



SUPPLEMENT

VOL. IV

REVUE INTERNATIONALE
DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

ET

BULLETIN INTERNATIONAL
DES SOCIÉTÉS
DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

SUPPLEMENT

Vol. IV, 1951

GENÈVE

1951

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January, 1951

Vol. IV, No. 1

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Published by
Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, Genève
Editor: Louis Demolls

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS

NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE FROM THE RED CROSS

M. Paul Ruegger, President of the ICRC, and M. Emil Sandström, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies, have broadcast a message to the world. The message was recorded in 14 languages and issued to 48 countries.

M. Ruegger's address is as follows :

“ In the divided world of today, where a doubtful friend is too soon and easily taken for a certain enemy, there are some institutions which must at all cost be preserved. Among them is the Red Cross, a symbol of protest against injustice and violence, working for a world of humanity and understanding. This world must be built, and those who, in all lands, serve under the standard of the Red Cross are its unremitting artisans. It is the earnest and heartfelt wish of the International Committee of the Red Cross, in Geneva, that the year which opens before us should see new progress towards peace and tolerance throughout the world.”

Speaking for the League of Red Cross Societies, M. Sandström said :

“ I address you, members and friends of the Red Cross in the various countries of the world, on behalf of our International Red Cross Federation, the League of Red Cross Societies. The purpose of the Red Cross has, from its inception less than a hundred years ago, been to alleviate the sufferings of mankind. Starting with the view of bringing relief to the sick and wounded on the battlefield, its sphere of activities has extended, and it wants to give a helping hand wherever suffering and distress prevail. The movement has

spread all over the world and it now spans the globe. Red Cross Societies exist in 68 countries and embrace 100 million people. Its emblem and its work are known and venerated in the most remote places, and the world could certainly not do without the Red Cross. The sufferings in the world are immense. Most of the time, the needs are vastly greater than our means to meet them. But, if our present efforts do not suffice, that is no reason to despair. On the contrary, we must continue to improve and to extend the services of the Red Cross in all fields and in all countries. Here the League has an important part to play. We cannot alter the destinies of the peoples, but we can aid those in need of our help. That we must do to the limit of our strength. Thus, we contribute very actively to the understanding between the peoples and to the preservation of peace, the World's most fervent hope. Let this be the task of the League of Red Cross Societies and of all their members in the New Year."

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

COMMUNICATION OF THE ICRC TO NORTH KOREA

Geneva, January 8, 1951.

Continuing the efforts it has unceasingly made to carry out its traditional humanitarian tasks for both sides in the Korean conflict, the ICRC has sent the message which follows to H. E. Pak Heun Young, Minister of External Affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea, Pyongyang.

In order to ensure most rapid and certain communication, the message was repeated by radio broadcast. The Committee is thus in a position to make immediate publication, as follows :

“ Geneva, January 5, 1951.

To H. E. Pak Heun Young, Minister of External Affairs, People's Democratic Republic, Pyongyang.

“ In the desire of bringing to all victims of the war the strictly impartial aid of the International Committee of the Red Cross, I consider it my duty to propose that I visit your Government in order to examine the different Red Cross problems which have been the object of our several previous communications, sent since June 26, 1950, and referring to (1) Prisoners of War on both sides ; (2) the possibility of protecting the non-combatant civil population, as outlined in our proposal of July 7, 1950, by the creation, in accordance with the Fourth 1949 Geneva Convention, of Security Zones which would be immune from all forms of hostilities, including aerial and naval bombardment.

“ If your Government and the Korean Red Cross agree to examine these urgent problems, I propose to travel personally to Korea in a Red Cross aircraft, registered in Switzerland. The mission would be

composed, in addition to the crew, of a personal assistant and a medical counsellor. The plane would also carry an initial stock of medical supplies provided from various neutral gifts, particularly a gift of the Swiss Government, for impartial and equitable distribution to all victims of hostilities in Korea.

“ The International Committee of the Red Cross would be grateful if Your Excellency would indicate where this plane might land, near to the seat of your Government. Such destination could be communicated to the plane en route to your country and, if possible, during its transit via China. We are at the same time approaching the Governments of your neighbouring countries with which you have diplomatic relations, to ask them to accord, in the spirit of the Geneva Conventions, every assistance in facilitating transit. Details about the plane, personnel of the mission and the crew will be communicated as soon as we receive your acceptance. We shall also communicate the route, which we suggest should be via India, Shanghai, and either Peking or Vladivostok.

“ We ask that you please give this purely humanitarian proposal your urgent personal attention. The International Committee of the Red Cross awaits and confidently hopes for a rapid and positive response.

“ We are repeating the above message by wireless in English and French to ensure its certain delivery.

With the expression of my high consideration.

Paul Ruegger
*President, International Committee
of the Red Cross*

PRINCIPAL ITEMS OF INTEREST IN DECEMBER

Korea. — The Delegates in South Korea visited the following camps.

UN PoW Transit Camp. November 30 and December 4.

UN PoW Collecting Centre, 10th Corps. December 6.

UN PoW Camp No. 1. December 27 and 28.

Mission in Amboina. — The aircraft lent to the ICRC and which brought relief to the population on the Island of Amboina, returned to Geneva on December 16. Dr. Pffimlin, who travelled with the shipment, remained in Indonesia.

The crew of the plane were received by the Committee when they arrived in Geneva.

End of Bengal Mission. — The mission of six Delegates and eight Nurses, led by Dr. Roland Marti, which went to Bengal six months ago, has returned to Geneva, its work being considered as completed.

The Hospitals, Clinics, and Child Welfare Centres they set up have been taken over by the Indian and Pakistani authorities, who have expressed their deep appreciation to the mission.

Kashmir Mission. — Two Delegates recently visited Yol and Jammu refugee camps in Indian territory, in which there are some 35,000 persons from Kashmir. They also visited refugees in the neighbourhood of Srinagar.

Germans in Jugoslavia. — The ICRC has sent 650 individual parcels to German detainees in Jugoslavia. The parcels, distributed by the Yugoslav Red Cross, contained body-building products and vitamins.

“Volksdeutsche”. — *Volksdeutsche* and Eastern Germans continue to arrive at Friedland and Furth im Wald, following the Committee's negotiations and thanks to the co-operation of Red Cross Societies in the interested countries.

The last convoy of the year at Friedland brought the number of persons who had passed through the camp in 1950 to 33,266.

There were 35 convoys to Furth im Wald during the year, bringing the total of arrivals there to 13,297.

The Committee arranged for the distribution of clothing and cash to *Volksdeutsche* at Furth im Wald and of parcels with primary necessities in Friedland Camp. A convoy of sixteen *Volksdeutsche* children awaited by their parents in Austria, and twenty-eight for Germany, arrived from Jugoslavia on December 11.

The Committee, through the intermediary of a special Delegate, continued its examination of emigration possibilities and the best manner in which it could help in re-establishing the *Volksdeutsche*. Fresh sums of money were transferred to Hamburg and Munich to continue the Committee's relief for *Volksdeutsche* from Poland and Czechoslovakia.

The German Red Cross at Hamburg received 12,500 DM. to pay for parcels of toilet and other primary necessities, for distribution on behalf of the Committee, in Friedland Camp. The German Red Cross at Munich received a similar amount for the purchase in Germany of clothing for distribution on behalf of the Committee to *Volksdeutsche* arriving at Furth im Wald.

Refugees in Italy. — A residue of funds for assisting Displaced Persons was given to the Italian Red Cross which, after inquiry into the most urgent needs of refugees in the camps of Fraschetti and Farfa Sabina, under Italian jurisdiction near Rome, made the purchases most urgently needed and distributed them before Christmas.

Medical Equipment. — The Committee made a gift to the Czechoslovak Red Cross of an apparatus, worth approximately 32,000 Swiss francs, for drying blood plasma.

Visits. — On December 8, the Committee received the visit of Mr. W. J. Phillips, Secretary of the British Red Cross.

On December 15, Señor Dr. Manuel Prado, President of Peru during the second World War, visited the Committee. He

was accompanied by Señor E. Manchego Herrera, Minister Plenipotentiary of Peru at Berne, Señor Alvarado, Assistant Director of the International Labour Office in Geneva, and Señor Aramburu, Cultural Attaché. They were received by M. Paul Ruegger, President, M. Martin Bodmer, Vice-President, other members of the Committee, and officials. The President of the Geneva State Council and Madame Perréard were also present.

Mlle Dagny Martens, Secretary of the Norwegian Red Cross, paid a study visit from December 10 to 15.

New Year Message. — A New Year Message from the President of the International Committee and the Chairman of the League of Red Cross Societies was recorded in fourteen languages and sent out to forty-eight countries for broadcasting.

*NOTE FOR THE INFORMATION
OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETIES OF THE RED CROSS
(RED CRESCENT, RED LION AND SUN)*

« LIEUX DE GENÈVE » AND SECURITY ZONES

Since the international Association for the *Lieux de Genève* (Geneva Areas) was set up with the object of designating zones, by agreement with the enemy, where the civil population of countries at war could take refuge from bombing, the ICRC has followed its work with interest.

The Committee, on its side, had made provision for the creation of Security Zones in the draft of the new Fourth Geneva Convention for the Protection of Civilian Persons. These provisions were, for the most part, adopted by the 1949 Diplomatic Conference.

Since then, the Committee's attention has been drawn to different publications of the Association, and to appeals which it has addressed to Governments and other authorities. Several National Red Cross Societies, when asked for information on the subject by their Governments, addressed themselves to the Committee; these Societies had been struck, as had the Committee itself, by the fact that the documentation submitted to Governments made no mention of Articles 14 and 15 of the Civilian Convention, and there has accordingly been a certain amount of misapprehension.

The ICRC was therefore glad to accept an invitation from the Association to an exchange of views of problems of common interest. Following the meeting, the Association published, in agreement with the International Committee, the following statement.

“ On the proposal of the International Committee for the *Lieux de Genève*, a meeting took place on November 22, 1950, between its representatives and those of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

“ It was noted that the original idea of General Saint-Paul, founder of the *Lieux de Genève*, had been brought appreciably nearer realization

by the provision made, in the 1949 Geneva Conventions, for establishing Security Zones which would be warranted immunity by agreement between the interested countries, and where certain categories of the civilian population would be protected from the effects of war.

“ While continuing its efforts in this direction, the International Committee for the *Lieux de Genève* recently made suggestions of an entirely different character, recommending to each country internal and practical measures for the evacuation and the dispersal of the non-combatant population in wooded and hilly districts, where natural protection can be afforded in places of refuge duly prepared.

“ Contact will be maintained between the two organizations in all matters pertaining to their common purpose : the safeguard of human lives.”

It is therefore clear that the proposals recently submitted to Governments by the Association for the *Lieux de Genève* are quite new, and are not founded on the provisions of the Civilian Convention. They are, rather, suggestions of national application in each State, without there being any need for agreement or even discussion of the subject with other States.

The International Committee of the Red Cross hopes that the present statement will afford the National Societies the required clarification, and is at their disposal for any further information they may desire.

Geneva, January 15, 1951.

PRESS RELEASES

ICRC MISSION RETURNS FROM BENGAL

The mission sent to Bengal by the ICRC has now returned to Geneva.

Following serious disturbances between Hindoos and Muslims, a twofold stream of refugees had set in between the western area of Bengal (under India) and the eastern area (under Pakistan). The two Governments thereupon approached the International Committee with a request for its co-operation in the humanitarian field. The presence in Bengal during the past six months of an ICRC mission under Dr Roland Marti, and comprising six delegates and eight nurses, has largely contributed to restoring quiet and confidence among the refugee masses. The main purpose for which the two Governments invited the Committee's collaboration has thus been achieved.

In addition to this task, the ICRC mission established hospitals, policlinics and child welfare centres in both Indian and Pakistani areas. Helped by the local medical staff, the Committee's personnel did much to instruct the refugees in elementary hygiene and infant nursing. The establishments thus set up have now been taken over by the Indian and Pakistani authorities, who expressed their deep appreciation of the work done by the Committee's representatives. The costs of the undertaking were met out of special relief funds made available in Geneva.

Geneva, January 4, 1951.

SAVING THE CHILDREN

Amongst the activities upon which the Berlin Delegation of the ICRC is still engaged, is the distribution of Streptomycin to doctors treating children with meningitis. The lives of several hundred children in Berlin and Eastern Germany have thus been saved.

During the last three years, the Delegation has issued close on twenty kilos of Streptomycin, provided by Swiss and other donors, and by the Committee itself. The drug was first given for individual cases and later handed to various hospitals in Berlin and Eastern Germany. In this connection, it may be recalled that the International Committee is at present the only foreign welfare organization permitted to operate in Eastern Germany and in all four sectors of Berlin.

THE CENTRAL PRISONERS OF WAR AGENCY AND KOREA

Since the beginning of the conflict in Korea, the Central Prisoners of War Agency in Geneva has received from the Unified Command in South Korea approximately 30,000 individual capture cards. These cards are made out by the prisoners of war themselves and give full information about identity, state of health, address of next of kin, and address to which mail can be sent.

The Agency also received official nominal rolls of about 13,000 North Korean prisoners. These lists and photostats of the capture cards are forwarded on receipt to the North Korean authorities.

Henri COURSIER

Member of the Legal Service of the ICRC

LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR REFUGEES

The XVIIth International Red Cross Conference (1948) recommended that " National Societies include in their activities, should the necessity arise, legal and social assistance to stateless persons, refugees and war victims ", and requested the League of Red Cross Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross " to establish a standard programme in this field ".

The two Red Cross organizations communicated the programme in question to the National Societies on February 9, 1949¹. Contrary to what the promoters of the Stockholm Resolution had expected, the communication was not in itself sufficient to induce individual Societies to undertake this new responsibility, despite the fact that the programme was founded on practical experience. In Italy, an autonomous Section of the Italian Red Cross (Legal Assistance for Aliens = AGIUS) had been set up on the initiative of M. R. Aghababian, an expert in international law, and had, during the four preceding years, given much-appreciated services.

Several of the National Societies which replied indicated that their countries had the facilities necessary for the proposed work, and that an international centre only was needed.

At the time, the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) had so far extended, and its resources were so great in comparison with those of the Red Cross, that the plan seemed to imply unnecessary duplication. Nevertheless, the fact that IRO was an inter-governmental organization sometimes limited its

¹ See *Revue internationale*, Feb. 1949, p. 127.

action, otherwise so widespread and beneficial. Some categories of refugees—Germans and certain others—were declared not eligible. Such refugees were very numerous in Italy and this, no doubt, is one explanation of the success of AGIUS—assisted as it was by Italian legal experts who, without payment, gave unstintedly of their time.

It is a cause of some regret that the Stockholm Resolution did not arouse more interest in the Red Cross.

The States which set up IRO decided that its activities should come to an end on March 31, 1951.¹ The High Commissioner for Refugees will, according to Resolution 319 (December 3, 1949) of the United Nations General Assembly, take over that part of the functions of IRO which concerns the protection of refugees. He will probably be responsible for more categories of refugee than is IRO, but will not have the same means of giving assistance. The budget will cover only administrative expenses. The High Commissioner will defend the interests of refugees in countries which will be totally responsible for them once the gradual liquidation of IRO has come to an end, but he will have no way of making up material deficiencies.

The High Commissioner has thus an obvious interest in welfare organizations which, of their nature, will be prepared to assist him, and with which both the League of Nations and the United Nations have always worked closely. Had National Societies already set up, as in Italy, special legal assistance Sections, their experience would have been of considerable value also to the High Commissioner in this field.

For his part, M. Aghababian took up the Stockholm proposal, independently of the National Societies. On December 30, 1949, he registered, in accordance with New York State legislation, an agency called "International Legal Assistance Inc.", formed on the AGIUS model but intended to be world-wide.

The principles of this organization have met with the full approval of the International Bar Association and the International Social Service in the United States, religious organiza-

¹ At its last meeting, in October, 1950, the General Council of IRO decided that the Organization should continue until September 30, 1951.

tions (Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and others), legal associations, Committees of ethnical groups amongst the refugees, numerous institutions (including the International Committee of the Red Cross) and figures well-known in humanitarian affairs. If it succeeds, legal assistance centres, working in liaison, would be formed in many countries; they would group representatives of the organizations named, legal experts and officials who would give necessitous refugees free advice and the benefit of their influence. The international system thus launched would offer adequate guarantees to States which must protect themselves against the admission of undesirable aliens.

The future will show how far the idea can be developed. A Special Committee of the United Nations, set up to find a comprehensive solution of the refugee problem for presentation to the General Assembly, has completed its discussions, in Geneva. It seems an appropriate occasion to examine what in practice has been the work done in Italy, especially for aliens not assisted by IRO. Those interested in the humanitarian aspect of this political problem should clearly appreciate its human implications; in examining the sense of the United Nations decisions, they will be better able to judge what part is left to welfare agencies.

After six years of activity, AGIUS still, as required by its Statutes, legally assists aliens (including the stateless) by :

- (a) — Helping them to protect their rights, through consultations, or by representing them with the administrative and judicial authorities.
- (b) — Drafting petitions and statements of all kinds in connection with actions and appeals.
- (c) — Settling, by conciliation or arbitration, disputes in which they are concerned.
- (d) — Giving diplomatic or consular authorities explanatory consultations or information about the legal position of aliens under Italian law.
- (e) — Publishing information about national and international legislation and jurisprudence concerning aliens.
- (f) — Informing the authorities of measures indicated for the legal protection of aliens.

AGIUS is organized as follows :

- (1) — An Executive Committee, nominated by the President of the Italian Red Cross, with a high official as Chairman, and comprising five legal experts (officials, university professors or lawyers), and the delegates of various administrations, and welfare and legal institutions.
The Executive Committee is responsible for the practical executive work.
- (2) — A Council of legal experts, legal advisers to diplomatic and consular representations at Rome, and delegates of Italian and international welfare agencies.
The Council examines general questions and advises.
- (3) --- The Director, with the co-operation of legal experts who prepare the cases, arranges for consultations and for the services of defence counsel. The settling of legal or administrative disputes is entrusted to barristers.

Results have been obtained at small cost. As most of the work is voluntary, the annual budget is no more than 4,000 to 5,000 dollars, provided by the Italian Red Cross and Government, the Holy See, and private donors.

The evident need for similar bodies, from the moment IRO will cease, led the Director of IRO, early in 1950, to recommend that each country should have a National Co-ordinating Committee for institutions dealing with refugee questions. The United Nations Information Centre at Geneva suggested that when IRO ceased to function, these National Committees should assist refugees, ensure that their fundamental rights are accorded, and provide them with certain essential services. Belgium and Great Britain have already formed such bodies. In Belgium, the representatives of twelve social welfare and employment agencies have, with the consent of the Government, set up a Belgian Committee for Refugees, under the patronage of the Belgian Association for the United Nations. In Great Britain, the British Council for Aid to Refugees is directed by a Committee of Government officials, business men and social welfare agencies. IRO helped both Committees with establishment costs.

These bodies, which are to co-operate with the High Commissioner, correspond to the ideas set out by M. Aghababian

and their practical realisation in Italy. We recall in this connection the Memorandum submitted by the International Social Service on July 24, 1950, to the Advisory Committee of the Non-Governmental Organizations.¹ It expressed the hope that the High Commissioner would act on the principle (1) that the Non-Governmental Organizations are particularly qualified to assist the refugees as individuals, provided that the appropriate means are placed at their disposal, and (2) that individual relief be subordinate to preliminary inquiry by a competent social agency. The solution of the refugee problem therefore implied the creation of a relief fund.

The above principles were taken up by M. Aghababian in a statement before the Permanent Committee of the International Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations which met in Geneva in August 1950. Pleading the cause of International Legal Assistance, he said :

“ A refugee may need to establish his identity, obtain as far as possible fresh records of his status, and other papers for himself and his family, his certificates of study or training ; he has to obtain the documents required by the laws of the country of asylum, residence or immigration. Often he has to defend himself against police measures, and show that he is not a danger to public order or security ; this is particularly so if he has entered the country irregularly, or cannot produce a proper passport. He requires international legal assistance to enable him to assemble—failing documents no longer available owing to political events—at least sufficient substitute evidence, in order to avoid administrative arrest, and obtain the necessary permits.

“ Immediately upon his arrival in the new country, the immigrant stands in need of legal assistance, to settle, obtain work permits, secure recognition for his qualifications and professional titles, send his children to school, join a union, and so forth. He usually has neither relations nor friends, and

¹ See United Nations Economic and Social Council, Document E/C 2/274.

is ignorant of the language and laws of the country. He will need to have frequent recourse to the national Section of International Legal Assistance, to establish the legal ties which still bind him to his former country, where he has perhaps left family, relatives, or sequestered property."

The financial resources of the organization may be made up as follows :

- (1) — Voluntary contributions of member organizations ;
- (2) — Grants which may be obtained from the United Nations, interested Governments, other welfare organizations, and private donors.

Other sources of income are the contributions which the rich foreigner can, in principle, make towards the cost of assisting the less fortunate.

These sources, which may require international agreements or municipal legislation, are listed merely by way of suggestion :

- (1) A stamp, " For Legal Assistance ", to be affixed to :
 - (a) — international licences for motor-cars, motor-cycles, yachts, or private aeroplanes ;
 - (b) — tickets for international first-class travel (sleeper, plane) ;
 - (c) — certain imported luxury articles of personal use.
- (2) Vacant estates of aliens, particularly of stateless persons, who have died without recognised heirs (*bona vacantia*).
- (3) Donation of blocked assets, released on condition that at least one-half be donated to ILA.

These ideas, plans and achievements have a special interest in relation to the cessation of IRO, when the refugee problem will again present acute difficulties.

Some time ago, the United Europe movement, meeting in Rome, estimated the number of refugees in Western Europe. According to statements made at the meeting (the sources of which we cannot vouch for) the territory of the German Federal

Republic had 9,360,000 refugees, Austria more than 300,000, France 700,000 to 800,000, Great Britain 500,000, the Netherlands 12,000, etc.; there were also large numbers in Italy, Greece, and Belgium. In other words, there are millions of persons who, having lost their social position, their means of livelihood, their savings and pension rights, have not yet found a place in the economic and social life of the country which shelters them. Even though food and lodging are of the most primitive kind, the mere cost of housing and feeding them is a heavy burden. Nor do the refugees ask to be kept without giving any return; very many of them are well educated and their technical abilities are not negligible.

The restoration of these people to normal life requires still further sacrifices from countries already impoverished by war. An international fund is required to help face this formidable task.

The texts¹ to be submitted for decision by the United Nations General Assembly in its Autumn session (1950) make no reference under this heading. But at least the preliminary discussions have shown that the United Nations are fully aware of the need of dealing with the question, on the international level, if necessary. They avoided general formulæ—which might have been better in keeping with the general nature of the problem—so as not to anticipate future decisions. They apparently preferred to leave it to the High Commissioner to inform them, in due course, of the different aspects of the refugee question, which vary greatly from one country to another. One example—relief to the Palestine refugees—has already shown that community of assistance in the United Nations is a concept which has more than a mere paper existence.

¹ Draft Refugee Convention, Draft Statutes of the High Commissioner's Office, and findings of the Special Committee.