



**REVUE
INTERNATIONALE
DE LA
CROIX-ROUGE**

SUPPLEMENT

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

A mission of the International Committee to China, the USSR and Poland

Several members of the ICRC Delegation to the XIXth International Red Cross Conference went on from New Delhi to visit various Red Cross Societies in Asia and Australasia. Among those who did so were Mr. M. Bodmer, Vice-President of the ICRC, and Mr. W. Michel and an account of their visits was published in the Revue Internationale last month.

In response to invitations of the Chinese Red Cross, the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the U.S.S.R. and the Polish Red Cross, Mr. F. Siordet, Vice-President of the ICRC, accompanied by Mr. Borsinger, personal assistant to the President, visited China, the USSR and Poland. We have pleasure in giving a short account of their journey, followed by a few notes of their impressions after visiting various institutions which the National Societies wished them to see and which bear witness to the fine work carried on in those countries under the Red Cross emblem.

TRAVEL NOTES

China. — Mr. Siordet, Vice-President, accompanied by Mr. Borsinger, left New Delhi on November 13 for Hong Kong, where they discussed with Mr. P. Calderara, delegate of the ICRC, various matters connected with the work of the Delegation. Two days later Mr. Siordet and Mr. Borsinger left Hong

Kong by rail on the short journey to the Chinese frontier, where they were met by a member of the Chinese Delegation in New Delhi, Mr. Yang Jun-Yin, of the Foreign Relations Department of the Chinese Red Cross. Leading members of the Red Cross of the province of Kwantung, in particular Mr. H. L. Ku, and of the city of Canton, including Mr. Li Ta-Chao and Mrs. Liang Sze-Yi, of the Foreign Relations Department of the Chinese Red Cross, also a member of the New Delhi Delegation, were waiting for them in Canton where visits were made to the hospital and Red Cross Centres.

Three days later the delegates went on by rail to Wu-han, where they saw the first bridge over the Yangtse, 1,800 metres long, which is a magnificent engineering achievement. On it is installed a first-aid post of the Chinese Red Cross Society. Afterwards they visited the university city, and the Park of Rest and Culture. In the afternoon they saw a new town, about six miles from the city, which is being built round the largest blast furnace in central and south China. Over 90,000 workmen are employed on the vast building site and the Chinese Red Cross has set up, at most points, first-aid posts supplied with dressings and disinfectants. The Red Cross first-aid personnel attached to these posts are all employed on the building site.

Next day Mr. Siordet visited the model prison for ordinary criminals in the Wu-han district, and Mr. Borsinger the Faculty of Medicine, the University Clinic and the city Nursing School. The delegates then met at Wu-Han airport and left for Shanghai. On November 22, they toured the city and visited a textile machinery works. In the afternoon they visited a large secondary school and the Youth Palace.

On November 23, they left for Hangchow; the leading members of the local Red Cross, in particular the President, Mr. Chen Li-Chih, showed the delegates round a silk mill and the workers' trade-union sanatorium. This sanatorium, directed by an eminent woman doctor, is equipped with modern appliances; the Red Cross does not, however, lend its services to the hospital as it is not organised for social work which it does not consider to be within its province.

The next day the delegates left for Peking, via Nanking and Soochow and were received on arrival at the airport by Dr. L. S. Woo, Secretary-General of the Society, Dr. Lin and other leading figures, and the Secretary to the Swiss Embassy.

A general meeting was held at the central headquarters of the Chinese Red Cross, presided over by Mrs. Li, President; other leading members of the Society were also present. Among the various matters discussed were the relations of the ICRC with the Chinese Red Cross, and the Draft Rules submitted by the ICRC to the New Delhi Conference.

Mr. Siordet and Mr. Borsinger were received by Mr. Cheng-Li, Vice-Premier of the Republic. They had the opportunity of visiting the headquarters of the local Red Cross, and of seeing the various activities of the Junior Red Cross. Mr. Siordet also visited a Children's hospital and the Paediatrics Faculty of the Peking University.

Various receptions were held in the delegates' honour, in particular by Mrs. Li, Dr. Woo and Mr. Bernouilli, the Swiss Ambassador.

On Saturday, November 30, the delegates left by the Trans-Siberian railway for Moscow. Mr. Woo, Vice-President, Mr. Lin, Secretary-General, Mr. Chi-Feng, Mrs. Liang, Mr. Yang and the Swiss Ambassador were at the station to bid them farewell.

The International Committee's delegates met with a very kind welcome and generous hospitality in China. The Chinese Red Cross did everything possible to show them its leading activities in varied fields and also arranged an interesting programme of sight-seeing and entertainment.

USSR. — We give below a few extracts from the report of the Vice-President of the ICRC on his return to Geneva—a report which gives a vivid picture of the delegates' stay in the USSR.

“The Trans-Siberian journey calls for no comment. We were issued with our exit visas at Manchuli, where a representative of the Chinese Ministry of External Affairs helped us with formalities and bid us farewell on behalf of the Government.

We arrived on Sunday, December 8, at *Moscow* and were met by Mr. Tchikalenko, Head of the Foreign Relations Department of the Alliance, Miss Mikalevskaya, the President's Secretary, Dr. Kiroff, Head of the Medical Section, and by the Swiss Ambassador, Mr. Zehnder.

Next day we were received at the headquarters of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies by the President, Mr. Miterev, some of his colleagues and members of the staff. We discussed general matters together and presented a copy of "Un Souvenir de Solférino".

We then visited the Alliance Tracing Service, Medical Section, Foreign Relations Department and the offices of the Red Cross Society of the RSFRS whose activities are similar to those of the Red Cross Societies of Bielorussia and the Ukraine.

On December 10 we visited a printed silk fabric mill where there are Red Cross first-aid posts in each workshop; we also saw the day-nursery for the workers' children. We received a cordial welcome from the management and the Red Cross unit. We were shown the work of the Red Cross and a first-aid display, followed by refreshments, which gave us the opportunity of talking with the manager, foremen and Red Cross workers. In the evening Professor Miterev gave a dinner in our honour, at which some of his colleagues, staff members, and Mr. Zehnder, were present.

At 11.30 p.m. we took the train for *Leningrad*, accompanied by Mr. Tchikalenko and Miss Vanezian, interpreter and member of the staff of the Alliance Tracing Service; we arrived on Monday morning, December 11, at about 11 a.m. On leaving the train we were greeted by Dr. Grakova, President of the Red Cross in Leningrad and some of her chief assistants. We later went sight-seeing in this historical city.

The next day we visited elementary and secondary schools and the Youth Palace where we noted the many and varied activities of the Junior Red Cross. We also visited the interesting Hygiene and Health Museum, instituted by the city corporation to spread knowledge of medicine, anatomy, hygiene and dietetics.

In the evening, accompanied by Mr. Tchikalenko, we took the train for *Kiev*, where we arrived two days later at about 11 a.m. We were met by Mrs. Panchenko, President, and Professor Dudko, Vice-President of the Red Cross of the Ukraine, accompanied by their leading staff-members. In the afternoon we visited the University Hospital for General Surgery, of which Professor Dudko is the head. In the evening we were invited to visit the studios and new headquarters of the Television Service of the Ukrainian Republic.

On December 16 we visited a factory where electrical instruments and high and low voltage meters are produced, and in which there were examples of the various practical activities of the Red Cross Society, i.e. first-aid posts in workshops, teams of voluntary first-aid workers, sick-bays, day-nurseries for children, etc. At midday we visited the headquarters of the Ukrainian Red Cross and were introduced to the principal heads of sections. In the afternoon, after a farewell lunch at which Mrs. Panchenko, Professor Dudko, Mr. Tchikalenko and Miss Vanezian were present, we boarded the train for Warsaw."

Mr. Siordet's report continues as follows :

Poland. — "We passed the whole day in the train on December 17, and crossed the frontier at Brest-Litovsk at about 3 p.m. We arrived in *Warsaw* at about 8 p.m. and were met by two leading members of the Polish Red Cross, Miss Zys (Foreign Relations and Legal Department) and Mr. Blizniewski (Secretary-General).

Next day we went to the Polish Red Cross headquarters, where we were received by Mrs. Domanska, President, and the principal staff members.

On December 19, we visited an electrical appliance factory where Red Cross first-aid posts have been installed everywhere, and, as we observed in China and the U.S.S.R., give invaluable service. Displays of first-aid work in accidents and disasters were given by a Polish Red Cross team; the young first-aid workers made us very welcome and took great interest in our visit

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In the afternoon we visited the Polish Red Cross Nursing School and took part in a meeting at the Society's headquarters.

Next day we visited an elementary school where the Junior Red Cross is very active. Pupils and teachers welcomed us most cordially. We saw a display of dancing and singing (some of the songs in French) and an exhibition of Junior Red Cross work. At midday, Mr. Gygax, the Swiss Minister, gave a lunch in honour of the Polish Red Cross and we were Mrs. Domanska's guests for dinner. At 9 p.m. we boarded the train for Geneva."

NOTES ON VISITS

Chinese Red Cross Hospital, Canton. — The hospital, founded in 1908, has continued to progress and today is one of the few hospitals under the management of the Chinese Red Cross. Practically all hospitals in China, and the nursing schools, are under State management.

The hospital contains 250 beds and about twenty doctors are in attendance; there are the usual out-patients' and children's departments; some hundred nurses are trained in the hospital each year. The hospital services are available to the entire population of the city.

Chinese Red Cross Waterways Service, Pearl River, Canton. — This is a very special activity of the Chinese Red Cross. One of the most characteristic features of life in South Asia is the immense population (several millions) which lives on the main rivers. These river dwellers were formerly looked upon, to some degree, as untouchables and outcasts; they were not, in particular, allowed to leave their homes on the water after sundown. This is no longer the case and the river dwellers enjoy considerable privileges; special schools for children, floating clubs for adults, total liberty of movement, a higher standard of living, etc.

The work of the Chinese Red Cross in this connection is part of the programme drawn up by the authorities. It is estimated in Canton that there are about 80,000 river dwellers;

the Red Cross has set up about twenty first-aid posts on boats, to give instruction in domestic hygiene and the prevention of epidemics, first-aid service, etc. There are three thousand active members, a number which it is hoped will increase, in the coming months, to eight thousand, that is to say a tenth of the population afloat. We visited one or two of these floating Red Cross units which are of a touchingly simple description. They contain Chinese Red Cross publications on health, a Red Cross flag, life-belts, stretchers, poles to help people in danger of drowning, etc. Each unit has a permanent staff of five or six persons on board, of whom or or two must be holders of a first-aid certificate and be able to practise the Nielsen method of artificial respiration.

Wu-Han Faculty of Medicine, University Hospital and Nursing School. — This is new work in modern conditions. The entire Faculty, its equipment and professional staff, were moved from Shanghai to Wu-Han in 1954; on an average, 3,800 medical students and about 500 student nurses spend four years in the city. The training of young general practitioners and future hospital matrons is, therefore, very rapid. All branches of medicine, from the treatment of children to surgery, are taught. The hospital, remarkably well equipped, contains 500 beds; treatment of every description is given and all types of operation are performed. We were able to watch several operations.

Shanghai loom factory. — This factory makes automatic and semi-automatic looms which are sold throughout the country, and also to Viet Nam and Korea; it employs 1,200 workers in 8 hour shifts. Each workshop has a first-aid post manned by one or two certificated first-aid workers recruited in the factory itself.

These first-aid workers are under the authority of the works doctor and his assistants. The factory, as in the case of all those visited by the delegates of the ICRC, has attached to it dormitories for the workers, an infirmary and a small sick-bay, well equipped for any first-aid treatment the factory workers

may require. There is also a day-nursery for the workers' children (children up to 6 years of age). All these premises are under the supervision of the doctor in charge, with the help of some twenty assistants, men and women doctors and professional nurses or nursing aids.

A secondary school and the Youth Place in Shanghai. — This school, one of the largest in Shanghai, has over two thousand pupils. We were thus able to see the work of the Chinese Junior Red Cross. These very lively young people gave us a most friendly welcome. The members of the Junior Red Cross have practically the same duties as those of the adult members of the Chinese Red Cross, i.e. they act as auxiliaries to the school medical service and their work is to spread health education and to teach personal cleanliness; they see that classrooms, corridors and playgrounds are kept clean. They also keep up-to-date the medical records of their school-mates, under the supervision of the school medical officers, and give first-aid in the case of slight accidents.

The Youth Palace—a large club where the children practise hobbies of their choice (painting, sculpture, puppet-shows, ballet, music, photography, modelling, weaving, embroidery, etc.) in their spare time—is installed in a very fine building, the gift of Mrs. Sun Yat-Sen. The Centre also has its Junior Red Cross teams in attendance.

Tracing Service of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR. — A number of persons are employed in this Service which is under the direction of Mr. Tchikalenko, and which the delegates of the ICRC found it very interesting to visit. All the staff members know one or two foreign languages, French, German, English, Polish and others. One of the principal members of the Tracing Service is Miss Novikova, who acted as President Miterev's interpreter at the New Delhi Conference. Our guide in the U.S.S.R., Miss Vanezian, also works there.

The Service deals with the current correspondence with the Central Agency in Geneva or the many National Societies which

send enquiries to the Alliance. We followed with extreme interest the information given us on the work of this Service, which is becoming more and more effective and which places the Alliance in contact with the entire world.

Kiev University Hospital for General Surgery, under Professor Dudko. — This State hospital, which is not under Red Cross management, trains Ukrainian surgeons. We visited the wards and the well equipped operating theatres, where the most difficult operations (heart, spinal and brain) are performed as well as the most complicated and delicate surgical grafting. Professor Dudko (a very eminent man in his profession) assisted by some enthusiastic surgeons, is carrying out elaborate and extremely difficult research, in particular into organ grafts, the lymphatic system, blood structure and in the new field of the renewal of cellular tissues.

Polish Red Cross headquarters in Warsaw. — The Polish Red Cross, like the other National Societies which we visited, is busily engaged in first-aid work and other assistance to the medical authorities. It also deals with the training of professional nurses and the development of its own hospitals. It is in close contact with the Army Medical Service of which a representative, Colonel Rozniatowski, is a member of the Society's Central Committee. It is also actively engaged in the re-uniting of families dispersed during and after the Second World War.

It plays a considerable part, on the national and international level, in the development of humanitarian law, and its dissemination. It will be remembered that, in May 1956, Miss Zys was one of the experts who took part in the meeting concerning the Draft Rules elaborated by the ICRC. In connection with assistance to refugees, the resettlement of dispersed populations and help to the war-disabled, the Polish Red Cross Society carries out extensive and successful medico-social activities, of considerable importance as the delegates of the ICRC were able to see and judge for themselves.

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This Society has an extensive Tracing Service. The delegates saw the numerous card-indexes for former prisoners of war, refugees, displaced persons and victims of concentration camps, containing in all over ten million cards. A staff of eighty men and women deal with this work which is carried out, day after day, by a highly qualified personnel, and demands great zeal and patient effort. The delegates' impressions agreed with those of other visitors from the ICRC, Mr. Hoffmann and Mr. Jaquet, in 1957.

Polish Red Cross Nursing School. — This one of the 49 Polish Red Cross Nursing Schools throughout the country. This school gives theoretical instruction in child welfare in conjunction with practical courses at the city hospitals. The training course lasts two years, followed by an examination to obtain the nursing certificate. However, the school also gives refresher courses in child welfare for certificated nurses.

Future nurses in Poland can enter a State school on the completion of the secondary school programme, or a Red Cross Nursing School, when they have completed their elementary studies, to train as nursing aids. After practising for two and a half years, nursing aids can sit for the State examination in order to become professional nurses.

We had great pleasure in visiting this school, which gives a very good impression on account of its pleasant atmosphere and its clean and tidy premises.

We wish to say, in conclusion, that the International Committee's representatives met with a most cordial welcome everywhere and were able, during their various visits to China, the U.S.S.R. and Poland, to gain a knowledge of multifarious activities which, though different in each particular country, are nevertheless a proof of the efforts of the Red Cross to create a world of security and peace.

A mission of the ICRC in the Middle East, Turkey and Jugoslavia

An account was given in the January Supplement of the mission to India of Miss A. Pfirter, Head of the Medical Personnel and War-Disablement Section of the ICRC. As stated, before returning to Europe, Miss Pfirter visited several National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the Red Lion and Sun Society of Iran, to discuss various problems, in particular the recruiting and training of voluntary medical personnel.

Miss Pfirter first visited Baghdad where she was received by the Central Committee of the Iraqi Red Crescent and visited some of its establishments, including an orphanage and a dispensary in a village damaged by floods.

Having heard that an earthquake had devastated a vast area in Iran, Miss Pfirter left earlier than she had planned for Teheran and, on her arrival, accompanied a delegation of the Central Committee of the Red Lion and Sun Society of Iran to the disaster area, in order to inspect the devastated villages, distribute relief supplies and make a list of the victims' needs. Miss Pfirter was struck by the rapidity and efficiency of the emergency relief action undertaken by this National Society, in close co-operation with its local branches, the Army and authorities; operations were rendered more difficult by the fact that the disaster area was situated in the high mountain district and was not easy of access.

Before leaving Iran, Miss Pfirter visited various establishments of the Red Lion and Sun, namely a hospital for emergency and accident cases, the Cancer Institute with a hospital and research centre attached, a nursing school and the tuberculosis centre.

Continuing her journey, Miss Pfirter arrived at Beirut where she discussed various questions with the Central Committee of the Lebanese Red Cross and other people. She then went to Damascus to visit the Syrian Red Crescent. Miss Pfirter then met Mr. D. de Traz, General-Delegate of the ICRC for the Middle East; together they visited the Central Committee of the Jordan Red Crescent at Amman, to present a gift of medical equipment. After another short stay in Lebanon, Miss Pfirter went on to Ankara. She was received by the Turkish Red Crescent and visited a number of its establishments, in particular a new blood transfusion centre and the Central Medical Equipment Depot at Ankara, the Nursing School and a Medico-Social Centre at Istanbul.

On her way back, Miss Pfirter stopped at Belgrade to discuss, with the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Red Cross, the opening of a new artificial limb workshop which this Society is planning to set up.

During her long mission, Miss Pfirter had the opportunity, on several occasions, of giving lectures on Red Cross principles and the work of the ICRC to student nurses and auxiliary aids. She received a warm welcome from the National Societies visited and saw for herself how useful it is to exchange views and to make a study, on the spot, of each country's problems.

On her return to Geneva, Miss Pfirter submitted a report concerning the visits made in India, in Damascus and Ankara, of which we are giving a few extracts below. Her study tour in India, together with Miss Y. Hentsch, Director of the Nursing Bureau of the League of Red Cross Societies, was suggested and arranged by the Central Managing Body of the Indian Red Cross Society.

Irwin Hospital, New Delhi. — This hospital includes departments for surgery, general treatment, orthopaedics, venereal

diseases, ear, nose and throat diseases and eye affections. It has several operating theatres, five laboratories, a blood transfusion centre and an out-patients department.

Persons suffering from contagious diseases are not admitted. The out-patients department gives treatment to 2,000 persons daily; last year 230,000 cases were examined and given treatment; 70% of them were new cases. The hospital contains 950 beds (the cost of treatment is borne by the State); 500 beds are given up to surgical cases, 250 to medical and 200 to special cases; 80 patients are admitted daily, i.e. some 2,000 per year; 10,000 operations were performed in 1956. The staff is composed of 60 doctors, 60 medical students, 140 professional nurses, 160 student-nurses, 2 tutor-nurses (a nursing school is attached to the hospital) and a matron in charge.

There are at present 275 nursing schools in India which train some 3,000 nurses and midwives each year.

The hospital work is carried out by 9 teams of doctors, each responsible for 30 beds, with a head nurse, 3 professional nurses and 6 student-nurses attached to each team.

Rural centres for the care of mother and child near Lucknow. — Three centres of this description, forming a single unit, are attached to a modern village. Each of the centres is staffed by a doctor, a professional midwife, a « dai », a health worker and two assistants. Each team is responsible for an area of about 5 square miles, gives pre-natal and post-natal care and carries out the food programme by distributing milk and medicaments donated by UNICEF. A doctor and a professional midwife give training courses to the "dais". A "dai" is an Indian midwife who has received no professional training, the occupation being passed on from mother to daughter. As there is a scarcity of professional midwives the Indian Government is trying, by this means, to give basic instruction to the untrained "dais", after which they will be allowed to exercise their profession in rural districts.

Hardwar and Narendranagar. — While visiting Hardwar, on the banks of the Ganges, the delegates of the ICRC and

the League had the opportunity of visiting Svashrama Hospital where the Sannyasins and Brahmacharins of the Order of Ramakrishna give free treatment to pilgrims who are taken ill when visiting the source of the Ganges. This quiet spot where the equipment consists merely of a set of surgical instruments and an X-ray apparatus, is very clean.

On the narrow road leading up to Narendranagar the delegate met several groups of local inhabitants whose dress and customs are similar to those of the Tibetans. The Indian Red Cross has done pioneer work in this isolated valley by setting up day-nurseries and women and children's centres. Miss Hentsch and Miss Pfirter were present at the opening of one of the centres. At Narendranagar they visited the district hospital, where the doctor in charge described the work of a doctor so far away from any town. It is only very gradually that the inhabitants of the area are becoming reconciled to being treated by a doctor from the town.

Orthopaedic Centre, Poona. — On arriving in Poona, the delegates of the ICRC and the League made a long visit to the Orthopaedic Centre for the War-Disabled. The Centre, which is part of a military hospital, manufactures artificial limbs from British models and is, as far as is known, the only centre of this description in a vast area of Asia.

The delegates were greatly impressed by the careful attention given to general rehabilitation and training in this centre. The instructors themselves are war-disabled and, in many cases, have lost both legs. Their agility stimulates and encourages the disabled in following their instructors' example.

Dissemination of the Geneva Conventions. — During her brief stay in Damascus in January, Miss Pfirter had a talk with Dr. Chaouwkhat Chatti, Secretary-General of the Syrian Red Crescent. She thus learned that Dr. Chatti has written a work in Arabic on medical ethics, of which about twenty pages are devoted to the history, organisation and principles of the Red Cross. A further chapter is to be added on the

Geneva Conventions. This work will be used by the medical students at the Arab University in Damascus.

Central Medical Equipment Depot, Ankara. — This depot of the Turkish Red Crescent contains all the medical equipment required for emergency relief actions, and is organised in such a manner that, twenty minutes after a call for assistance, lorries can leave the depot carrying sufficient personnel and equipment to set up two hospitals. Throughout the year twelve persons are on duty at the Central Depot during the night, and each person is responsible in turn for taking immediate action if necessary. All the persons in charge belong to the Turkish Red Crescent Central Secretariat.

Several similar depots have been set up in various parts of the country; they are run on the same lines and are kept in readiness to deal with emergency calls during natural or other disasters.

MISSION OF THE ICRC
TO YUGOSLAVIA, BULGARIA AND RUMANIA

Between 1 and 15 December, 1957, Mr. H. G. Beckh, Delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, visited Belgrade, Sofia and Bucharest with a view to renewing or strengthening the links between the International Committee and the Yugoslav, Bulgarian and Rumanian Red Cross Societies and discussing problems concerning the reuniting of families and any other problems which the Red Cross Societies in the three countries might wish to raise.

Yugoslavia. — In Belgrade our Delegate once again met with a cordial and understanding attitude on the part of the Yugoslav Red Cross Society.

He was able to work with the department of that Society which deals with the reuniting of « Volksdeutsche » children with their families. After discussion of each case still outstanding, it was agreed between the representatives of the Society and the ICRC Delegate that the next group of « Volksdeutsche » children would leave at the beginning of 1958 and would probably consist of some 40 children going to rejoin their families to Germany, Austria and Canada.

The close co-operation of the ICRC with the Yugoslav Red Cross Society and the other Red Cross Societies concerned has enabled almost 2,500 children to rejoin their families in the

Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, Austria, France, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Switzerland, the United States of America, Canada, Venezuela, Argentina and Australia. There still remain a few difficult cases to be settled, particularly those of children whom it has not yet been possible to find. The Yugoslav Red Cross has indicated its readiness to renew the search for these children. The International Committee is also still concerning itself with this problem of Yugoslav children of whom all trace has been lost.

So far, more than 50,000 adult « Volksdeutsche », either alone or accompanied by their children, have been reunited with their families as part of an action which the ICRC initiated in 1952, and which, as Mr. Beckh was able to see for himself, is still continuing with the help of the authorities on the basis of the arrangements agreed upon with the ICRC in 1952.

Bulgaria. — Mr. Beckh was also very warmly welcomed by the Bulgarian Red Cross Society in Sofia.

He had the opportunity of visiting the health centres and sick rooms in two plants in the city of Sofia. It is in the health posts that employees who fall suddenly ill or are victims of an accident receive first aid; the health centres are run by doctors, and their function is to look after the health of the whole staff; sick persons receive free of charge the care which they need. The Bulgarian Red Cross Society which has at its disposal a large number of devoted voluntary helpers, has set up such centres and posts everywhere in offices and in industry.

These undertakings also have first-aid teams, one of which gave a demonstration in Mr. Beckh's presence. Following this demonstration and at the request of the Red Cross workers, Mr. Beckh had the pleasure of explaining several aspects of the International Committee's work.

During a visit to the headquarters of the Bulgarian Red Cross, Mr. Beckh was welcomed by the Vice-Chairmen Mrs. Rajdowska and Mr. Gospodinov and their staff. Various questions were broached, including the study of the « Draft

Rules», to which the Bulgarian Red Cross attaches great importance.

The representatives of the Bulgarian Red Cross Society gave Mr. Beckh several details of relief work in behalf of the Hungarian people undertaken by their Society, which has arranged for Hungarian children to stay in Bulgaria for limited periods. The relief supplies sent to Hungary consisted mainly of medicaments and of foodstuffs.

During the same interview, Mr. Beckh spoke of the reuniting of dispersed families in various countries. The Bulgarian Red Cross stated that it was ready to accept any request for the reuniting of families which the International Committee submitted to it with its recommendation.

Rumania. — The Rumanian Red Cross Society had very kindly asked its Director and her aide to meet the ICRC Delegate at the Bulgarian frontier; this saved time and enabled discussion on various items to begin immediately.

In Bucharest, Mr. Beckh had several interviews; during one with Dr. Belea, Chairman of the Rumanian Red Cross, Mrs. Mesaros, and General Rusesco, Vice-Presidents, and Mrs. Papp, director, various questions of common interest were discussed. Mr. Beckh saw for himself the great interest of the Rumanian Red Cross Society in the dissemination of the Geneva Conventions and the study of the Draft Rules submitted at New Delhi by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

He also saw the effective work of the Rumanian Red Cross Society in regard to health matters. Accompanied by Dr. Sferdian, Head of the Health Division, he visited the health centre and the health posts in a large undertaking. The health centre, which is run by specialists, enables the employees to obtain free treatment, whether they are «up-patients» or hospital cases.

Mr. Beckh noted with particular satisfaction, during demonstrations by first-aid services, the zeal and devotion shown by the voluntary workers of the Rumanian Red Cross.

In regard to the reuniting of families of German stock, it will be remembered that during previous missions and during

visits by representatives of the Rumanian Red Cross to Geneva and Bonn, the Rumanian Red Cross Society had agreed to deal with particularly tragic cases which had been brought to its notice; these mainly concern the reuniting of children with their parents or of married couples separated by events or of old people whose children settled abroad wanted to give them a home. Naturally, the agreement was subject to the final decision being taken by the authorities concerned. On the basis of these discussions, the ICRC had submitted to the Rumanian Red Cross, by the end of December 1957, 2038 requests with its recommendation; the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic had sent to Bucharest lists by regions containing a total of 8432 names.

During the working discussions which the ICRC Delegate held with the Rumanian Red Cross, that Society explained the results so far obtained. It had submitted the German Red Cross Society's list to the competent authorities, emphasizing that the ICRC also recommended that a solution be found for these cases. It could not do more than support this recommendation, for it should not be forgotten that only the authorities, and not the National Red Cross, can issue exit visas.

It is only on the basis of individual requests supported by the ICRC or a National Red Cross Society that the Rumanian Red Cross Society is able to discuss unsettled cases with the competent authorities.

In view of the fact that several thousand families are still separated, and have been separated for a number of years, it was decided that the joint work on the basis of individual cases could and should be undertaken more actively, particularly in the case of children on their own or persons who had reached a certain age. For that reason, during the ICRC Delegate's stay, a thousand or so requests were re-examined and some of them again submitted, as a matter of urgency, to the competent authorities.

The ICRC Delegate was able to record a number of positive results achieved through all these measures in 1957:

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

743 exit visas had been issued to « Volksdeutsche »
wishing to go to the German Federal Republic,
145 for Austria
4 for the United Kingdom
7 for Argentina
57 for Austria
2 for Belgium
3 for Brazil
50 for Canada
1 for Chile
2 for Denmark
16 for the United States
13 for France
1 for Italy
2 for Peru
5 for Switzerland

totalling 1051 visas

However, this picture is not quite complete, since it does not take into account lists of visas granted towards the end of 1957 for countries other than Germany. Furthermore, the results of the further discussion of urgent cases and their submission to the authorities was not yet known. On the other hand, a small percentage of visas were granted to persons not of « Volksdeutsche » stock.

With regard to the problem of repatriating Greek nationals, the Rumanian Red Cross Society handed to the ICRC Delegate a new list of 308 names; it asked the ICRC to approach the Greek Red Cross Society and the Greek authorities on the basis of the principle of the unity of the family, so that these young people and some aged persons, who have all been in possession of Rumanian exit visas for a long time now, can be given permission to return to Greece, a country whose nationals they legally are. Mr. Beckh explained what the ICRC, in agreement with the League of Red Cross Societies, has undertaken so far and underlined the great interest felt in this problem in Geneva.

In all discussions concerning the reuniting of families, the Rumanian Red Cross declared itself ready to accept also persons from other than Greek or « Volksdeutsche » stock and also to use the same methods of procedure as for the « Volksdeutsche ».

During a visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where Mr. Beckh was received by the Director General, Mr. Russu and his assistant, Mr. Fonea, concerned with Red Cross affairs, several problems were discussed, including the Draft Rules. Mr. Russu asked Mr. Beckh for information concerning the practical prospects to which the International Committee's initiative in submitting the Draft Rules might lead.

Giving an outline of the action for reuniting families, the Delegate recalled what was being done in other countries in this connection on the basis of the general recognition of the principle of the reuniting of dispersed families at a place of their choice. Mr. Beckh pointed out that such reunions, by definition, are a powerful means of ending tension and a real contribution to peace. He added that the ICRC would be glad if this principle could be adopted without reservation by the Rumanian authorities.

On his way back to Geneva, Mr. Beckh spent a day in Vienna where he discussed with Mr. Joubert, Head of the ICRC Delegation, various problems connected with the activities of that Delegation. The two Delegates of the International Committee were able to see for themselves the satisfaction of those concerned in Austria at the favourable news concerning the reuniting of « Volksdeutsche » families from Rumania.
