



**REVUE
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SUPPLEMENT

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

THE ICRC IN THE CONGO

ACTION OF THE ICRC ON BEHALF OF DETAINED PERSONS

February 15, 1961. — Since the outbreak of disturbances in the Congo the International Committee of the Red Cross has made every effort to assist military prisoners as well as persons arrested and imprisoned for political reasons. So far the numerous approaches made in this connection by the International Committee's representatives in the Congo have in many cases led to positive results.

Thus, in December 1960, its delegates visited Luzumu prison near Leopoldville where they spoke with various persons under detention, in particular Mr. Finant, a politician of the Orientale Province and a partisan of Mr. Lumumba, also the Lula Farming School near Stanleyville where Mr. Songolo, former Minister and partisan of President Kasavubu and several other persons, were held. On December 27, the Doctor-Delegate of the ICRC was able to visit the Hardy Military Camp Thysville, where he spoke with Mr. Patrice Lumumba and his co-detainees.

Moreover, a delegate of the ICRC in Katanga obtained permission from the Tschombé Government to visit Buluo and Kasapa Prisons which contained over a thousand political detainees.

Since then the ICRC has never ceased to approach the authorities concerned in Katanga, Stanleyville and Leopoldville, with

a view to making further visits. It had not received permission to visit M. Lumumba at the time his death was announced.

The ICRC is determined to continue its efforts to visit all detainees who are entitled to rely upon its assistance. It still hopes to be able to do so in all parts of the Congo, regardless of the detained person's political opinions and race, and whoever they may be.

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SOLEMN APPEAL

February 22, 1961. — The ICRC launched today the following appeal:

To all who hold authority in the ex-Belgian territories of the Congo.

The International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva wishes solemnly to recall humanitarian principles which are recognised by all countries and by which, in particular, persons not taking part in a conflict and those placed hors de combat by illness, wounds or captivity will in all cases be treated with humanity.

It exhorts those authorities to abstain from any taking of hostages, summary executions and reprisal measures.

The ICRC offers its services equally to all concerned for the purpose of alleviating the sufferings of victims of the events.

* * *

FIRST REPLY TO THE APPEAL

February 27, 1961. — Following on the solemn appeal which the International Committee of the Red Cross addressed on February 22 to all those exercising authority in the Congo in an attempt to ensure the application in those territories of the rules of humanity, Mr. Moïse Tchombé has now informed

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Geneva that he is adhering to the principles mentioned in that appeal. President Tchombé has also noted the offer made by the ICRC to come to the aid of victims of the present events and he has accordingly given authorization for a delegate of the ICRC to visit places of detention in Katanga.

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ICRC DELEGATION

Mr. C. Pilloud has replaced Mr. M. Thudichum, who has recently returned to Geneva, as head of the ICRC delegation in Leopoldville. His assistants are Mr. G. Hoffmann and Mr. G. Olivet. Mr. J. de Preux has joined the delegation and Mr. E. L. Jaquet has returned to Geneva, after having established the tracing service of the Congolese Red Cross.

The Red Cross field of Action is becoming wider...

A considerable part of the May 1960 issue of the official organ of the British Red Cross, *News Review*, is taken up with an activity which will no doubt come to be widely developed within the National Societies. Under the heading "Mental Health is everybody's business", borrowed from a booklet published by the National Association for Mental Health, Mary Applebey, O.B.E., J.P., M.A., General Secretary to the afore-mentioned Association, surveys the problem such as it stands today. She firstly establishes the difference between mental illnesses and mental deficiency, and then, after describing the changed appearance of modern psychiatric hospitals, she explains clearly and concisely what rôle the Red Cross could play in this new field.

* * *

The fact that the World Federation for Mental Health has devoted a year—the World Mental Health Year 1960-61—to studying this problem reveals how burning the question has become nowadays. Indeed, it appears that in many countries the position of mental health gives rise to very serious concern and the tasks facing psychiatric clinics are on the increase. Moreover, we find doctors and scientists of all branches working side by side in a watchful team to fight this evil by all the

means in their power. Various medical reviews and newspapers which have recently devoted numerous articles to questions of mental health, provide us with information on the subject: in these articles, famous doctors and scientists present their views and anxieties concerning these questions and propose, each in his own branch, new methods of treatment and the means of applying them. "For many years, the psychiatric hospital and out-patients' services have started setting up psychiatric social services which are of ever-increasing importance and continue to widen their field of activity, in the sphere of prevention as well as in that of rehabilitation and return to normal life"¹.

This development in the views on treating mental illnesses and deficiency and the growth of scientific and technical skills surrounding the patient, call for the present position to be remedied. All this appears as an alarm-signal to attract the attention of a Red Cross Society, as has been the case with the British Red Cross.

Thus Mary Applebey takes us straightaway into the field in which a Red Cross Society would carry out its charitable work: the hospital. Here, the treatment applied by the doctors is based on modern methods and can in no way be identified with those used formerly: "First, you will not on the whole find patients in bed, though a few of them who are undergoing the early stages of treatment may be in bed. You will not meet the terrifying lunatics sometimes presented in books and films. You will not find patients in padded cells or in strait-jackets. You will not find the doors locked. Nowadays we have drugs which doctors use in some forms of treatment; there are operations which can be performed (though these are rarely used); and doctors can explore the hidden conflicts which sometimes lie at the back of a mental breakdown with the help of psycho-analysis".

However, in a mental hospital, it is the atmosphere and organization of the patient's day more than the medicaments

¹ For example, the medical review *Médecine et Hygiène*, Geneva, of June 10, 1960, from which we quote an article by Dr. Repond, President of the Swiss National Committee for Mental Health.

which make up the most important part of the cure. And in this connection the Red Cross will be able to play a helpful rôle.

Continuing her description of the hospital in question, the writer states: "... So you will see workshops and occupational therapy, you will find music, painting and outdoor recreations being organized, and sometimes you will wonder if indeed these patients are ill at all. I think, however, that a closer acquaintance would make it clear to you that a good many of them are very sick".

At the end of this chapter, Mary Applebey does not forget to remark that even if a good number of cures have comparatively rapid effects—sometimes about three months—the new methods of treatment have nonetheless not provided the whole answer and numerous cases still need many years of hospitalization.

* * *

After mentioning the circumstances which led to the passing of the Mental Health Act in England, intended as a basis for work in the field of mental health, Mary Applebey insists that this Act stresses the fact that hospitals, whether for the mentally ill or the mentally defective, should be used as places of treatment and not as places in which people can live because there is nowhere else for them to go. "The corollary of this is that the community has to devise services to help the recovered mental patients and the trained mental defective to live in the community. This means the strengthening of the services of the local authorities, and a fuller understanding by the community of its responsibilities".

Thus each one of us is made to realize his duty towards this afflicted section of mankind—hence the afore-mentioned title used by Mary Applebey: "Mental Health is everybody's business". But the writer goes still further in her analysis by quoting some of the reasons for the mental disorders in question, in particular, unfortunate family conditions and loneliness, this being considered the most widespread cause of mental illnesses at all ages.

What therefore are the possibilities for a Red Cross Society to work in this field? Here, we come to the real object of our article and the chief concern of the writer who puts forward the following three suggestions:

1) co-operation with certain institutions already existing in Great Britain and which are experienced in dealing with this type of patients, in order to foster a friendly approach to the patient. Each hospital has its own methods of approaching the patients, but the author believes that all will be willing to accept offers of reliable voluntary service such as the Red Cross is known to give.

2) Medical officers of health would be glad to accept help from the Red Cross in solving the problems they will have to face in the near future with patients living outside the hospitals.

3) With its calm, sensible approach to illness, the Red Cross can foster the general understanding that the mentally disabled should not be shunned, but that they and their families should be treated without fear and with humanity.

In short, there are three duties for a Red Cross Society to fulfil:

- 1) co-operation within the hospitals;
- 2) co-operation with the authorities concerned for looking after patients outside the hospitals;
- 3) psychological influence on behalf of the patient and his family.

* * *

The second part of this publication shows us how this idea of bringing the Red Cross into such work, as put forward by Mary Applebey, has already begun to be put into action by various Branches of the British Red Cross. Indeed, under the heading "The British Red Cross Society and the New Outlook on Mental Health", we learn of the work of the Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Durham Branches in the mental hospitals of these counties.

The introduction to this second part reminds us that in December 1958 the British Red Cross Society entered a new field with the publication of its Mental Health manual and the introduction into its training of a short course on the subject. The passage also mentions the work carried out since then by the British Red Cross in the field of mental health—and in particular the special “Picture Library Scheme”—in hospitals where long-stay patients are treated. But the services are to be extended and developed to meet the new requirements of the Mental Health Act.

A member of the Gloucestershire Branch of the British Red Cross then takes us into the very heart of the subject with an arresting and original title: “Beauty treatment for patients”. After a detailed description of the ways in which this treatment is carried out under the best conditions, the writer concludes: “The therapeutic value of such treatment is fully acknowledged by the Medical and Nursing Staff. It gives an immense uplift to the patients’ morale as can be seen if for any reason their regular treatment is interrupted”. And as far as the result is concerned: “It is not difficult to imagine the effects of a simple beauty treatment on a patient in a mental hospital who has previously shunned the society of others on account of her appearance, when this treatment can make her feel like other women and help to give her the confidence to take her normal place once again among family and friends”.

We are in no way surprised to read that the big hospital which introduced this form of treatment is considered a pioneer in its field¹.

As far as the Wiltshire Branch is concerned, members have been taking part in the work at a mental hospital since 1912, when “mental hospitals were known as asylums and regarded with a certain amount of mistrust”. Over the years,

¹ Indeed, this type of treatment has already won followers outside Great Britain. The periodical *Réforme* of July 9, 1960, published an article concerning the building of a day hospital for mental patients in France and “kalotherapy”, that is, beauty treatment, is among the proposed forms of treatment. A doctor interviewed on the subject stated: “We have great hopes of this experiment”.

members of this Branch have been doing everything in their power to help the unfortunate inmates, especially by means of games, Sunday visits and outings. One cannot help being moved by what follows: "Some of the patients were able to revisit places they had known as children and their evident pleasure and excitement made it very worth while". The writer's concluding remarks are indeed promising: "So much can be done to assist the rehabilitation of long-stay patients and for this reason Roundway Hospital has recently formed a League of Friends. In the opinion of the Medical Superintendent the outings and the Sunday visiting are the most important to the patients, but other possibilities range very wide and are well within our scope. Trolley-shops, library trolleys for the wards, flower arrangements in the church, Christmas and birthday cards, country dancing classes, are all suggestions which might be welcomed by patients at any mental hospital".

Finally, the Durham Branch of the British Red Cross also carries out considerable and splendid work in a large mental hospital of the county. More than a dozen voluntary helpers devote their time to various duties there. The author of the article observes that the scope of their work has widened considerably since they first started helping the patients; some of them accompany patients receiving medical treatment outside the hospital; others visit them bringing parcels of food and clothing requested by the doctor.

On the other hand, efforts are being made to care for patients in day hospitals: a few years ago these same patients would have been kept as in-patients.

In this connection, the writer points out that a mental patient needs special care when he returns home, possibly even more than an ordinary patient. Often, especially if he is old, he returns to the loneliness which was the prime cause of his illness; in this case he needs especial encouragement to take up the threads of his old life with the interests and habits he had in the past.

It is important and delicate work, which the voluntary helpers in Durham and elsewhere are enthusiastically carrying out.

CHRONICLE

One particularly dynamic director of the mental hospital in question is thinking of starting a special course of lectures on the basis of the material given in the Mental Health manual, published by the British Red Cross, which we mentioned above. He hopes thereby to attract a number of suitably trained and qualified helpers to carry out these numerous and much-needed services for the mentally disordered.

* * *

One is indeed moved when reading this article which describes simply and realistically the struggle which men and women are undertaking to save other human beings from their affliction and suffering. And we believe that the Red Cross does indeed have a word to say and a place to fill in this field of human suffering. Thanks to its tact and understanding, traditional qualities learnt through long experience, it can exert a beneficial influence, side by side with the doctors, in the best possible moral conditions.

J. Z.

NEWS ITEMS CONCERNING NATIONAL SOCIETIES

CHILE

On 21st of May 1960 a serious earthquake laid waste a large area in Central and Southern Chile and this was followed by a tidal wave. Several towns were destroyed and there were more than 800.000 victims.

In response to the appeal launched by the League of Red Cross Societies, fifty-two National Societies took part in a vast relief action.

Then and during the subsequent months, the Chilean Red Cross made considerable and effective efforts to come to the aid of the victims, by bringing relief supplies to them in the form of food and clothing, looking after children — under the charge of nurses — who had been assembled and transferred to reception areas, helping in the reuniting of families and by generally giving them assistance all the more precious for being immediate. In short, its efforts were entirely in keeping with the gesture of fellowship which was shown by the entire nation.

The following editorial of the last number of *Cruz Roja Chilena*, December 1960, gives an indication of the significance of this action :

« The Chilean Red Cross can look back on the year 1960 with satisfaction with the work which has been accomplished : it has shown itself at all times to have closely followed the principles which direct its action.

In fact, all members of our institution, Central Committee, regional committees, the various associations, outposts and dispensaries, have displayed an intense and fruitful activity

NEWS ITEMS CONCERNING NATIONAL SOCIETIES

in the sphere of social work and assistance, which has considerably increased the popularity which our Society already enjoyed with the people of Chile. When one considers the work which was accomplished this year in such a devoted spirit, but without any noisy publicity, one can feel nothing but pride for the way in which our National Society undertook such an immense task and, combining all its strength, came to the aid of victims in areas which had been devastated by the earthquake.

This task of the Chilean Red Cross which is « anonymous » and will certainly be continued well into 1961, has been carried out at the cost of countless sacrifices, but with that thoroughness which is in keeping with its principles of charity and goodwill.

The Red Cross Societies of the whole world, learning the full extent of the disaster befalling our country through the League, sent a considerable amount of gifts both in kind and in cash to their fellow-Society, to come to the aid of the victims of the calamity. These gifts were added to reserve relief stocks held by the Chilean Red Cross and despatched to the stricken areas on the day following the events. They had to be sorted, packed and despatched to the towns and villages which had suffered. The various sections of the Red Cross occupied themselves with making this distribution after having made the necessary enquiries to discover whether these supplies were really indispensable. Members of local branches, forgetting that tragedy had fallen on their own homes and often even on the headquarters of their own Society, gave themselves entirely to their social work and to relief action. Such action is a great encouragement for those whose mission it is to relieve suffering.»

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