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INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS

STANDING COMMISSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS

The Standing Commission of the International Red Cross held its regular meeting on May 21, 1953, in Geneva. It examined and settled questions of common interest for the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies.

Recalling the representations made to the Delegates for North Korea at the Toronto Conference, the Standing Commission expressed its satisfaction on the return to their countries of a certain number of civilian internees held in North Korea, several of whom belonged to the Diplomatic Corps and religious institutions, and of whom no news had been received for some long time.

The Standing Commission of the International Red Cross hopes that the operations for the liberation of civilian internees will be pursued and brought to a conclusion. It has also received with satisfaction the news of the exchange of wounded and sick prisoners of war between belligerents in Korea. It expresses the hope that this action will be extended and amplified in the near future, and that the difficulties which still oppose the conclusion of an armistice in Korea may soon be overcome, in the interest of Peace.

The Standing Commission continues to follow with the keenest interest the discussion being carried on by the League Executive Board with a view to better co-ordination of international relief actions undertaken on the occasion of heavy disasters.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

PRINCIPAL ITEMS OF INTEREST

Germany. — On May 15 last the Delegation in Bad Kreuznach, which had been the only permanent ICRC Delegation in Western Germany since 1949, was closed. This measure was decided upon for both economical and practical reasons. The work of this agency had greatly decreased, mainly on account of a number of its activities having been taken over by the German Red Cross. Those which are exclusively connected with the ICRC will in future be assumed by missions sent periodically from Geneva to Germany.

It is interesting to recall here the various fields covered by this Delegation in post-war and more recent periods. It was a valuable auxiliary at the time when the ICRC, the only institution accepted by the occupying Powers, had the responsibility of carrying on both its own work and that of other humanitarian organisations, to which it gave its support until such time as they were allowed to do their own work. In the same way the Bad Kreuznach Delegation played an important part in the efforts which resulted in the reconstitution of the German Red Cross.

The Delegation was also associated with the International Committee's considerable activity in favour of the civilian population, which had the benefit of receiving from the autumn of 1945 until the end of 1947 some 26,000 tons of relief supplies representing 32 million Swiss francs in value.

Its work also included relief to former prisoners of war and civilian internees, and assistance to prisoners tried and sentenced by Allied Tribunals, whom the representative of the ICRC visited in Werl, Landsberg and Wittlich. In conjunction

with the Paris Delegation, it joined in representations for establishing the status of German prisoners who had become civilian workers in France.

The Delegation also gave its services in the actions undertaken on behalf of military and civilian war-disabled, and in assistance to refugees, displaced or stateless persons in Germany.

It further made a very useful contribution to the action started five years ago by the ICRC for the reunion of families belonging to ethnical minorities of German origin in countries of East and South East Europe. For this action, which has so far enabled over 75,000 persons to join their relatives, principally in Western Germany and Austria, its services were mainly those of a liaison agent with the German authorities, while it had also to provide a certain amount of relief in the form of foodstuffs and clothing, and apparatus for the disabled.

Korea. — It is common knowledge that the four Delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross in South Korea were allowed to co-operate in the recent operations for the repatriation of wounded and sick prisoners of war. In particular they accompanied convoys of prisoners coming from the South, and assisted them during their journey.

As a result of representations made by the Delegates of the ICRC, the United Nations Command decided to include 85 members of the Chinese and 600 members of the North Korean forces in the transport of prisoners to be repatriated.

The International Committee's Delegates, not having been admitted to North Korea, were not able to carry on similar action there or to assist the wounded and sick prisoners of South Korean origin, or members of the United Nations forces, during their transfer.

Central Prisoners of War Agency. — Since last autumn the Agency has received over 3,000 requests from former Lybian prisoners, who fought with the Italian forces. The object of their applications was to obtain certificates of captivity, which are essential to enable them to obtain a war bonus granted by the Italian Government.

The compiling of these documents entails much preliminary work. The particulars of the applicants, collected at the time by the Agency and inserted in its card indexes, were taken from capture cards and lists which the British authorities, who were the holders of the prisoners in question, had made out phonetically according to their declarations. This method of transcription, made necessary by the difficulties of the Arab script and the fact that the majority of the captives were illiterate, led to numerous errors caused by the distortion of family names and often in addition by the lack of accuracy in declarations made by the prisoners themselves.

To fill the gaps in these particulars and to enable researches to be made with all the necessary precision, the Italian Section of the Agency submitted questionnaires to the persons concerned. The replies of the latter greatly facilitated checking in the card indexes and made it possible to issue the certificates with more speed. It was found necessary to have recourse to the services of an Arabic-speaking helper to bring this delicate task to a satisfactory conclusion.

The work of the Agency was alluded to on May 6 during the visit to the ICRC of Dr. Clément Noger, Acting Director General of the Public Health Services of the Federal Kingdom of Lybia. At the special request of His Excellency Mohammed Osman, Minister of Health, Dr. Noger discussed with the International Red Cross agencies in Geneva the problems raised by the accession of Lybia to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and by the possible creation of a National Society in that State. During a visit last year one of the Committee's Delegates had already discussed these questions with the Lybian authorities.

ASSISTANCE TO POLITICAL DETAINEES

A Commission of Experts, formed of jurists and persons of various nationalities, known for their legal science and humanitarian feelings, has just met for three days in Geneva to give its opinion on problems submitted to it by the International Committee of the Red Cross. The object was to examine the means of assisting certain political prisoners, particularly those detained as a result of events of war, civil war or internal disturbances.

The Members of the Commission were MM. Maurice Bourquin, Professor at Geneva University, Roberto Cordova, Ambassador for Mexico, Professor Nihat Erim, former Minister of State in Ankara, Professor G. Gidel, Paris, Jean Graven, Professor at Geneva University, Max Huber, Honorary President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Zürich, Carraciolo Parra-Perez, Ambassador for Venezuela in Paris, Judge Emil Sandström, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies, Stockholm, Giuseppe Saragat, Member of Parliament, Roma, Professor Carlo Schmid, Vice-President of the Bundestag, Bonn.

MM. Sandström, Cordova and Saragat were unfortunately unable, on account of their state of health or their personal commitments, to attend the meetings of the Commission.

As on frequent occasions in the past, the International Committee welcomes outside assistance in examining such complex problems.

The International Red Cross Conference have been concerned with this question for a long time past. On many occasions the International Committee of the Red Cross has received appeals which show that in various countries internal disturbances in particular have led to the arrest of persons who have been placed in solitary confinement, deprived of

all contact with their families and all relief, without any humanitarian organisation being allowed to visit them.

The International Committee's initiative is by no means intended to form conclusions as to the motives for the deprivation of liberty, but merely to obtain humane treatment for these persons in conformity with the general principles of law and civilisation.

The experts, whose discussions were followed by some Members of the ICRC, including the President, M. P. Ruegger, and M. L. Boissier, Chairman of the Legal Commission, drafted a report which was unanimously approved by the Members present, and of which the findings will shortly be made known to the public.

Geneva, June 12, 1953.

MAX HUBER

*Honorary President of the International Committee
of the Red Cross*

THE IDEA OF THE RED CROSS ¹

In the life of individuals, as in the life of institutions, there are certain anniversaries which are of special significance. They serve on the one hand as an occasion for contemporaries and their followers to express their thanks to the parties commemorated for the work they have done, and at the same time they enable the latter to look back over a period, long or short, and to criticise themselves, think what their life was for, and attach a value to the aim which it pursued.

In the same way, as it seems to me, it is possible to recall what is essential and permanent in the movement, which owes its existence to Henry Dunant, and to deduce from the past our lessons for the future.

The realisation of what an institution was, and was thought to be, in the past is the point we have always to remember, if in speaking of it we are concerned to recognise its primitive origin and essential character. That is a rule which holds good both of individuals and of institutions, and even of States. No life is truly authentic, except in so far as it remains true to itself and to its origins over the course of years.

* * *

Historically the Red Cross has two origins—the first, Solferino and the battle which was fought there in 1859, the

¹ Speech made at the ceremony organised by the Swiss Red Cross at Berne on 8 May 1953 to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the birth of Henry Dunant.

French translation by Jean-G. Lossier.

second, Geneva, where the first Red Cross Conference met in 1863, and was followed by the Diplomatic Conference of 1864.

What then was the inspiration of Dunant at Solferino, and what is the essential element of that inspiration even today for the Red Cross? How can it be defined?

It was an improvisation, a bold improvisation, an act in which the manifestation of a resolute attitude and a pioneering spirit were apparent.

It was a gesture of relief, of voluntary relief as when each gives what he can.

The defects of the Army Medical Services had already been shown in the Crimean War by the work of Florence Nightingale. Solferino was another proof of this inefficiency; and it is from this point that we should date the whole story of the development of Red Cross work in connection with the care of the sick, medicine, and hygiene.

Most important of all, on the battlefield of Solferino the sick and wounded of both sides lay after the combats indiscriminately together. Dunant and the local population at his instigation brought improvised relief to all the wounded without distinction of nationality. Help to anyone suffering, without distinctions of any kind, wherever they came from — that was the keynote.

Ninety years ago a number of persons representing (though not officially) their respective countries met in Geneva to consider together the measures proposed by Dunant. The meeting was of particular importance because of the fact that it was a case of private initiative proposing action on an international scale. National committees had been set up, which were the nucleus of the present national Societies; and this initiative induced the States to enter into treaty obligations with one another, and thus to give the Red Cross movement a basis in international law, and a special protection in time of war.

In the following year this object was attained by the signature of the Geneva Convention of 22 August 1864, under which the four fundamental principles of the Red Cross found complete and official expression:

- (1) Friends and enemies were treated equally.
- (2) The Medical Service in the field was given special protection.
- (3) The principle of voluntary medical aid was recognised in international law.
- (4) A red cross on a white field was adopted as a protective emblem, and the whole movement took its name from this fine symbol.

* * *

From the first the national Societies realised that their activities could not be limited to the wartime work assigned to them by the Geneva Convention. They had to prepare, with a view to war, for the new work of caring for the sick ; and in preparation for this work, they had to make a beginning with it in peacetime. Accordingly their intervention was found equally necessary when in peacetime immediate relief was required, e.g. in case of natural disasters. Dunant had been one of the first to foresee this work, the immense importance of which was brought home to us Swiss on the occasion of our avalanches, and again to all nations in the superb united effort in favour of the victims of the floods in Holland, England and Belgium during the present year, as also to the unhappy victims of the inundations in the year 1951 in the valley of the Po. The success of these efforts of the Red Cross was due to the fact that they were popularly regarded as the natural fulfilment of a duty.

A comparison of the Red Cross of the present day with the Red Cross of ninety years ago reveals two different lines of development. There is first what may be called the horizontal development, which now covers the whole world ; and secondly there is a vertical development in the form of a multiplication of tasks, of which it would hardly be possible here to give even a summary account. The tasks in question are very varied in character ; and the different national Societies deal with them in different ways, some with more and some with less activity, not only in connection with the care of the sick or the administration of relief in national disasters, but also on a very large scale in the matter of public health and social service.

As a part of the general body of the work of the Red Cross at the present time, the activities of the volunteer auxiliaries, as defined in the First Geneva Convention and its successive revisions, no longer bulk as largely as they did, partly because the Army Medical Services have greatly developed, and modern war leaves much less scope for volunteer action, and partly because in wartime the special aid to soldiers and prisoners of war absorbs a great part of the efforts of the national Societies. But, apart from this, the appalling evolution of war from the air, and the terrible destruction of mass centres of population which it carries in its train, constitute a menace to the civilian population which was not formerly conceivable, the menace namely of total annihilation. The Red Cross is faced today with situations, with which it is infinitely more difficult to cope, and with deficiencies which it is infinitely more difficult to make good, than in the early days, when it intervened in favour of combatants in the field.

A closer view of the great expansion of the work of the Red Cross in the last ninety years, and particularly during and after the First World War, clearly shows that the changes have been mainly in connection with peacetime work. The functions in question are no longer connected except remotely or indirectly with the functions envisaged at the beginning. The national Societies are the gainers by the process. Their own strength and their vitality as viewed by others are thereby increased ; and this alone enables them to face better the vast body of work, which they are now called upon to do, nationally and internationally, without previous preparation, as in the Second World War.

But this shift of functions from one branch to another involves the danger of losing sight to a certain extent of the original purpose of the Red Cross, and ceasing to bear in mind its specific characteristics. For there are besides the Red Cross a large number of national organisations, as for example in our own country the Pro Juventute, the Pro Senectute and the Pro Infirmis Societies, whose work, if they did not exist, would perhaps have had to be taken over by the national Red Cross Societies of the countries concerned with their not dissimilar activities. Internationally again there are private organisations

which do work, and have purposes, similar to those of the Red Cross, such as the International Union for Child Welfare, the World Health Organisation founded by the different States, or the Nansen Office, the creation of which was suggested by the International Committee of the Red Cross after the First World War.

If we are to go further in the analysis of the work of the Red Cross and of its specific characteristics, we must endeavour to grasp its underlying features, and with that end in view to approach the problem from two angles—the first in connection with the nature of suffering, and the second in connection with the conditions precedent to our sympathy with suffering.

* * *

It is not necessary for our purpose to consider the nature or significance of suffering from a religious, metaphysical or psychological standpoint. The Red Cross is conscious of a call to alleviate and, if possible, to eliminate human suffering, which it regards as a plain fact, a fact which it does not approach as a spectator, but as a combatant, not merely on grounds of social utility, but on the basis of an impulse of human pity. To regard one's neighbour's interests as one would regard one's own is the first consequence of the altruistic outlook. Suffering therefore induces pity. That is the origin of the action, which Dunant and those who were with him took at Solferino; and that is the foundation accordingly of the spiritual and moral Red Cross movement.

* * *

Suffering is a consequence of a break in biological equilibrium in the sick or wounded man. But for the Red Cross mental suffering is as important as physical suffering, since it is often induced in the victim by separation or removal from those whom he holds dear, or again by the absence of news from them, or by the fact that the victim has had to quit his country, or has been compelled to do so. The active sympathy which Dunant and his assistants showed to the wounded and dying at Solferino

must have been much more valuable in their eyes than all the medical aid they were able to give them.

* * *

There are three fundamental causes of human suffering.

- (1) Disease or disaster. These are natural causes.
- (2) Inadequacy of the conditions of existence in respect of food, housing or welfare.
- (3) Violence, hatred, ill will on the part of other humans.

In the first of these cases, where Nature is alone responsible for the suffering, the possibilities of affective aid depend only on the numbers of men and the amount of material and technical equipment available. In the second case relief work cannot as a rule produce results, except where it is undertaken by the State and communes concerned as a whole, and is given practical form as such. It is in principle too big a problem for the forces of the Red Cross to handle.

In the third case, where the suffering is the consequence of the violence or ill will of man, those who seek to give relief are at once limited by the means at their disposal. They are also perpetually confronted by obstacles inherent in the conditions of the combats concerned, and by the ill will of those who are in the last resort the authors of the suffering. The case may arise in wars which whole peoples wage against one another. But these melancholy conditions may be reproduced, where single peoples are torn by political struggles and persecutions.

The Red Cross was instituted in order to help those whose sufferings are aggravated by the circumstances of war. Its mission is to intervene in just those cases where many of us cannot, or will not, bring relief. It is amidst an environment of indifference, of aversion, of hostility even (which is alien to it) that the Red Cross is called upon to act, inspired and fortified by nothing but its own charitable spirit.

This work of aid in time of war or similar circumstances has two motive causes behind it. In the first place, it has always been done by the Red Cross from the beginning, and since then

has been expressly assigned to it by agreements in international law, especially the Geneva Conventions of 1949 in favour of prisoners of war and civilians ; and secondly, it is pioneering work and, as such, is congenial to the nature of the Red Cross. The texts of the Conventions of 1929 and 1949 represent for the most part affirmations and (so to say) codifications of Red Cross initiatives, and in particular of initiatives by the International Committee. But in presence of the violence of man the pioneers of humanity never fail to have opportunities of displaying their zeal.

* * *

Human suffering always imposes on us two duties. We have (1) to give immediate relief to the sufferers, and (2) to put an end to the reasons for the suffering. The first of these duties, the aid of man to man, is the proper mission of the Red Cross, whether in case of war, natural disasters, or evils arising out of bad social conditions. This duty cannot be abandoned for other functions, however important they may be and whatever the case that may be made out in their favour. No abatement of this duty, no encroachments on it by recently developed permanent activities calling for all the resources at the disposal of the Red Cross, can be allowed. The one *mot d'ordre* of the Red Cross is, and in the nature of things must be, " Ready ! Aye ! Ready ! "

Preventive measures to cope with the danger of natural disasters, in so far as such measures are possible (e.g. the erection of obstacles on slopes exposed to avalanches, the construction of dykes, and the like), have never been considered as coming within the competence of the Red Cross. Similarly with remedies for social evils, which themselves involve the intervention of the Red Cross. But the Red Cross can nevertheless play a very important part in urging the State or the public bodies concerned to take suitable social action : for no one is in a better position than the Red Cross, which itself steps in to alleviate the sufferings in question, to call for social reforms on the strength of its higher moral authority and its far wider experience.

The same thing is true in our opinion in times of war or any other forms of human violence or hate. When in the true Red Cross spirit—that is to say, in the spirit of compassion—relief is given to the sufferings of war victims, the party giving relief is at the same time showing himself a valiant combatant for peace. The Red Cross Conferences have again and again proclaimed the close connection between the Red Cross and international peace. Soon after 1864 Dunant had already grasped the connection between the two. The relief activities for which the Geneva Convention provides have a dual significance. Their significance is not confined to the actual aid which they give to the wounded and sick : they represent also in an inhuman age the permanence of the idea of humanity, and thus become a moral bridge towards peace at a time when so many human relations are in process of dissolution or conflict.

Practical measures for the organisation of peace are of course necessary ; but there is another factor, which is even more important, and that is the attitude towards other peoples, not only of Governments, but also of each individual of the popular masses. Such a transformation of human conduct from within in the true spirit of the Red Cross may have decisive results, if once it penetrates the masses.

This brings us to the capital problem of the Red Cross—namely, to the foundations of all sympathy with suffering.

* * *

When the Geneva Convention provided for the inclusion of volunteers in national armies in time of war, it was thought in the first instance that this was in the interest of all the armies and all the peoples. The preparatory work of the Red Cross, and its increasing peacetime activities in connection with public health and social services, all on a national basis, is quite natural. Why ? Because in the first place the Red Cross is led to exercise these internal functions by external considerations, and the activities of the national Societies are limited by their resources in men and material : and in the second place because the pity

for compatriots is ultimately an expression of the fellow-feeling which all men have for their common home.

Side by side with this—in itself important—national fellow-feeling there is another fellow-feeling of an ideological character which has its origin primarily in the sense of religious and confessional community, and community of race and political conceptions. In this second form of fellow-feeling there is however an admixture of the feeling of pity in the shape of a sense of collective interest. The suffering are aided, but only those who belong to certain circles.

* * *

But it is of the first importance that from the very beginning—as the Geneva Convention attests—the Red Cross idea has been that help in war must be given, not only to compatriots, but to every individual, including adversaries, who whether wounded and as such *hors de combat* or sick are in need of treatment. The Geneva Convention is one of the decisive turning—points in the history of international law. It is the individual it is desired to protect, not because he is a national of this or that State, but because he is an individual. I have had occasion to speak on this subject a year ago ¹.

This assertion of the individual as a human being, and of his dignity as such, is at the origin of our Western civilisation, of Christianity, and of its secular form, Humanism, which draws its inspiration from the philosophy of Illumination and Idealism. But the importance of the individual is not by any means a conception of the Red Cross alone. It is confirmed, not only by purely humanitarian organisations, but even by religious or confessional relief bodies, such as the Quakers or the Y.M.C.A., who do admirable work in the same field. On the battlefield of Solferino it seemed perfectly natural to give relief to any and everybody who had need of it. That is a capital element in the thought and spirit of the Red Cross, which finds expression in three forms.

¹ *Das Völkerrecht und der Mensch*, Tschudy Verlag, St. Gallen, 1952. Published in the « *Annuaire suisse de droit international* », Vol. VIII, 1951. French translation by Jean-G. Lossier in the *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, August 1952, page 646.

1. The Red Cross is concerned with hundreds of thousands, and even with millions, of human beings, who suffer or are threatened with suffering; but it never becomes a pure mass organisation or an anonymous collective organisation. It feels the need for vital contact with each individual, and makes every effort to maintain such contact. Thanks to the International Committee of the Red Cross the lists of prisoners have become dozens of millions of index-cards. These index-cards are at the disposal of the national Red Cross Societies. They are not merely a colossal effort of bureaucracy: they are a turn-table of human relations, because they allow of the transmission of news and presents between prisoners of every sort and their families. A Delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, M. Georges Dunand, has published a fine book entitled "Ne perdez pas leur trace"¹, in which he describes his own experiences. What sufferings there are for an unfortunate, separated from his own relations, with whom it is not possible to prove definitely that he is a war victim or a victim of political persecution! Anyone, who is opposed to relief efforts to alleviate such sufferings, is incurring a grave and terrible responsibility.

2. It is the individual as a human being, and not a particular individual in whom for some reason or another one has a special interest, that one assists. There are two principles which derive from this—first, the principle of universality, and secondly, the principle of impartiality. These two principles are of primary, indeed of vital, importance for the Red Cross.

The Red Cross endeavoured from the first to be universal; and the whole earth is now covered with an uninterrupted series of national Red Cross Societies, formed one after the other in the course of years. The Geneva Convention for its part is one of the oldest international agreements open to ratification by all the States.

But this "universality" of the Red Cross is not purely "spatial" or "territorial". It is a phenomenon of actual fact. It is no doubt important for the Red Cross to have its work recognised, and so facilitated and protected, in national and

¹ Editions de la Baconnière, Neuchâtel, 1950.

international law, though not necessarily by means of rigid legal formulas. Like other pioneers, the Red Cross is always on the look-out for action where there is need of relief, which no one else is in a position to provide. It was in this way that in the First World War, and even more in the Second World War, the Red Cross found and explored many sources of activity up till then unknown. It was faced with situations, which were novel if not abnormal and unknown in international law. But for suffering let there be an equal and equivalent mass of relief! That is the idea underlying the new Conventions of 1949, to which it should be possible to evolve practical implementation, so far of course as that has been found possible to provide in international agreements.

Another consequence of universality for the national Red Cross Societies is the extension of their activities to foreign countries in distress, or their intervention in favour of foreigners, as for example when the Swiss Red Cross welcomes underfed or weakly children in Switzerland.

To handle the manifold problems of public health and social services—even in foreign countries and in favour of foreign populations—necessarily involves a risk of the Red Cross wasting its energies. Its institutions, national or international, should always keep in view the lessons of experience. It is not the quantity, but the quality, of its activities which it should endeavour to develop to the utmost, for it is in this way that it will be able to give valuable and truly effective aid. In any moral or spiritual effort—and it is from these that the Red Cross draws its sustenance—moderation is necessary, if action is to be permanent and effective, just as it is essential to assess the relative importance of the various undertakings on which one embarks or proposes to embark. One should not for a moment allow oneself to be deflected from a purpose one has conceived by ill-founded criticism urging the impossible, or again the union of irreconcilables.

The universality of the Red Cross has been interpreted from the first as symbolising the principle that all in need of aid should receive it without political, religious or racial considerations. But it has been conceived as a universality addressed to peoples

as a whole and to all social classes ; and the workers and directors of the Red Cross are taken from all groups and all layers of the population. The world unfortunately is divided today in ever-increasing measure. The divisions occur, not only between individuals, but also between peoples, and are due to ideological differences, or to the antagonism in colonies or former colonies between Whites and coloured races. All of which makes it more and more difficult for many organisations to give practical effect to the universality, which the Red Cross regards as a principle of action so vital that it can never be abandoned.

3. But there is another principle of equal importance for the Red Cross—deriving, as it does, from the fundamental conception of the individual—and that is the principle of impartiality, which used once to be described in somewhat more precise language as “ neutrality ”. It means that the Red Cross cannot favour one set of groups against another, where two adversaries are in conflict. In civil war or in internal dissensions the Red Cross can never favour one party to the detriment of the other. Nor again can it be diverted from its work, where (as in the case of political persecutions) it is confronted on the one hand with a powerful State, which has its police and its troops and needs no Red Cross aid, and on the other hand with a feeble body, perhaps a quite small group of persecuted people. The principle of impartiality should never be allowed in actual practice to become a partiality from which the weaker side suffers.

* * *

A last and most important consequence of the principles of universality and impartiality is that we should be prepared to assist the adversary. And this would seem to have been the rallying cry on the Solferino battlefield. As a matter of fact one can hardly imagine a more contemptible or less charitable attitude than to make a distinction in the care of the wounded, sick and dying in so far as they are akin to or remote from us in political, racial or other connections. The first Geneva Convention of 1864 already deemed it quite natural for the Medical Service of an army in the field, and the voluntary

auxiliaries attached thereto, to prove their impartiality. At the same time this Convention did not consider it necessary to provide special guarantees for the practice of equal treatment. Nevertheless, as from the war in 1864, representatives of the International Committee made their appearance in army hospitals.

It would be absurd to deny however that the fact of asking for the adversary himself to be assisted with such total goodwill constitutes an extraordinarily exacting and almost superhuman demand. It would be unwise and even dangerous for the Red Cross cause to lay too strict an emphasis upon the need for National Societies to extend their services to the adversary also, and to assist prisoners of war or the civilian population in a region occupied by their own national troops. It is already noticeable that national feeling and animosity become overstrained in time of peace. Total war moreover, by methodically creating an unwholesome psychological atmosphere, renders doubtful the possibility of the Red Cross (in conformity with its spirit) being able to pursue an activity in favour of the adversary, for this assistance, however well-intentioned it may be, is likely to be received with suspicion and resented as being a humiliation.

Experience shows that psychological tension between two nations at war makes the intervention of a third party necessary. By this should be understood neutrals, whether the Protecting Power, National Red Cross Societies of neutral countries or the International Committee of the Red Cross. As those to whom one party to the conflict wishes to give assistance are, through captivity or occupation, in the power of the opposite party, the necessity arises for the intervention of a third and impartial party who can cross the barrier separating the two sides in conflict. Without neutrality the Red Cross could not accomplish a great and essential part of its work. A former Delegate of the International Committee, and a very distinguished one, Dr. Marcel Junod, gave to his book relating his ten years' experience the eminently apt title of "Warrior without Weapons?"¹. The warrior in question does not of course engage

¹ Dr. Marcel JUNOD *Warrior without Weapons*, Jonathan Cape, 1951.

in work of destruction like the others but, on the contrary, brings relief to war victims.

A neutral has the advantage of being able to intervene with greater facility and in the same manner on behalf of men of one or the other side ; and he is entitled to hope that both parties will place sufficient trust in him by allowing him to pass from one front to another and to act as a go-between for the two adversaries. He should have the wish and the means for identifying himself entirely with every suffering being, without regard to his own personal feelings.

The greater the abnegation required for relief work, the more fully will the earnest desire of the Red Cross be realised. The Red Cross should give practical proof of this abnegation, even when its work is questioned and it is the object of attack. The Red Cross is prepared to intervene wherever its services are called upon, whenever it is again given the means of doing so. For itself, it can only ask for one thing—the opportunity of giving its unbiassed and total assistance.
