the Hungarian capital was becoming critical. The general strike had interrupted transport and there was a risk that supplies for one-and-a-half million inhabitants might no longer be certain. In this situation Mr. Bovey was rejoined at Budapest by Mr. de Preux who had twice succeeded with an ICRC driver in crossing the frontier with a medical and supply convoy of the Austrian Red Cross.

On Sunday, 4 November, Russian troops reoccupied Budapest and the delegates were no longer able to send us news of their activities. It was not until 12 November that they managed to reestablish contact with Geneva.

#### THE FLOW OF RELIEF SUPPLIES TO VIENNA

On 30 October the Committee had received a telegram from the Hungarian Red Cross thanking the ICRC for its assistance to the Hungarian people in their distress. A list of requests followed "Have lost all vehicles need as far as possible ambulances lorries and all types of motor vehicles, surgical instruments, X-ray equipment, aureomycin, anti-tetanus serum, vitamins, baby foods, condensed milk, fats, building materials, timber, cement and glass. Please transmit National Societies".

A new appeal went out to the National Societies immediately.

While gifts in money and offers of help came to Geneva from many organizations, collections had been made in numerous countries and Vienna became the main centre to which aid for Hungary flowed.

By 31 October the amount of relief received in Vienna was estimated at 1,200,000 Swiss francs. Other gifts to the value of 1,500,000 francs had been promised. A month later the gifts had reached a total of more than 40 million Swiss francs in value and more than 1730 tons in weight, made up of 810 tons of foodstuffs, 510 tons of medicaments and clothing and 410 tons of equipment for relief camps, and coming from the National Societies of the Red Cross of almost 50 countries.

An idea can be gained of the scale of this movement of goodwill from the following list of countries and territories which have taken part in the action:

Argentina - Australia - Austria - Belgian Congo - Belgium - Brazil - Bulgaria - Canada - Chile - Colombia - Czechoslovakia - Denmark - Ethiopia - Federal Republic of Germany - Finland - France - German Democratic Republic - Great Britain - Greece - Guatemala - India - Ireland - Italy - Japan - Lebanon - Liechtenstein - Luxemburg - Malta - Monaco - Morocco - Netherlands - New Zealand - Norway - Pakistan - Portugal - Rumania - Spain - Sweden - Switzerland - Turkey - USA - USSR - Union of South Africa - Uruguay - Venezuela - Vietnam - Yugoslavia.

The supplies sent by the National Societies of the Red Cross and other bodies to which the ICRC appealed, and the reserves which the donors intended to establish in Vienna, reached such proportions that it became difficult to cope with the ever-increasing flow; in the shortest possible time it was necessary to unload, check and pack

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thousands of bottles of penicillin containing several million units, thousands of flasks of blood plasma and human albumen, ether, large quantities of morphine and various medicaments, thousands of rolls of bandages, and plaster, hundreds of tons of dressings, blankets, clothing and foodstuffs, and blood transfusion apparatus; sites had to be found for the motorized relief columns and accommodation for the escort teams. The reception, sorting and preparation of parcels for despatch across the frontier as soon as it was reopened went on unceasingly. The League and the ICRC delegates had set up an efficient system of supervision to avoid losses. While some losses were inevitable in view of the risks which the transport columns faced, the precautions taken reduced them to a negligible proportion.

### THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ICRC AND THE LEAGUE

An agreement was signed on 2 November between the International Committee and the League of Red Cross Societies, specifying that the international Red Cross relief action in Hungary would be conducted by the ICRC while the League would coordinate in Vienna the relief supplies for the Hungarian people received from National Societies.

The text of this agreement and of the amendments to it made on 27 November is as follows:

- (1) *In consideration of the troubled conditions in Hungary at the present time, and in accordance with the Statutes of the International Red Cross and the Agreement concluded between the League and the Committee in 1952, all operations connected with the forwarding, allocation, and distribution in Hungary of gifts of National Societies are placed under the direction of the ICRC Delegation in Hungary, acting in cooperation with the Hungarian Red Cross and possibly of other qualified relief organisations.*
- (2) *As circumstances required that a large part of the relief supplies from national societies intended for Hungary should first be assembled in Vienna, the handling of gifts from National Societies already in Vienna or which may subsequently be in Vienna, are placed under the direction of the Representative of the League of Red Cross Societies, acting in cooperation with the Austrian Red Cross.*
- (3) *The ICRC Delegation in Hungary and the Representative of the League of Red Cross Societies in Vienna will exchange Liaison Officers in order to ensure the coordination of their respective operations.*
- (4) *In view of the above, it will be for the Representative of the League of Red Cross Societies to coordinate gifts of National Red Cross Societies on their arrival in Vienna, to watch over them, arrange for their warehousing and sorting, and for the establishment of a daily inventory, by category of article.*

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- (5) *It will be for the Representative of the League of Red Cross Societies to place at the disposal of the ICRC Delegation in Hungary whatever relief supplies it may request according to needs, and in conformity with a plan established in agreement with the Hungarian Red Cross or other qualified relief organisations. These relief supplies will be handed over to the Representatives of the ICRC either in Vienna or at a frontier post for forwarding by them and subsequent distribution by the Hungarian Red Cross or other qualified bodies under the auspices of the ICRC.*
- (6) *The transport vehicles of the National Societies, with the exception of those belonging to the Hungarian Red Cross, will be assembled in a car park under the management of the League Representative in Vienna, who will hold available the vehicles required by the Delegation of the ICRC in Hungary for the forwarding of relief supplies in that country.*
- (7) *If the relief supplies assembled in Vienna or announced by the National Red Cross Societies are not adequate to meet the requirements of the ICRC Delegation in Hungary, the latter will inform the ICRC, which will launch the necessary appeals to the National Red Cross Societies for additional relief.*
- (8) *It is understood that the delegates of donor National Red Cross Societies will have the possibility, whenever circumstances permit, of personally observing the manner in which their gifts have been utilised on the spot.*
- (9) *It is also understood that, as soon as circumstances permit, the ICRC will facilitate the installation in Hungary of any medical units which the National Societies may desire to send there. Their installation on Hungarian territory will however have to be arranged under a plan established between the ICRC and the Hungarian Red Cross, in order to ensure their most efficient use.*
- (10) *In order to ensure as perfect a balance as possible between supply and demand of relief for Hungary, the International Committee and the League will endeavour to centralise in Geneva as much information as possible on non Red Cross relief.*
- (11) *The above provisions constitute the general principles on the basis of which the ICRC Delegation and the Representative of the League will settle practical details of application.*

### ADDENDUM

- (a) *The provisions of the present Agreement relating to gifts from National Societies also apply to any personnel and relief equipment which Societies may send to Vienna for Hungary.*
- (b) *Action on requests concerning individual cases, news transfers, etc., comes within the competence of the ICRC.*
- (c) *The present Agreement will remain in force as long as the disturbed situation which led to its establishment continues to exist. The ICRC and the League will subsequently examine the situation jointly.*
- (d) *As regards the Hungarian refugees in Austria, the Austrian Red Cross is primarily responsible for assisting them at the national level. If supplementary relief supplies have to be drawn from the general reserve in Vienna, the representatives of the League and the ICRC in Vienna will jointly decide upon the measures to be taken, in conjunction with the Austrian Red Cross.*

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- (e) *National Societies will be kept regularly informed about the action taken by the ICRC and the League. Since the present agreement has been concluded with a view to ensuring the smooth running of the relief action undertaken for the benefit of the Hungarian people, the ICRC and the League request National Societies to consult Geneva before despatching further consignments of relief supplies, but without, for that reason, suspending any present or future national collection of contributions.*

\* \* \*

*Following the joint decision to entrust the League with the relief operation for refugees from Hungary to Austria, it has been agreed to make the following amendments to the Agreement concluded on 2 November 1956 between the ICRC and the League:*

- (1) *The ICRC will not only undertake the forwarding, allocation and distribution of relief in Hungary (as provided for in the Agreement of 2 November), but also the handling in Vienna of gifts assigned to the relief operation in Hungarian territory.*
- (2) *The League will undertake, in Austria, the administration and distribution of relief assigned to Hungarian refugees on Austrian soil. This work will be carried out with the cooperation of the Austrian Red Cross and according to the undertakings entered into by the League.*
- (3) *The gifts in cash or in kind which have not been earmarked for a specific purpose, will be allocated by common agreement according to needs, by the representatives of the ICRC and the League representative at Vienna. These will determine the share of this relief that will go to Hungary and be placed at the disposal of the ICRC, and the share that will be used for the refugees, under the responsibility of the League.*
- (4) *The ICRC and the League will consult together on the appeals to be addressed to National Societies in order to obtain additional relief for the above-mentioned operations.*
- (5) *The technical measures relating to the execution of the present Agreement will be the subject of a special arrangement.*

### ICRC MEASURES TO SAFEGUARD ITS DELEGATES AND VARIOUS RELIEF MISSIONS

At Geneva, where activity was intense, the ICRC took immediate steps to ensure the safety of its delegates, and also for the protection of the members of relief missions of various nationalities who remained in Hungary.

On the afternoon of Friday, 2 November the President of the ICRC sent to both the USSR Delegation to the European Office of the United Nations and to Mr. Joseph Marjai, Hungarian Minister at Berne, a memorandum on the action taken by the ICRC since 29 October in response to the Hungarian Red Cross appeal. Drawing attention to these operations, carried out in conformity with the

provisions of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross statutes, and conducted in the field by Mr. Amman, Mr. Beckh, Mr. Bovey, Mr. Meyer and Mr. de Preux, all of Swiss nationality, he requested the Hungarian and Soviet Authorities to facilitate the International Committee's humanitarian work and take the necessary measures to safeguard the persons and property engaged therein. The following day, he sent a copy of this document to Mr. Shepilov, USSR, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and added details of the support given to the ICRC's work by mobile medical units and transport columns of various National Societies, placed under the protection of the Red Cross flag, which had to travel on Hungarian territory to carry out their humanitarian tasks. Referring by way of example, to the presence of ICRC delegates and a German Red Cross medical unit in Budapest, and of two Austrian Red Cross food supply columns in the west and south-west of Hungary he asked the Minister to instruct the Soviet diplomatic and military Authorities to ensure the protection of the Red Cross delegates and of persons, of whatever nationality, in the service of the Red Cross in Hungary.

Following these messages, the ICRC sent a telegram asking the Alliance of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR in Moscow to enquire into the safety of its representatives, and to facilitate their task and their means of contact with the International Committee.

#### ICRC APPEAL FOR A TRUCE

The situation was serious. On 4 November the Hungarian Red Cross, in one of the last telephone calls received from Budapest, requested the ICRC to intervene to secure the application of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention for the protection of civilians during the fighting raging in the capital.

The ICRC immediately made another appeal to the Hungarian and Soviet Authorities. It also broadcast both on its own wave-length, and on others put at its disposal by various stations, a message to the responsible leaders in the fighting in Budapest, appealing for a truce to enable those wounded during the last battles to be picked up and cared for. This message was issued in accordance with the provisions of Article 15 of the First Geneva Convention.

#### NEGOTIATIONS FOR FORWARDING RELIEF SUPPLIES

**Preparatory work.** — The destitute condition of the Hungarian population, as shown by the daily flow of refugees into Austria, made it more and more necessary to intervene. Everything had to be done to resume the distribution of relief supplies drawn from the considerable stocks supplied by the National Societies.

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In Vienna, the International Committee's delegates continued their preparations to fill the gap left by the ending of the air-lift.

The ICRC had given its approval to a scheme whereby the vehicles of the Austrian Red Cross and other National Societies which had sent motor units to Vienna would be divided into three mobile columns and would attempt to cross the frontier at three different points, with a view to penetrating as far as possible into Hungarian territory. These medical and relief units, placed under the International Committee's responsibility, and escorted by its delegates, would first supply foodstuffs and medicaments to hospitals. The frontier between Austria and Hungary was, however, still closed. On Sunday, November 4, the ICRC endeavoured, with the Yugoslav Red Cross, to find a means of sending relief supplies in transit through that country. Similar discussions on the subject were held with the Czechoslovak Red Cross.

On November 6, the President of the International Committee also appealed to the President of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR ; he recalled the principles and the methods applied for the intervention of the ICRC in Hungary, and stressed the need for sending further consignments, and making fresh distributions, at the earliest possible moment. In his letter he stated that, with this end in view, land convoys were being prepared in Vienna which, he hoped, would take the road to Hungary in the very near future.

**Despatch of the first convoy.** — On November 8, the ICRC Delegation, Vienna, informed the ICRC in Geneva that the preparatory work was finished.

The convoy consisted of a transport column of 15 vehicles, loaded with 25 tons of foodstuffs and 2 tons of medicaments, and manned by 38 persons ; a medical unit (Danish) of 35 vehicles, accompanied by 78 persons, and an Italian unit of 15 vehicles, accompanied by 50 persons, i.e. a total of 65 vehicles and 166 persons, including delegates, doctors, nurses, interpreters, drivers and mechanics. Both persons and vehicles were internationalized under the Red Cross flag.

The ICRC sent other delegates and in particular MM. Châtillon, Haas and Willemer, to accompany the transport units. The head of each convoy received the necessary instructions to the effect that the relief supplies were to be carried to Budapest and handed over to the delegates of the International Committee who might still be there or, if not, to the Hungarian Red Cross. Should it not be possible to reach Budapest, distributions could be made on the spot by the delegates and escorts, in accordance with the Red Cross principles of impartiality, and taking into account the most urgent needs. In

order to prevent misappropriation or removal of supplies, strict instructions were given that the supplies should not be left in the hands of non-qualified persons.

The ICRC then made a choice between the various routes suggested, and decided that the first unit of 15 vehicles, escorted by Mr. Willemer, should try to cross from Austria to Hungary at Sopron. The same evening, it informed the Hungarian and Soviet authorities that the departure would take place the following day, November 9; the telegram for Budapest could not be despatched, on account of the interruption in postal communications, and the information was therefore communicated to the Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires in Switzerland. In Vienna, Mr. Meyer remained in contact with the diplomatic representatives of the USSR and Hungary.

The convoy—all the vehicles had been painted white and bore the red cross emblem—presented itself at the Hungarian frontier on Friday evening. It stopped there until Monday morning, November 11. On that day, authority to cross the frontier was granted and, at 11 a.m., the first ICRC relief convoy penetrated into Hungarian territory and continued on its way to Budapest.

On Monday, November 12, Mr. Bovey, who had remained in Budapest, telephoned to the International Committee in Geneva, to confirm the safe arrival of the convoy, and the unloading of the supplies. During the day the convoy returned to Vienna in order to fetch further relief supplies.

**Progress of operations.** — The ICRC at once decided to send a second relief column, which would follow the same route as the first. Mr. Haas was in charge of the second convoy of 38 vehicles, carrying 120 tons of foodstuffs and medicaments. The column was split up into several small units which also crossed the frontier at Sopron and arrived at Budapest.

From that time onwards, all convoys under the International Committee's responsibility were allowed to enter Hungary.

Relief supplies, escorted by Mr. Châtillon, were also shipped by the Danube.

Between November 9, when the first column was despatched, and December 4, sixteen journeys were made to and fro between Vienna and Budapest, enabling the transport of 570 tons of relief supplies; 1,057 tons of flour were sent by river. So far over 1,600 tons of sundry relief supplies have been handed over to the ICRC delegates in Budapest who supervise their distribution by the Hungarian Red Cross.

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### AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ICRC, THE HUNGARIAN RED CROSS AND THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT

At the start of this second stage of the relief action, the ICRC gave to M. R. Gallopin, Executive Director, the task of making contact in Austria with the new leaders of the Hungarian Red Cross. On November 15 and 16, M. Gallopin met in Vienna Dr. Georges Killner, Professor Tibor Nonay, Professor Boldizar Howath and M. Michel Guédényi, i.e. the Executive Director, Members of the Executive Committee and Head of the Foreign Relations Section of the Hungarian Red Cross, and stated the conditions under which the ICRC would undertake the supervision of the relief operations entrusted to it. These conditions were accepted and an agreement embodying them was signed in Vienna on November 16, 1956, and was immediately ratified by the Hungarian Minister in Vienna, by direct authority of the Hungarian Government.

The terms of the agreement are as follows:—

- (1) *The International Committee of the Red Cross assumes the control of the distribution in Hungary of relief supplies for the Hungarian population which have been or which will be entrusted to it by national Red Cross Societies, either directly or through the intermediary of the League of Red Cross Societies.*
- (2) *The International Committee of the Red Cross will also assume the control of the distribution of donations made of behalf on the Hungarian population which have been or which will be entrusted to it either directly or through the intermediary of the Secretary General of the United Nations organization acting in agreement with the Hungarian Government.*
- (3) *The distribution of these supplies through the neutral intermediary of the International Committee of the Red Cross shall be carried out in accord with the fundamental principles governing its action, that is to say; strict impartiality and without any discrimination whatsoever other than that of the needs of the persons to be assisted.*
- (4) *Towards this end the International Committee of the Red Cross shall, in agreement with the Hungarian Red Cross, draw up various programs for assistance which shall be carried out progressively according to the urgency of the needs to be met and function of the available supplies. As an example, it has already been foreseen that assistance should in the first place be given to the sick, the wounded of all kinds, infants, expectant mothers, the aged and the infirm.*
- (5) *All facilities shall be given to the International Committee of the Red Cross in order to enable it to set up a delegation in Hungary immediately, which shall include the following personnel required in order to:*
  - (a) *draw up, in agreement with the Hungarian Red Cross, the programs for assistance mentioned above,*
  - (b) *assure the protection and the management of the warehouses which the International Committee of the Red Cross will set up in the principal distribution centres,*
  - (c) *assure the transportation of supplies to or from these warehouses,*

- (d) *assist in the actual distribution of supplies and in reporting back to the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva on these distributions for the information of donors.*

*This personnel, mainly consisting of Swiss citizens, shall be placed under the orders of a Delegate—in—Chief, with Headquarters in Budapest, who will be acting in close liaison with the representatives designated by the Hungarian Red Cross for this purpose.*

- (6) *In order to allow the efficient execution of the strictly humanitarian action of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Hungarian Red Cross and the Hungarian Government shall see that in the exercise of its functions, the Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Hungary receives all aid and protection from all authorities civil or military.*
- (7) *The general dispositions of the present agreement shall be completed by a technical plan of operations drawn up in agreement between the representatives of the Hungarian Red Cross and the Delegate-in-Chief of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Budapest.*
- (8) *The sole object of the present agreement being the distribution of relief supplies to the Hungarian population it cannot be interpreted as restricting the other humanitarian activities which the International Committee of the Red Cross may be called upon to exercise in Hungary in conformity with the statutes of the International Red Cross or the provisions of the Geneva Conventions.*

#### THE PLAN FOR SUPPLYING FOODSTUFFS FOR HUNGARY

On the basis of the agreement concluded with the Hungarian Government and Hungarian Red Cross, the ICRC has drawn up a food programme for Hungary divided into three operations, i.e.

**Distribution of milk to children.** — 173,000 children under 6 years of age will receive a daily ration of 100 gr. powdered or condensed milk and 1 capsule cod liver oil.

One distribution per week will be made, as from December 5, at the Infant Welfare Centres.

**Distribution of food in schools.** — From 50,000 to 150,000 school children from 6 to 16 years of age will be given a hot meal daily, consisting of 10 gr. fats, 50 gr. meat (or cheese or tinned fish), 50 gr. cereals (rice, flour paste foods, oat-flakes, barley, flour, pulse and farinaceous foods), 50 gr. powdered milk, 1 roll of bread; ro: 10 gr. sugar, 50 gr. cereals, 50 gr. powdered milk, 1 roll of bread.

The programme will start on or about December 8 by distributions to 50,000 children in parts of the city which have suffered the greatest damage; it will gradually be expanded to include all school children of the ages mentioned above. The distributions will take place in the schools or in adjacent buildings.

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**Distribution of food parcels to persons in distress.** — About 100,000 persons in distress (namely, those whose dwelling has been partly or entirely destroyed, families deprived of their breadwinner, disabled and aged persons and families with more than four children) will receive one standard food parcel per week, sufficient for feeding four persons, each individual ration consisting of 500 gr. meat or fish, 250 gr. fats (butter, cooking-fat, oil, margarine), 250 gr. powdered milk or a tonic preparation, 50 gr. soap, as well as, when available, cheese, eggs, tinned vegetables or fruit, chocolate, coffee, tea, etc.

Apart from the food programme, the very great need for coal, clothing, window-glass, etc., should be taken into account.

As regards medicaments, fairly large stocks have now been built up in Budapest by the ICRC. They will be replenished as fast as they are drawn upon.

The food programme is expected to be continued for the duration of the winter and until the end of April. However, the supplies the ICRC has available do not seem likely to last beyond January 15 and further donations would therefore be required to enable the entire programme to be carried out.

## ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES

As regards assistance to refugees, this is the concern, firstly of the Austrian Government, assisted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration, and, secondly, the Austrian Red Cross, supported by the Red Cross movement throughout the world.

In view of this very important aspect of the matter, which is a question of accommodating, feeding and giving medical treatment and assistance of every description to thousands of persons, whose numbers will continue to increase until they leave Austria for other countries of asylum, the ICRC and the League have entered into an agreement. According to this agreement, the Red Cross relief supplies stocked in Vienna have been divided. One portion, taken over by the League, will be used for assisting refugees in Austrian territory, the remainder, handled directly by the ICRC, is to enable the relief action in Hungary to be continued.

Reference should be made to the great effort made on behalf of the Hungarian refugees by various National Red Cross Societies, in particular the Austrian and Swiss Red Cross Societies, and by the League of Red Cross Societies.

## ASSISTANCE GIVEN BY THE ICRC TO THE HUNGARIAN REFUGEES

The ICRC is in a position, through its Central Agency for Prisoners of War, to give valuable assistance to Hungarian refugees who wish to remain in contact with other members of their families.

The broadcasting of the names of persons wishing to receive news of their relatives over the Radio-Intercroixrouge short wave-length was started on November 13. These persons are also requested to make use of the Red Cross Civilian Message Forms which can be obtained from the National Societies for transmission to the ICRC. By December 4, 1956, nearly 9,000 messages had reached the ICRC, and 3,324 of them had been broadcast. In addition, the messages will be sent by ordinary mail to Hungary as soon as the Hungarian Red Cross or the ICRC Delegation in Budapest are able to forward them to the addresses.

The card-index will enable a census to be made of the Hungarian refugees, and to keep track of those who have gone abroad. This procedure met with the warm approval of the National Red Cross Societies, to which the ICRC has recently send cards printed in four languages (Hungarian, German, French and English) to be filled in by all refugees on their arrival in the reception centres, or when they move.

These measures will enable the ICRC to perform one of its traditional functions—the reuniting of families which had been split up.

## AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

It will have been seen that the agreement with the Hungarian Red Cross also mentions the possibility of the International Committee assuming the control of the distribution of relief supplies entrusted to it through the Secretary General of the United Nations. The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross concluded an agreement with the United Nations on December 4, 1956, whereby the ICRC assumes responsibility for the distribution in Hungary of relief being given by the United Nations to the population of that country, in accordance with the resolution of the General Assembly meeting of November 9.

The agreement provides that relief shall be distributed in accordance with Red Cross principles and in the spirit of the Geneva Conventions, that is to say, without discrimination and taking only need into account.

The agreement reads as follows :

- (1) *The Committee, at the request of the Secretary-General, agrees to use any funds as may be transferred to it by the United Nations for the exclusive purpose of providing immediate aid to the population*

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*of Hungary, in particular by furnishing medical supplies, foodstuffs and clothing. The responsibility assumed by the Committee in this respect will commence upon receipt of any such funds and will terminate after the distribution of relief supplies to the Hungarian population or, in the event of cessation of the programme upon return to the United Nations of any unused portion of such funds or of supplies purchased with such funds.*

- (2) *The Committee will undertake responsibility for the distribution of such supplies as may be furnished by the United Nations. The Committee may indicate to the United Nations the types of relief goods regarded as most appropriate for the purpose of the programme.*
- (3) *In accordance with the principles of the Red Cross and in the spirit of the Geneva Conventions, the Committee will distribute relief under this programme without discrimination and on the basis of need alone.*
- (4) *While making every effort to carry out this programme as rapidly as possible, the Committee will retain responsibility for the schedule (French "cadence") of distribution of relief supplies. In the event of difficulties or obstacles arising in the execution of the programme, the Committee will, if necessary, report to the United Nations but it will be solely responsible for taking appropriate measures.*
- (5) *The Committee will supply all organizational, supervisory and technical personnel, services and equipment required for the operation of the programme.*
- (6) *The United Nations will defray such administrative and operational costs of the Committee attributable to the performance of the United Nations relief programme as may be agreed between the United Nations and the Committee.*
- (7) *The Committee will be the sole agency to carry out the relief programme on behalf of the United Nations with the contributions made pursuant to resolution 399 adopted by the General Assembly at the Second Emergency Special Session on 9 November 1956. This shall not be construed to limit the right of other United Nations agencies to carry out assistance programmes in accordance with their terms of reference and in agreement with the Hungarian authorities.*
- (8) *The United Nations recognizes the Committee as an independent and autonomous organization which undertakes to perform the services envisaged in this agreement. The performance of such services will not in any way place the Committee in a subordinate position towards the United Nations, and the Committee will not be required to carry out any other task than those set forth in this agreement.*
- (9) *The Committee will submit to the Secretary-General monthly operational reports and financial report of costs incurred in the performance of its responsibilities under this agreement.*
- (10) *The United Nations and the Committee will act in close collaboration in regard to the planning and the implementation of the programme. In particular, the Committee will extend full co-operation to any representative who may be sent to Hungary by the Secretary-General in connexion with the programme.*
- (11) *Nothing contained in this agreement will affect any of the other activities which the Committee already is carrying out or may carry out in Hungary in the performance of its traditional role.*

- (12) *This Agreement may be terminated by either party on one week's notice subject, if possible, to prior consultation. The termination of this Agreement will not affect the responsibilities of either party under the Agreement with respect to the completion of the distribution of supplies still outstanding at the date of termination.*

These operations, carried out in rapid succession during the past few weeks, are still continuing at the time of going to press. M. Georges Rutishauser, as General Delegate, will direct the sections which, in Vienna and Budapest, deal with the forwarding and distribution in Hungary of the relief supplies entrusted to the ICRC. There is a considerable need for coal, clothing, foodstuffs, etc. As to medicaments, relatively large quantities are at present stocked in Budapest, and the ICRC has planned to replenish these as rapidly as they are drawn upon. It must be pointed out, however, that the funds at the International Committee's disposal for relief in general appear likely to be exhausted by February 15 next. Consequently, further donations will be necessary to enable the relief programme for the Hungarian population to be continued after that date.

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## The ICRC Relief Action in the Middle East

Near a landing-strip at Cairo Airport a group of persons was waiting the arrival of the special aircraft chartered by the ICRC, the first foreign plane to land at Cairo since the start of military operations. It drew near enough to show the large red crosses painted on the wings and the fuselage and, a few minutes later, came to a stop opposite a line of motor trucks. The four tons of relief supplies—medicaments and dressings—were immediately unloaded. Shortly afterwards the Egyptian Red Crescent wrote to the ICRC saying: "We wish to express our deep appreciation for your generous assistance in this time of stress".

\* \* \*

The story of the aircraft is very simple. On the first day of the Middle East conflict, the ICRC appealed to all the parties concerned to apply the provisions of the Geneva Convention, and stated its readiness to assume all its traditional responsibilities. A special relief fund for the victims of the events was at once opened. Soon contributions had been made by some thirty National Societies, thus, enabling the purchase of medicaments carried by the special aircraft.

At the same time, the ICRC increased the number of its representatives in the region. The permanent delegation in Cairo was enlarged, and new offices opened at Port Saïd, Alexandria and, on the other side of the line, at Tel Aviv.

\* \* \*

On his arrival in Cairo, Dr. Grosclaude who, on the International Committee's behalf, escorted the first consignment of relief supplies, decided to send part of the medicaments under his supervision to Port Saïd. With the help of the Egyptian Red Crescent, he obtained the Egyptian authorities' consent for a special train to be sent to that port under the protection of the ICRC. The most difficult task remained, however, that of crossing the demarcation line controlled by the occupying forces. Negotiations through the ICRC in Geneva

were immediately opened and permission to cross the line was granted. The convoy, also accompanied by a member of the Egyptian Red Crescent, reached its destination on November 16.

Two days later, another aircraft, lent by the Danish Red Cross, left Geneva Airport. It carried three tons of medicaments and dressings consigned to the Egyptian Red Crescent.

\* \* \*

Although besieged with requests for immediate assistance, the delegates of the ICRC are not, on that account, neglecting their traditional duties. At Tel Aviv, Dr. Grosclaude, sees that the provisions of the Geneva Conventions are duly applied and receives all facilities from the authorities for that purpose. He makes regular inspections of three prisoner-of-war camps and two hospitals. He is thus informed of the position of about five thousand persons under detention. He makes frequent distributions of fruit juice, cigarettes, sports requisites, indoor games, etc.

Anxious to find out the position of the civilian population entitled to protection under humanitarian law, Dr. Grosclaude applied to the Military Governor for authority to visit the Gaza district; this was granted and enabled him to see for himself the living conditions of persons dwelling in that area.

In the Suez Canal Zone, the ICRC delegate, Mr. M. Thudicum, visits the camps for Egyptian prisoners of war held by the French and British forces. Nominal lists of detained persons are also sent to the Central Prisoners of War Agency, Geneva, which forwards them to the authorities concerned.

\* \* \*

In Geneva, the Central Prisoners of War Agency is once more at the height of activity. Thousands of persons without news of those they cherish, held prisoner or missing, place their last hope in receiving a Civilian Message of twenty-five words, and their requests for enquiry are sometimes addressed merely to "CICR Genève". Within a fortnight, 3,500 messages have passed through the Agency, of which over 600 brought news to the addressees of men captured on the battle-fields.

\* \* \*

Among all the duties of the ICRC representatives, the repatriation of the seriously wounded is often one of the most moving. Twenty-six of them were being cared for in Israel, and the Government offered

## INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

to send them back to their country. The ICRC delegate in Tel Aviv took up the matter immediately ; the entire Red Cross organisation was informed and applications were made to the proper authorities. Within a few days the transfer had been arranged. Two medical aircraft, bearing the red cross emblem, were lent by the Italian Government. Finally the ban on any plane landing in Egypt which had touched down in Israel was lifted and, for the first time since 1948, direct communication between Lydda and Cairo was authorised.

After one day's delay, the operation took place on December 5.

\* \* \*

Meanwhile, in Egypt, the ICRC delegates continued the relief action. At Port Said, Mr. Thudicum, appointed Chairman of the local relief co-ordination committee, purchased and distributed condensed milk for children. Medicaments and foodstuffs were needed, but the problem was to get them to Port Said. Negotiations were opened by Mr. de Traz, ICRC general delegate for the Middle East, and as a result the relief convoys of the ICRC and the Egyptian Red Crescent are now being sent from Ismaïlia to Port Saïd.

The work of the Cairo Delegation has increased, the ICRC having suggested to the Egyptian authorities that it should assume the duties of a Protecting Power on behalf of all persons who, being stateless, were deprived of protection. Moreover, the detention centres for British, French and Israeli civilians are visited, relief measures have been started and, in so far as possible, the delegates of the ICRC are seeking to alleviate suffering.

The relief action is therefore being pursued in every field.

## The final stages of an important undertaking on behalf of former prisoners of war

It will be remembered that, according to Article 16 of the Peace Treaty with Japan, signed at San Francisco in September 1951, the International Committee of the Red Cross was given the task of distributing to former prisoners of war in Japanese hands, who were nationals of the Powers party to the Treaty, compensation for hardships suffered during their captivity. This compensation was to be paid out of Japanese assets held in neutral or ex-enemy countries and which Japan relinquished for that purpose.

The *Revue internationale*<sup>1</sup> has already informed its readers of the work achieved by the International Committee to prepare for the distribution of these funds. As we know, the beneficiary States were to provide the ICRC with a complete list of the former prisoners of war among their nationals, since the amounts distributed in each country were to be in direct proportion to the total number of former prisoners of war in Japanese hands.

The final date for sending in these lists was April 30, 1956. After that date the lists had to be checked by the ICRC, to make sure that they contained no repetitions of names, and included no-one outside the categories mentioned in Article 16.

This work was carried out as rapidly as possible, both in Geneva and in the countries concerned, where representatives

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<sup>1</sup> See *Revue internationale*, English Supplement, May 1956.

of the ICRC made sample checks of the documents used for the preparation of the lists.

The International Committee of the Red Cross would have preferred to make a single distribution of funds, but it became obvious that it would take considerable time, perhaps several months even, to settle matters in some countries, either because the lists supplied had not been adequately checked, or because no agreement had been reached on the method of distribution. The Committee felt, however, that it would be unfair to postpone any longer the distribution of compensation to former prisoners of war in countries where those two points had already been dealt with.

It therefore suggested to the beneficiary States that it should proceed with the first distribution wherever it was possible to do so and at a meeting held in London on November 8, 1956, this suggestion was adopted. The following points of interest emerge from the memorandum submitted by the ICRC to the meeting, and the decisions taken :

The former prisoners of war of fourteen countries will receive compensation :

The ex-prisoners of war of ten States will share in the first distribution which amounts to a total of 1,891,136.11.02 pounds sterling, and 5,290,203.18 US dollars<sup>1</sup>, calculated on the basis of a total of 153,206 recipients :

The share accruing to four countries, i.e. 802,269.13.8. pounds sterling and 2,244,242.82 US dollars, calculated on the basis of a total of 64,994 recipients, will be temporarily set aside :

The checks made so far have shown that 9,980 names should not have been placed on the lists submitted to the ICRC, and have therefore to be deleted :

The interest on the capital entrusted to the ICRC for distribution to former prisoners of war, which it has invested,

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<sup>1</sup> Payment will be made in these two currencies (pounds sterling and US dollars) in equal parts and at the same time, in the same manner as the ICRC received the funds.

constitute a reserve fund which will be distributed when decisions have been taken regarding the four countries whose shares have, as stated above, been temporarily set aside.

As and when it receives the necessary technical information required, the ICRC is handing over to the national associations designated for the distribution of compensation the shares due to prisoners of war formerly held by the Japanese forces who suffered undue hardships. By the time this article appears, the majority of the beneficiaries in the ten countries participating in the first distribution will probably have received the share to which they are entitled.

The other beneficiaries, nationals of four countries, should not have to wait long for their compensation, as the ICRC is making every effort to solve the outstanding problems with all possible speed, and trusts that the authorities concerned will do all in their power to speed up the operations which must precede the distribution of the funds. The important and responsible task assumed five years ago by the International Committee, and which it is carrying out with close regard to the interests of the former prisoners of war, will then be completed.

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