



REVUE
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SUPPLEMENT

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RESERVATIONS TO THE 1949 GENEVA CONVENTIONS

II

RESERVATIONS CONCERNING ARTICLES COMMON TO ALL FOUR CONVENTIONS

Two reservations, one by the *Argentine Republic* and the other by *Portugal*, were made with regard to **Article 3**, which concerns armed conflicts not of an international character. The Argentine reservation, which was not maintained on ratification, read as follows :

I shall, therefore, sign the four Conventions in the name of my Government and subject to ratification, with the reservation that Article 3, common to all four Conventions, shall be the only Article to the exclusion of all others, which shall be applicable in the case of armed conflicts not of an international character.

This reservation was without doubt unnecessary, since the text of Article 3 itself shows that it is the only article applicable to internal conflicts. Otherwise, there would be no point in the recommendation in paragraph 3 that Parties to the conflict should endeavour to bring into force, by means of special agreements, all or part of the other provisions of the Conventions. It is probably for this reason that the reservation was abandoned.

The Portuguese reservation is worded as follows :

Article 3, common to all four Convention :

As there is no actual definition of what is meant by a conflict not of an international character and as, in case this term is intended to

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refer solely to civil war, it is not clearly laid down at what moment an armed rebellion within a country should be considered as having become a civil war, Portugal reserves the right not to apply the provisions of Article 3, in so far as they may be contrary to the provisions of Portuguese law in all territories subject to her sovereignty in any part of the world.

This reservation raises a rather difficult problem of interpretation of the Geneva Conventions. Indeed, while Article 3 contains some important indication of "armed conflict not of an international character", the problem has been dealt with in detail by the ICRC in the Commentaries on the Ist and the IVth Conventions¹. Furthermore, the Commission of Experts convened by the ICRC in 1955 for the study of the question of the application of humanitarian principles in the event of internal disturbances, tried to define the scope of Article 3. They came to the conclusion that under the terms of Article 3, the States bound by the Geneva Conventions are left a certain freedom in the interpretation of doubtful cases, but that it would be completely contrary to the spirit of the Conventions to base a decision on whether or not to apply Article 3 solely on national laws. The adoption of such an attitude would deprive of all meaning an article forming an important part of an international agreement.

Portugal made this reservation on signature, but has not yet ratified the Conventions. It may be hoped, therefore, that the reservation will not be maintained on ratification.

Article 10 of the first three Conventions and **Article 11** of the fourth Convention, concerning the designation of a Protecting Power, are subject to reservations on the part of the following States: Albania, Byelorussia, Bulgaria, the People's Republic of China, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, the Ukraine, USSR, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and Yugoslavia.

¹ *Commentary on the Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field, Geneva, 1952, pp. 49 et sqq. Commentaire de la Convention de Genève relative à la protection des personnes civiles en temps de guerre, Geneva, 1956, pp. 40 et sqq.*

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These reservations are all to the same effect, although there are slight differences of wording. For example, the reservation made by the USSR in respect of the IIIrd Convention (prisoners of war) and the general reservations made by Portugal and Hungary read as follows :

U.S.S.R. ad article 10 :

“ The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will not recognise the validity of requests by the Detaining Power to a neutral State or to a humanitarian organization, to undertake the functions performed by a Protecting Power, unless the consent of the Government of the country of which the prisoners of war are nationals has been obtained.”

Hungarian People's Republic :

“ In the opinion of the Government of the Hungarian People's Republic the provisions of Article 10 of the Wounded and Sick, Maritime Warfare and Prisoners of War Conventions and of Article 11 of the Civilians Convention, concerning the replacement of the Protecting Power, can only be applied if the Government of the State of which the protected persons are nationals no longer exists.”

Portugal :

Article 10 of Conventions I, II, III, and Article 11 of Convention IV :

The Portuguese Government only accepts the above articles with the reservation that requests by the Detaining Power to a neutral State or to a humanitarian organization to undertake the functions normally performed by protecting Powers are made with the consent or agreement of the government of the country of which the persons to be protected are nationals (Countries of origin).

The anxiety reflected in these reservations is not altogether pointless. There are cases where it is impossible to designate a Protecting Power. The Suez conflict of November 1956 is an example, since the Egyptian Government does not recognise Israel, and this fact prevented the designation of a Protecting Power for Israeli interests in Egypt and Egyptian interests in Israel. Neither Egypt nor Israel asked neutral States to undertake the functions incumbent upon Protecting Powers under the Geneva Conventions. In fact, with the tacit consent of the

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parties, the humanitarian functions normally performed by Protecting Powers were performed by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The problem therefore did not arise, but it is reasonable to suppose that if neutral States had been asked by the Egyptian and Israeli Governments to act as Protecting Powers on behalf of enemy nationals, they would have sought to obtain the approval of the Government concerned.

This amounts to saying that a neutral State asked by a Detaining Power to act as Protecting Power will certainly not do so without having consulted the Government of the country of which the detainees are nationals, in so far as such a Government exists and can properly give an opinion. The question is more difficult in the case of a Government or a provisional body outside the national territory, but claiming to speak on behalf of the occupied State. It may happen that there are two Governments, each claiming to be the legitimate one, one in the national territory which has been occupied and the other abroad. Such cases occurred in the Second World War. As it will be seen, the decisions which will have to be taken by the neutral States will not always be easy. However, these States must always be guided by two principles :

- (a) In such a situation, a neutral State which agrees to act as Protecting Power, does not receive a mandate to do so from the Detaining Power, but exercises its protection on behalf of all the States bound by the Conventions and must therefore consider itself responsible towards all those States.
- (b) Wherever it is possible to consult the Government of the country of origin of the protected persons or an authority or body which seems to be entitled to speak on their behalf, the neutral State must consult that Government, authority or body and take into account the opinion expressed.

If it is a humanitarian organization which is designated by the Detaining Power, the above considerations remain valid. The ICRC which is mentioned by name, performs the functions peculiar to it, some aspects of which are fixed by the Conventions

themselves; for the Committee, therefore, it is merely a matter of adding to these functions the humanitarian tasks incumbent upon a Protecting Power. In a situation of this kind, the ICRC would certainly consult those who may properly speak on behalf of the persons for whose benefit these tasks are to be performed. Indeed, it did do so during the Second World War. When it was invited to take part in the defence before the courts of prisoners of war who were nationals of a country completely occupied by Germany, it first of all obtained the approval of the Government in exile. Of course, this applies only to the duties of the Protecting Power. The activities of the ICRC on behalf of war victims are carried out with complete independence, according to the principles of humanity, and the International Committee does not have to seek the prior consent of the country of origin of the persons to whom it brings relief.

As can be seen, the reservations to Article 10 of Conventions I, II and III, and Article 11 of the IVth Convention are really nothing more than an official commentary on the articles. They have the advantage of drawing the attention of neutral States and humanitarian organizations to their responsibilities. They will prevent a Detaining Power designating as Protecting Power a State only neutral in name and thus hindering other States which are really neutral from exercising their real functions.

It should be remarked that the wording used by Hungary seems to be the most realistic. Indeed, it merely limits the application of these articles to cases where a government no longer exists. In such a situation, it becomes impossible, at least officially, to engage in a prior consultation.

Article 11 of Conventions I, II and III, and **Article 12** of the IVth Convention led to the following reservation being made by *Hungary*:

(2) The Government of the Hungarian People's Republic cannot approve the provisions of Article 11 of the Wounded and Sick, Maritime Warfare and Prisoners of War Conventions and of Article 12 of the Civilians Convention, according to which the competence of the Protecting Power extends to the interpretation of the Convention.

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Now, this Article in no way gives protecting Powers competence to interpret the Conventions, but merely invites them to lend their good offices in order to settle differences regarding the application or interpretation of the Conventions—a very different thing. This reservation, therefore, may be considered to be the result of a misunderstanding; in any case it does not change the sense of the article under discussion.

GENEVA CONVENTION FOR THE AMELIORATION OF THE CONDITION OF THE WOUNDED AND SICK IN ARMED FORCES IN THE FIELD

Article 13 : For the reservation by *Portugal*, see below, page 16.

Article 38

Israel ratified the Convention :

Subject to the reservation that while respecting the inviolability of the distinctive signs and emblems of the Convention, *Israel* will use the Red Shield of David as the emblem and distinctive sign of the medical services of her armed forces.

Similar “reservations” were entered with regard to the Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea and the Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The Geneva Conventions, of course, refer to the emblem of the Red Cross (Red Crescent, or Red Lion and Sun) without mentioning the Red Shield of David. Is this really a reservation? We have seen that by making a reservation a State may limit or modify its own obligations, but may not increase the obligations of the other States Parties to the treaty. For this reason, *Israel*’s “reservation” is more in the nature of a simple unilateral declaration. Naturally, *Israel* may use the emblem she wishes, but her enemies are not bound to afford this sign the same respect which they are obliged to afford to

the signs listed in the Conventions. This, of course, does not mean that persons or things marked with the Red Shield of David may be deliberately attacked or destroyed. Indeed, hospitals, medical personnel, hospital ships, etc. must be respected as soon as they have been recognised as such, whether or not they have been marked. It can be said, however, that the sign of the Red Shield of David does not give, *a priori*, the same guarantee as the Red Cross emblem.

This question has led to a great deal of discussion; indeed it has had repercussions in the International Red Cross movement since there is a Society in Israel, the Magen David Adom, which uses the Red Shield of David as its emblem. Several times, it has asked the ICRC for recognition as the National Society for the State of Israel. Its activities, which are very effective, are similar to those of the National Red Cross Societies. The International Committee however, to its regret, has been forced to refuse recognition, since it may only recognise societies which use one of the emblems listed in the Geneva Conventions, as is expressly stated in one of the traditional conditions for recognition confirmed by the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference.

It was said during this discussion that since no State had objected to the "reservation" entered by Israel, the result was that the Red Shield of David had become an emblem recognised by the Convention. Even disregarding the fact that this argument rests on wrong premises¹, we are bound to point out that it is based on a wrong idea of the nature of reservations. Furthermore, the theory seems now to have been abandoned. The Magen David Adom had asked for the question of its recognition to be placed on the agenda of the XIXth International Red Cross Conference, to be held at New Delhi in October-November 1957. The Standing Commission of the International Red Cross, whose task it is to draw up the draft agenda for the Conference, rejected this request, pointing out that only a Diplomatic Conference for the revision of the Geneva Conventions could possibly create a new emblem.

¹ See the general declaration of the United States above.

Faced with this very forthright statement, the Magen David Adom amended its request. It now suggests, in a recent pamphlet¹, that the XIXth International Red Cross Conference should recommend to the next Diplomatic Conference that it recognise the Red Shield of David as the emblem of the National Society of Israel. No one, however, can foresee when a Diplomatic Conference will be called to revise the Geneva Conventions.

It must be admitted that this situation is very regrettable. It follows from it that Israel marks its medical services and installations entitled to the protection of the Red Cross emblem with an emblem of no legal validity, thus conducing to danger and uncertainty. Furthermore, the Magen David Adom Society, which carries out extensive humanitarian activities, is thereby prevented from becoming part of the International Red Cross.

This is not the place to consider the merits or demerits of Israel's attitude. The ICRC, which made its position clear during the 1949 Diplomatic Conference in Geneva, will doubtless have the opportunity of defining its viewpoint once more at the XIXth International Red Cross Conference.

Article 53

The *United States*, on ratifying the Conventions, entered the following reservation, which had not been made on signature :

The United States in ratifying the Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field does so with the reservation that irrespective of any provision or provisions in said Convention to the contrary, nothing contained therein shall make unlawful, or obligate the United States of America to make unlawful, any use or right of use within the United States of America and its territories and possessions of the Red Cross emblem, sign, insignia, or words as was lawful by reason of domestic law and a use begun prior to January 5, 1905, provided such use by pre-1905 users does not extend to the placing of the Red Cross emblem, sign, or insignia, upon aircraft, vessels, vehicles, buildings or other structures, or upon the ground.

¹ *The Claim of Magen David Adom for Recognition*, Jerusalem, 1957.

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The date of January 5, 1905 mentioned in this reservation is the date of the first American law regulating the use of the Red Cross emblem and reserving it for use by the military medical services and the American Red Cross. This law reserved the rights of prior users. Under the 1906 Geneva Convention and its revised version of 1929, the United States did not consider herself under the absolute obligation to prohibit the commercial use of the Red Cross emblem, whatever the date at which the undertakings concerned had begun to use it, and this situation presented numerous disadvantages, particularly for the American Red Cross, since several commercial houses use the emblem and name of the Red Cross for advertisement or as a trade mark. It was hoped that the new 1949 Conventions would put an end to this confused situation. Unfortunately, this was not so; the commercial enterprises concerned were able to plead their cause before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and judgment went in their favour. It appears that the Senate allowed itself to be convinced by the argument, which we consider fallacious, that a prohibition of the use of the trade marks concerned would have a retroactive character, which would be contrary to the Constitution of the United States and the general principles of law¹. As the *Commentary* on the Convention emphasizes², a law only has retroactive effect when it punishes or prohibits past acts, it cannot be considered retroactive if it punishes or prohibits future acts. Now, in the present case, it was simply a matter of prohibiting misuse of the emblem from the date of the entry into force of the Convention.

With regard to rights acquired before 1905, this question could have been settled by granting users time to alter their trade mark, or even by the payment of fair compensation, if it was considered that appreciable damage had been done to their interests. Of course, this reservation has most effect on the national level, and internationally it has almost no bearing.

(To be continued.)

CLAUDE PILLOUD
Head of the Legal Department ICRC

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

News Items

The mission of Mr. A. Durand, delegate in Indonesia, came to an end early in July.

During his six months stay in Indonesia the International Committee's representative made a point of assisting, wherever he was authorised to do so, at the embarkation of the various Dutch communities leaving Java, Sumatra and the Island of Celebes.

Whereas the first embarkations were carried out without difficulty, the events which occurred in Sumatra on February 15 caused some slight delay in the evacuation of Dutch nationals from the Padang area (Central Sumatra) where a blockade had been imposed by the Government naval forces. Nevertheless, some were able to reach the east coast by their own means before being sent on to Medan (North Sumatra) and Singapore. Immediately the fighting ceased the Indonesian Red Cross had sent relief teams by sea and land, to take family messages and medicaments and to escort persons wishing to be evacuated.

Early in May Mr. Durand was authorised to proceed in his turn to Padang; from there he went to Indarung and got in touch with a number of Dutch nationals whose evacuation was then arranged with the Indonesian authorities. The delegate of the ICRC did everything possible to help them to find the necessary means of transport.

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Hostilities having again broken out in North Celebes, where the rebel forces were bombing the principal neighbouring ports from the air, steps were taken to evacuate some families of the employees of the Shell petroleum works at Balikpapan and Tarakan (Borneo). The Indonesian Red Cross accompanied to Djakarta a vessel carrying 300 women and children, the majority of whom were Dutch Nationals.

By the end of June most of the Dutch nationals in Indonesia had left the country to return to the Netherlands.

* * *

Mr. A. M. Leuenberger, correspondent of the ICRC, was authorised by the Government of the Republic of Viet Nam to visit a few persons under detention as a result of the events which occurred in the Saigon area in 1954 and 1955.

Mr. Leuenberger visited Saigon Central Prison on several occasions during the autumn of 1957 and early in 1958. He was thus able to see that the state of health of the detainees—who are allowed to correspond with their families and to receive parcels—was satisfactory.

* * *

Following the agreement concluded on December 31, 1957 between the Japanese Government and the Republic of Korea, the majority of the Japanese fishermen held at Pusan (South Korea) and the Korean internees in Omura and Hamamatsu (Japan) were released and repatriated.

* * *

Mr. D. de Traz, General-Delegate of the ICRC for the Middle East, recently carried out a mission in the Persian Gulf area.

During his journey, Mr. de Traz visited, in particular, Bahrain and Kuwait where he met the government authorities of these two shaikhdoms where no Red Cross or Red Crescent organisations exist at the present time. During his tour Mr. de Traz also had

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talks with the representatives of the British authorities in the Persian Gulf area.

* * *

Following the events which took place in the Lebanon in May, at Mr. de Traz's request the ICRC sent 250 bottles of human albumen to the Lebanese Red Cross for the treatment of victims of the events.

Mr. de Traz also approached the Lebanese authorities, and the heads of the opposing party, and recalled to them that the principles of Article 3 of the four Geneva Conventions should be respected in the event of internal disturbances.

In addition, Mr. de Traz is at present studying the advisability of increasing the medical aid given by the ICRC, and the means for so doing, should circumstances make it necessary.

* * *

On April 30, Mr. C. Vautier, ICRC delegate in Morocco, visited Goulimine in Southern Morocco, to ascertain the living conditions and requirements of some 16,000 Moroccan refugees from the Sahara, and to collect any information available concerning the supposed presence of Spanish prisoners in that area.

Shortly afterwards Mr. Vautier went to Geneva to make a report on his mission to the ICRC. The matter of a special relief action of the ICRC on behalf of needy refugees, and the continuation of Mr. Vautier's investigations concerning missing Spanish combatants were closely examined. Mr. Vautier returned to Morocco early in July.

* * *

Mr. R. Vust, Honorary-Delegate of the ICRC in Algeria, has been informed by the French authorities that important measures have been taken for the release of persons in assigned residence and those held in military screening and transit centres. According to information supplied by Mr. Vust, up to June 15 over 5,000 persons had thus been released.

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When visiting a civilian prison in Algiers, Mr. Vust handed over sundry relief supplies for the detainees' use. In addition, relief supplies (books, dentures, etc.) were also despatched by Mr. Vust to the Arcole and Lodi Centres.

* * *

The International Commission of the International Tracing Service (ICITS) held its 16th meeting on June 5, 1958, presided over by the representative of the Government of the German Federal Republic, Mr. Weber.

On this particular occasion the meeting was held at the ITS headquarters at Arolsen, in deference to the request of the International Commission which wished thus to show its interest in the work of the ITS staff.

The ICRC took this opportunity of sending as its representatives at the meeting Mr. M. Bodmer, Vice-President, Miss M. van Berchem, Member of the International Committee and, as customary, Mr. R. Gallopin, Executive Director.

In the morning the members of the ICITS, and the representatives of the ICRC visited the ITS headquarters. After the visit they expressed their satisfaction with the work achieved in an excellent co-operative spirit and the devoted service given by the management and the 250 members of the present staff of the ITS.

Before the meeting was opened the representatives of the Government members of the ICITS, the ICRC representatives and the managing body of the ITS lunched together. Mr. Bodmer welcomed the participants in the meeting and expressed his thanks for the valuable support they had given the ICRC in carrying out the task it has performed since 1955 when it again undertook the responsibility of the administration of the ITS.

* * *

The ICRC was represented by Mr. H. Coursier, Member of its Legal Department, at the 8th meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration, held in Geneva from May 7 to 14, 1958.

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This meeting was marked by the appointment to the directorship of this organisation of Mr. Marcus Daly (to succeed H. E. Mr. Tittmann, Ambassador) who will place at the disposal of the ICEM his vast knowledge of international law and his administrative experience. Like his eminent predecessor, to whom we wish to pay a special tribute, Mr. Daly intends to maintain the excellent relations existing between the ICEM and the ICRC.

During its work the meeting examined, among other matters, the report on the work of ICEM, in particular the resettlement of Hungarian refugees and the assistance given to refugees in the Middle East and Far East.

It may be pointed out that the ICEM, in 1957, dealt with the transport of 194,074 persons, of whom over half were refugees. This is the highest annual figure since this organisation was founded.

* * *

The Executive Committee of the United Nations Refugee Emergency Fund (UNREF) met in Geneva from June 2 to 6, and was presided over by Mrs. May Curwen, delegate of the United Kingdom.

During the meetings various reports were submitted by Mr. A. Lindt, High Commissioner for Refugees, in particular of the general activities of the UNREF, the present situation of the Hungarian refugees and measures to be adopted for increasing the assistance to European refugees in Hong Kong.

The International Committee, which pays particular attention to the refugee problem, was represented at the meetings by Mr. H. Coursier and Mr. H. Beckh, as observers.

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The World Congress of Family and Population Problems, organised by the International Union of Family Organisations, was held in Paris from June 15 to 21, 1958. The ICRC was represented by its delegate in France, Mr. W. Michel.

* * *

Mention has already been made in the Revue internationale to the work of the delegation opened by the International Committee in Cairo following the events of October 1956. Mr. Muller visited Geneva in May for discussions with the ICRC, and to give a report on the present work of the Cairo Delegation of which he is in charge.

It was decided to make a temporary increase of the staff since the obligations incumbent upon the Delegation had not decreased as rapidly as had been expected six months previously. Miss E. Bugnot and Mr. M. Martin, of the ICRC staff, left Geneva for Cairo early in June.

It is foreseen that the special work of the Cairo Delegation on behalf of stateless persons will come to an end on December 31, 1958, at the latest.

* * *

During May two leading members of the Red Cross, on a mission in Geneva were the guests of the ICRC, namely, Mr. Hussein Asfahany, Director-General of the Egyptian Red Crescent, and Mr. Tchikalenko, Chief of the Department of External Relations of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR.

Dr. Pedro Ceresoto, member of the Supreme Council of the Argentine Red Cross, making a study-visit to Europe, also paid a visit to the International Committee.

On June 12, Dr. Chadli Zouiten, Vice-President of the Tunisian Red Crescent, during a brief visit to Geneva, was received by the Presidential Council of the ICRC which was very pleased to have the opportunity of meeting, for the first time, a representative of this recently founded National Society.

During June the ICRC also received visits from Mr. Anthony Ikem Ibegbuna, Assistant-Director of the Badan (Nigeria) Branch of the British Red Cross, Dr. Thoron, President of the Orange Free State Branch of the South African Red Cross, Mr. K. Helmy and Mrs. P. Daghighi at the head of the Junior Red Lion and Sun, Iran, and Dr. A. Gregory, Director of the Kenya Branch of the British Red Cross.

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H. E. Mr. Alberto Berio, the new Permanent Delegate for Italy with the European Office of the United Nations, paid a visit to the President of the ICRC on May 19, 1958.

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Miss Blanca Viera Freitas, Administrative Secretary of the Uruguayan Red Cross recently made a three months' study-visit to the League and the ICRC in Geneva with the object of making a close study of the organisation and activities of the two institutions.

The ICRC is expecting the arrival, during the coming months, of other study-visitors and is very pleased to see the interest shown by National Societies in the structure and work of the International Red Cross.

* * *

The Afghan Red Crescent Magazine recently published an article by Mr. Ghulam Hazrat Koshan on the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The author gives a record of the International Committee's activities and lays particular emphasis on the scope and variety of the tasks incumbent upon the Central Prisoners of War Agency and the International Tracing Service. He points out the value of the results achieved and explains the significance of the work undertaken by our organisation, whose activities have long since passed over European frontiers and continue to spread, more and more, to Asian and African countries.

* * *

Among the thousands of tourists who flock to Geneva as soon as the summer season begins, a great many make a point of visiting before they leave the city (the home of the Red Cross) the headquarters of the ICRC and, in particular, the Central Prisoners of War Agency. The ever-increasing flow of visitors of all nationalities is a most encouraging proof of the interest shown in the Red Cross throughout the world.

* * *

In April, May and June the International Committee received visits from various groups and associations which had asked to be informed of its activities. It was visited, in particular, by 180 members of the Association suisse des Services complémentaires féminins accompanied by their C. O. Weitzel, the President of the Association, and the Group Leader Künzle; the party was also accompanied by Colonel Schindler. Other visitors to the ICRC were student social-workers of the French Red Cross, Lyons, students of the Ecole d'études sociales, Geneva, first-aid workers of the French Red Cross (Annecy and Annemasse) and some sixty members of the Swedish Red Cross. The latter were taking part in a tour organised each year by the Swedish Red Cross, with the object of making known to an increasingly greater number of its members the work of the ICRC and the League.

* * *

The "Tagung des Verbandes Deutscher Mutterhäuser" of the German Red Cross held its annual general meeting at Wiesbaden on May 28/29, 1958.

Over a thousand matrons, sisters and nurses of the German Red Cross took part in this congress, during which professional problems were discussed and cultural displays, which reached a very high standard, were given.

After the opening speech of Generaloberin Mrs. von Örtzen, President of the association, various speeches were made, in particular by the representatives of the Federal Government and the Hesse authorities, Dr. Weitz, Minister of State, President of the German Red Cross and Dr. Mix, Mayor of Wiesbaden.

The International Committee of the Red Cross, which had been invited to attend the congress, was represented by Miss A. Pfirter, Head of the Medical Personnel and War-Disablement Sections of the ICRC. When speaking at the congress, Miss Pfirter paid a tribute to the spirit which animates the German Red Cross and the efforts made by it to promote a still wider dissemination of Red Cross principles and the Geneva Conventions.

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As stated in the June (1956) issue of the Revue internationale, in order to help the war-disabled of Viet Nam, and in agreement with the authorities of the Republic of Viet Nam, in 1955 the ICRC lent its co-operation in the setting up of an Orthopaedic Centre in Saïgon by presenting the tools and equipment for the manufacture of artificial legs for the disabled, and by making available—for a period of three months—the services of two specialists to train staff recruited locally by the Vietnamese authorities.

Mr. A. M. Leuenberger, the correspondent of the ICRC in Saïgon, who recently visited Geneva to make his report, informed the ICRC of the remarkable development of this Orthopaedic Centre which, actively supported by the Vietnamese authorities, has extended its work, particularly in manufacturing artificial arms with hook appliances and invalid carriages for the crippled, and in the vocational training of the disabled.

We shall have the occasion of reverting to this matter and of giving more detailed information on the organisation of this Centre.

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The "Journées d'études", in which take part the departmental directors of nurses' and social-workers' units and the directors of nursing and social-workers schools of the French Red Cross, were held in Evian from June 5 to 8; some 120 persons were present.

The ICRC, which had been invited to take part in this congress, was represented by Miss A. Pfirter, Head of the Nursing Personnel Section, who spoke on the role of nurses and social-workers of the Red Cross.

The members of the congress took advantage of their presence in the district to pay visits to the International Committee and the League. They arrived in Geneva on June 6, in the care of Mr. G. Vermersch, Vice-President of the French Red Cross, and were received at the ICRC headquarters by Miss L. Odier, member of the International Committee, who welcomed them and gave a brief history of the Red Cross with special reference to the duties incumbent upon medical personnel in time of war. Mr. J. Pictet,

Director for General Affairs, then spoke on the principles which inspire the Red Cross and gave a description of the work accomplished by the ICRC since the outbreak of the Second World War to the present day. Mr. P. Jequier, Director of the Central Agency services, in his turn, explained the efforts still being made by the ICRC to obtain information concerning thousands of military personnel reported missing during the hostilities, and to help innumerable civilians to get in touch with relatives from whom they were separated during the war. His speech was followed by a visit to the Central Agency's card-indexes and files.

THE ICRC AND EVENTS IN THE LEBANON

July 7, 1958. — Following the disturbances which recently broke out in the Lebanon, the International Committee of the Red Cross—through its General-Delegate for the Middle East, Mr. de Traz, a Swiss citizen—made several representations to the authorities in the Lebanon, the Lebanese Red Cross and the various rebel groups, for the purpose of recalling to all concerned the essential humanitarian principles as set forth in Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949.

By Mr. de Traz's regular contacts with the authorities and the Lebanese Red Cross, and those he has been successful in setting up with some of the rebel chiefs in various areas of the Lebanon, he has also been able to ascertain the considerable need for medical supplies.

In order to meet the most urgent requirements, by drawing upon the few relief funds available to it, the ICRC sent by air from Switzerland to Mr. de Traz various consignments of medical relief supplies, in particular blood plasma, surgical equipment and medicaments.

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The delegate of the ICRC has also lent his services in some cases to facilitate the evacuation of the seriously wounded.

A MESSAGE FROM FIDEL CASTRO TO THE ICRC

July 5, 1958. — On July 4 the International Committee of the Red Cross received a message from Mr. Fidel Castro concerning the wounded and sick of the Cuban forces, in his hands, whom he proposes to hand over, unconditionally, to a commission of the Cuban Red Cross.

Being unable to send a direct reply to this appeal, the sender's exact address being unknown, the International Committee made a broadcast over the Swiss Short-Wave Service, stating that it was transmitting the message to the Cuban Red Cross and offering its services, and those of a delegate whom it is prepared to send immediately to Havana to assist with any humanitarian action, in accordance with its traditional duties and the provisions of the Geneva Conventions.
