



REVUE INTERNATIONALE DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

SUPPLEMENT

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

News Items

Dissemination of the Geneva Conventions among young people. — *At the end of 1958 a competition for school children in the German Federal Republic was organised by the German Red Cross of which the special subject was the Geneva Conventions.*

Over 35,000 classes, i.e. about half a million pupils, took part in the competition. The prize—a trip to Geneva by motor coach—was won by a class of sixteen girls, aged from 15 to 17, of the Peine School (near Hanover).

Accompanied by Mrs. C. D. von Stieglitz, President of the Peine Branch of the German Red Cross and Dr. W. Jacobsen of the Central Committee of the German Red Cross, and two school teachers, the class visited the League on April 21 and was afterwards received at the headquarters of the ICRC.

The International Committee was very pleased to meet the winners of the competition; when congratulating the visitors on their interest in the Red Cross it expressed the hope that they would continue to assist in disseminating the principles of the Geneva Conventions.

After several brief talks on the role and activities of the ICRC the Peine scholars visited the Central Prisoners of War Agency and were also shown the film "Blood is still being shed..."

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The ICRC received by the Swiss Red Cross — *From March 31 to April 5 an international meeting, organised by the Swiss Red Cross was held at the Italo-Swiss centre at Varazze (Italy) in which German, Austrian, Italian and Swiss members of the teaching profession took part. The subject of the discussions was the dissemination of knowledge of the Geneva Conventions among school-children.*

The League was represented at the meeting by Mr. C. A. Schusselé, Director of the Junior Red Cross, and the ICRC by Mr. H. Coursier, Member of the Legal Department. During the discussions Mr. Coursier spoke on the principles of the Geneva Conventions and the application of those principles to new situations which were more or less provided for by the Conventions, in particular assistance to political detainees, legal assistance to migrants and refugees and the study of the protection of the civilian population from the danger of war.

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A delegate of the ICRC visits Cyprus — *Mr. D. de Traz, General-Delegate of the ICRC for the Middle East, visited Cyprus in mid-April. During his short stay in the island he found that the recent agreements passed in London have brought a satisfactory solution to the problem of political detainees with whom the ICRC has been concerned during the past years. With the exception of those under sentence of death all political detainees have been released.*

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Representatives of the ICRC at the Xth Session of the Council of ICEM — *The Xth Session of the Council of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration was held in Geneva from April 7 to 10, 1959. The ICRC was represented by Mr. H. G. Beckh, Delegate, of the Executive Division and Mr. H. Coursier, Member of the Legal Department.*

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Distribution of cigarettes — *Gifts of cigarettes received by the ICRC enabled it to place a million cigarettes at the disposal*

of the Red Cross of the German Federal Republic for distribution to refugees in various assembly centres, in particular at Berlin.

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Assistance to internees in Algeria — *During March the International Committee instructed Mr. R. Vust, delegate in Algeria, to hand over to the French military authorities 1,345 parcels for distribution to Algerian prisoners captured while bearing arms. These parcels, of which the total value was 1,150,000 Algerian francs, contained underclothing, toilet requisites, towels and cigarettes. Each parcel was packed in a canvas bag which could be used afterwards by the prisoner to store toilet articles.*

In February last the ICRC sent to Mr. Vust, 5,000 packets of cigarettes (value 4,000 Swiss francs) for distribution in internment camps.

During his visit to Douira Camp (Algeria) in March, Mr. Vust distributed books and games valued at 300 Swiss francs to the internees.

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Legal Assistance to Aliens. — *The Advisory Council of the International Centre for the Co-ordination of Legal Assistance held a meeting on April 17, at the ICRC headquarters, presided over by Mr. H. Coursier. The meeting expressed its approval of the report of the Geneva Working Group for the Study of Legal Assistance which was to be submitted, early in June, to the VIIth Session of the Standing Conference of Voluntary Agencies working for Refugees to be held in New York.*

The Advisory Council also approved a draft circular to be sent to member organisations concerning proposed improvements in legal assistance to migrants and refugees.

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Visits to the ICRC headquarters. — *Among the visitors to the ICRC headquarters during the first fortnight in May were the Ambassador of the German Federal Republic, in Berne, and Mrs. Mohr, and the Permanent Delegate in Geneva of the German Federal Republic, and Mrs. Thierfelder, who were received by*

the International Committee. They afterwards visited the Central Prisoners of War Agency in which they took great interest.

On May 11 the ICRC had the pleasure of receiving H. E. Mr. Thanat Kohman, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand, accompanied by Mr. Obeboon Vanikkul, chargé d'affaires at the Thai Legation in Berne. On May 14 H. E. Mr. Wilhelm Goertz, the new Permanent Delegate of Austria to international organisations in Geneva, paid a visit to the ICRC headquarters.

During the past two months visits have been made by Miss Muzaffer, Head of the Cecebi Nursing School, Ankara, Mr. Luis Garardo Guerrero, Director of the Relief Section of the Chilean Red Cross, Mr. Maurice Orbach, Labour Member of the House of Commons (Great Britain), Miss Suzanne Martin, Head of the Versailles Nursing School, Miss Elizabeth O. R. Browne, Director of the Nova Scotia Junior Red Cross (Canada), the Hon. Justice L. R. Caney, member of the Natal Regional Council, South African Red Cross, General Hossbach, Member of the Board of Directors of the "Kriegsgräberfürsorge" (German Federal Republic), Mrs. S. T. M. Lake, former Vice-President of the Women's Work Programme of the British Columbia Division (Canada) and Mr. Manlio Managlia, Head of Press Section of the Italian Red Cross.

On April 28, Mr. H. Dunning, Secretary-General of the League who was leaving for the United States on a mission, made a point of discussing with the directorate of the International Committee various current problems which might be of interest to the American Red Cross.

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The ICRC at the World Health Assembly. — *The 12th World Health Assembly was held in Geneva from May 12 to 30; the ICRC was represented at this session by Dr. M. Junod, Member of the International Committee.*

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The ICRC at the "Congrès international sur la neutralité de la médecine en temps de guerre". — *Mr. F. Siordet, Vice-President of the ICRC, Dr. E. Gloor, Member of the International Committee*

and Mr. J. Pictet, Director for General Affairs, took part in the "Congrès international sur la neutralité de la médecine en temps de guerre" held in Paris from April 6 to 8.

They also represented the ICRC at the 21st meeting of the International Information Office for Military Medicine and Pharmacy, also held in Paris, from April 1 to 5.

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The ICRC invited by the World Federation of United Nations Associations. — The tenth series of lectures on the World Health Organisation given by the World Federation of United Nations Associations took place in Geneva from May 11 to 20. The ICRC, invited to attend, delegated Miss A. Pfirter, Head of the Medical Personnel Section, who followed with special interest these lectures on the manifold activities of the WHO.

On May 19 some of the participants visited various sections of the ICRC including the Central Prisoners of War Agency.

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Collective visits. — During the past few months several groups of visitors from various countries have called at the ICRC headquarters to collect information on the work of the International Committee and to visit the Central Prisoners of War Agency.

Mention may be made of the visit, on April 20, of the national table-tennis team of the Republic of Korea which was passing through Geneva and, on April 28, of some thirty persons taking part in the International Seminar of the World University Service, Bonn, accompanied by the Secretary-General of the institution, Mr. Kulesa. On May 1 students from the French Red Cross Nursing School in Valence, accompanied by their director, Miss Vallet, came to Geneva to visit the various sections of the League and the International Committee. On May 13 the ICRC received 56 students from three social-workers' training centres in Lyons (Ecole des Alouettes, Ecole du Service social du Sud-Est and the Ecole de la Croix-Rouge française de Lyon) accompanied by their instructors. A visit was made on May 15 by a group of junior officials of the Department politique fédéral in Berne.

Further, 62 first-aid workers of the French Red Cross from the Paris area who were proceeding to Solferino, and first-aid workers of the French Red Cross of the Bouches-du-Rhône and Annemasse branches were received on May 16 at the ICRC headquarters by representatives of the International Committee and the League who explained the role and activities of the two institutions.

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Representatives of wives of Japanese fishermen at the ICRC headquarters. — *Mrs. Ishihara and Mrs. Shirasawa, representing the wives of Japanese fishermen under detention in the Republic of Korea, arrived in Geneva from Japan at the end of March.*

The two delegates, accompanied by Mr. Kasai, Vice-President and Mr. Inoue, Director of the Foreign Affairs Department, of the Japanese Red Cross, were received on April 1 at the ICRC headquarters by the directorate of the International Committee to whom they explained the concern felt by the families of Japanese fishermen interned in South Korea.

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Vietnamese refugees in Thailand. — *Mr. André Durand, delegate of the ICRC, arrived at Bangkok in February in order to examine on the spot, the problem of the repatriation of Vietnamese refugees in Thailand, on whose behalf the International Committee had been approached by the Thai Red Cross and the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.*

Mr. Durand was authorised to visit 272 Vietnamese nationals who were interned early in the year. He also visited the provinces where refugees are living and was able to speak freely with them.

The Government of Thailand having agreed, in principle, to the repatriation of Vietnamese from Thailand to a place of the choice in their country of origin, Mr. Durand went on two occasions to Hanoi to study, with the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, questions relating to the repatriation of refugees who had expressed the wish to proceed to North Viet Nam.

Through the efforts of the delegate of the ICRC, a meeting between the two National Societies now appears to have been agreed to, in principle, by both parties concerned.

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Celebration of Red Cross Day at the ICRC headquarters. — *On May 8, International Red Cross Day, the ICRC staff members were invited to attend a lecture given by Mr. F. Siordet, Vice-President of the International Committee.*

After recalling the extreme complexity of Henry Dunant's character and his stirring apostolate, Mr. Siordet defined the basic principles of the Red Cross, described its achievements since its creation and explained the part which the institution is called upon to play at the present time.

In view of the weapons of destruction at the disposal of the world of today, at this period of our times when the interests of the individual tend to be placed only after those of the masses, is one to consider that the very existence of the Red Cross has become an anachronism? By no means. The Red Cross, the repository of Dunant's message, owes it to itself to remain faithful to its mission. Dunant did not look upon the 40,000 wounded at Solferino as a statistical figure or collective suffering of such proportion as to discourage any attempts to alleviate it. In the eyes of the founder of the Red Cross those 40,000 wounded men represented 40,000 cases of individual suffering and for every one assistance was due.

The most imperative duty of the Red Cross and the very reason for its existence is to help a human being left to suffer alone—a wounded or captive man rendered helpless and therefore looked upon as useless—and to go to his assistance regardless of his origin, his beliefs or his past.

Mr. Siordet's lecture was followed by a cartoon of a symbolical and particularly vivid description illustrating the various activities of the Swiss Red Cross, and a film produced by the League, a series of fine coloured scenes and photographs of Dunant's life and activities, Solferino and his retirement in Heiden, and also the birth and development of the Red Cross Idea.

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The tenth International Red Cross Broadcast. — *On May 8, for the tenth time in succession, International Red Cross Day in commemoration of Henry Dunant's birth, was celebrated by broadcasts from Europe and other countries. In 1950 five countries took part; this year there were thirty-five including over fifty broadcasting systems.*

Eighteen of these took part in the multiplex introduction; the broadcasting stations were divided into thirteen language groups of which the majority sent out the original text or an adaptation of a play by Gerardo Guerrieri presented by the Italian Radio-Television Service. (An English version was given under the title "The train which did not come in time"). The multiplex was particularly successful and listeners could hear the calls and note the simultaneous presence of studios in Switzerland, France, Luxemburg, Monaco, Italy, the Vatican, German Federal Republic, German Democratic Republic, Austria, Belgium, the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Jugoslavia, Greece and Tunisia.

The programme was also broadcast or relayed by several stations in Spain and Latin America, and English-speaking stations in various parts of the world. Other stations took part, in a slightly different manner, in this great international programme. In all over seventy countries in the five Continents participated in the celebration of International Red Cross Day.

In this year which marks the centenary of the Battle of Solferino, Gerardo Guerrieri's radio play called up a striking and thrilling vision of the horrors of the battle, the suffering of the wounded and the agony of the dying. It recalled the charitable action of Henry Dunant in words which the millions of listeners to this exceptional broadcast must have found very moving.

The original version in Italian was broadcast by Radio-Rome, Radio-Vatican and the Swiss station at Monte-Ceneri. Broadcasts from France, Luxemburg, Monaco and French Switzerland were given in an adaptation in French by Professor T. R. Castiglione.

This broadcast, organised by Radio-Genève, was given under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross Societies and the European Broadcasting Union. It was produced by Mr. Georges Kuhne, Head of the ICRC Broadcasting and Television Office at Radio-Genève.

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Missions to London, Paris and Bonn. — *Miss A. Pfirter, Head of the Medical Personnel Section and the War-Disablement Section of the ICRC, went to London during the second week in March. She was received by the directorate of the British Red Cross and was able to make a close study of the manifold activities of this Society, particularly in regard to the training of medical personnel.*

During her stay in Great Britain, Miss Pfirter visited various medical establishments and units. She also had discussions with the International Council of Nurses of which the headquarters are in London.

Miss Pfirter went on to Paris where she had interviews with the heads of the principal sections of the French Red Cross. At the Hôtel des Invalides, the army pensioners' hospital where the war-disabled are operated upon and given treatment, she visited the surgical clinic, recently renovated and equipped with the most modern appliances.

She also visited an assembly centre for Moslem women and a transit camp for refugees of all nationalities under the management of the French Red Cross. She saw a centre for pilot nurses of the Air Convoy Corps, the Nurses Training Centre, of the French Red Cross, a Nurses Home and the Seine Branch of the French Red Cross.

Before returning to Geneva, Miss Pfirter made a short stay in Bonn for discussions with the directorate of the Red Cross of the German Federal Republic on various matters relating to war-disabled and the training of medical personnel.

Miss Pfirter received a cordial welcome in these three countries.

RELEASE OF PRISONERS

IN MOROCCO

May 6, 1959. — The International Committee of the Red Cross has learnt with great satisfaction from press reports of the release at Rabat, on May 6, 1959, of forty Spanish civilians and military personnel who had been captured eighteen months ago by the "Moroccan Army of Liberation" during the events at Ifni and Cape Bojador. The ICRC has made many representations concerning these Spanish nationals, and is therefore particularly pleased to learn of their release. Last month a delegate of the ICRC, Mr. Pierre Gaillard, carried out yet another mission in this connection, and visited H.R.H. Princess Lalla Aïcha, President of the "Entraide nationale marocaine" and Mr. Mohammed Sebti, President of the Moroccan Red Crescent.

IN ALGERIA

May 19, 1959. — The International Committee of the Red Cross was particularly pleased to note the release in Kabylia by the A.L.N. of fifteen French prisoners and a Swiss national during the past few days. The representations made by the ICRC for several months past in Geneva and North Africa in behalf of this group of prisoners have thus been crowned with success.

The ICRC is most satisfied with this unconditional release which responds to its untiring efforts towards the humanisation of the Algerian conflict.

VISITS OF THE ICRC TO DETAINED PERSONS

A state of emergency was declared at the end of February in Nyasaland and Rhodesia where conflicts had arisen between the indigenous inhabitants and the Government forces. A number of arrests having been made by the local authorities, the ICRC instructed its delegate in British Central Africa, Mr. G. C. Senn, to approach the authorities with a view to obtaining permission to visit the detained persons. His request was granted promptly and on May 6 and 7 Mr. Senn started at Kentucky Camp near Salisbury a series of visits to camps and prisons which are at present being continued in Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

RED CROSS DAY

May 8 has indeed become the universal Red Cross Day and an occasion for the Red Cross institutions to strengthen the bonds between them. This year it was celebrated in many countries with great enthusiasm since it was a prelude to the commemoration of the birth of the Red Cross Idea.

As related in this issue of the *Revue internationale*, the tenth International Red Cross Broadcast took place in the evening of May 8 with the participation of numerous national broadcasting services.

Many publications of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies received in Geneva contain articles on the anniversary of Henry Dunant's birth and recall the life and work of the founder of our movement. Commemoration ceremonies were also held under the auspices of the National Societies in Asia, America and Europe. For instance, the Guatemalan Red Cross organised a meeting during which the President made a speech, a procession marched through the town and it is planned to erect a bust of Henry Dunant in a park dedicated to the Red Cross.

Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld, Secretary-General of the United Nations, again sent a message this year for May 8 in which he said :

“ World Red Cross Day ” this year calls for special note and observance, for it is just one hundred years ago that Henry Dunant, moved by the sufferings of the wounded on the battlefield of Solferino,

conceived the idea of a humanitarian movement now universally known as the Red Cross.

Thanks largely to Henry Dunant's own untiring efforts, his compassionate idea evoked not only sympathy, but action. It led to the adoption of international rules for the humane treatment of prisoners of war and wounded. From his idea has grown the League of Red Cross Societies composed of the Red Cross, Red Crescent, and Red Lion and Sun national societies throughout the world. Their activities are no longer confined to the battlefield, but are promptly extended to peoples, whoever they are, and wherever and whenever they may be the victims of disaster.

The growth, influence and, most important of all, the great work of the Red Cross for the alleviation of human suffering, inspire and encourage all who believe in the effectiveness of international cooperation for overcoming the obstacles—natural or man-made—to human progress and happiness. It is this belief that animates the work of the United Nations.

At its first General Assembly the United Nations unanimously recognized the value of the Red Cross idea and ever since has actively cooperated in many programmes of assistance with members of the League of Red Cross Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

I feel sure that on this hundredth anniversary of his dedication to the cause of man's humanity to man, Henry Dunant would have us pay homage also to all those unknown voluntary workers throughout the world who are carrying on his work with the same selfless devotion, finding reward enough in the care and comfort they can bring to their fellow men.