



REVUE
INTERNATIONALE
DE LA
CROIX-ROUGE

SUPPLEMENT

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RED CROSS PRINCIPLES

V

4. Impartiality

The Red Cross will act without favour or prejudice towards or against anyone.

Impartiality is the first of a series of three principles whose object is to ensure that everyone has confidence in the Red Cross, such confidence being indispensable. These principles guarantee the strict observance of the essential rules which we have just been considering.

The best of dictionaries are sometimes too summary to bring out the whole meaning of an abstract notion. One need not be afraid, therefore, to give one's own definition of the words one uses. In order to define "impartiality" we shall start from the term "partial" from which it is derived. "Partial" describes someone who makes up his mind, or takes sides, as a result of prejudice or personal preference. Two ideas may be distinguished: the action itself, and its motive, the latter being founded on a subjective appreciation of the problem. These two distinct elements are also to be found in the counter-term, but we must carefully note here that the negation only applies to the motive and not to the action. A man who does not make up his mind should not therefore, be described as "impartial", as he sometimes has been, by people who confuse the notions of impartiality and neutrality; a man is only impartial if, when he comes to a decision, he does so without prepossession or bias of any kind.

We shall now analyse the five fundamental features which, in our opinion, characterize this concept. In the first place, impartiality is an attitude of mind. It can therefore only be attributed to man, or to an organization considered as a person. In a wider sense, one sometimes speaks of an impartial act or an impartial opinion ; but in this case the idea of impartiality still remains inseparably linked with the author of the act, whose state of mind has merely been translated into action. The attitude of the agent is then transferred to the act and its result.

In the second place, impartiality implies a choice, or at least a comparison, between two or more people, or between two or more actions or theses. It is called into play, for example, when a judge has to decide a law-suit, or when the Red Cross has relief supplies to distribute. In exercising this choice any tendency to favour or be prejudiced against any party must be avoided. On the other hand, one cannot speak of impartiality in cases where there is no need to show discernment, where the distribution takes place automatically in mathematically equal parts. It is, in fact, as we shall see later, this positive quality, implying a decision, that distinguishes impartiality from neutrality. An impartial man chooses, without any bias for or against any of the parties concerned. A man who is neutral does not choose : he refrains from taking action, or, if need be, gives equally to everyone.

Then again, impartiality, like its counterpart partiality, implies that the agent enjoys a sufficient degree of freedom. This freedom must be of two kinds : vis-a-vis oneself and vis-a-vis the world. The latter quality is known as independence, and as it constitutes, in itself, one of the fundamental principles of the Red Cross, we shall devote a special chapter to it at a later stage.

Inward freedom may be even harder to attain. Subjective constraint is impartiality's most formidable enemy ; it is all the more dangerous, as the person concerned is often unaware of its existence. This is already true in the case of passion, which makes one see human beings and things in an unreal light. It is even more striking, however, in the case of mental complexes, which are essentially unconscious, as one is cured of them when

one realizes that they exist. These complexes warp an individual's mind and affect his behaviour, sometimes seriously. It is therefore above all necessary to burst such bonds.

Fourthly, impartiality depends upon a precise and comprehensive examination of the factors involved and an exact appreciation of what is at stake. Impartiality is founded on objectivity, which means basing one's opinion and decision on the facts alone without allowing oneself to be influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by the personal factor, which is the disturbing element in any subjective appreciation. Thus a scholar or scientist is objective when he seeks the truth, basing himself solely on phenomena about which he is certain. The notion of objectivity is a wider one than impartiality, since it is not necessarily limited to a choice to be made between two parties. Nevertheless, one of the criteria of impartiality is to be able, without detriment, to replace that notion by that of objectivity. For impartiality may be defined, when all is said and done, as objectivity in one's decisions or judgments.

It must, lastly, be emphasized most strongly, that impartiality is shown in the application of rules laid down beforehand—of general principles which are recognized as valid and held to be just in the given set of circumstances. We have described a partial man as one who makes up his mind as a result of prejudice or personal preference. Such a man makes up his mind improperly, that is to say, in a manner contrary to recognized standards of conduct. On the other hand, an impartial man's decision to act is based solely on just motives. His line of conduct follows a rule defined in advance as being the most equitable, and in order to adhere strictly to it, he must be free from all emotional constraint. Impartiality thus consists, as we see, in living up to an ideal ; it is this, incidentally, that gives it its value and distinctive character.

An honest judge will show his impartiality by an objective examination and appraisal of the facts and arguments put forward and by then applying the permanent rules laid down by law. Justice, whether we speak of equity or of the justice instituted by society, presupposes the existence of laws or higher precepts which it maintains. The impartiality of the

Red Cross consists in applying certain rules without favouring or handicapping any person or groups of persons, through self-interest or passion. The rules in question are the three principles of humanity, equality and due proportion which we have already discussed—the principle, that is, that men who suffer must be helped; that an equal degree of distress calls for equal aid; and that the assistance given, in cases where the distress is not equal, must depend on the greatness of the respective needs and on their urgency. We should, however, stress the fact that impartiality is independent of the rules applied: it only refers to the manner in which they must be applied.

It may be said, in conclusion, that impartiality has two aspects—one moral and the other intellectual. The first represents an effort by the individual to free himself from his prejudices and sympathies, so as to become objective, not forgetting that this objectivity is liable to be affected at any moment, consciously or unconsciously, by factors which the best will in the world is often powerless to resist. The second aspect consists in the absolute submission of one's faculty of judgment to standards which are recognized to be right. Impartiality thus lies in the application, without personal preference intervening, of rules accepted by the civilization to which the parties belong. If asked for a precise definition, we would say that impartiality is the quality shown by a person or an institution which, when called upon to judge, choose, apportion or act, does so quite freely, in the light of objective considerations and in accordance with the prescribed standards, without yielding through personal interest, sympathy or antipathy, to the influence of the persons or ideas involved.

Until now, the doctrine of the Red Cross has, as we said, confused the notion of impartiality with that of equality as between men, both conceptions being referred to as impartiality; it has, in fact, confused the principle itself with the manner in which it is applied. The two notions are essentially different. Impartiality is an inward quality, an intrinsic virtue of the agent; it implies a constant effort on his part to free

himself from prejudices, it is a means to an end. The principle of equality, on the other hand, is not concerned with the agent ; it relates to the actual object of the operation, suffering man, and the help to be given to him ; this principle, which results from the common nature of men and from their desire for equality—the expression of the highest form of justice—has won acceptance once and for all ; its place is among the ends to be attained, and it, together with certain other basic principles, determines the action itself and the methods to be used. To be convinced of this we need only reverse our line of reasoning. Starting from the general idea of impartiality, we note that it is apparent in various acts, but does not, on its own account, give rise to any. Impartiality would not, for example, allow a judge to dispense justice, if he did not already know the standards of equity and the provisions of the law, and if he were not called upon to render judgment. It is the principles laid down earlier which give impartiality the substance, without which it would merely be an empty form. In other words, impartiality is a condition for the proper application of those principles to the concrete cases which occur in real life.

An example will confirm this. Let us suppose that the principle of impartiality is not observed in a Red Cross action. The institution's abstract and intangible principles will remain unshaken, and the blame will be laid on the agent who has been guilty of partiality. Everyone will agree that the lapse was an individual one and that there is no question of abandoning the institution's principles. A deliberate, systematic violation of the fundamental rules of the Red Cross would constitute a repudiation of the ideals of humanity. But to be partial is to apply those rules falsely, for subjective and personal reasons.

We have robbed the old principle of impartiality of part of its substance—of everything, in fact, that is covered by the notion of equality. It may even seem surprising that we still need to refer to impartiality after noting that in the eyes of the Red Cross all individuals are equal. It is quite obvious, people will say, that the institution must observe its own principles and apply them conscientiously. But man is not a logical and purely reasonable being ; let us make no mistake about that ;

he is, on the contrary, an emotional being, a victim of mental complexes and preconceived ideas, and swayed by his passions. His vision is often distorted by the impact of his own personality. Impartiality therefore demands that a prolonged and intense effort be made to free charitable action from the influence of the personal factor¹. It will sometimes be the fruit of a hard-won and dearly gained victory over oneself; it is always balanced, as it were, on a narrow dividing-line, finer than a razor's edge. Just think, for example, of the position of a man who must avoid favouring his own son.

Whereas, the principle of equality forbids all objective distinction between individuals, it is the principle of impartiality that prohibits the subjective distinctions which spring from factors peculiar to the relationship existing between the agent and the person concerned—those based on social considerations or political opinion, for example, or on a spontaneous feeling of sympathy.

Impartiality has exactly the same importance for the Red Cross as it has in legal proceedings; this should indicate its value.

The Red Cross—and the International Committee in particular—has sometimes been asked to express its opinion on certain facts, affecting the human person, about which public opinion is stirred, as though the Red Cross were a judge. If the Red Cross is thus expected to go outside its traditional role as a charitable institution, it is because there is a feeling of confidence in its impartiality, and a desire for it to settle the problem, not according to the justice of man, but according to its own justice as the moral conscience or court of honour of humanity. It is therefore desirable to enumerate here the cases in which Red Cross action is comparable in certain respects to the discharge of a judicial function.

Apart from these specific tasks, the Red Cross, has, in the name of its widest ideal, brought about the conclusion of the

¹ Goethe, emphasising the great difficulty of acquiring the quality of impartiality, said in his *Aphorisms*: "I can promise to be sincere, but not to be impartial."

Geneva Convention, thus helping to make duties of a humanitarian nature exigible under international law. One of the most important features of this codification of the law lies in the observance of rules of procedure enacted by civilized nations with a view to surrounding the administration of justice with all the desirable guarantees of equity and humanity, within a limited and well-defined field—that of the protection of prisoners of war and civilians of enemy nationality against whom legal proceedings are taken. But, as we have said, the Red Cross does not in any way oppose the actual dispensation of justice or question the right of the State to punish the guilty according to its laws.

Furthermore, the duties of the Red Cross under the Geneva Conventions are entrusted to it as an agent, and not as a judge. The International Committee of the Red Cross is, however, responsible for seeing that the Conventions are properly applied, in particular by arranging for the visiting of prisoner-of-war and civilian internment camps by its delegates, and by sending the reports drawn up after such inspections to the Power of Origin of those detained, and also to the Detaining Power. This task is of fundamental importance, but of a very special nature, and perhaps more strictly the concern of the International Committee as a neutral organization than of the Red Cross as an institution, since the Protecting Powers exercise a similar function. Although the sole object of the Committee's delegates, when carrying it out, will be to further the interests of the war victims, they may be regarded to some extent as impartial witnesses seeking the truth, and giving an account of what they see. The International Committee assists in this way in the application of the law, endeavouring to ensure respect for those standards of human justice, which it has itself inspired.

The International Committee is, lastly, sometimes asked to take part in an impartial inquiry into some alleged violation of a provision of the Geneva Conventions, or of humanitarian principles. In actual fact, however, it has never yet filled such a role, as it could only agree to do so with the consent of both parties concerned—not being at liberty to sacrifice the sustained relations it must entertain with the belligerents, to any parti-

cular interest—and only if there were no danger of its charitable work in the practical field suffering as a result. Nations are no more inclined than men to recognize when they are at fault, or to submit, of their own free will, to sentence being passed on them ; consequently one or other of the parties has always so far refused its consent. But if, for a wonder, the various conditions stated above were one day fulfilled, the Committee would then serve in a capacity which would be approximate to that of an arbitrator or judge.

In all other respects the Red Cross is only the guardian of moral rights, over which the judicial organs, for their part, have no power. As can be seen, the two spheres remain, in substance, quite distinct.

(To be continued)

Jean S. PICTET.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

COMMISSION OF EXPERTS

FOR THE STUDY OF THE QUESTION OF THE APPLICATION OF HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES IN THE EVENT OF INTERNAL DISTURBANCES

The International Committee of the Red Cross decided to convene a restricted Commission of Experts composed of personalities of various nationalities in order to obtain their opinion on the question of the application of humanitarian principles in the event of "internal disturbances".

The Commission met at the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva from 3rd to 8th, October, 1955.

The present report, drawn up and unanimously approved by the Commission, sets down the ideas whereby it was inspired and the conclusions which it felt it could reasonably submit to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The Commission was made up as follows :

Mr. Paul Cornil, President of the International Association of
Penal Law ¹,
Professor Gilbert Gidel,
Professor Dr. Max Huber, honorary President of the Inter-
national of the Red Cross,

¹ Mr. Cornil, unable to attend the meetings in Geneva, submitted his opinions in writing to his colleagues. The report having in its turn been submitted to him he declared that he agreed with it.

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- H. E. M. Julio Lopez-Olivan, Spanish Ambassador,
H. E. M. Mohan Sinha Mehta, Ambassador of India to Switzerland,
H. E. Dr. Abbas Naficy, former Vice-Chairman of the Council of Iran, Vice-Chairman of the Red Lion and Sun Society of Iran.
H. E. Professor Nihat Erim, former Vice-Chairman of the Council of Turkey,
H. E. Caracciolo Parra Perez, Ambassador of Venezuela,
H. E. M. Massimo Pilotti, President of the High Court of the European Coal and Steel Community,
Mr. Alejandro Quijano, Chairman of the Mexican Red Cross Society, represented by Mr. J. J. Gomez de Rueda,
Professor William E. Rappard, Geneva University,
Justice Emil Sandstroem, President of the Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies,
H. E. Professor Dr. Carlo SCHMID, Vice-Chairman of the "Bundestag" of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The Commission elected Professor Rappard to the Chair and Professor Gidel as Rapporteur.

The following four questions were submitted to the Commission by the International Committee in lieu of a provisional agenda :

- (1) Is it possible to define the idea of an "armed conflict", so as to determine the moment when Article 3 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of August 12th, 1949, becomes applicable in law, in the event of internal disturbances?
- (2) So long as the said article is not applicable in law, is it consistent with the interests of humanity and the standards of civilisation for the humanitarian safeguards defined by the Fourth Convention to be applied, in particular in the case of persons (citizens or subjects) detained by their own Government for political reasons?
- (3) Would not the International Committee be justified, by virtue of its traditions, the Statutes of the International Red Cross and its own Statutes, in offering its services to the Governments responsible for law and order?

- (4) What should the conditions be for its action to be exercised, and what should be the limits of such action?

* * *

With regard to question 1, the Commission first had to examine whether the problems raised by "internal disturbances" were already covered by the Geneva Convention and, in the affirmative, to an extent. Could "internal disturbances" be considered as coming under the heading of "armed conflicts" as foreseen in Article 3 common to all four Geneva Conventions of August, 12th, 1949?

The Commission was of the opinion that this Article, though it does indeed cover situations which are different from those foreseen in the other dispositions of the Convention, does tend towards the application of the principles contained in the Convention, to situations which, though presenting certain characteristics of a war, are distinct from that of an international conflict. It is, however, often difficult to include under the heading of these different situations, the event of "internal disturbances" since such troubles oppose the State to persons who are in fact its own nationals, subjects or citizens and who do not generally in themselves constitute a "Party to the conflict". It should be noted that such situations would seem, in the present state of the world, to tend to become more and more frequent and it is necessary to meet them, in so far as possible, by applying the humanitarian principles upon which the Geneva Conventions are based. At the same time, it should never be forgotten that the State which finds itself faced with such disturbances has full liberty to judge which measures it shall take in order to "repress, according to the law, a riot or an insurrection" (Article 2 of the European Convention for the Safeguard of the Rights of Man).

The difficult and delicate nature of the problems to be examined by the Commission are thus abundantly clear. On the one hand, as Señor de Alba, Mexican Ambassador, representing his country at the Geneva Diplomatic Conference of 1949, so concisely stated "the rights of the State should not

be placed above all humanitarian considerations (*Actes de la Conference - II, B, p. 11*). But, on the other hand, humanitarian action should never include any intrusion on the legal plane, nor any expression of opinion with regard to the merits or otherwise of the steps taken by the authorities in order to assure the maintenance or the reestablishment of public order. It was between these two poles that the Commission had to deliberate.

The Commission did not hesitate as to its reply to question 2. It does, indeed, appear consistent with the interests of humanity as well as with the standards of civilization that the humanitarian safeguards, as defined more particularly by the Fourth Convention, should be applied to persons at strife with their own government on political or social grounds. When pursuing this humanitarian aim the Red Cross is well within its sphere. The International Red Cross Conference has, moreover, already expressed itself on various occasions in this sense. Resolution XIV adopted at Geneva (Xth International Red Cross Conference), formulated, in 1921 already, the following general principles :

The Red Cross, which stands apart from all political and social distinctions, and from differences of creed, race, class or nation, affirms its right and duty of affording relief in case of civil war and social and revolutionary disturbances.

The Red Cross recognises that all victims of civil war or of such disturbances are, without any exception whatsoever, entitled to relief, in conformity with the general principles of the Red Cross...

The Red Cross is acting within the bounds of its mission when placing the principles which inspire the Conventions before the positive rules which they lay down. These principles are absolutely essential. They are the source from which the Conventions, which formulate them, sprang and allow for their adaptation in view of the changes which the continuous evolution in the life of humanity impose.

Indeed, the Hague Conference followed a similar concept when drafting the preamble to the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land which runs as follows :

Until a more complete code of the laws of war has been issued, the High Contracting Parties deem it expedient to declare that, in cases not included in the Regulations adopted by them, the inhabitants and the belligerents remain under the protection and the rule of the principles of the law of nations, as they result from the usages established among civilized peoples, from the laws of humanity, and the dictates of the public conscience.

The evolution which has taken place with regard to the respect due to the individual also contributes towards orienting the action of the Red Cross towards the maintenance of permanent humanitarian principles even in cases where the application of normal legislation is compromised by a state of emergency or exception. We merely need to recall, in this connection, the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10th, 1948, whose principles inspired the Convention for the Safeguard of the Rights of Man and Fundamental Liberties, signed in Rome, on November 4th, 1950.

The Commission's attention was also drawn to the work of the first international congress of the United Nations for the prevention of crime and the treatment of delinquents, which met in Geneva from August 27th to September 3rd, 1955. This congress formulated rules applicable to all categories of prisoners. This document should therefore be considered as a code of the minimum basic rules governing detention.

* * *

With regard to questions 3 and 4 on the practical methods of action in virtue of humanitarian principles in the event of "internal disturbances", the Commission was of the opinion that the International Committee of the Red Cross has the right to found itself not only on its general mission to alleviate human suffering, but also on the texts whereby the 61 signatory Powers of the Geneva Conventions expressly recognised its right of initiative in the humanitarian field. The Geneva Conventions of August 12th, 1949 (Articles 9/9/9/10 common to all four) in fact lay down that :

The provisions of the present Convention constitute no obstacle to the humanitarian activities which the International Committee of the Red Cross or any other impartial humanitarian organization may, subject to the consent of the Parties to the conflict concerned, undertake for the protection of civilian persons and for their relief.

Article 3, common to all four Conventions, which proclaims the International Committee's quality as "an impartial humanitarian body" and recognise its right to "offer its services to the Parties to the conflict" should also be recalled here.

Given these circumstances, it is difficult to see what objections could possibly be raised against action by the International Committee of the Red Cross in the event of "internal disturbances" if it remains strictly on the humanitarian plane which is its own.

The Commission was unanimously of the opinion that the International Committee of the Red Cross should abstain, in conformity with its invariable tradition of neutrality, from any measures which might seem to constitute an encroachment on the political or legal sphere. The Commission stressed the idea that humanitarian action is absolutely distinct from political considerations of any kind and that, moreover, the carrying out of a humanitarian action cannot, under any circumstances, have as a result any change whatsoever in the legal status of the persons benefiting by this action. Such humanitarian action in no wise constitutes a "de facto" or legal recognition and cannot entail any change of status.

The Commission declares that it attaches the greatest importance to recalling here that the respect of humanitarian principles not only imposes obligations on governments but also on all those persons who are involved or engaged in "internal disturbances". This is, indeed, an essential element for the amelioration of the tragic situations examined by the Commission.

The rule of the presence of the Red Cross in the event of disturbances is imperative, not only in order to effectively attenuate human suffering, but also in order to contribute towards progressively establishing a mode of behaviour which

will lead to extending to persons not specifically protected by the Geneva Conventions and to the victims of "internal disturbances", similar guarantees as those contained in these Conventions on behalf of protected persons and in time of war.

Thus, more especially, it is desirable that the minimum laid down in Article 3 should in all cases be respected by all parties concerned and that the dispositions of Article 33 and 34 of the IVth Geneva Convention of August 12th, 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in time of War should also be applied. These Articles lay down :

Article 33 : *No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited.*

Pillage is prohibited.

Reprisals against protected persons and their property are prohibited.

Article 34 : *The taking of hostages is prohibited.*

With regard to the clause often referred to as "collective responsibility", the Commission was unanimous in disapproving the conception of the possible responsibility of an individual, due uniquely to the fact that he or she was a member of a given group, independently of criminal acts committed by him or her. The incarceration and the punishment of members of the families of persons implicated in "internal disturbances", and more especially of their children, should be strictly condemned.

Finally the sick and wounded should always be able to receive the medical care they require ; and those persons who give them this care, should be respected under all circumstances and may not be the object of sanctions for having done so.

With regard to the practical methods of intervention by the Red Cross, the Commission was of the opinion that there were no grounds for examining the question of the delimitation of responsibilities and competences between National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

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Very different situations can, in fact, arise in the relationships between the national societies and the government with whom they may be called upon to intervene. With regard to the action of the International Red Cross, the International Committee of the Red Cross must decide in each case what practical forms this action should take, taking into consideration all circumstances in order to assure maximum rapidity and efficacy. Each separate case may call for a different solution. There are no hard and fast rules of procedure. The essential fact is to make known to the national society, to the authorities, and to the victims of events that the International Red Cross is prepared to come to their assistance.

NEW YEAR MESSAGE
FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE ICRC

During the coming year, the International Conference of the Red Cross will be held in New Delhi, the capital of India. Men of different races and religions, with different political and social conceptions, will meet there and will try to show that Henry Dunant's message applies to everyone : that the principle of mutual aid in the face of suffering means bringing relief to the victims of all conflicts, whatever form they take, whether wars, revolutions or armed risings.

In a divided world, where peace depends on a precarious balance of power, the Red Cross can bring the hope, I may even say the certainty, that, however, dark the future appears to be, the untiring work of those who wish to make human charity the supreme object of international collaboration, will one day result in the nations of the world understanding that they must at last unite in a spirit of fellowship.

The further development of humanitarian law, the return, to their own countries and families, of those who have been separated from them by war, and the sending of delegates to regions which are still the scene of bitter struggles and bloodshed —those are the immediate tasks now facing the International Committee of the Red Cross in whose name I wish you a happy New Year.

Léopold BOISSIER
President

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

News Items

M. J. de Preux, delegate of the ICRC in Saigon, paid a brief visit to Pnom-Penh on December 7 last. He had several discussions with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health, and met a number of eminent persons. He made a special point of bringing to the government authorities' notice the desirability and necessity for the accession of Cambodia to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and supplied them with useful data on the subject. Moreover, as his predecessor, M. N. Burckhardt, had already done in the previous year, he enquired how the movement in favour of the creation of a Khmer Red Cross had progressed. He met, in this connection, Dr. Riche, delegate of the French Red Cross in Cambodia, who, for his part, is endeavouring to promote the setting up of a National Society in that country.

* * *

With a view to assisting the war disabled in South Viet Nam, the ICRC has just presented the Saigon Government with the necessary equipment for setting up a complete workshop for the supplying of artificial limbs. The gift includes 200 standard peg legs which will be finished and adjusted on the spot. Two British technicians, engaged by the ICRC, arrived in Saigon on December 14, 1955. For three months they will train six Viet Nam apprentices who, when they leave, will be able to carry on the work of adjusting artificial limbs and teaching the disabled the exercises required to re-educate the muscles.

The workshop comes under the Ministry of Ex-Servicemen in South Viet Nam, which has appointed a Saigon orthopaedist to manage it.

* * *

The action started by the ICRC in 1949 for the re-uniting of families separated by the events of war and the post-war period, in particular those of German origin or German-speaking, is being continued. In 1955 about 15,000 persons, from East and South-East European countries, have been united with their relatives, principally in Germany and Austria, thanks to the efficient co-operation of National Red Cross Societies of the countries of departure and destination, and the understanding attitude of the Governments concerned.

The rate at which this activity is progressing shows the growing interest it is arousing.

* * *

On December 12, 14 and 16, the ICRC resumed its trial broadcasts over the wave-length (41.61 m.-7210 kc.) allocated to it for the purpose. The Broadcasting Section of the ICRC is now dealing with the first batch of reception reports.

* * *

In 1955 the ICRC received 100,611 letters and telegrams and despatched 119,626.

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A gift of X-ray equipment, valued at 15,000 Swiss francs, has been made by the ICRC to the Yugoslav Red Cross Society.

The equipment, which arrived in Belgrade last December, is intended for use in the Titograd Children's Hospital now being built. The hospital, which will contain 100 beds, will provide treatment for children of the town and neighbourhood, and also for those from a large area of the Montenegrin territory.

* * *

The convoy of Greek nationals, organised by the Rumanian Red Cross in conjunction with the ICRC and the League, whose early departure from Bucharest to Australia was referred to by us in November last, arrived in Vienna on November 15. The thirty-eight persons who made up the convoy were received in that city by M. Joubert, delegate of the ICRC, and members of the Austrian Red Cross Society. The representative of the ICRC attended to these persons' accommodation and vaccination against cholera, and made arrangements from them to continue their journey. A first group of 22 persons left by sea from Trieste, on December 17. The other travellers were sent on to their countries of reception, either by air, or via Genoa where a delegate of the ICRC was present when they embarked.

Moreover, two further convoys of Greek nationals in Rumania are now being prepared; the first will proceed to Greece; the second will also be leaving for Australia.

With regard to the latter, it has been arranged that the emigrants will wait in Switzerland until the necessary preparations for them to continue their journey have been made. The Swiss Red Cross was requested to provide temporary accommodation for these persons, and has been good enough to lend its services in the matter.

* * *

Miss A. Pfirter, Head of the Medical Personnel and War Disablement Sections of the ICRC, left Geneva on January 6 for Cairo. The object of her mission is to make contacts with National Societies and authorities in the Middle East countries, in order that the ICRC may obtain information on the organisation of their relief activities and, in particular, the training of the various formations of medical personnel which ensure the carrying out of emergency services in the event of conflicts.

The information collected by Miss Pfirter will serve for the drafting of a report on medical personnel which is to be submitted by the ICRC to the next International Red Cross Conference in New Delhi.

* * *

The International Committee's action on behalf of the disabled held under detention in Greece came to a close in 1955. It was started in 1949 and has enabled 76 beneficiaries to be supplied with 58 artificial limbs, 13 orthopaedic aids and 10 pairs of surgical boots. The contribution of the ICRC to this action amounted to 20,000 Swiss francs.

* * *

Towards the end of last year, four new official translations of the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, were made: in Spanish by the Spanish and Ecuadorian Governments, and in Italian and Siamese by the Governments of Italy and Thailand. At the present time, twenty-three States have already published similar translations and versions of the texts exist in twenty languages. The Korean version, however, only concerns the Third Convention.

* * *

With its 410th Circular of June 27, 1955 (see last July issue of the Revue, p. 443), the ICRC distributed to National Societies the "Draft Rules for the Protection of the Civilian Population from the Dangers of Indiscriminate Warfare". It is, no doubt, superfluous to emphasise again in these pages the importance of the questions raised in this document.

The circular requested that National Societies should make their remarks and suggestions known to the ICRC before November 15, 1955. The ICRC proposes to prepare, on the basis of those comments and its own study of the question, a more detailed draft text, which will be submitted to the XIXth International Red Cross Conference. Over twenty Societies have already sent replies to the ICRC; many of them have made a close study of the matter, and have sent most detailed observations to the ICRC. Other Societies have informed it that, on account of the complex nature of the subjects dealt with, they could not finish their studies within the time-limit first indicated. On account of the adjournment of the XIXth International Conference to January 1957, the International Committee was pleased to be able to inform them that it

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could take into account comments submitted to it before the end of February, 1956.

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The ICRC Delegation in Vienna recently received from M. A. Riedl, Federal Councillor, President of the Burgenland Branch of the Austrian Red Cross Society, a remarkable report on its work over the past ten years. This work gives a very objective survey of the early difficulties of a branch which today renders all services which a local Red Cross centre can be expected to give, and which was congratulated by M. Joubert on behalf of the International Committee, which he represents in Austria.

* * *

Following various approaches made by the ICRC, there have been several departures for new countries among the Trieste refugees and members of their families: the former had been under treatment in Leysin hospitals until cured, and the latter accommodated in Morzine. On January 4, fifteen left for Belgium accompanied by a social worker of the ICRC. They have been taken over by the "Entr'aide socialiste belge" which will help them to return to a normal life. Their resettlement will only be considered as definite, however, after a period of three months, as a trial period is necessary to ascertain whether they will be able to adapt themselves to changed conditions. Another couple has just been admitted to a Caritas catholica home, also in Belgium, with the help of the Government authorities. Moreover, a family of three persons left for Australia on January 17.

Mention may be made of the fact that in September, thanks to help of the Swiss Confederation and various charitable organisations, twelve persons suffering from incurable or chronic diseases were given a permanent home in Switzerland.

* * *

On the death of M. François Ehrenhold, the ICRC received from all parts numerous tokens of sympathy from those who met

its late lamented delegate in his work, or collaborated with him during the last few years. In this connection, messages were sent from Dr. Weitz, President of the Red Cross of the German Federal Republic, M. Bargatzky, Vice-President, and the Secretary-General, M. Hartmann, also from Dr. Wagner, Head of the Tracing Section in Bonn, and M. Ohlsen, Head of the Tracing Section in Hamburg. Dr. W. Ludwig, Head of the Red Cross of the German Democratic Republic, transmitted the condolences of that Society. The sympathy of the Austrian Red Cross was expressed in a message from its President, Dr. B. Breitner. M. G. Gospodinov, Vice-President of the Bulgarian Red Cross, Dr. V. Mirza, President of the Rumanian Red Cross and Dr. O. Milosevic, Secretary-General to the Yugoslav Red Cross, sent messages of condolence on behalf of their respective Societies. In the absence of its President, Mme. Domanska, the Polish Red Cross associated itself with the homage paid to the memory of the late M. Ehrenhold.

* * *

The ICRC has just published, in French and English, a handbook entitled "Training Course for Red Cross Nursing Auxiliaries and Voluntary Aids". The author, Mlle. H. Nussbaum, who was at the head of the ICRC Medical Personnel Section in 1954, gives in a condensed form the basic theoretical and practical knowledge which is essential for auxiliary personnel, without neglecting in any way the moral formation which is inseparable from the work of those who devote themselves to the care of the sick and wounded. This work, which includes a preface by Mlle. Odier, will render great service, in many countries, to nurses entrusted with the training of auxiliary medical personnel.

* * *

M. D. de Traz, Deputy Executive Director of the ICRC, left Geneva early in November on a mission to the Middle East as the special representative of the International Committee, and has visited in succession the authorities and National Societies of the Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Israel. During his interviews he

discussed all the questions which are of common interest to those States and the International Committee.

In view of the frontier incidents between Israel and the Arab States, M. de Traz had been instructed, in particular, to remind all the parties concerned that the Geneva Conventions of 1949 were applicable in their entirety, and that the ICRC was prepared to assume the various humanitarian tasks for which the Conventions provide.

* * *

During his visit to Israel, M. de Traz was specially concerned with the welfare of the Egyptian and Syrian prisoners of war captured by the Israeli forces. He visited, in particular, a camp where 77 prisoners of war (including 3 officers and 16 non-commissioned officers) were interned. As is customary, the delegate of the ICRC was able to converse without a witness with the prisoners' representatives. In addition, he took with him on leaving family messages and photographs for transmission to the relatives of the captives in Egypt. The Israel authorities also authorised M. de Traz to visit Egyptian civilian detainees serving sentences for espionage and sabotage.

From Israel the delegate of the ICRC returned to Egypt for the purpose of visiting, also, the Israeli prisoners of war held in that country. The every case he was courteously received by the authorities concerned.

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RED CROSS PRINCIPLES

VI

5. Neutrality

The Red Cross must observe strict neutrality in the military, political, denominational and philosophical spheres

In the world of the Red Cross no idea has been the subject of more confused thinking than neutrality. Most people are content to regard it as a simple entity and give it a single, vague meaning, whereas in reality the one word can be used in a number of different senses. Before analysing them there are certain general points to be considered.

The word neuter is derived from the latin "*ne-uter*" meaning "neither one nor the other". Neutrality is essentially a negative conception—the quality of someone who remains outside a conflict, who does not openly take the side of either party.

Neutrality has not in itself any ethical value, as it may spring from a variety of very different motives, high or low, such as fear or perspicacity, self-interest or indifference. It is a form of outward behaviour which is not in itself either good or evil and can therefore only be appreciated or criticized in relation to the surrounding circumstances. Neutrality only takes on a moral aspect when it is the result of a firm resolve, based on permanent principles such as a love of peace, respect for one's pledged word, or a desire to be objective.

Neutrality demands real self-control and sometimes takes long to learn. It then becomes a form of discipline, a self-imposed restraint to which one submits, perhaps unwillingly,

a brake applied to the impulsive urges of the feelings. The man who follows this difficult road will see that in any controversy one party is rarely entirely right and the other entirely wrong. Having reached an advanced stage in his reflections, he will sense the futility of the motives so often put forward for launching nations into the fray. Considered in this light, neutrality is a first step towards objectivity, and so towards wisdom and perhaps towards peace.

In international law, neutrality is the reverse of belligerency : it is the position, in relation to two Powers at war with one another, of a State which is taking no part in the conflict. Neutral status is governed by legal rules, in particular the Hague Conventions, and involves rights and duties. It implies, in a word, abstention from any official participation, direct or indirect, in hostilities. It is therefore first and foremost a military conception. Recent developments in the situation and in the world of ideas lead some people to consider, however, that neutrality should also have certain effects in the economic sphere, in view of the important influence which the latter has today on the war potential of a country. A neutral State which maintains trade relations with the warring nations would, for example, do its best to give them equal treatment. This would not, incidentally, be a question of establishing equality in a mechanical fashion¹, excluding all discretion on the part of the neutral party, but, on the contrary, of leaving the latter to apply the principle, taking into account the particular circumstances in each case and without favouring either of the contending parties for subjective or selfish reasons.

Considered from the most general point of view the notion of neutrality implies, in the first place, an attitude of abstention and, secondly, the existence of persons or groups which oppose one another. As this latter element is common to neutrality and to impartiality, the two notions have often been confused, the more so as they each demand restraint and moderation. They are nevertheless very different—particularly in regard

¹ Would such equality be in regard to quantity or quality? Would it be numerical or proportional? These are questions which we cannot pursue any further, as they go outside our subject.

to the element of abstention—although the one does not necessarily exclude the other. Impartiality, as we showed in the last chapter, describes the attitude of someone who acts, making a choice in accordance with pre-established rules, while a man who is neutral refrains from action, refusing to express an opinion concerning the qualities of the men or theories compared. If he had nevertheless to take action of some sort, he would maintain an even balance between the two parties, and that would be his only guiding principle. In such cases the neutral man could and should display impartiality by refusing to let his judgment of this equality be warped by subjective reasoning.

Although neutrality defines the attitude of the Red Cross towards belligerents and ideologies, it never determines the institution's behaviour towards sufferers. In the first place the wounded do not fight one another. And, above all, the essential characteristic of the Red Cross is action, and, when it acts, not to maintain an inhuman parity, but—quite the contrary—to favour those who are most in need of help¹. Charity demands impartiality and not neutrality, which, as we shall see later, is not so much part of the Red Cross ideal as a means of accomplishing its task.

We must now study the five different senses in which the term neutrality is used in the doctrine of the Red Cross.

(1) It denotes neutrality in the military sphere, which must be strictly observed by the Red Cross as the counterpart of the immunity accorded to it. This requirement is so absolute and so general in its application that we have no hesitation in including it among the institution's fundamental principles. While it has not until now been mentioned in the summary of those principles, it follows inevitably from the Geneva Conventions and is one of the first conditions of the Red Cross's existence.

It is seen, first of all, on the battlefield. Under the 1864 Convention, ambulances and military hospitals were "recognized

¹ In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the neutral figure is the Levite who passes by indifferent to the dramatic scene in which the traveller and the brigands have just been involved.

as neutral, and, as such, protected and respected by the belligerents". For their part, medical personnel—and by implication the wounded themselves—also benefited by neutrality. The use of the term neutrality clearly indicated that the wounded were no longer enemies and that those who cared for them were placed outside the struggle. But as the word "neutrality" has a more limited sense in legal parlance, it was not a suitable one to use in a treaty. For in international law neutrality denotes, above all, the position of a State which does not take part in a war. Furthermore, its use introduced an element of ambiguity: it might have been thought that medical units were denationalized, which is not the case. The term was therefore abandoned, reference being only made thereafter to "respect and protection without distinction of nationality". The idea of neutralisation has nevertheless subsisted and the term itself has retained its value in current parlance.

The immunity conferred on the establishments and personnel of the Medical Service and Red Cross implies the completely loyal abstention by such personnel from all interference, direct or indirect, in the hostilities. Being considered as "neutrals" by the enemy, in the best interests of the wounded, they are under an obligation to behave as neutrals. They must above all avoid committing what the Convention calls "acts harmful to the enemy", that is: acts whose object or effect is to harm the armed forces of the adverse Party by favouring or hampering military operations. We may mention as examples the action of establishing an ammunition dump in a hospital, or installing a military observation post there. Such acts constitute grave breaches of neutrality and are liable to deprive the medical unit which has committed them, or allowed them to be committed, of protection. The consequences, immediate or remote, on the lives and security of the wounded may, moreover, be extremely serious. Medical personnel are, however, entitled to carry arms, in order to maintain discipline in the units for which they are responsible and to defend themselves and the men committed to their care against unlawful attacks. If compelled to make use of their arms under such circumstances, they would not be committing a breach of neutrality. But they cannot,

of course, use force to resist the capture of their unit by the enemy, any more than they can themselves take prisoners.

The most recent version of the Geneva Conventions states specifically that the protection due to hospital units shall not cease except as a consequence of harmful acts committed by them "outside their humanitarian duties". For the work of the Red Cross, considered from a narrow and strictly utilitarian standpoint, may in fact impede military operations to some extent. When it enables combatants to be "recovered", does it not contribute to the war effort, if only very slightly? If military interests, in the strictest sense and wrongly understood, had prevailed, the wounded would be considered to be enemies who would again be dangerous one day, and those who helped them would be regarded as traitors. We wish we could say that such ideas have long been relegated into the past, never to re-emerge. We have, however, been alarmed to see them subsisting or springing up again in certain minds, even among members of some medical services. It had therefore to be made very clear, in the recent Conventions, that the charitable activities of the Red Cross are always lawful and are never hostile gestures, so long as they remain within the limits traced by the international law relating to the subject and by the great principles of humanity. Let us never forget that in the world's history war might have remained what it was—a merciless unleashing of brutal instincts, a ruthless and bloodstained triumph of barbarity. But it is not quite that, because one day, on August 22nd, 1864, the States signed the Red Cross covenant, sacrificing a national interest and a fragment of their sovereignty to the dictates of conscience. This sacrifice was made once for all time. It may appear extraordinary, and paradoxical, to some; for the States thus renounced the killing of enemy soldiers, which is after all the characteristic feature of war. But it was at this price that a breach was made in man's ancestral hatred, and that was not too much to pay for one of civilization's finest conquests.

All we have just said concerning the attitude which the Red Cross must observe on the field of battle also applies by analogy to its action as a whole, in both the international and

national fields. This is true of its practical relief work. No limits must be placed by the belligerents on the Red Cross's consignments of medicaments and medical equipment to war victims of all categories, since the institution will then be fulfilling its specific role and the help given will, by its very nature, only benefit the wounded, sick and infirm—that is, human beings who are in distress and not in a position to harm anyone ¹. The new Geneva Conventions make express provision for this in the case of prisoners of war, civilian internees, the population of occupied countries, and even that of countries at war. They are less explicit on the subject of military wounded and sick who are with their own army, but there cannot be any doubt on this head, as the spirit makes good the letter of the law. The entire Red Cross movement was created in order to relieve war wounded, and save them wherever they might be. It would be failing in its mission if it lost sight of its original task. We come back here to what we said a moment ago about the sacrifice military power has made, once for all time, to the dictates of humanity.

On the other hand, other consignments of relief supplies, such as food and clothing, may be subjected to certain restrictions ; for in their case we come up against war itself and one of the most effective means of waging it—the economic arm. One knows that in international law, as it exists at present, a blockade is still accepted as a measure of coercion, in spite of the fact that it affects innocent civilians just as much as members of the armed forces. The Red Cross will be able to provide relief freely to persons placed under the enemy's authority, such as prisoners of war or the inhabitants of occupied countries. But in the belligerent countries themselves it will confine itself to supplying the children and expectant mothers, as laid down in the Fourth Geneva Convention. Its action may, nevertheless, extend to wider circles, provided the opposing side gives its consent.

¹ Speaking generally, humanitarian principles also demand that pharmaceutical products should at all times be able to circulate freely all over the world and that their price should not be prohibitive. Discoveries in the world of medicine should spread everywhere without any delay.

Military neutrality is necessary in many other spheres. One Red Cross Society refused, for instance, to be associated in wartime with a collection whose proceeds were to go both to the national defence and to the society itself; it was right to refuse. It was, again, unfortunate that an appeal, issued under the Red Cross emblem to the general public to give their blood for the wounded of both camps, should have been accompanied by a slogan according to which to give one's blood was also to fight. Nor can the Red Cross intercede for the repatriation, during hostilities, of prisoners of war who are fit for service and could take up arms again. Nor, again, can the Red Cross, in any given conflict, transmit or lend its support to peace or armistice proposals, even if they appear to be humane; for they may give one or the other of the parties an advantage, according to the moment chosen, as has been seen in some well-known cases.

The immunity enjoyed by Red Cross Societies with respect to military operations, has been supplemented since 1949 by the important safeguards which the Fourth Geneva Convention accords them against the unfair use an Occupying Power might make of its authority in the administrative sphere. During the Second World War certain National Societies were exposed to measures, involving their dissolution, the dismissal of their staff or the seizure of their equipment and supplies, which seriously impeded them in their action or even paralysed it completely, the consequence being to deprive a great many unfortunate people of assistance which they needed urgently. Today, however, under Article 63 of the Convention for the protection of civilians, and subject to urgent reasons of security, the Occupying Power must let Red Cross Societies and other charitable organizations pursue their activities in accordance with Red Cross principles, and may not require any changes in the personnel or structure of these societies which would be prejudicial to their work.

The natural corollary of this immunity is, of course, the duty of the National Societies and those controlling them to give themselves up entirely to their humanitarian duties and never to participate, either closely or remotely, in the struggle

which the resistance forces are carrying on, openly or secretly, against the Occupying Power. The action of such patriots may be legitimate ; it may be heroic ; but it is incompatible with the mission of the Red Cross. If it is desired, in the general interest, that philanthropic institutions should continue to exist in an occupied country and should be allowed to carry on their work, their members must, by their irreproachable attitude, inspire the complete confidence of the authorities who hold power under exceptional circumstances.

(2) The term " neutrality " is used to describe the reserved attitude which the Red Cross forces itself to adopt towards political, philosophical, ethical and religious doctrines. The Red Cross fulfils a universal need, it responds to aspirations which are shared by all men, and it acts in accordance with generally accepted principles. In doing this it has, perhaps without realizing, taken up its position in the forefront of civilization. Its neutrality marks its serenity and tolerance. It is a sign, nay a proof, of its sincerity in regard to its ideal.

It must be recognized that the word " neutrality " does indeed apply to this attitude of abstention on the part of the Red Cross towards all moral philosophies other than its own, to the fact that it holds itself apart from controversies which are alien to its mission and inconsistent with its universal character, and also to the indifference it shows, not to political events—which may effect its action—but to the meaning ascribed to them.

The principle of equality is at the basis of this neutrality. The main reason why the Red Cross refuses to take sides, is for fear that a partisan spirit should lead to distinctions contrary to its principles. Any ideology to which it might give its allegiance could but restrict its freedom of appreciation and its objectivity.

But there is another reason too for this neutrality : the fact that the Red Cross must inspire universal confidence, both among those it is helping and those who make its work possible. Its work depends very largely, particularly in wartime, on the credit it has with the authorities of the opposing country and

on cooperation between national Red Cross Societies. And, as we know, the bitterest hatreds, those which create the greatest havoc, often spring from a difference of opinion.

Reserve in no way signifies contempt or hostility, however. The Red Cross cannot become a foreign body within a nation, nor a centre of opposition to a regime, party or creed. It will therefore be able to observe an attitude of benevolent neutrality towards the temporal or spiritual authorities, maintain good relations with them and, if necessary, collaborate with them in humanitarian matters. All that one asks is that it should not militate in favour of institutions or ideas which have no essential connection with the mission it has undertaken.

It is above all with regard to politics, both national and international, that neutrality must be observed. Let Red Cross institutions beware of having anything to do with politics! Their very existence depends on this¹.

This attitude is sometimes questioned, or even decried, in an epoch when so many ideologies clash violently and claim to carry everything along in their train. There is a growing tendency to ask everyone to "enlist" in the cause and to tax those who refuse to do so with cowardice. The policy of a party is being regarded more and more as life's supreme object, and conceptions or actions which do not directly assist in attaining it are condemned. Neutrality, like impartiality, is so often misunderstood and rejected, simply because everyone wishes to be at the same time judge and party, without having any universally valid criterion on which to base his decision. Everyone imagines rather naively, that his cause is the only just one, and that not to join it is to abandon truth and justice.

It is the non-political character of the Red Cross that limits the extent of its action in connection with the prevention of war. Having seen its horrors at close quarters, the Red Cross

¹ The XVIIIth International Red Cross Conference in Toronto in 1952, noting the fact that questions of a political nature had been raised there, expressed "its determination not to allow such issues to undermine the work of the Red Cross at any time" and declared "its unabated faith in the Red Cross as a movement concerned solely with humanitarian activities which help to promote mutual understanding and good will among nations whatever their political differences". (Resolution No. 10.)

RED CROSS PRINCIPLES

realizes better than anyone that war is inhumane, and as uncharitable as it is unjust¹. There are few causes dearer to the Red Cross than that of peace. Its whole attitude shows that it regards war as an evil. Its very existence is like a reproach to those who give free rein to force. Its international work of mutual aid helps to bring men—and perhaps in the long run, nations—together, and to spread a spirit of peace. It is therefore contributing indirectly, within its own province, to the work on behalf of peace.

In this matter, like all others, the Red Cross must avoid taking sides as between the Powers. For although all nations love peace, they do not often agree about the manner in which it is to be established or maintained, nor about the form it should assume, and to express one's opinion on questions of world organization is, whether one wishes it or not, to adopt a political position. Were it desired to produce an effect in this sphere, it would be necessary to descend into the arena of nations and parties. In order to exert its influence, the Red Cross would have to discuss the military budgets of States, take up a position on the subject of armaments and disarmament and, generally speaking, support or oppose a number of political measures. If the Red Cross were to launch itself in this way into a struggle for which it was not designed, it would be courting rapid destruction. Any initiative of this nature would lead it into a labyrinth from which it could only extricate itself by violently taking up a position in the matter, and that would be incompatible with the confidence the contending parties must be able to have in it. On the other hand, other institutions, which have taken as their objectives the defence of peace and the organization of the world, are not limited in the same way, but are free to act without reserve. In the crusade against war, everyone must, as we see, fight with the means available to him and with his own particular weapons.

Let us turn now to neutrality in regard to religion. This has been a ruling principle of the institution since its inception

¹ War does not mean the triumph of the best, but of the strongest or the most unfair.

and has never been disputed. Although the founders of the Red Cross were themselves animated by a Christian spirit, they wished from the first to set up a purely undenominational institution free from all religious influence. One cannot indeed conceive of any other course being possible, as the movement was destined, by its very nature, to be a universal one. Did it not have to devote its care to men of every race and nationality, and every creed? And was it not also necessary for it to group everyone who volunteered his help beneath its flag?

It is quite clear, however, that the official character of the institution in no way restricts its members' individual freedom in religious matters. As Max Huber said¹, the Red Cross is neutral in religion, and must always remain so. Whether the charitable motives that prompt its collaborators' participation are of religious or other inspiration, is their exclusively personal affair, shut in the silence of each conscience and never outwardly stressed". Every servant of the cause must, in fact, be able to search his own heart, reason or beliefs for the inspiration which will guide him in his charitable calling, and find there the strength to support him through the vicissitudes of what will often be an arduous mission. Moreover, the strict attitude of reserve which servants of the Red Cross are bound to observe in their work, in no way alienates the right of each of them to opt for one dogmatic conception or another, or to argue in favour of his personal opinions in his private life. Our remarks on the subject of religious neutrality also apply to any other philosophical or ideological system.

At this point it will be well to recall shortly that the red cross on a white ground—which is at one and the same time the protective sign instituted by the Geneva Conventions and the emblem of the Red Cross movement—is entirely neutral. This has been stated by those who can speak with the greatest authority². The Conferences which created the sign deliberately intended it to be universal and bereft of all national or religious

¹ *The Good Samaritan*, p. 29.

² See the opinions cited in the *Commentary on the First Geneva Convention of 1949*, by the same author - Geneva 1952, p. 303 et seq.

significance. In adopting this attitude they were merely bowing to an absolute necessity, since the flag, like the movement itself, has to rally to itself men of all nations and all convictions. The reversal of the Swiss Federal colours produced a new emblem, with only one meaning, but one which was in itself of immense importance : help for the sufferer, whoever he may be. So much having been said, there is nothing to prevent Christians who work for the Red Cross, from associating this cross with the Christian cross in their own minds ; but such an interpretation would, needless to say, remain a purely personal one and could not in any way affect the neutrality of the institution.

There is, finally, no doubt at all that the Geneva Conventions, and everything in them, are strictly neutral in the sense in which the term is used here, from the mere fact that they form part of public international law. In the words of Professor P. Guggenheim : “ The acceptance of a rule as a provision of international law implies that it is consonant with the aspirations and common ideological bases of the civilized world. Treaty law is therefore bound to be a secularized, undenominational law, unaffected by religious doctrines. It cannot be otherwise, if one considers the variety of moral and religious conceptions found in the different communities which make up international society ” ¹.

(3) Neutrality denotes the attitude which the International Committee of the Red Cross observes voluntarily vis-à-vis States. The Committee treats the Powers on a footing of complete equality : it keeps at the same distance from each of them, expresses no opinion in regard to their legality, and refrains from passing judgment on their policies ; in its relations with them it follows the customary rules of international courtesy.

It will be pointed out to us that States as such are not, after all, a matter of concern for the Red Cross, that its interest is not centred on them : for the Red Cross only sees suffering men, the victims of events. That is true. But such men are in the power of States and, in order to reach them and relieve their

¹ Professor Paul GUGGENHEIM : *Traité de droit international public* — Geneva 1953, I, p. 16.

distress, it is necessary to obtain the consent of the responsible authorities and entertain with the latter the continuous and confident relations which arise through day-to-day cooperation. This form of neutrality cannot, therefore, be regarded by the Red Cross as a motive for action on its part. It is, on the contrary, a practical condition, secondary in importance, derived from the movement's general aims and set by the circumstances peculiar to any conflict. It enables the International Committee of the Red Cross to attain its object. This conception is not, however, without importance or value. It is a fruit of reflection. It resembles, to some extent, the attitude of a sage who excludes all judgment, the taking up of any definite position. The International Committee, here as elsewhere, will hold unswervingly to one course. The future of its work depends on this. Even if the organization of the world were one day to do away with the institution of political or military neutrality, a neutral humanitarian agent would still be needed to assist the war victims who have fallen into enemy hands.

Neutrality must be shown to be complete and unreserved so far as the actions of the institution and of its agents are concerned. On the other hand, it does not mean that a Red Cross worker must abjure his own sympathies or convictions; he is entirely free to form his own opinion. It demands, however, that he should hold himself somewhat aloof from politics and exercise restraint in expressing his opinions, the more so the more responsible the post he holds.

Neutrality also implies that the International Committee must always be open and perfectly straightforward in its dealings with the belligerents, even if the latter do not do as much for it. The Committee will therefore only perform tasks which are authorized, or at least tolerated, in the countries where they must be carried out. It will not resort to roundabout or clandestine methods, and, whenever the circumstances or the matter dealt with so demands, it will observe the most complete discretion with regard to the representations it is making or the negotiations it is conducting between different Powers. So far as the Red Cross is concerned the end does not justify the means. This attitude has not always been understood. It is

nevertheless necessary, as only a tradition of absolute straightness can command confidence and respect. What is lost at the time is regained a hundredfold later on.

We have said that the Red Cross treats all States on a footing of equality. That means that it will display the same readiness to assist each one of them. But, obviously, if its intervention is not necessary in the case of one of the belligerents, or if the latter declines its offers of help, the International Committee will be fully justified in acting solely in the camp of the opposing party, and this will not entail the slightest breach of neutrality.

Let us now consider the main tasks of the International Committee in relation to its neutrality. Viewing its complex work as a whole, one can distinguish several essentially different functions. In its relief work, first of all, it applies the rules, applicable to the whole of the Red Cross, which we have analysed throughout our survey. It does not have to make any pretence of observing neutrality in distributing relief. It was an erroneous interpretation of the idea of neutrality which made the International Committee think, during the civil war in Spain, that it had to share out its consignments equally between the two parties to the struggle. The truth is that charitable aid is not given to States, but only, and this should be stressed, to suffering men. And, as we showed when studying the principle of due proportion, the only valid criterion which the Red Cross can adopt in distributing its benefits is the relative importance of individual needs and their degree of urgency.

We come next to one of the tasks specifically entrusted to the International Committee—its role as a neutral intermediary between the belligerents. In this capacity it is responsible for transmitting all proposals of a humanitarian nature—whether emanating from one of the camps or initiated by the Committee itself—and for negotiating any arrangements between the parties which may tend to improve the lot of the war victims. In such work, a neutral attitude towards the States is a decisive factor in gaining their confidence, which the Committee must enjoy.

In the third place, the International Committee tries to see that the Geneva Conventions are properly applied and due

protection afforded to persons in enemy hands¹. It does so, in particular, by visits which its delegates make to prisoner-of-war camps. In this role, the Committee may, perhaps, be acting more in its capacity as an agent who is specifically neutral towards the Governments concerned than as a Red Cross body. Although neutrality is not absolute in this case, it predominates and is added to the impartiality observed. The Committee communicates to the Powers the points noted by its agents during their inspections, together with any observations or representations which it feels obliged to make. It thus appraises the facts and does not reserve its judgment. But as these representations to the responsible authorities are always made discreetly, and under a mantle of reciprocity and objectivity, they do not affect the Committee's neutrality or prejudice its other missions.

Reference should, finally, be made to the role—almost that of a judge or arbitrator—which some people would like to see the International Committee play in connection with alleged violations of humanitarian law. Is such a role compatible with the essential neutrality of the Geneva Committee? The people who thus bear flattering witness to the authority which it enjoys in their eyes are sometimes astonished at the prudence which the Committee feels it necessary to show in such a connection. It is quite clear, however, that in so far as it set up for a judge, it would in that same measure be abandoning its voluntary neutrality. We showed earlier on that it was not possible to be at one and the same time a champion of legal justice and of charity: it is necessary to choose. And the Red Cross has chosen to be a charitable institution. That is why, when protests concerning a violation of the Conventions or of the great principles of humanity are referred to it, it must confine itself to passing them on to the party called in question, requesting investigation and a reply. In most cases, moreover, the Committee is not in a position to form an opinion on the

¹ Supervision, in the strict sense of the term, is exercised by the Protecting Powers, neutral States responsible for representing the interests of one belligerent within the territory of the adverse Party.

facts advanced, nor to make the necessary enquiries into what actually occurred.

For the same reason the International Committee has refrained from making public protests about specific acts of which the belligerents are accused. There again charity has been regarded as more important than man's justice. For experience has shown that demonstrations of this kind may well, for an illusory result, jeopardize the work of relief which the Committee is in a position to carry out. Besides, such gestures are most often made for reasons of prestige or from a desire to soothe one's conscience at little cost to oneself. True courage consists rather in acting silently, at the risk of being slandered.

It is, finally, for this same reason that the Committee can only take part in an investigation into alleged breaches of international law in exceptional cases and after surrounding itself with all the requisite safeguards. In order that it may do so, both parties must officially accept its intervention, and the latter must not be liable to jeopardize its work taken as a whole. Nor could the Committee ever itself constitute a court of arbitration or court of inquiry; it would confine itself to appointing one or more qualified persons from outside its own ranks¹. It would, moreover, have to be quite certain that its assistance would not be utilized for political ends or to stir up hatred between the nations.

(4) Neutrality characterizes the nationality of the members and staff of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and also, naturally, those of the National Societies of countries which are not engaged in the struggle. The International Committee finds this neutrality the essential basis of its action in time of war, civil war or internal disturbances. Thanks to it the belligerents have one more practical guarantee of the Committee's independence; they know that the latter will not take unfair advantage of the facilities and liberties they

¹ Only on three occasions has the International Committee been requested by a Government in recent times to participate in the setting up of a court of inquiry. In none of these cases has the inquiry been held, one of the parties having each time refused its consent.

afford it ; they can have complete confidence in it. Here again, neutrality is not an ideal to be aimed at, but an existing fact ; it is not an end in itself, but a means, a condition. It is nevertheless absolutely essential that this condition should be fulfilled, in order that the International Committee may carry out the mission entrusted to it.

The Committee is not, however, in time of war, the only Red Cross organization entirely made up of neutrals. The same thing is true of the National Societies of countries which have remained outside the conflict. Among the tasks which such Societies may carry out in that capacity, we must mention, first and foremost, the assistance in the form of personnel and equipment which they may, according to the Geneva Convention, lend to the Medical Service or Red Cross Society of a belligerent. Neutral voluntary aid, of which Henry Dunant and Louis Appia were the pioneers, is fully in accordance with the Red Cross ideal. How can one avoid admiring the men and women whose devotion to the cause of humanity is so great that they abandon the security and comfort of a country spared by the hostilities and go to assist the victims of a conflict in which they have no part? The First Geneva Convention of 1949 underlined the fact that such assistance can under no circumstances be regarded as interference in the conflict, that is a breach of neutrality. Since Red Cross Societies are not international in character, it is not necessary for their help to be given to both sides ; it may be lent to only one of them. This may be regarded as a concession to the partisan spirit which often characterizes private charity. But the National Societies will find, above all, that it allows them to apportion their assistance in the Red Cross spirit, that is to say, bearing in mind only the needs of the persons to be helped and not observing the inhuman equality which the neutrality of States demands. Since medical assistance by neutrals has on several occasions, and even very recently, given rise to misinterpretations and criticism due to ignorance or ill-will, it was necessary to be explicit and remove all doubt on the subject.

In some cases the National Societies of neutral countries have been able to play the part of a go-between akin to that

played by the International Committee. But it is a role which devolves *par excellence* upon the latter, for whom it is a matter of a long tradition and vast experience—a subject in which the Committee has really specialized. Besides, the National Societies are tied down to tasks which they carry out for the benefit of their own country, especially if the latter is drawn into a conflict, while the International Committee is completely free from such cares. The International Committee is, finally, recruited exclusively from among the citizens of a small country where the Red Cross originated and where it now has its headquarters. The country we speak of has been neutral for centuries past by the firm will of its people, who regard perpetual neutrality as one of the essential guarantees of their independence and do not intend to forgo it at any price. The country in question cannot and does not wish to play a political role in the world. The neutrality of Switzerland has, moreover, been recognized, by the Treaties of 1815, as a principle of international law consonant with the interests of all Europe. In 1920, it won Switzerland a special status within the League of Nations. And today, there is no international authority which can affect its sovereignty and, consequently, its neutrality.

After the Second World War it was suggested by certain people that the International Committee of the Red Cross should open its ranks to representatives of countries, other than Switzerland, which had remained neutral during the conflict. Others recommended a sort of union between the International Committee and the League of Red Cross Societies. These proposals were withdrawn by their authors themselves when they had studied the question in greater detail. Experience has shown that in wartime, organisations with an international membership find it difficult to maintain relations with both belligerent parties, or even, in most cases, to call together their general meeting ; they would be even less able to act as an independent intermediary between the parties. The presence of representatives of the contending countries within an association does not necessarily lead to a balancing-out of extremes nor to anything remotely resembling neutrality. If the International Committee were formed of nationals of several different countries,

the degree of neutrality accorded it would only be that of the country whose neutrality was most doubted.

(5) It has been maintained by some that a sort of "absolute neutrality" of the Red Cross might exist, in virtue of which members of the movement would rise above national contingencies. In other words, membership of the Red Cross would in itself create a neutral status which would replace that of belligerency. Representatives of the National Societies of countries at war should, it is said, be able to maintain direct working relations with the Red Cross of the opposing countries and move about freely in the latter's territory.

This theory does honour to its authors, inspired as they are by a high ideal, and one can only hope that it may one day take shape. But we are obliged to note that, as things are at present, it remains purely a mental picture, and it is always dangerous to build upon a myth. To give it some reality, nothing less would be needed than to change human nature. The Red Cross opens its ranks to everyone, as we shall see later. It is not, therefore, made up only of sages and saints, and the loftiness of its principles is not enough to transform human beings. But even supposing that there were, in each National Society, people capable of freeing themselves, in wartime, from their national ties and attaining perfect serenity, that does not mean that the adverse party would necessarily accord them the complete confidence which they would need in order to carry out such a very special mission. In case of war, all links between the contending countries are broken: their citizens can no longer consort with enemy nationals; correspondence no longer crosses the front. What is more, the authorities are increasingly suspicious and everyone is on the look-out for spies. One cannot conceive of a State authorizing nationals of the opposing country to move all over its territory.

During the Second World War, the chairman of the Red Cross of one of the principal belligerents expressed the hope that he would be able to establish direct contact with the chairman of the Red Cross society of their main opponent and receive a visit from him. But the plan was never put into

effect. Reference may however be made, in the same connection, to a journey made at the beginning of the war by Dr. T. W. B. Osborne, delegate of the South African Red Cross. While he was in Geneva, where he had come to establish contact with the International Committee, the German forces extended the area under occupation, surrounding Switzerland. The International Committee was able to arrange for Dr. Osborne to return to his country via enemy territory, accompanied however by a representative of the German Red Cross. Otherwise all contacts between the contending nations took place through the intermediary of neutral bodies in the legal sense of the term: that is, the Protecting Powers, the International Committee of the Red Cross, or Societies belonging to a neutral country ¹.

In conclusion, National Red Cross Societies, as can be seen, are not and ought not to be neutral. They treat men on an equal footing, and that in itself is of great significance.

Having reached the end of our analysis, we see that it is in its first and second acceptations that neutrality can be set up as a fundamental principle valid for the Red Cross as a whole. In its other aspects, it is also of great importance, but it is then essentially the concern of the body within the Red Cross movement, which is neutral *par excellence*: the International Committee.

Jean S. PICTET

(*To be continued.*)

¹ We do not, however, wish to exclude in any way, the possibility of meetings on neutral territory attended by representatives of opposing countries, as suggested in the Geneva Convention of 1949 (Article 11). In 1917 and 1918 some ten agreements, mainly concerned with the treatment of prisoners of war, were concluded in this manner. The delegates usually sat in two separate halls, a neutral person going from one to the other to transmit the proposals made.

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RED CROSS PRINCIPLES

VII

6. Independence

The Red Cross must be independent of all authorities and free from every influence.

“Political, religious and economic independence.” Thus runs the formula—explicit and, when all is said and done, an apt one—which we find in the old summary of the fundamental principles.

The reasons why independence is necessary are so obvious that there is no need to dwell on them. If the Red Cross is to remain the Red Cross it must be master of its own decisions, it must control its own actions and words. In order that it may be better able to show the way to charity and its justice, it must break certain ties with the constituted powers. It must be free to base its actions on purely humanitarian motives, applying its own principles on all occasions and treating all men with equal consideration; it must be free to remain universal. No power, no matter what its nature, must be in a position to move the Red Cross from the fixed course set by its ideals. Furthermore, the institution's independence will serve as a guarantee of its neutrality. It will allow each Society to work in spiritual harmony with its sister Societies. It is, moreover, essential for the Red Cross to inspire the confidence of everyone it may be called upon to assist, even, and especially, if they do not belong to the ruling circles. Lastly, the Red Cross ranks are open to all men of goodwill, and its submission to a temporal or spiritual authority would close its doors to

those who did not fall in with the official views. From the point of view of Red Cross action, independence is thus a subsidiary condition, but none the less a necessary one.

Independence must in the first place be shown in regard to politics, national and international. That is obvious. As we have seen, neutrality demands that Red Cross organisations should abstain from all interference in either the home or foreign affairs of a State. On the other hand it is important for them to preserve their independence by firmly resisting any attempt to introduce politics into their own sphere.

When we deal with the organic principles in the second part of our survey we shall consider in detail the complex problem of the Red Cross's relations with the public authorities. We shall then see that although the National Societies have close ties with their respective Governments, since they give them assistance by supplementing the official services, they must nevertheless retain their autonomous and private character.

The special character of the International Committee of the Red Cross means that it does not meet with similar difficulties. There is nothing to threaten its independence. The fact that all its members without exception are recruited, by co-option, from among the citizens of a small neutral country with no ambitions, offers the world a further safeguard. The Committee is completely independent of the Swiss Confederation in regard to its policies and administration. Its position in this respect is in no way modified by the fact that its work has been largely supported by gifts received from the Swiss people and that facilities have been liberally afforded it by the Federal Government. The people and Government of Switzerland will both, so to speak, be rallied in support of its neutrality.

The very fact of this complete independence leaves the International Committee without any material power. It has no armoured divisions and cannot appeal to outside influence nor resort to skilful manœuvres. But that is not all: its very principles forbid it to make use of such means of exerting pressure as it might on rare occasions have. One cannot, for instance, conceive of the Committee suspending a relief scheme, which it has been carrying out on behalf of the inhabitants of

a country, simply because the Government of that country rejects a humane request in some other connection. By so doing it would be harming the very people it is meant to help, and it would, in the last analysis, be the innocent who suffered. The Committee cannot even harbour resentment against those who attack it unjustly ; such attacks are forgotten immediately in the interests of its mission, which is the only thing it feels called upon to defend.

In actual fact the Committee draws its strength from this apparent weakness. Its indifference to all temporal power is more than balanced on the spiritual plane ; thus destitution may denote spiritual wealth, and abasement may become dominion. The States may rest assured that in a world dominated by self-interest, there is at least one exception to the general rule, one institution whose objects are solely humane ; that in a world where expediency and compromise reign, the Committee will act without any ulterior motive, and give no handle for any intrigue ; that in a world divided by hatred, it will only be moved by love of one's fellow man. The purity of its intentions and the sincerity of its motives will inspire confidence and those who appreciate such qualities will listen to its voice. A firmly held ideal carries more weight than any subtle diplomacy, and no one will feel that he is losing face by complying with disinterested requests based on international ethics, as he will know that no base motives are hidden behind them.

When a delegate to the XVIIIth International Red Cross Conference apparently wished to reproach the International Committee with not "representing anybody", Judge Sandstroem, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the League, replied : " I think it could not be better expressed why the International Committee has got the task it has and why it ought to be maintained in it. The Committee does not represent anybody, it does not represent any particular interest ; it just represents an idea, and an ideal—the Red Cross idea, the Red Cross ideal—and that, I think, is its great merit ¹."

¹ Proceedings of the XVIIIth International Red Cross Conference, Toronto, 1952, p. 100.

The Red Cross must also resist all forms of social and economic pressure. It cannot allow any class, any group of interests, or even public opinion itself, to divert it from its goal. If circumstances so demand, it must have the courage to face unpopularity. In the same way, it cannot suffer any interference by financial interests, nor yield to any attempt to influence it, even very indirectly, by means of money. The fact that its work depends entirely on donations, may make this condition a very hard one : but no concession can be made. Even if its resources dry up as a result, the Red Cross must refuse any financial contribution which would affect its independence to even a very slight extent. So far as it is concerned, there is no truth in the maxim that " the man who pays the piper, calls the tune ".

For the same reasons, the Red Cross cannot be incorporated in or associated with another institution which does not fully respect its spiritual and material independence. Any deviation from its line of conduct may be fatal to it. Moreover, if the Red Cross establishes close ties with other charitable organizations for purposes of collaboration, it must be on condition that they agree to observe the principles of the Red Cross in their entirety when carrying out the common work ¹.

The fact that the Red Cross may co-operate with outside bodies has not always been fully realised. Sometimes even, with the intention of increasing the prestige of the Red Cross, a monopoly has been claimed for it, although one cannot be sure that this is always in the interests of the people who are to be helped. In our opinion a more liberal attitude is warranted. " To be in the Red Cross " does not merely mean bearing a name and wearing a badge ; it means possessing a certain attitude of mind and respecting an ideal. And under that heading, there are sometimes others from whom we have to learn.

JEAN S. PICTET

(To be continued.)

¹ This condition has been laid down in the principles formulated by the League of Red Cross Societies.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

News Items

After a stay of two months in Greece, M. F. Horneffer, Head of Section, returned to Geneva on January 20. The mission given him by the ICRC, following the reorganisation of its representation in that country, included, in particular, visits to various places of detention and exile, where M. Horneffer distributed relief supplies—consisting of medicaments—to a value of about 16,000 Swiss francs.

* * *

The mission of M. J. de Preux, ICRC delegate in Saigon, is nearly ended. Having completed the work of distributing relief supplies to refugees in South Viet Nam for UNICEF, and taken steps to ensure the smooth running of the scheme for the benefit of war-disabled persons recently instituted by the ICRC, M. de Preux is preparing to return to Geneva. The ICRC has appointed M. A. Leuenberger as his successor, and the latter will take over the duties of International Committee correspondent.

The Revue internationale will publish an article, in an early issue, on the work carried out by M. de Preux during his mission.

* * *

M. H. Ph. Junod, ICRC delegate in South Africa, who arrived in Geneva last June, has now returned to Pretoria after seven months' absence.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

Although his visit to Europe was essentially of a private nature, M. Junod was, nevertheless, entrusted by the ICRC with a mission to the Red Cross and the British authorities in London. It related to the situation in Kenya.

* * *

In late February, during a ten day study-visit to the League of Red Cross Societies in Geneva, M. Mansour Farzami, Executive Director of the Junior Red Lion and Sun, Iran, visited the ICRC on several occasions.

M. Farzami formerly held the post of Director of the Foreign Relations Department of the Red Lion and Sun. In that capacity he was in constant touch with the ICRC. He was thus able to participate in the kind welcome given in Iran to the representatives of the ICRC, in connection in particular with the missions carried out by M. Gaillard in 1951 and 1952, and M. de Cocatrix in 1954, not to mention the visit paid last year to that country by M. Paul Ruegger, who was then President of the ICRC.

* * *

Mlle L. Odier and Dr. M. Junod, Members of the ICRC, accompanied by M. J. Babel, Head of Section, took part in a meeting held on February 27, on the initiative of the League of Red Cross Societies, which brought together, at that organisation's headquarters in Geneva, the representatives of international organisations concerned with the question of blood transfusion.

The League's invitation was also accepted by the World Health Organization, the International Society of Blood Transfusion, the International Organization for Standardization and the International Commission for Medical Equipment.

The object of the meeting, presided over by le Médecin-Colonel J. Julliard, Secretary-General to the International Society of Blood Transfusion, was to enable the organisations present to exchange views, consider the co-ordinating of their work in that field and examine the questions of interchangeability, the standardisation of equipment, and biological standards. The matters

relating to reserve stocks for emergencies and the recruitment of blood donors were also discussed.

Organisations throughout the world interested in the question of blood transfusion will be informed later of the results of the meeting's work.

* * *

The International Committee's action on behalf of tubercular refugees from Trieste and members of their families is being continued. A family of three recently left Morzine for resettlement in Switzerland, while a patient under treatment in Leysin, and now cured, proceeded to Belgium where the "Entraide socialiste Belge" will help her to resume a normal life. The person in question is the last but one of the 102 refugees who were admitted to hospital in Leysin in December 1953.

* * *

In 1955, the collective and individual relief supplies distributed by the ICRC amounted to 48½ tons, representing an outlay of about 700,000 Swiss francs. The International Committee's share of this amounted to 34 tons (equivalent to 500,000 francs in value), the balance being supplied by various other donors. The figures do not, however, include the relief supplies distributed by the ICRC delegate in Saigon for the account of UNICEF.

In terms of value, pharmaceutical products take the first place (452,000 francs), followed by foodstuffs and clothing (174,000 francs) and, lastly, appliances for the special use of the disabled (74,000 francs).

The beneficiaries of this assistance were the victims of war-time and post-war events in some thirty countries. Part of the relief supplies was distributed to the victims of natural disasters.

* * *

The repatriation of former prisoners of war and civilian internees in the USSR has been accelerated during the past few months. On two occasions, in December and January last, the

ICRC instructed one of its delegates, M. G. Hoffmann, to proceed to Friedland Camp (German Federal Republic) to help with the arrangements for the refugees' reception. During these visits M. Hoffmann got in touch with the representatives of the German Red Cross at Friedland, and the medical officer of the camp.

* * *

Mlle A. Pfirter, Head of the Nursing Personnel and War Disablement Sections of the ICRC, at present engaged in a study-mission in the Middle East, met the directors of the Lebanon Red Cross and Syrian Red Crescent in Beirut and Damascus, as well as the representatives of the health authorities of those two countries. As she did when visiting Egypt, Mlle Pfirter collected some very useful information on the training of nursing personnel.

* * *

Countess Bonde, one of the directors of the Swedish society for the welfare of children, the " Rädde Barnen ", recently visited the ICRC headquarters, accompanied by M. G. Thélin, Secretary-General to the International Union for Child Welfare. She was welcomed by Mlle L. Odier and M. R. Olgiati, Members of the ICRC, and M. H. Coursier, a member of the Legal Department. The object of her visit was to inform the International Committee of the progress of the campaign started by her association, the Swedish Red Cross, the Swedish Federation of Voluntary Aids and the Swedish Civil Defence Department, to promote the wearing of identity discs by civilians.

We may here recall that an article by M. Georges Thélin on " The Protection of Children in Time of War " was published in the December 1955 number of the Revue internationale, which described, in particular, the remarkable work being done by the Rädde Barnen Association to promote the application of Article 24 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. We would also like to mention that the nation-wide campaign for the issue of identity discs, started by the Rädde Barnen, will continue until next June, and that about 500,000 discs were applied for during the first few weeks.

* * *

M. L. Bossard, the International Committee's delegate in New Zealand was in constant touch, during 1955, with the New Zealand authorities and Red Cross Society, more especially with the latter's Secretary-General, Mr. Galloway.

He also had occasion to discuss the present activities of the ICRC with Sir Willoughby Norrie, Governor General, and Mr. I. H. Luxford, Mayor of Auckland. Moreover, he approached the immigration authorities on several occasions in connection with the resettlement in New Zealand of a number of refugees from Trieste whose welfare, as is well known, is a matter of particular concern to the ICRC.

* * *

During his mission in the Middle East, M. D. de Traz, special representative of the ICRC, has, for the past two months mainly visited Egypt, Israel and Syria. In each of those countries M. de Traz enquired into the living conditions of the military and civilian prisoners captured in the clashes, during the last four months, between the Israeli, Egyptian and Syrian forces.

In Israel, the delegate of the ICRC visited two Egyptian and two Syrian prisoner-of-war camps, and also a military hospital. In addition the high Egyptian and Syrian military authorities authorised M. de Traz to visit the Israeli prisoners of war detained in Cairo and Damascus.

During those visits the International Committee's delegate was able to ascertain that the essential provisions of the Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949, were being applied. On each occasion he was able to converse, without witnesses, with the officers, or the prisoners' representatives, to collect family correspondence, and take photographs.

Further, M. de Traz started discussions with all the authorities concerned in the hope of promoting the early repatriation of all prisoners of war.

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RED CROSS PRINCIPLES

VIII

7. Universality

The work of the Red Cross must extend to all men, and all countries.

The notion of universality contains two ideas—that of reaching everyone and that of spreading everywhere¹. The first has a very special meaning for the Red Cross; for the institution's ideals demand that it should open its arms to everyone who asks for its help. As we have already said, love of one's fellow man, in its ideal form, embraces all men, whoever they are. The principle of universality thus follows, as a natural and necessary consequence, from those of humanity and equality. The really distinctive feature of the Red Cross, where its merit may perhaps lie, is that in its own sphere it has achieved in practice the universality which most advanced civilizations, and even religions, have conceived but not been able to attain. Understood in this sense, universality is truly one of the aims of the Red Cross movement.

The second idea—that of spreading to all countries—follows from the first. In order that relief action may reach everyone, it must be carried out on every portion of the world's surface. In this sense, universality is a means to an end. As the Red Cross marches on, it should not encounter obstacles

¹ We shall see in the second part of our survey that it must also be possible for the Red Cross to be the work of everyone.

or frontiers. No place must be out of its reach. It must be able to explore every nook and cranny of the vast world of suffering, where all men are brothers.

There were two possible ways for the Red Cross to attain universality: by federalism or by unity. In other words, was the movement to ensure that its action spread everywhere by relying on the nations of the world and having recourse to their intermediary or, on the other hand, by trying to secure the direct adherence of individuals to a single organization? From the start the Red Cross adopted the first of these two courses. The variegated aspect of our globe, with its many different facets, was against unity. The movement, influenced amongst other things by the era which saw its birth, took its pattern from such a variety of nationalities, each bearing the imprint of sovereignties, cultures, political systems and its own national genius. Besides, and this may have been the main reason, members of the Red Cross in opposing countries are separated from each other when war breaks out.

The Red Cross accordingly laid its foundations step by step on a national basis, and it is no doubt because they are securely established on that basis that the edifice stands so firmly. From the beginning the National Societies were set up as independent organizations free to manage their own affairs. The Red Cross Charter, drawn up by the 1863 Conference which brought the Red Cross officially into existence, states the matter thus: "Each country shall have a Committee... The Committee shall organize itself in the manner which seems to it most useful and appropriate". The International Committee in Geneva, for its part, has never claimed any right to exercise control. Like it, the International Conference and, more recently, the League exercise a purely moral authority over the member Societies¹.

For the greater part of its history, the various bodies which together form the Red Cross were only linked together by

¹ In 1927, the National Societies of the Scandinavian countries withdrew from the League—though only for a short time—as they considered that the powers which it was intended to give to the Board of Governors were too wide.

their common aims and hopes. It was not until 1928 that the International Red Cross was set up under that name as an organized group of bodies with its own Statutes. Nevertheless this ingenious edifice, which was improved still further in 1952, only established flexible and fairly loose ties between its members, leaving each the largest possible measure of autonomy. The unity achieved remains purely symbolic.

The principle of universality does not apply to the National Societies, considered individually, at any rate not at their present stage of development. As we have already said, nobody expects them to scatter the whole of their resources about the world. Their mission is first and foremost a national one, and although, recognizing the bond of fellowship which unites them, they give each other mutual aid, such action is voluntary and on a relatively modest scale. On the other hand, the principle of universality applies to the Red Cross considered as a supra-national institution. The international Red Cross organizations are the only ones whose action does not in theory know any geographical limits.

Within the frontiers of a country, however, the work of that country's Society must be, not universal—for that would be the wrong term—but total or general in character, as we shall see later. According to the "Conditions for Recognition", every Red Cross Society must "extend its activities to the entire country and its dependencies".

Through the combined action of these two elements, the Red Cross was thus in a position to cover the whole field of human society. Has it managed to do so in actual fact? From the geographical point of view, the Red Cross is practically universal. There are today seventy-four National Societies, which means that there is one in every country in the world, with a few rare exceptions¹. Does that mean that the Red

¹ The countries in which no Red Cross (or Red Crescent) Society has yet been formed are very few in number. They are, in the main, a few States in Arabia, and also Nepal and, so far as we know, Mongolia. In certain other countries, such as North Korea, the Indo-Chinese States, Israel, Liberia and Libya, Societies are in process of being formed, or else already exist but cannot, for one reason or another, be recognized officially.

Cross can really get close to all the suffering which it has made it its object to relieve? One cannot be sure that it can. Every human undertaking has its limits and imperfections. The results achieved by the Red Cross in less than a century are already considerable. But a vast area has to be covered and there are further conquests to be made. Moreover the ground gained on the surface has still to be exploited in depth. What really matters is that the Red Cross is striving ceaselessly with all its force to attain universality. That is the way in which this principle will acquire its full significance, and become universal in the strict sense of the word.

The national character given to Red Cross Societies, their independence in relation to one another, and the fact that they have been left free to organize themselves as they think fit, all mean that the Societies of different countries vary considerably today in their structure and size. But they nevertheless have many features in common, owing to the conditions set for their recognition as members of the International Red Cross—conditions for ensuring the fulfilment of which the Geneva Committee has always been responsible. Those conditions refer expressly to the principles of the Red Cross. That is the essential bond between the organs of the institution. That is where its universality really lies. The very idea of universality implies identity in certain respects. The name and emblem of the Red Cross can only have one and the same meaning everywhere. Being unable to achieve unity in the material sphere, the Red Cross has created it in regard to its ideal. For we must again emphasize here that everyone can acknowledge that ideal, whatever his views on life and man's destiny.

For the Red Cross, universality does not merely mean spreading to all countries: it must also reach smaller units, such as the parties to a civil war, which cannot be allowed to escape its influence. Nor is that all: the universality of the institution is not expressed only in terms of geographical areas, but extends to all circumstances which may occur and to all classes of people who need its help. As Max Huber said, in the eyes of the Red Cross there is no legal no man's

land ; once a territory has been won over to the Red Cross, it must no longer be possible for its inhabitants to be deprived of the institution's help. In cases in which the International Committee is called upon to act, for example, it does not consider the degree of legality of the parties involved in the struggle, nor the status which their authorities agree or refuse to accord to one another ; where necessary it departs from legal forms and acts through unofficial channels, in order to be present wherever suffering would otherwise go unrelieved. The Red Cross must be able to go wherever human beings are in suffering. It does not serve the interests of a State as such, but only those of human beings in distress.

It is easy to understand, therefore, that the International Committee has always sought to secure the widest possible application of the Geneva Conventions.¹ The original Convention, that of 1864, very quickly became universal. The Convention has retained that character ever since, and that has been one of the main factors which give it its value and force. In 1949 considerable progress was made in extending the field of application of the Geneva Conventions. They now cover the civilian as well as the military victims of wars. Moreover they will be applicable in future not only in the case of a regularly declared war, but as soon as hostilities break out between two States. Finally, in cases of conflict within a country the Parties to the conflict are at least bound to observe the essential rules of humanity.

Universality has a solid prop, a sure warrant, in what is termed *reciprocity*, that is in the fact or hope of obtaining a similar advantage from some other party in the same circumstances. Reciprocity is naturally of greatest importance in wartime, in connection with military or civilian prisoners who are held captive on either side of the line of fire.

Reciprocity is not in any way a Red Cross principle ; it is only a practical means of action, based on the most realistic,

¹ The universality of the Red Cross is, incidentally, bound up with that of the Geneva Conventions, since the rules only allow a National Society to be recognized in a country where the Conventions are in force.

not to say down-to-the-earth, outlook. The ideal, on the contrary, would be for humanitarian action in each country to be on as wide a scale and as efficient as possible and for the position of those in captivity to be as favourable as could be, even if the opposite side failed to come up to the desired or agreed standards.

The question which arises straightaway is whether the application of the Geneva Conventions is, or is not, subject to reciprocity. In other words, is a belligerent freed from his obligations if his opponent fails to observe the Convention's clauses?

It is generally agreed that where the terms of a treaty are not carried out by one of the parties its annulment is justified, as it would be in the case of a contract in Common Law. But that cannot apply to the Geneva Conventions: they remain valid in any event. One cannot, for example, conceive of a belligerent deliberately ill-treating prisoners or putting them to death, simply because its adversary had been guilty of similar crimes. Whereas most treaties are intended to safeguard the interests of the contracting States, humanitarian law has an essentially different and infinitely superior purpose: it determines the lot of individual men and women¹. There is no question here of exchanging benefits; for the Conventions are a collection of objective rules proclaiming, in the face of the world, the humane safeguards to which everyone is entitled. Such rules are merely a codification of the usage of civilized nations. Every country binds itself *vis-à-vis* itself as much as it does *vis-à-vis* other countries. There is no question here of commercial profits, but of human life. And man is not naturally inclined to give others rights over his life, or to allow the State to dispose of it as it disposes of its natural resources. Consequently, any treaty which protects man in this respect will win individual support and may respond to

¹ For further study of the idea that international law is by no means only concerned with the settlement of international relations, but very largely also with the protection of the individual, we would refer the reader to the very full survey by Professor Maurice Bourquin: *La position de l'individu dans l'ordre juridique international — Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, November and December 1954.

a unanimous desire, which will carry all before it. Besides, for a belligerent to abrogate a Convention on the ground that the enemy had broken its clauses, would be equivalent to taking reprisals. But the Geneva Conventions formally prohibit any form of reprisals against the persons they protect. And in spite of the brutality of men there are well known examples of respect of this kind for one's pledged word, even where there was no such action by the other party.

It is nevertheless true that the proper application of the Geneva Conventions would be greatly facilitated by the existence of a positive form of reciprocity, or in other words, if the Conventions were put into practice by both belligerents or even, need it be said, if there were a certain balance of mutual humanitarian interests on either side of the front. Experience has shown how difficult it is for Protecting Powers—and even for the International Committee of the Red Cross, whose action is more particularly universal in character—to play their respective roles under the Geneva Conventions when the opposing side refuses to accept their intervention and avoids all scrutiny. Being unable to resort to the powerful weapon of reciprocity, their credit wears thin. The same phenomenon is to be noted, but in a less marked degree, when only one of the Parties holds prisoners of war in large numbers or when one of the Parties takes no further interest in those of its nationals who are held prisoner by the enemy.

The special work of the Red Cross in wartime is, as we know, based on the goodwill of the countries at war, and it also depends to a large extent on their understanding of where their mutual interest lies. This is the case where the International Committee is concerned, since the Committee must depend on the general consent of the belligerents, and often on their consent in particular cases, in order to carry out its various activities and receive the necessary co-operation. In the same way where any advantage has been accorded over and above the minimum requirements under the Conventions, an appeal to reciprocity is the most obvious way of obtaining equivalent advantages from the other side. Nothing is more contagious than example. The work of the Red Cross as a whole will

thus find a valuable adjunct in reciprocity, whereas any lack of universality will, on the other hand, have unfortunate repercussions in other countries and so diminish the chances of relieving distress.

Attention must, finally, be drawn to a grave and difficult problem. The National Red Cross Societies of different countries are, as we have seen, very differently constituted. The deep bond uniting them, the common denominator which really marks their universal character, is the intention they have all expressed of adhering to the fundamental and permanent principles of the institution, which form an indivisible whole. The very notion of universality implies identity in certain respects. The name and emblem of the Red Cross can, we said, have only one meaning. But what would happen if one Red Cross organization or another rejected these principles, or even a single one of them, and no longer regarded them as the common basis?

Some people will feel that too high a price would be paid for a pure façade of universality if it were preserved by renouncing something which is its very essence and by weakening the movement through the inclusion of heterogeneous elements. The Red Cross should be universal, it is true, but it must also and above all remain the Red Cross. Otherwise there would simply be contradiction in terms, as though a man were to claim to be an Aristotelian without acknowledging Aristotle's doctrine. A Red Cross Society which strays from the right path may nevertheless relieve the distress of at least some of those who are suffering in its country; but could not its task then be carried out just as well by a Health Service or a charitable society, without any reference to the Red Cross or its emblem?

Others will reply that the Red Cross must beware of any tendency to be hide-bound, that its essential function is to unite and not to divide, that it promotes understanding between the nations and must be tolerant and indulgent to human weakness and error. If a Red Cross Society were to deviate from the fundamental principles of the institution, it would

doubtless do so, they say, under the influence of official doctrines which it could not disregard if it wished to carry on even part of its humanitarian work. Would it not be better to have an imperfect Red Cross Society in every country rather than have no Red Cross at all? They will also point out that a breach of universality, even if that universality were more apparent than real, might have very serious consequences, that the Red Cross would thus lose one of its proudest possessions, and that very careful reflection was necessary before taking the responsibility of such a step.

What is the real answer? In our opinion a problem like this can only be solved by applying the "Golden Rule" to which we refer later, a rule the Red Cross must apply whenever it is faced with a dilemma: one must ask oneself where the interest of the victims lies. The good of the human beings who are to be relieved will alone determine the institution's attitude to each National Society and enable it to decide whether the latter can claim that title. The question will thus depend on each individual case. Is it not, after all, by the assistance it gives that a Red Cross Society reveals its true nature?

The matter will be considered more particularly in the light of the situation which would exist in wartime; for war is the crucial test so far as the Red Cross is concerned. During the Second World War, for example, the fact that the International Committee maintained *de facto* relations with certain Red Cross Societies set up under the aegis of the Occupying Powers was not always understood; it is true that their legitimacy was open to question. What was forgotten was that those *de facto* relations represented the only possible chance of giving assistance to persons detained in those countries. The International Committee has never sacrificed or jeopardized humanitarian interests for the sake of appearances or for reasons of prestige.

JEAN S. PICTET

(To be continued.)

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

COMPENSATION FOR FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR

An important task undertaken by the International Committee

The International Committee of the Red Cross frequently receives enquiries from former prisoners of war in the hands of the Japanese forces as to when and in what form they will receive the compensation to which they are entitled under Article 16 of the Peace Treaty with Japan.

It may serve a useful purpose to recall that, with a view to the indemnification of prisoners of war who suffered undue hardship during their captivity, Japan, under this article, undertook to hand over its assets in neutral or ex-enemy countries. Those assets, or their equivalent, are to be transferred to the International Committee of the Red Cross, which will be responsible for distributing them to the various appropriate agencies for the benefit of the victims of captivity.

The International Committee of the Red Cross has never ceased its efforts to expedite, as much as possible, all the work involved in implementing the measures provided for in Article 16, but many and serious difficulties have had to be overcome, which the public, naturally, has difficulty in appreciating.

Hence, with a view to complying with the requests for information received, the International Committee wishes to state briefly in this letter the problems that have arisen and which have had to be solved before the work could reach its present stage.

Since the funds for indemnifying former prisoners of war were, under Article 16, to derive from Japanese assets in neutral or ex-enemy countries, the first step was to find out where those assets were located and what they amounted to. The Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States undertook to make the necessary investigations. That was a matter which needed tactful handling, and the work could not be completed before the end of 1952.

As soon as the Treaty had been ratified, the International Committee expressed the wish to examine, in conjunction with representatives of Governments and with the least possible delay, the various problems raised by the application of Article 16. That suggestion could not, however, be carried out until the inventory of Japanese assets had been completed.

In March 1953, the representatives of the various beneficiary States under Article 16 met and set up a Working Party, which took a number of decisions as to the methods to be adopted for carrying out its provisions. It was agreed that the share of Japanese funds attributable to prisoners of the various nationalities should be strictly in proportion to the number of prisoners of each nationality. The question of the criteria to be used in the subsequent distribution at the national level was left for later discussion and agreement between the International Committee, on the one hand, and each of the national agencies referred to in Article 16, on the other.

The Governments then initiated negotiations with the Japanese Government through the appropriate channels, with a view to obtaining from that Government payment of a sum equivalent to the total amount of those of its assets to which Article 16 applies. Once again, owing to their complexity and, more particularly, the need for action on the part of other States, such as those which were the provisional holders of Japanese assets, these negotiations took time. It was not until November 1954 that an agreement could be concluded with the Japanese Government by which the latter undertook to transfer an amount of four and a half million pounds sterling to the International Committee of the Red Cross in May, 1955. That payment was duly made and the amount added to a sum

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of two and a half million dollars, representing the value of Japanese assets in Thailand, which had already been transferred to the International Committee in the summer of 1953.

During this same period, the International Committee requested the beneficiary States, and the latter agreed, to produce complete lists of their former prisoners of war in the hands of the Japanese forces to be used in determining the total number of prisoners of the various nationalities involved. The production of these lists is the main source of the delay in carrying out the provisions of Article 16, since several States have not yet sent the International Committee of the Red Cross complete lists. These are, however, important documents which the International Committee cannot do without. When received, the lists are submitted to certain checks which have revealed quite a large number of mistakes and, more particularly, the inclusion of persons ineligible under the terms of Article 16. Their names must, of course, be deleted.

Sometimes these checks involve appreciable alterations in the numbers reported and the International Committee, which is responsible for looking after the prisoners of war's interests, is, therefore, anxious to complete the checking so as to be able to draw up as equitable a plan as possible for the distribution of the funds to the various nationalities. Should, as is to be hoped, the Governments of the beneficiary States submit their final lists of prisoners to the International Committee at an early date, the work of checking could be finished in a few months' time. The distribution plan could then be approved by the Working Party, and actual payment of compensation could begin.

To save time the International Committee, as early as the beginning of this year, approached the various national agencies with a view to examining with them the methods of distribution to be adopted by each individual country. These plans will probably be ready by the time the sharing out of funds to the various countries has taken place.

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MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES

The representatives of more than thirty National Red Cross Societies, who are at present in Geneva for a normal meeting of the Executive Committee of the League of Red Cross Societies, visited the headquarters of the International Committee on May 11 1956. The Committee gave them information about the activities on which it is now engaged in the field, and also about the work it is doing in connection with the legal protection of the civilian population from the dangers of indiscriminate warfare.

A most interesting exchange of views on this latter subject took place, and the delegates from the National Societies of Great Britain, the United States, the USSR and Belgium explained their points of view. M. André François-Poncet, President of the French Red Cross and Chairman of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross Conference, pointed out that the Red Cross movement could not admit the principle of total or indiscriminate warfare, and that support should be given to the International Committee in its efforts to persuade Governments to agree on a delimitation of the methods and means of waging war. This theme will doubtless be the main subject of the next International Red Cross Conference which will take place in New Delhi at the beginning of 1957.

We may mention certain other details which give an idea of the extent of the ICRC's activities: in Geneva the Central

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Prisoner of War Agency still receives an average of 5,000 requests for information every month, which obviously involves the same number of replies and the opening of numerous enquiries ; the work of re-grouping dispersed families is being continued with the active and understanding collaboration of various national Societies ; the ICRC, which is responsible under Article 16 of the Japanese Peace Treaty for administering a fund of 63 million Swiss francs derived from Japanese assets abroad, will soon be in a position to distribute this sum to some 225,000 ex-prisoners of war who were held captive by the Japanese ; a travelling mission from the ICRC is at the present time visiting countries in the Middle East for the purpose of studying and trying to settle problems of a humanitarian character raised as a result of the tension between Israel and various Arab States ; another mission is now in the Far East ; ICRC delegates have just returned from Morocco, Tunis and Viet Nam, while one delegate is still at his post in Hanoi.

At the above meeting, the President of the Alliance of Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies announced that the Alliance had recently decided to participate in the financing of the ICRC's activities.

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RED CROSS PRINCIPLES

IX

ORGANIC PRINCIPLES

When embarking on our survey we pointed out that the rules which form part of the doctrine of the Red Cross could be classified under two main headings: fundamental principles and organic principles. This distinction is important.

As we have seen, the principles which fall into the first category are directly bound up with the fundamental motives which prompt Red Cross action. They are unaffected by circumstances and do not vary according to the particular case under consideration; they inspire the institution, characterize it and determine its aims. The organic or institutional principles, on the other hand, exist because of the fact that the Red Cross is an organization; they relate to the structure of the institution and the way in which it works. They may also be regarded as rules for applying the fundamental principles to the conditions which prevail in the world today. The practical ends which the Red Cross sets out to achieve mean that it must take due account of the material and spiritual realities of the life in society in which it undertakes its work. Having once decided what its duties are, it needs rules to govern its constitution, to guide it in the choice of the means by which it can achieve its aims, and to direct its steps in all the different situations with which its manifold activities may bring it face to face.

Although the fundamental principles differ from the organic principles both in regard to their importance, and even their essential character, it is not always easy to draw a hard and fast line between the two categories in certain borderline cases. The principle of impartiality and certain parts of the chapter on "neutrality" might, for example, have been included here, although they have, for the sake of clarity, been dealt with in the first part of our survey¹. In the same way, the organic principles are closely connected as between themselves.

Although the fundamental principles of the Red Cross were only formulated recently, that is in 1921, this cannot be said of the institution's organic principles, some of which—the independence of the National Societies and the voluntary and auxiliary character of the service they give, for example—had already been expressed in some detail in the resolutions of the original Conference which founded the institution in 1863. Eleven years later Gustave Moynier, President of the International Committee, added certain ideas which were not quite so obvious: "Member Societies of the Confederation of the Red Cross", he wrote, "are linked to one another by the more or less formal undertaking they have given to act in accordance with certain identical rules. These rules are four in number, namely: centralization, foresight, mutuality and solidarity"². We shall revert later to the significance of these terms.

The first systematic statement of the organic principles was, however, contained in the "Conditions for Recognition" of the National Societies. These conditions were drafted by the International Committee shortly after the IVth International Red Cross Conference which met in 1887 and, confirming what was actually occurring in practice, officially entrusted the International Committee with the task of introducing newly

¹ We are thinking, in particular, of the neutral attitude which the International Committee adopts towards States, treating them on a footing of equality and refusing to give any opinion as to their legal status or about their politics.

² G. MOYNIER: *Ce que c'est que la Croix-Rouge* — Geneva, 1874, page 6.

constituted Societies to international life. The "Conditions for Recognition" were revised in 1948.

We have, lastly, already alluded to the "Fundamental Principles" of the League of Red Cross Societies—a long and important declaration, drawn up by a Committee formed of representatives of certain National Societies, which was adopted by the Board of Governors of the League in 1946 and later confirmed by the XVIIIth International Conference. In spite of its title it is concerned with the organic principles of the Red Cross, but it begins with a reference to the "summary" of the fundamental principles. Although the principles given there do not follow any logical sequence or any system, and there are repetitions, the document is nevertheless of real value and we shall often have occasion to refer to it¹.

One must beware of simply regarding the organic principles as rules of good management which any undertaking takes a pride in observing. But they are not as absolute in character as the fundamental principles and some flexibility in regard to their application may be allowed in exceptional cases, where circumstances warrant it. When is this permissible? The only possible answer to that question is to be found in the League's declaration to which we alluded above; after recommending that National Societies should act in accordance with Red Cross principles, the statement goes on to say that they "should not be deterred from helping the distressed by too rigid an interpretation". In other words, if the letter of the principles should ever clash with a humanitarian interest, the latter should prevail. As we shall see in a moment, the "Golden Rule" of the Red Cross is that the only consideration should always be the welfare of those who have suffered.

¹ We have also found A.-R. Werner's work, *La Croix-Rouge et les Conventions de Genève* (Geneva, 1943), a useful source of reference.

1. Selflessness

The Red Cross does not reap any advantage from its activities ; it is only concerned with the humanitarian interest of the persons who require help.

The first and most important of the organic principles of the Red Cross is selflessness. This notion is closely connected with the fundamental principle of humanity. The two may be said to form a pair. Neither has been formulated in the official doctrine of the movement. But the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference, in defining the Red Cross in a resolution on the subject of the spirit of peace, spoke not only of " relief of suffering wherever it may exist " but also of " selfless service to all quarters of the globe ".

In speaking of the selflessness of the Red Cross we mean that it reaps no personal advantage from its work, that it has no interests of its own, or that its interests are, at all events, always expressed in terms of charitable aims. That is equivalent to saying that the interests of the Red Cross and those of the people it assists coincide. Any encouragement or assistance to the Red Cross serves the victims who need the latter's help, and vice versa. If the Red Cross as an institution were to have any separate interest of its own, this could only be envisaged as the preservation of existing and future opportunities for carrying out its charitable work to the best advantage. In speaking of " interest " we are certainly not referring only to financial benefits, but to any material or spiritual advantage at all.

Whenever the Red Cross Body has to act or make a decision, it will first of all ask itself where the humanitarian interests of the persons in need of help lie, and whether they will be furthered. By humanitarian interests we mean the advantage everyone has in having his distress relieved and in being humanely treated. This is the most valuable of the rules guiding the action of the Red Cross ; it is the " Golden Rule " which will

enable it to solve most of the problems it meets, without any possibility of error. In moments of difficulty it will point the way more surely than the needle of a compass.

The above remarks refer, of course, to the true interests of those who suffer. They will be determined in each case by carefully weighing the factors involved. What must be attained is the greatest possible good for the greatest possible number. But in actual practice the decision will often depend on the immediate interests of the victims. The main concern here will be their life and health, which are of supreme value to them and may be dangerously affected by the time factor. The Red Cross cannot take any chances where they are at stake. Knowing that delay may be fatal, it will not take the risk of deferring action if there is any doubt about the future result. It will never sacrifice a life today in the uncertain hope of saving a hundred later. For the Red Cross, we repeat, the end does not justify the means.

In the same way the Red Cross refrains from anything which might inflict injury or loss on human beings. The International Committee, for example, will not communicate the information about war victims which it has in its possession if it has any reason to fear that it may, by so doing, harm the persons concerned or their families. This attitude is endorsed by the recent Geneva Conventions¹. An exception might be made to this rule, however, in order to protect a higher humanitarian interest. Medical personnel may be armed, for instance, in order to protect the wounded committed to their care. Similarly, the Red Cross was justified in proposing legal texts prescribing the punishment of persons who violated the provisions of the Geneva Conventions; for its main concern was the protection of their innocent victims.

The disinterested nature of the Red Cross's action is, as we said, a consequence of this fundamental principle of humanity. It is the natural result of the philanthropic character of the movement's work. The characteristic feature of charity, or if one prefers it, social service, is to devote oneself, wholly

¹ Fourth Convention of 1949, Article 140.

and without reserve, to one's fellow men. With such an ideal there can be no middle course, for that soon leads to compromising with one's conscience. It is clear, moreover, that no one would give his money or unpaid assistance to an organization which used them, not for the stated object, but for personal profit.

The Red Cross is a purely charitable institution. It has only one object: to relieve human suffering. All its other activities are subordinate to this one unique aim. Nothing can divert it from its true purpose and, by so doing, diminish its efficiency. It cannot have subsidiary aims which do not help to further its essential object. First and foremost it avoids any money motive. It is not moved by a desire for gain, but by love of one's fellow men, and these two motives are diametrically opposed to one another. It is nevertheless a remarkable fact that in an age when everything can be bought and sold, a coherent group of services, spread over the whole world, should function regularly and permanently, without the powerful incentive of commercial profit.

The absolute priority given to charity is not a monopoly of the Red Cross. It is nevertheless the feature which distinguishes it from most of the other organizations and establishments which are engaged in the struggle against suffering. Many of them have a dual purpose to achieve. In the case of the civilian medical and para-medical professions, private clinics and the pharmaceutical industry, the profit motive plays an obvious part. But in many countries the public hospitals also try to pay their way or, at all events, cover their expenses to some extent; to make up for this, the poor receive free treatment. The above services thus represent, to a varying degree, a reasonable compromise between a desire to assist as many people as possible and a desire to avoid placing too heavy a financial burden on the community.

It follows from what we have said above, that the Red Cross must devote its entire resources to attaining its humanitarian aims; everything must assist, as directly as possible, in accomplishing its mission. It might even be said that the

Red Cross has no property of its own. It acts as a trustee¹ for the gifts it receives, for they are entrusted to it on behalf of, and in the name of the suffering. The Red Cross is merely an agent responsible for administering such property, and for making the best use of it in their interests. This circumstance lends special force to the appeals which the Red Cross makes for funds; it is not asking for anything for itself, but always for others. It also means that the Red Cross must always manage its affairs as economically as possible, strictly scrutinizing the smallest items of expense, avoiding all show, and maintaining the simplicity which inspires confidence, and constitutes the institution's true adornment.

The selflessness of the Red Cross prevents it from laying undue stress on what it has accomplished. One would prefer such work to be unobtrusive, like private charity. For a long time this view prevailed in the Red Cross world, but one must recognize that it is no longer really practicable today. The secrecy observed by a mere individual with regard to the generous use he makes of his own money is out of place in the sphere of organized assistance. The Red Cross has no independent financial means of its own; it depends entirely on donations. It is its absolute duty to increase its resources, so as to be in a position to respond to appeals for help made to it and render the services expected of it. Appeals are made to public generosity from all sides, and the public's attention is attracted by all the means offered by modern publicity methods. Silence would mean being ignored, and under such conditions charity could not be dispensed efficiently. While the Red Cross must not engage in noisy, cheap propaganda, which might in the end harm it, it should nevertheless give objective information concerning its activities to the people who make such activities possible by paying its expenses, and also to those who may make donations in the future. But its credit will above all depend on the services it has rendered—on the work it actually does.

Our study is concerned with the laws governing the institu-

¹ Or fiduciary. *Fiduciaire* in the French text.

tion and not with the moral conduct of its representatives. But perhaps one observation may be allowed us. Those who serve the humanitarian cause all over the world sometimes fall, like everyone else, into the pitfall of self-esteem and are not always immune from the attractions of prestige and honours. But the Red Cross will not be the conquering force it should be unless its members only serve for the sake of serving, and to achieve results, setting little store by things in which so many men take a pride.

It is also our duty, however, to know ourselves as we are and not to delude ourselves as to the motives for our actions; in that way our very faults may be turned to profit. If we cannot rid ourselves of vanity, let us at least use it in the interests of good works.

2. Free service

The Red Cross offers its services free of charge.

The services of the Red Cross are free not only because of the disinterested character of the institution, but also because of its universalism and the equality it observes as between men. As we have seen, the Red Cross offers its assistance, without exception, to everyone who needs it and appeals for it. To make the assistance given depend upon a financial contribution would be equivalent to refusing help to those who were not in a position to make such a contribution. If the services of the Red Cross are to reach everyone they must of necessity be free.

This very obvious requirement is not expressly formulated in the movement's official doctrine, but it follows without any shadow of doubt from the spirit of that doctrine. The fact that the Red Cross was set up for the very purpose of assisting the unfortunate, incapable of saving themselves and in most cases without resources, makes this requirement all the more essential. In wartime the Red Cross will have to care for the

wounded or prisoners, who are separated from everything on which their prosperity depended; it will have to supply the needs of necessitous evacuees tramping the roads, and help refugees to start a new life. Even in peacetime the Red Cross is sometimes the last resort, the last hope, of unfortunate beings whom it tries to help without even asking their names, without asking them to admit their utter necessity.

The principle of free service does not mean that the Red Cross must always refuse to receive payment. For the evils which have to be cured exceed the resources at its disposal and, constantly facing new duties, it spends what it has as fast, or almost, as it receives it. Apart from the essential reserves which it must build up to meet eventualities¹, it would be unthinkable for the Red Cross to accumulate capital and live on the interest, when there is so much crying misery all around². If, therefore, the people who have benefited by the good works of the Red Cross wish to show their gratitude by covering the cost of the assistance given to them, and have the means to do so, the movement may and should accept such contributions, in order that people who are less well placed may benefit by its action in their turn. In certain cases it would even be legitimate for the Red Cross to ask those who can to share in its expenses, and if such people are generous they will do more than their share; those who have will thus pay for those who have not—a state of affairs which is in full accordance with the spirit of the Red Cross. Such payments should always be voluntary, however, and never a condition on which care is given. Understood in this light, they will not infringe the principle of free service or be at variance with the essential nature of the Red Cross movement.

The fact that the Red Cross gives its services free means

¹ We shall see later that foresight is also a Red Cross principle.

² It has been suggested that in order to ensure that the Red Cross receives regular resources and to defend it against itself, as it were, inalienable funds should be constituted for it. But this solution is no longer entirely valid under present-day conditions, particularly in view of the decline in the rates of interest paid. A possibility which should, perhaps, be studied, would be the creation of capital which could not be touched in normal times, but would be at the disposal of the Red Cross in case of a serious crisis.

that the community should, for its part, support the institution's work all the more widely and objectively. The rule of budgeting according to which expenditure must depend upon income must not apply to the Red Cross. In its case it is income which must increase in proportion to expenditure, for the latter is dictated by humanitarian needs. Its financing is therefore essentially a matter of donations—resulting from public subscriptions and collections, from State subsidies, etc. Nor is there any reason why a government should not reimburse the expenditure resulting from special tasks it has asked the Red Cross to carry out. The principle of free service only applies, in fact, to the people to whom the Red Cross gives its care—to those who benefit directly by its action.

Let us remember, for example, how the International Committee of the Red Cross remained faithful to the principle of free service during the Second World War. Throughout the war it was able to meet its expenses, thanks, for almost half the total, to gifts received from the Swiss people, the remainder being provided by contributions from the Governments and Red Cross Societies of the belligerent countries. In most cases these contributions were in the form of a lump payment and went to support the work of the Red Cross as a whole, without being specially assigned by the donors to the assistance of a given class of persons or to support a particular relief scheme. The work of the Geneva Committee forms a whole: by its very nature and through the effect of reciprocity, it is useful to both sides, wherever it is carried out. When the Committee's delegates visit prisoner-of-war camps in a given territory and help to ensure that the provisions of the Conventions are properly applied, are they not working to some extent on behalf of both parties? As a matter of principle too, the system of lump payments seems preferable, at all events in wartime: it is in accordance with the disinterested character of the Red Cross and helps to preserve the independent quality of the charitable work done, enabling it to be carried out where it is most required.

On the other hand, the International Committee was obliged to ask for its expenses to be refunded in the case of certain

special tasks which greatly exceeded the services which could rightly be expected of it and involved the provision of material resources out of all proportion to its normal means. Cases in point were the transmission by wireless of nominal rolls containing the names of many soldiers captured overseas, and, in particular, the forwarding of relief to prisoners of war belonging to the Allied Powers who were detained in Germany. In this second instance a vast system had to be built up from scratch, to undertake the conveyance by sea and by land, the storage and the distribution of food and clothing to a value of over three hundred million Swiss francs. The International Committee, which had incidentally done its work most economically, just covered its actual outlay by deducting a commission, on a percentage basis, from the goods forwarded. On the other hand it refused to use that method to meet other expenditure, or even a proportion of its general expenses, although one may well feel that it would have been justified in so doing.

The emblem of the Red Cross on a white ground must always remain a symbol of disinterested help within everyone's reach. To the general public it can only call to mind aid dispensed free of charge. A clear indication of this is given us in the Geneva Convention which laid down, both in 1929 and 1949, that the Red Cross sign could be used, with the express permission of the National Red Cross Society, to mark the position of aid stations exclusively reserved for the purpose of giving free treatment to injured and sick civilians, even when the aid stations in question did not belong to the Red Cross. This provision applies in particular to the emergency first aid posts at crowded meetings and events and to the "Highway First Aid" posts which are placed at intervals along main roads for use by motorists involved in accidents. The Convention stipulated that such posts must offer their services free. If any charge is made or any medicaments sold, permission to use the Red Cross sign should be withdrawn.

The authors of the Convention were thus careful to safeguard the idea of disinterested service in an exceptional case of the emblem's use, simply because that idea is very closely bound up with the work of the Red Cross. The General Rapporteur

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of the Diplomatic Conference of 1929 underlined this when he said: "By adopting this text, the Commission showed that it sincerely wished to preserve the complete integrity and universal prestige of the sign of the Convention, and the high moral significance of the principles it represents in the eyes of all peoples" ¹.

(To be continued.)

JEAN S. PICTET

¹ *Actes de la Conférence diplomatique de Genève de 1929* — Genève, 1930, p. 619.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

LEGAL PROTECTION OF THE CIVILIAN POPULATION

ADVISORY WORKING PARTY OF EXPERTS DELEGATED BY NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETIES

As stated in the *Revue internationale* (January 1956) the ICRC extended to the end of February 1956 the period within which the National Societies might send in their comments on the *Draft Rules for the Protection of the Civilian Population from the Dangers of Indiscriminate Warfare*. This extension enabled several other Societies to submit detailed and most interesting comments on these humanitarian rules, which, as we know, will be one of the most important items on the Agenda of the next International Red Cross Conference.

Having received the comments of many Red Cross Societies in all parts of the world, and of independent experts, the ICRC was thus able, early this year, to collate and examine all the suggestions made with a view to extracting those most useful for improving the Draft which it straightway submitted last year to Red Cross Societies. This examination showed how well the National Societies had understood the spirit animating this action. They know, of course, that their great organisation earnestly hopes that it will never again experience the war-time conditions to which the *Draft Rules* apply, and that the sole aim of these rules is to see reaffirmed, at some future date, that respect for human values to which the Red Cross attaches such great importance ; they are also aware that such a reaffirmation, by relieving the anxiety of the civilian population about the

fate of those values, would help to dissipate fear, which is the source of suspicion, and foster the spirit of peace in the hearts of men and among nations.

The collation of all these comments also showed that while many of the amendments proposed by National Societies could easily be accepted, others required careful scrutiny; all the more so because they dealt with points of substance, such as the general principles, the definition of military objectives, weapons with uncontrollable effects, and sanctions or inspection. The ICRC, therefore, thought it advisable, before taking a final decision on these suggestions, to discuss them with qualified representatives of National Societies.

It was glad of the opportunity which was offered when several Societies, in submitting their comments, indicated that they were favourably disposed to the idea of a Red Cross meeting, to be held before the New Delhi Conference, for the purpose of making a preliminary study of the *Draft Rules*. It will be recalled that, in its 410th *Circular* which accompanied the *Draft Rules* sent to all Red Cross Societies, the ICRC asked them to give their views on the desirability of calling such a meeting, and stated that it was prepared to organise it if it was generally considered desirable. As the majority of the Red Cross Societies, when replying, did not ask for the meeting to be held, the Committee concluded that the condition it had laid down for the convening of a general and official meeting had not been fulfilled.

On the other hand, as we have said, the Committee thought it advisable to examine the important suggestions referred to above with experts delegated by those Red Cross Societies which were in favour of a preliminary exchange of views on the *Draft Rules*, on the ground that, after having carefully studied the text within their own Society, such experts would be specially qualified to express their opinion on these suggestions and to find a compromise between the different points of view. It was also of the opinion that this general study could best be carried out by an Advisory Working Party unofficial in character and free from publicity; it should, in particular, be distinguished by the qualifications of those taking part, as well as by the Red Cross spirit animating its discussions.

The ICRC therefore invited those Red Cross Societies which had expressed interest, about ten in number, to delegate one or more qualified representatives to a working party to be held from May 14 to May 19. The invitation was accepted by all the Red Cross Societies concerned in Belgium, France, German Democratic Republic, German Federal Republic, India, Japan, Jugoslavia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland.

Furthermore, in a circular letter dated April 19, the International Committee informed all the other National Societies of the meeting, and stated that all Red Cross Societies wishing to participate in the work could do so by sending qualified experts. The Polish Red Cross took advantage of this offer and was represented at the meeting ; the first sessions were honoured by the presence of M. de Rougé, Secretary-General of the League, and M. Tuma, President of the Czechoslovak Red Cross, accompanied by M. Blaha, Head of the Foreign Relations Department.

Altogether, seventeen persons, representing twelve National Societies, regularly attended the meeting, that is to say :

Red Cross in the German Democratic Republic : Dr. Bernhard Graefrath, Legal Adviser : M. Helmut Fichtner, Head of the Foreign Relations Department.

Red Cross in the German Federal Republic : Dr. Kramarz, Assistant Secretary-General and Legal Adviser.

Belgian Red Cross : M. Henri Van Leynseele, Advocate at the Supreme Court of Appeal.

French Red Cross : M. G. Cahen-Salvador, Honorary Vice-President of the Council of State, Administrator of the French Red Cross ; Médecin-Général Inspecteur Costedoat, Technical Adviser to the Public Health Ministry ; M. Fautrière, Sous-Préfet H. C., Civil Defence Department, Ministry of Internal Affairs ; M. J.-P. Pourcel, Civil Defence Department, Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Indian Red Cross : Major-General Rao, Director of the Army Medical Service.

Japanese Red Cross : Dr. Juji Enomoto, Professor.

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Jugoslav Red Cross: M. Bosko Jakovljevic, Legal Adviser, Jugoslav Red Cross : Captain Jovica Patrnogic.

Mexican Red Cross: M. de Rueda, Delegate to the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies.

Norwegian Red Cross: Lieutenant-General J. D. Schepers, Member of the High Court of Military Justice.

Polish Red Cross: Miss D. Zys, Delegate.

Swiss Red Cross: Dr. Hans Haug, Secretary-General, Swiss Red Cross.

In addition, the meeting had the benefit of the advice and assistance of Colonel Divisionnaire Karl Brunner, Doctor of Laws, Expert ad hoc of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The discussions of the Working Party, presided over by M. F. Siordet, Vice-President of the ICRC, continued without interruption from May 14 to 19. The experts present were called upon to give their opinions on some thirty items connected with the Draft Rules ; these items had been submitted to them beforehand to serve as an Agenda.

During the discussions, which were followed with great attention by all, and marked throughout by a spirit of mutual understanding and a desire to reach solutions most in keeping with the Red Cross ideal, experts were able, not only to comment upon the conclusions reached by their Societies after studying the Draft Rules, but also, thanks to the exchange of views, to reach general agreement on many points.

In the commentary on the final text of the Draft Rules, the ICRC will have occasion to give a detailed account of the result of the discussions, especially of amendments to the provisions of the present text. We would like, however, to mention a few points which were brought out in the discussions.

The experts confirmed their Societies' opposition to the idea of total warfare, which is so contrary to both the principles and the work of the Red Cross. They also emphasised their concern that the new rules should not in any way give the impression

that they justify acts of war, and indicated their preference for a form a of wording of the articles, and the insertion of a preamble, designed to dissipate any confusion in that connection. They also thought it necessary to define more clearly the relationship between those new Rules, which aim at protecting populations primarily from the dangers caused by weapons and their effects, and the Fourth Geneva Convention, or the Hague Conventions, so that the protection which those Conventions, especially the former, already afford to civilians in times of conflict should on no account be underrated.

With regard to several very important questions, such as those relating to weapons with uncontrollable effects, reprisals and sanctions, all of which could, in some instances and in other circles, have a political significance, it seemed to them that while the Red Cross could not disregard them, it could make a more valuable contribution by keeping to its own purely humanitarian and general aims. For the new Rules which will be submitted to the next International Red Cross Conference, although they take the form, for their greater utility, of a draft international convention, should nevertheless be considered from the true Red Cross angle, that is to say, they represent an appeal to the conscience of all men and especially of Governments.

The valuable information drawn from the discussions of the Working Party, and the comments submitted by the National Red Cross Societies, will enable the ICRC to prepare the version of the Draft Rules which will serve as a starting point for the discussions of the XIXth International Red Cross Conference. The new version will be printed and sent, probably in the early autumn, to National Societies and Governments taking part in the Conference, so that all concerned may have sufficient time to examine it. The ICRC hopes that the National Societies and Governments which will be represented at the supreme assembly of the Red Cross will give this text the same careful and profitable attention that was granted to the first version of the Draft Rules.

R.-J. W.

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RED CROSS PRINCIPLES

X

3. Voluntary Service

The Red Cross is an expression of private charity and a spirit of service ; it is an institution for the provision of voluntary relief.

The Red Cross was built up on a basis of voluntary service. Was not one of the first cares of Henry Dunant, when faced with the sufferings at Solferino, to awaken a sense of vocation, a desire to help, in women of the region? The movement was conceived from the first as a contribution by private charity to the relief of the evils which beset mankind, starting with war. Selfless service and spontaneous co-operation were counted upon from the very beginning, and the whole undertaking only appeared possible with the assistance of numerous volunteers ¹.

The voluntary service provided by the Red Cross has remained one of its most striking features. A clear picture of what it means is given in the movement's official texts. Thus the original Conference of 1863 which founded the Red Cross gave it the task of training "voluntary medical personnel" and of sending them to the battlefield. The conditions for the recognition of new Red Cross Societies stipulate that they must be accepted by their Governments as "Voluntary Aid Societies". The same demand is made in the League's principles. Finally, since 1906, the Geneva Convention has had a special

¹ Henry Dunant pointed this out as early as 1862 in his "A Memory of Solferino". "It is not mercenaries that are needed...", he wrote.

Article dealing with the personnel of " Voluntary Aid Societies ", who are placed on the same footing as the personnel of the army medical services, whom they assist. The above expression naturally includes National Cross Societies, which are the most important of the societies referred to ; since 1949 they have been expressly mentioned.

What does this notion of voluntary service imply? The word " voluntary " applied to a person, does not necessarily mean that he works without remuneration, but that he is working of his own free will, without being compelled to do so. In an army, volunteers are men who have enlisted of their own accord, without being called up by the authorities concerned, and also those who later volunteer to carry out some dangerous or difficult task. For the purposes of the Red Cross, the idea of voluntary service implies that such service is the result, not of compulsion, but of freely given adherence. This adherence may, however, take the form of an engagement involving, in its turn, obligations from which the volunteer cannot release himself : he has subscribed to them of his own free will, it is true, but he is nevertheless bound to respect their terms ; having once accepted the task, he cannot give it up or modify it as he thinks fit.

What really distinguishes a mercenary from a servant of the Red Cross, is that the former only enlists with a view to earning money, while the latter is above all concerned with the work to be done ¹.

As in the case of selflessness, the voluntary character of Red Cross action is directly linked with the fundamental principle of humanity : it is a means of putting it into practice. If the Red Cross is to fulfil its mission, it must inspire devotion and awaken a sense of vocation ; men and women imbued with a spirit of service, must come forward in large numbers

¹ That alone should ensure that nursing personnel receive the esteem and respect to which they are entitled but which is denied them in some countries where they are regarded as workers of an inferior grade, or even as servants.

and swell its ranks. Charity and a spirit of self-sacrifice are inseparable.

In a recent publication¹ Mr. Jean G. Lossier showed that service is above all a matter of love: "to serve means to give, to sacrifice part of oneself, part of what one is, of what one has, on behalf of others". Service is thus an act of faith: "one takes the risk of losing the whole benefit of one's sacrifice, of losing all one has staked, if one may put it so".

It is this individual, spontaneous spirit in which the Red Cross helps its fellow-men, that gives it its private character and enables it to supplement the assistance given by the public authorities. However well organized the official services of a State may be, they will never be able to deal with all requirements, meet all needs, guard against all misfortunes with the requisite tact and sympathy². It will always be necessary to fall back to some extent on the goodwill and generous aspirations of the public. The truth of this is recognized everywhere, even in the countries where authority tends to be centralized. The Red Cross is the leaven of individual charity; it organizes and groups goodwill and directs individual initiative into suitable channels. Its work is very often that of a pioneer or forerunner. It is essentially personal in its approach, not only to the victims whom it helps but also to those who lend it their assistance.

The Red Cross must therefore take care that the means it employs never make it lose sight of its ultimate purpose. And we do not mean one of the more or less utopian aims with which we like to adorn our undertakings with no cost to ourselves, but a very real purpose translated into terms of living reality. If the Red Cross were to lose the human touch, its direct contact with suffering, if it were to lose its voluntary character and become tied up with red tape, it would be like a flower which has been plucked and soon withers and dies. This danger, all the greater because it is not obvious, threatens

¹ *Sur l'Esprit de Service* — Studia philosophica, Vol. XII — Basle, 1953.

² What has become of St. Vincent de Paul's admirable venture? It is now simply public assistance with its paper forms, queues and pigeonholes!

nearly all the institutions of our epoch, especially when the have attained a high degree of development, when they are organized, with their own ranks and grades, when they are emancipated, in a word when they are an established part of the century. The machinery thus built up, having become an end in itself, will work and produce nothing, a great body with no eyes to see. It may be true that the duty produces the means, but it is also true that the means sometimes in its turn creates the duty. In this matter, the Red Cross can never be too vigilant. What use will admirable statutes, a balanced budget and a well-trained staff be to it, if it must lose its soul? Let it meditate on the old myth of Antaeus, and constantly draw new strength from the source from which it originally sprang.

Someone once said that to serve the Red Cross was, in certain respects, like taking vows¹. It is well to repeat that saying at a time when too many people who claim to serve the Red Cross are mainly concerned with making use of it. A man who is animated by a true spirit of service does not look for any reward other than the satisfaction he finds in the work he is doing. Nor does he expect any gratitude—for gratitude is very rarely encountered². But, to quote Lossier once again³, “acts of love bring unforeseeable returns”. As he pointed out, service permits a human being to demonstrate his freedom, to assert himself, and emerge from his loneliness; it is really an exchange⁴.

As we have seen, the institution is bound to make its achievements known, in order to obtain the donations on which it subsists, but there is no need for individual members of the movement to speak about their actions. The true Red Cross worker keeps in the background and his work remains anonymous

¹ Quoted by Jacques Chenevière — *Revue de Paris*, June 1946.

² Selfishness is not the only reason. Since suffering is abnormal and hope never dies in the heart of man, a person who is delivered from his misfortunes is inclined to regard this as being in the natural course of events.

³ *Op. cit.*

⁴ “My gesture in stretching out my hand is at one and the same time a gift and a supplication” (LOSSIER, *ibid.*).

as far as possible. He knows that credit in the eyes of the world often reflects a fall in real values. The greatness of the Red Cross—like military glory, though in a different way—is made up of innumerable cases of unknown heroism. Last but not least, the true Red Cross worker will never spare himself trouble: he will take infinite pains; for he is conscious of his grave responsibilities: that the life and health of human beings may be at stake.

The question arises here of the remuneration of Red Cross personnel. In order to cope with its many tasks, the institution must be able to count on voluntary contributions, not only in the form of money, but of work. It therefore asks for unpaid assistance, and enlists voluntary (unpaid) workers¹.

The advantages to the Red Cross of this unpaid labour are obvious: besides making it possible to economize, it is calculated to increase the institution's independence and raise its credit. Although it is not for the Red Cross to measure the moral value of the devoted service it inspires in different individuals, it is nevertheless true that it will find in the gratuitous service of its members a quality of enthusiasm which conforms to its ideals and will serve as an example.

There are, however, definite drawbacks to depending on unpaid labour when one is engaged on a long-term undertaking or when the work demands specialized technical knowledge. The words written on the subject by Gustave Moynier and Louis Appia in 1867 are still so true today that we do not think we can do better than reproduce them here: "There is something attractive about the idea of unpaid service, but the people who would accept such a disinterested position might not be those upon whom one could most count. The warm-hearted impulse which led them to subscribe to that condition is liable to be chilled by contact with reality, and they might end by tiring more quickly than one would have

¹ Originally, the word "voluntary" ("bénévole" in French) only meant: "done willingly, without constraint". But in its present connotation, it has recently acquired the sense of something done without remuneration. To avoid confusion the word "unpaid" will be used to express this meaning in the following paragraphs.

thought... With a system of unpaid service, not only would the Committees have no authority over their agents, but they would be under an obligation to the latter and would often be at a loss how to repay them ; they would owe them too much consideration and be in a poor position to refuse them the favours they might ask. Unpaid workers sometimes cost more than the others. The only formal reservation which we feel we should make in regard to the application of this principle concerns the members of the Committees themselves. They are too keenly interested in the success of the work, and too directly responsible for it, for there to be any fear of their enthusiasm flagging... They should not be remunerated, but that will not prevent the Committees from allowing them the out-of-pocket expenses necessary for carrying out their duties.”¹

It is not among the rich that one finds the greatest number of generous people ; but it is obviously impossible for everyone to offer his services free of charge. On the other hand, the Red Cross must obtain the qualified assistance it needs. Part of its regular staff will therefore be paid employees. As we saw above, services can still be voluntary even when they are paid for. A piece of work does not lose its essential merit simply because it provides the livelihood of the man who carries it out. The place in the movement occupied by each member of its staff does not depend on whether he draws a salary or is unpaid. There can be no upper or lower category based on that factor.

The very nature of the Red Cross movement demands that it should not apply the laws of supply and demand to members of its staff. It must permit them to live, not in luxury, but respectably. And they, for their part, moved by similar motives, cannot forget the nature of the institution they serve. The remunerative character of the work must always be a matter of secondary concern to them. But although the Red Cross must always—and to a greater extent than any other organization—take the social and human factor into account in its relations with those it employs, it must also beware of

¹ *La guerre et la charité*, p. 224 and seq.

letting too much solicitude affect the efficiency of its work ; that will always be the first consideration. Here, as in so many other spheres, it is all a question of proportion.

The essential point is that the assistance given to the Red Cross should remain voluntary. Whether the members of its staff are unpaid or paid is, after all, of secondary importance. Depending on the duties to be carried out, National Societies will have both permanent employees, who will be paid, and occasional unpaid helpers, like the voluntary ambulance workers who have received special training enabling them to give first aid in case of accidents or sickness. But, as Gustave Moynier and Louis Appia said, it is most desirable that the members of the Central Committees should continue, so far as possible, to be unpaid. The work will benefit enormously from this. Requests for funds carry far more weight when they are voiced by completely disinterested parties.

Lastly, as Professor Max Huber showed so clearly¹, the Red Cross ideal demands that each of its bodies should not be simply a group of unconnected elements, but a real working community "all of whose members are consciously striving towards a higher purpose common to them all, where each keeps his own personality, but nevertheless submits willingly to the common cause and, despite the existence of different grades—a necessity in any organization—treats those under his orders as colleagues". Each servant of the Red Cross, whatever post he fills, must be regarded as a member of this living, fraternal community, and not as a mere cog in an inhuman machine. In this way a team spirit can be built up, and everyone will willingly help one another and see the good qualities of his colleagues before their faults, working joyfully together with the enthusiasm engendered by combined effort.

JEAN S. PICTET

(To be continued.)

¹ *Au service du CICR*, Geneva, 1944.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

News Items

In response to an invitation, M. F. Siordet, Vice-President of the ICRC, gave an address to the Académie de Médecine in Paris, on April 17, on the subject of the application and supervision of the Geneva Conventions of 1949. His speech was published in the "Bulletin de l'Académie nationale de Médecine".

* * *

Professor P. Carry, Member of the ICRC, M. R. Gallopin, Executive Director, and M. P. Kuhne visited London on May 24 to attend a meeting of the Executive Committee for the application of the provisions of Article 16 of the Peace Treaty with Japan.

It will be remembered that this Committee (appointed by the States signatory to the Treaty which benefit under the said Article) is composed of representatives of the United Kingdom, Pakistan and the Netherlands.

* * *

In order to execute the mandate entrusted to it by virtue of Article 16 of the San Francisco Treaty, the ICRC must fix how much of the funds received from the Japanese Government is to be allocated to the countries which are beneficiaries under Article 16, for the purpose of compensating their nationals who

suffered undue hardships during their captivity in Japan. In accordance with the decision taken by the beneficiary States, the amounts to be distributed will be proportionate to the total number of nationals of each State who were prisoners of war in Japanese hands.

As we are aware, in order to make this first allocation, the ICRC requested the States concerned to produce lists of the former prisoners of war. At present most of the lists have been received, and for the past few months have been checked by the ICRC departments concerned. It has been ascertained, unfortunately, that the lists received from each country (which are usually composed of tens of thousands of names) are not entirely correct, either because some names have been repeated, or through the inclusion of persons who are not beneficiaries under Article 16, whose names have to be deleted.

In view of these circumstances, the ICRC has been obliged to make a thorough check of all the lists received, basing its work, in particular, on the information contained in the Central Agency's card-indexes, and by making use of IBM machines which automatically reveal any repetition of names. In addition, the ICRC instructed its delegates in certain countries to undertake the checking of names in co-operation with the national authorities concerned.

We need hardly say that this work takes considerable time, and is a cause of further delay in executing the stipulations of Article 16. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that it serves a useful purpose, since it is likely to result in a considerable difference between the first estimates and the final totals, and will enable the ICRC to distribute the funds available on the most equitable basis possible, between the various countries.

* * *

M. W. Michel and M. E. de Weck, who left Geneva at the end of March, are continuing their mission to the Far East. After visiting New Delhi, Pyongyang, Peking, Seoul and Tokyo, the International Committee's representatives went on to Hong Kong. From there M. Michel proceeded to Djakarta, to visit the Indonesian Red Cross. M. de Weck received instructions

to visit Manila and Saïgon, in order to continue the checking of the lists of Philippine and Viet Nam nationals who are likely to receive the compensation provided for in Article 16 of the Peace Treaty with Japan.

* * *

On April 24, M. A. Durand, delegate of the ICRC in Hanoi, handed over to the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam the pharmaceutical products and textiles donated by the Red Cross Societies of Canada, India and Luxemburg, and the Red Lion and Sun of Iran. He also presented that Society with a gift of milk powder from the International Sponsorship of War Orphans, and quinine from the ICRC.

These relief supplies, of a total weight of 5 tons, represented 57,000 Swiss francs in value.

* * *

Following the severe earthquake which occurred last March in the Lebanon, and caused the destruction of over two hundred villages, the ICRC sent 850 blankets and 50 sleeping-bags to the Red Cross of that country. The value of the gift amounted to 12,000 Swiss francs.

* * *

M. D. de Traz who, as the special representative of the International Committee, left in November last for the Middle East, has just returned to Geneva after seven months' absence. During his long mission which led him to Egypt, Israel, Syria, the Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Iran, M. de Traz visited the authorities and National Societies of those various countries and met many persons with whom he discussed questions relating to the work of the ICRC in the Middle East. Among other subjects discussed on those occasions were those of the dissemination of the Geneva Conventions and the studies now being pursued by the ICRC for the purpose of the development of humanitarian law for a more efficient protection of the civilian population.

*For more immediate and practical purposes, M. de Traz applied himself, in particular, to finding a solution for the problems confronting the Red Cross because of the tension existing between Israel and the Arab States. As already stated in the *Revue internationale*¹, the delegate of the ICRC was given all necessary authority to visit military and civilian prisoners in Israeli, Egyptian and Syrian hands, to converse, without witnesses, with their representatives, or their officers, and to take with him, on leaving, messages for transmission to their families.*

* * *

We know that, during his journey in the Middle East, M. de Traz visited Cyprus where, in agreement with the British authorities, he was able to visit persons under detention as a result of recent events. He handed over, in the name of the ICRC, for the detained persons' benefit, a sum of 10,000 Swiss francs for the purchase of toilet requisites, tobacco, biscuits, etc. This gift was shared between the various places of internment.

* * *

The action started by the ICRC in December 1953 in favour of tuberculous refugees from Trieste and their families is now drawing to a close.

From the medical point of view, this action has produced the results hoped for. Out of a hundred patients, only fourteen cases of an incurable nature, or which require long treatment, still remain in the sanatorium. Four organisations have undertaken to provide for their material needs: Caritas catholica, the Commission for Orthodox Refugees, the Œuvre suisse d'entraide ouvrière and the Mouvement chrétien pour la paix. These organisations have, moreover, agreed to take care of four relatives of the remaining refugees. Hence, there are no more tuberculous patients in Leysin under International Committee's responsibility.

Furthermore, the Morzine centre where members of the patients'

¹ See *News Items*, February and April 1956.

families and several discharged patients were accommodated, is being closed down. During the past few months numerous refugees have been able to emigrate, or have been resettled in France or Switzerland. Three have gone to Belgium where they have been provided with accommodation and employment by the Entraide socialiste Belge. Following the negotiations entered into by the New Zealand Red Cross and M. L. Bossard, ICRC delegate in New Zealand, seven refugees have been allowed to settle in that country, although they have no relatives living there; three others have joined their families in Australia. Two families, representing altogether eight persons, have been able to settle in France, and three former patients who served apprenticeships in the Centre de rééducation professionnelle, Nantaux sur Lunain, with the financial help of the Aide Suisse à l'Europe, have left that institution to take up the work for which they were trained. Three refugees are on the point of leaving for Holland. We may also mention fourteen former patients whose emigration is delayed on medical grounds, and who have been temporarily resettled in Switzerland. They are under the responsibility of Caritas catholica and the Commission for Orthodox Refugees, which will look after them and provide for their needs until the negotiations being pursued by the ICRC, on their behalf, with the countries of emigration, have reached a successful issue.

In conclusion, we may say that the ICRC has still to deal with the emigration formalities in connection with four families, that is to say fifteen refugees altogether, who are awaiting, in France, the authority to proceed to countries overseas. Eleven of these persons have been given accommodation and employment and are self-supporting. It is to be hoped that a similar arrangement can soon be made for the four remaining refugees who have not yet taken up a normal life pending their resettlement in a country of their choice.

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RED CROSS PRINCIPLES

XI

4. *Auxiliarity*¹

The Red Cross cooperates with the public powers.

The modern conception of the social order assigns the general task of relieving distress primarily to the State. It alone is responsible for the fate of the beings committed to its care. Power implies duties. Besides, the State alone has sufficient authority and resources to cope with a task of this magnitude.

In wartime there is sometimes a tendency to regard the Red Cross as responsible for the condition of certain victims of events—political prisoners, for example, or those deprived of the safeguards of fair trial and defence—as though it were actually to blame for their misfortunes. Nothing could be more unjust. People who adopt such an attitude are usually trying to clear themselves or preparing to meet grievances. If the Powers assume the right to make war, they must bear all its consequences. The Red Cross is only trying to alleviate the ills brought about by others, who are themselves morally bound to relieve them or prevent their occurrence. The intervention of the Red Cross does not free anyone from his obligations. Its devotion to duty must not lead to its becoming a scapegoat for the faults of others.

The Red Cross cannot, as we have said, undertake alone

¹ We are consciously using a neologism here, to indicate the complementary character of the Red Cross. Words of this family are derived from the Latin verb *augere*, which means to "increase" or "add to".

an immense task beyond its capacity. Like any other charitable institution working in the vast field of human affliction, it can only make a contribution proportionate to its strength and resources. It has therefore aimed, in this field, at making good the deficiencies existing under present arrangements, at filling in, in one way or another, the gaps left by the existing social system. We have seen that its contribution is one of private charity and individual initiative. That in itself makes it useful, one might say indispensable. Although the public authorities have vast resources, they are not in a position to relieve all misfortunes, nor, in particular, can they create between the helper and the helped the community of thought, which adds so much, or the generous impulses and warmth of feeling which only arise from personal contact and assistance freely given. Besides, the best-organized services may sometimes be overburdened as a result of exceptional circumstances. There is therefore a place for spontaneous, disinterested action based on charity, as well as for official government action based on justice. That is why the Red Cross can and must assist the public authorities and sometimes, in so far as its means allow, take their place. But the auxiliary character of the Red Cross is not a fundamental principle based on its essential aims. It is the practical outcome of the conditions existing in the field in which it works.

The National Red Cross Societies are, first and foremost, the authorized auxiliaries of the Army Medical Service. They were created in the first instance for that sole purpose. Although it is not their only function today, or even in many cases their most important one, it is still of great significance.

Figuring as it does in all the institution's basic documents, there is hardly any other organic rule more meticulously framed or less open to discussion. Before an organization can be recognized by the Geneva Committee as a National Red Cross Society and so become a member of the world-wide brotherhood of the International Red Cross, it must be accepted by the Government of its country as being auxiliary to the Army Medical Service. That is an absolute condition. If an association

were unwilling or incapable of undertaking such duties in case of need, or not authorized to do so by its Government, it could not become a Red Cross Society ¹.

The role of Red Cross Societies as auxiliaries to Army Medical Services has caused them to be mentioned in Treaty Law ; thanks to it they are granted immunity on the battlefield and have the right to wear the Red Cross emblem there. An Article of the Geneva Convention ² has provided Red Cross Societies with their fundamental legal basis. It gives members of the Societies the same status as army medical personnel, both being placed on exactly the same footing ; they enjoy the same protection, provided they are employed on the same duties and are subject to military law.

Everything we have said here relates to the assistance given by a Red Cross Society to the Medical Service of its own country. But the Geneva Convention lays down that a Society from a neutral country may do the same thing for a belligerent, the conditions governing such assistance being similar, as we shall see below.

It should not be forgotten that although National Red Cross Societies are by far the most important bodies assisting the Medical Services, they are not always the only ones. Other recognized aid societies giving assistance of the same kind exist in certain countries ; the oldest are the Knights of Malta and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. States could not give the Red Cross an exclusive right to provide voluntary relief for the wounded, and so deny themselves in advance all other help ; they could not do so for the simple reason that the work is voluntary. It would have been wrong to discourage other offers of service, which can never be too numerous in time of war and might have been intended to apply to different spheres, to the religious field for example. These other societies, and the Medical Service itself, will be entitled to use the Red Cross sign when engaged on this work, in spite of their not belonging to the

¹ An exception is, however, made in the case of countries which have no armed forces. This will be explained further on.

² Geneva Convention of 1929, Article 10 ; First Geneva Convention of 1949, Article 26.

Red Cross movement ¹. In such cases co-operation between several different organizations and co-ordination of effort in the giving of care to the wounded and sick will be harder to arrange. A greater measure of goodwill will therefore be required from all concerned ; for in this domain more than in any other a perfect mutual understanding is essential to the success of the work. Such an understanding will be facilitated by the common submission to military orders and discipline, which the Geneva Convention wisely prescribes.

Although Red Cross Societies were originally created to serve as the natural helpers of the Army Medical Service, and for no other purpose, their exclusive assignment to that function was not maintained as time went on. We see two main reasons for this. The first is that National Red Cross Societies were not long in attaining their original objective ; they were fairly quickly organized in a manner which enabled them to carry out their task ; and, what is more, their initiative had the effect of inaugurating a thoroughgoing reform of the official services. The very creation of relief societies had been in the nature of a protest ; that protest was heard, and in a number of countries the Army Medical Service attained a degree of development which made the assistance of the Red Cross less and less necessary.

In the second place the impossibility of leaving Red Cross personnel in a debilitating state of inactivity was soon recognized. It was not felt possible to assemble a host of workers and hold them ready to meet a contingency which might not arise, when there was so much distress to be relieved. Besides, Red Cross personnel had to be trained and given the opportunity of gaining as much practical experience as possible.

The energies of the Red Cross were therefore redirected to some extent towards what is termed peacetime work, that is charitable works on behalf of the general public. This tendency

¹ The League's principles state that " a Red Cross Society should not share the Red Cross name or emblem ". This recommendation obviously does not apply to Societies auxiliary to the Medical Service, which are entitled to make use of the sign by virtue of the Geneva Convention and their recognition by their Government.

increased after the First World War, when it was believed that the spectre of war had disappeared for ever, and that was how the League of Red Cross Societies came into being. It must be admitted that the Red Cross would not have attained its present universal scope and popularity if it had continued to confine itself to assisting war casualties.

Red Cross Societies began to run hospitals, nursing schools and day nurseries ; they tried to raise standards of hygiene and to bring relief to the victims of natural disasters ; they engaged in social welfare work to an increasing extent, training special workers in this field or setting up, in the home country, for example, or in the colonies, organizations which take an interest in, assist and reeducate the infirm, persons who are detained, orphans and, in general, people whose way of life is particularly difficult or dangerous, such as seamen or miners. In carrying out all these tasks, the Societies assist the public authorities, either because they have been granted express authority, or even an exclusive right to do so, by the Government, or else through the very fact that, although acting in a private capacity, they are relieving the official services of duties in the public interest which those services would otherwise have to carry out.

Since the last world conflict there have, happily, been countries which have no army and have decided not to have one. This has made it necessary to modify the conditions for the recognition of Red Cross Societies. According to the new text, in States which do not maintain armed forces a society may become a member of the International Red Cross if it is recognized by its Government as being a " Voluntary Aid Society auxiliary to the public authorities and acting for the benefit of the civilian population " ¹.

There are other spheres too in which the Red Cross is asked to lend its support. At the end of the last century military operations were still exclusively the concern of the armed forces, but since then the civilian population has been involved to a steadily increasing extent. Nowadays civilians suffer as a result

¹ This might, in particular, involve collaboration with the Department of Health.

of war as much or even more than soldiers do. This tragic situation opens up a wide field to Red Cross Societies, a field in which they will find as much scope for keenness and efficiency as in their activities on behalf of wounded members of the forces. We are thinking, among other things, of the work of bringing in and looking after air raid casualties, of the evacuation of refugees, and arrangements for billeting children. For all this, close collaboration with the competent government services is essential.

Another task which the Red Cross did not originally consider to be part of its duty, but later accepted, is assistance to prisoners of war. The help it gives under this heading is very different from that given to the wounded ; it is largely a matter of sending parcels of relief stores. But here again we have a case of intervention by voluntary aid societies which is sanctioned by international law¹ and involves co-operation with the State. Red Cross Societies have also sometimes been asked by their Governments to set up the national Prisoners of War Information Bureaux for which provision is made in the Geneva Convention. An even more recent development has been the assumption by the Societies of a similar role on behalf of civilians in the power of the enemy. This has been supplemented by tracing work and the transmission of messages for the benefit of civilians in general².

We thus see that in carrying out their principal tasks in the humanitarian field, Red Cross Societies cooperate with official bodies—as a rule more important than themselves—pursuing similar aims within a given sector.

The Red Cross does not confine itself, however, to assisting those who are giving aid. It also endeavours to help the people whom no one else is helping, thus putting into practice its ideal

¹ Second Geneva Convention of 1949, Article 78 ; Third Geneva Convention of 1949, Article 125.

² During the Second World War, Red Cross Societies exchanged more than twenty-five million family messages through the intermediary of the International Committee, thus taking the place of the postal services, which were completely interrupted between the belligerent countries.

of pure charity. Its help may also be given to people in whom the State takes no interest or those subjected to measures of repression. In such cases the Red Cross is no longer an auxiliary in actual practice, but it remains one, to some extent, from the moral standpoint, since it fills a gap which would otherwise remain unfilled, replacing the public authorities at one point and carrying out a complementary function.

The auxiliary character of the Red Cross demands, lastly, that it should leave other organizations to act alone if they are fully qualified to do so and it is in the interest of those helped. It is true that the Red Cross has its own specific role to fill ; but it in no way claims to exercise a monopoly in the whole philanthropic field. It undertakes or accepts a charitable mission when its intervention is necessary, provided there is no one who can perform the task better. A failure of those responsible to cope with the situation may also lead it to take their place for the time being. But once the difficulty has been overcome, it stands aside and resumes its normal role, for fear of providing the official services with an excuse for inaction and encouraging them to shirk their responsibilities.

5. Autonomy

The Red Cross must have a sufficient degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the public powers.

When studying the more general picture in the first part of our survey, we saw that the Red Cross must be independent of all authorities and all politics. We must now consider the practical problem of the relations which should exist between the Red Cross and the public authorities, and the autonomy the organisation must enjoy.

The last chapter made it clear that the nature of the duties which fall to Red Cross Societies imply continuous collaboration

between the Societies and the authorities. The auxiliary character of the Red Cross in itself demands, and fully justifies, close liaison with the government services, and what is more, such liaison is usually a great help to the Society in its work. Besides, Societies themselves carry out duties which are in the public interest and, in order to exist, they must be approved by their Governments. It would, finally, be inconceivable for them to be a State within a State, or an alien body within the nation.

On the other hand, the Red Cross has world-wide aims, certain aspects of which are supranational ; it cannot therefore be subordinate to one particular authority. Red Cross Societies are private, voluntary bodies ; they are their own masters ; their future is in their own hands. They cannot become mere cogs in the nation's administrative machine ; for there would then no longer be any reason for them to have their own distinct identity. They must above all beware of the intrusion of politics into an institution which is pre-eminently non-political.

The Red Cross is therefore at one and the same time a private organisation and a public service. It is an independent charitable militia which gives the Government assistance in a given sphere.

The remarkable clearness with which the founders of the Red Cross saw the situation must be recognized. They perceived this dual character from the first. At the Conference of relief societies in August 1864, for example, Gustave Moynier pointed out " the difficulty of reconciling two things which appear to be naturally incompatible, namely the freedom from control of private charity and the necessity of making it conform to the requirements of military discipline in the field ".

The contrast between its private character and its connection with the State is one of the most original features of the Red Cross, but it is by no means an insuperable obstacle. One cannot even speak of a contradiction. What is true, however, is that the proper operation of the institution and its harmonious development depend on a just balance being maintained between the two tendencies.

RED CROSS PRINCIPLES

The inherent autonomy of Red Cross Societies has been a recognized principle from the outset. As early as 1863, the Conference which provided the Red Cross with its constitutional charter laid down that each National Society was to "organize itself in the manner which seemed to it most useful and appropriate". Today, the conditions for the recognition of new Societies stipulate that a Red Cross Society must be "an institution whose autonomous status allows it to operate in conformity with the fundamental principles of the Red Cross". This autonomy is also mentioned in the League's principles and in various resolutions adopted at Red Cross Conferences.

But that is not all : Governments have themselves sanctioned this requirement. As we have seen, the voluntary character of Red Cross Societies is taken for granted in the Geneva Conventions, which state expressly that their goods are to be regarded as private property. The revised version of 1949 recognizes that even in the presence of an Occupying Power, the Societies are entitled to be constituted and to act "in conformity with the principles laid down by the International Red Cross Conferences"¹. Moreover, the General Assembly of the United Nations proposed, in a resolution encouraging Member States to help Red Cross Societies, that their "independent voluntary nature be respected in all circumstances"² and, quite recently, the International Conference of American States recommended that Governments should accord National Red Cross Societies the greatest possible measure of autonomy and collaboration³.

¹ First Convention, Article 44 ; Fourth Convention, Article 63. According to the latter Article : " Subject to temporary and exceptional measures imposed for urgent reasons of security by the Occupying Power, recognized National Red Cross Societies shall be able to pursue their activities in accordance with Red Cross principles, as defined by the International Red Cross Conferences... the Occupying Power may not require any changes in the personnel or structure of these Societies, which would prejudice the aforesaid activities..."

² Resolution 55 of 19 November 1946.

³ Organization of American States, Xth International Conference of American States, Caracas, 1954.

We said, at the beginning of the present chapter that the Red Cross must be sufficiently independent vis-à-vis the public powers. What exactly does that mean? When can one consider that the degree of autonomy achieved by a National Red Cross Society is sufficient? The reply to this question is given in the passage quoted above from the Conditions for Recognition: it is when a Society is free to "operate in conformity with the fundamental principles of the Red Cross"¹. That one sentence says everything. If what it proclaims is in fact achieved, the Red Cross Society will be able to make its own decisions and remain faithful to its ideals. It will be able to open its ranks to everyone and be at everyone's service. It will be able to make the voice of humanity heard. It will be able to show that it is disinterested and impartial. It will be able to be a real part of the International Red Cross and follow the principles of that universal movement.

The autonomy of the Red Cross will win it the confidence and understanding of the general public, of those it assists and those who give it their support. The mere fact that a Government represents a majority² and is bound to be subject to the influence of parties and factions means that its actions may not always be completely impartial. Any body which owes allegiance to a political party is in a poor position to act in the interests of the entire nation. The Red Cross, for its part, must be able to reach everyone who is suffering, even if the State decides to leave them without care or to exclude them from the community. The Red Cross is not interested in the original cause of their misfortunes. It simply notes that they exist and finds a remedy. Governments may come and go; but the Red Cross is always the same.

In wartime the Red Cross must remain unaffected by the spirit of war which spreads like a flame over the whole country and which the authorities vie with each other in stirring up. It must be free from every passion, other than its charitable

¹ The text adopted by the League of Red Cross Societies employs the formula: "maintain the integrity of its aims in accordance with Red Cross Principles". This wording is also satisfactory.

² When it does not simply represent a minority.

zeal. If it is called upon to serve abroad, it is important that its purely humanitarian character should be obvious to everyone and that its action should not be regarded as mere propaganda. Whenever a Red Cross Society serves as a channel through which its Government distributes relief or other benefits in foreign countries, it must be careful never to become the instrument of a State which seeks to maintain its political influence in the region concerned by winning support and goodwill.

In case of civil war or disturbances within a country, it is particularly necessary for the Red Cross to remain calm and collected. The National Society must set an example under such circumstances, as Red Cross Conferences have not failed to point out. Being a rare element of union in a world of discord, it can intervene between brothers who hate one another, it can gain their confidence, win acceptance for the principle of equality among men and, by so doing, save lives. In this way, it will also help to lessen the bitterness which poisons the aftermath of wars, and so hasten the return to real peace. Even when an open struggle has not taken place in a country, the Society always has a highly commendable duty to carry out—that of visiting and if necessary assisting persons against whom coercive measures are taken for political reasons, and ensuring that the rules of humanity are respected. The atmosphere of impartiality and neutrality which it brings with it will enable it to achieve its object without raising the question on an international level. Needless to say autonomy is indispensable for all these tasks.

In modern times one sees the State extending its control over a wider field in almost every country ; it interferes with private interests, and even enters into the sphere of the intellect. It often strives to mobilize charitable organisations and we must not be blind to the fact that it will be more difficult now than in the past for Red Cross Societies to preserve their independence. They must nevertheless defend it with all their energy, constantly on the alert: their real, fundamental existence depends on it. During the upheavals which accompanied the Second World War the disastrous consequences to a National Society of its subordination to a political party were

clearly seen. And is it not heart-rending to see the whole directing staff renewed in so many countries whenever there is a change of government? ¹ For a Society is thus liable to be decimated and lose its leaders at a time when events demand impartial, effective and rapid action on its part.

Can the leading members of a Red Cross Society also take an active part in public life? The official regulations are silent on this point and so are the resolutions of the International Conferences. What is essential, however, is that the Society should strictly apply the fundamental principles of the Red Cross; that it should lend its assistance without discrimination to everyone who needs it. If the leading members of the Society can carry out their humanitarian mission with complete impartiality, without being in any way influenced by their political opinions, it would be unjust to reproach them for their rôle outside the Red Cross. Members of the Central Committee often devote only a small part of their time to the Society and have leisure to engage in other pursuits. It is to be hoped, however, that if they can, they will choose a field of activity which is not connected with politics. For although there is no incompatibility in theory, there is some advantage too in keeping up appearances and it is well to remove any factor which might shake the confidence which all classes of the population should have in the Red Cross.

What is, in actual fact, the influence of the public powers on the Red Cross, and by what means is it exercised?

As we know, the delegates of sixteen States, gathered together unofficially, founded the Red Cross in 1863. Since that time Governments have always been invited to take part on a footing of equality with member Societies in the International Red Cross Conference, the institution's highest deliberative authority. They thus have very nearly as many votes as the Red Cross itself—which is truly one of the strangest features of the institution. But it must be acknowledged that they have

¹ On the other hand, during a recent internal conflict in Latin America, the National Red Cross Society remained wholly unchanged and retained the confidence of both the contending parties. This happy circumstance deserves to be emphasized.

never taken advantage of the situation. A distinct tendency on the part of certain government representatives to abstain from interfering in what they regard as purely Red Cross matters has been noted during the last few decades. On the other hand, it seems difficult to maintain that States are bound by the decisions of the Conference, in view of the fact that it has no diplomatic or intergovernmental standing.

In the previous chapter we discussed the role which National Red Cross Societies play as auxiliaries to the Army Medical Service. Under the Geneva Convention, the personnel of the Societies only benefit by immunity if they carry out the same duties as members of the official medical services and are "subject to military laws and regulations". This means in practice that Red Cross personnel will be temporarily incorporated in the medical service and placed under its orders. But incorporation does not mean identification, and there is nothing in the Convention to imply that relief personnel must form part of the armed forces. In most countries voluntary relief personnel retain their status as civilians, or at all events enjoy a special status and wear a different uniform. This solution appears to us a very good one, for it enables the Red Cross to preserve its individual character.

Red Cross Societies carry out public duties ; they also entertain relations with other countries. It is clear, therefore, that they must be accorded a privileged position. They are often given State subsidies, or various facilities, such as exemption from taxes, free transport, exemption from customs duty, or a monopoly in one field or another. And since a favour is seldom granted without some return—since nothing, in fact, is given "for nothing"—the more generous the authorities show themselves to be, the more inclined they are to try to exercise some degree of supervision. This may take various forms, the simplest merely consisting in periodical inspections which allow the Government to ensure, for instance, that the Society enrolls the necessary staff and maintains sufficient equipment, or that its finances are sound and properly managed.

On the other hand, the State often aims at exerting a more direct and effective influence over the National Society. In

many countries the statutes of the Red Cross must, by law, be submitted to the Government for approval, and the Government reserves certain leading posts for its own nominees. Sometime the President or Chairman of the Society is chosen by the Head of the State; in countries with monarchies, it is customary for the Royal family to be associated with the Red Cross, either by occupying an honorary post or by according the Society their patronage.

It is even more common to find the public authorities playing some part in the actual composition of the Society's managing bodies—particularly of its Central Committee: representatives of the departments concerned may automatically be members of the Central Committee, the Government may appoint a proportion of its members, or may merely have the right to propose or veto the names of persons who are presented as candidates for election.

Study of the statutes of different National Red Cross Societies shows that a system of complete autonomy, in which all the office holders and all the members of the Central Committee are freely elected by the General Assembly, is exceptional. The complete opposite, in which the State is entitled to and, in fact, holds the majority of the seats, is also rare. In most countries, an intermediate solution is adopted, the Government controlling less than half the seats.

It is true that statutes are not everything, The autonomy of a Society will depend on innumerable factors, many of which cannot be checked. It would be necessary to take part in the life of each National Red Cross, in order to measure the true extent of its independence. For in a case where the Government nominates a number of the members of a Society's Central Committee, its representatives may receive no further instructions from the public authorities and be left free to act according to their own judgment. On the other hand, a Society whose statutes disclose no apparent interference on the part of the State, may in fact be subjected to so much indirect pressure that it is for all practical purposes under government control.

Nevertheless, as we shall see in the next chapter, one of the best guarantees of a Society's independence is a democratic form of organization and recruitment.

RED CROSS PRINCIPLES

It is also important that it should depend for its funds, in part at least, on individual voluntary subscriptions. A Society which could not count on receiving funds from any private source and had all its needs covered by the State, would run the risk of soon having to obey a will other than its own. The Leagues' principles accordingly recommend that Red Cross Societies should not accept funds from the State unless they are assured of nevertheless retaining their independence.

JEAN S. PICTET

(To be continued.)

REVUE
INTERNATIONALE
DE LA
CROIX-ROUGE

SUPPLEMENT

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RED CROSS PRINCIPLES

XII

6. Multitudinism¹

Membership of a National Red Cross Society must be open to all the citizens of the country concerned. The Society must be organized on a democratic basis.

Under this heading we shall deal in turn with three notions : indiscriminate enrolment, multitudinism in the strict sense of the word, and democratic organization.

The principle of indiscriminate enrolment appears in the original " conditions for recognition " of new Red Cross Societies, drawn up at the end of the 19th century. It is expressed as follows in the most recent version of the " conditions " : " The Society shall not withhold membership from any of its nationals, whoever they may be, on grounds of race, sex, class, religion or political opinions ". Similarly, we read in the fundamental principles of the League that " Red Cross Societies are ... public organizations " and that a Society should take all possible steps to ensure that its membership " is open to all citizens ".

¹ *Multitudinism* is defined in Cassel's New English Dictionary as " the doctrine that the welfare of the many is of higher importance than that of the individual ". It is used throughout this chapter in a more general sense, to express everything which, in the words of the author, " links the Red Cross with the multitude ". It corresponds to the neologism *multitudinisme* used in the French text.

As the wording of the first passage quoted above shows quite clearly, this principle of indiscriminate enrolment does not mean that a Red Cross Society must necessarily grant membership to all the citizens of the country without exception. What is forbidden is to withhold membership for reasons of a "discriminatory nature", that is reasons based on considerations which have nothing to do with the institution and its efficient running. No one can deny a Society's right to refuse to accept individuals as members if they are dangerous or corrupt, but it would be wrong to debar them from membership simply because they belonged to a given race, class, religion or political party.

The right to get rid of undesirables is not so important in the case of the rank and file of certain Societies whose members acquire that status by paying a modest annual subscription, nothing else being asked of them ¹. But it is of greater significance when the persons concerned occupy responsible posts, and in such cases it is not only their respectability but also their efficiency which must be considered. Positions which demand special knowledge—medical knowledge, for example—obviously cannot be filled by incompetent people.

Indiscriminate enrolment allows all social, political and religious circles to be represented, and so excludes sectarianism and a partisan spirit. It ensures that there is confidence in the Society both inside and outside the country. It is the best antidote to favouritism.

One can see here the profound difference in the scale of values between the fundamental and the organic principles. While it is important for the Red Cross ranks to be open to everyone, the main point is that it should bestow its benefits without distinction on all those who need them. We are concerned there with the institution's ultimate purpose and not merely with the means of achieving it.

We now come to a second notion : that of multitudinism in the strict sense of the term. We have seen that the Red Cross

¹ In such cases enrolling members is merely a matter of collecting subscriptions.

must not reject those who wish to join its ranks. But that is not enough : it should enrol the greatest possible number of members, try to establish itself on a very wide basis, and win the masses to its cause. The Red Cross must be a conquering force. " Unity is strength " is a national maxim ; and what is true of a nation is also true of an institution. Relief action will be more effective if all men of goodwill lend their hands to the task ; that is obvious. But there is, of course, no reason for the Red Cross to arrange deliberately for the proportional representation, in the Society, of the various trends of opinion which exist in the country, or to try itself to establish a balance between the different sections of the population.

We have not made this idea one of the organic principles, because it rests on purely practical requirements. It is nevertheless a fact that if its action is to reach everywhere, and everyone, the Red Cross must be organized on popular lines. It is not an organization run by the privileged few for the benefit of the outcasts of fortune, by one class on behalf of another. Every human being should have the right to give, and not merely to receive. The Red Cross must therefore draw its members from all classes, and its leaders must be able to come from any milieu. But in choosing them what will always count will be their personal qualities and not the fact that they represent one trend of opinion or another.

Such considerations assume particular importance in countries where the native population and another more advanced population live side by side. It is highly desirable that the original inhabitants of the country should be associated to the maximum possible extent with the work of the Red Cross and, so far as their stage of development allows, allowed to form part of its working staff. Having thus gained the confidence of the native population, the Red Cross will be able to penetrate to the most remote regions, explain its purpose and spirit, and spread the benefits of modern hygiene.

But that is not all : in the event of such nations being emancipated, they will not be able to count on anyone but themselves ; they must therefore be capable of carrying on the work on their own ; otherwise it might soon cease. Lastly,

should a war unfortunately break out between the original inhabitants and the newcomers, it is imperative that humanitarian principles should be recognized by both sides, that victims of the events should be cared for, that a foot-bridge at least should still bridge the gulf between the contending parties.

The third implication is that Red Cross Societies must organize themselves on democratic lines. This requirement, formerly a tacit one, has now been expressed as follows by the League: "It is essential that a Red Cross Society should be organized on a truly democratic basis".

This solution is in true conformity with the equal treatment accorded by the Red Cross to all men. Besides, a National Society is made up of individual men and women; its existence depends very largely on the common effort of voluntary helpers and disinterested subscribers. The fact that such people can influence its fortunes and, by delegating their powers, take part in the management of its affairs, will provide the Society with the surest guarantee of its autonomy vis-à-vis the authorities, and enable it to remain the master of its own actions.

In speaking of democracy we are obviously only doing so on the analogy of a political system which only exists in its pure form in very few countries, if it exists at all¹. Furthermore, the structure of a private organisation cannot be modelled on that of a State. Since Red Cross Societies are, so to speak, the reflection of the nation which saw their birth, their constitutional system varies appreciably from one case to another. The essential thing is the democratic character of the organization. What is important is that the prevailing will of the Society's members should be able to find expression—that its general assembly should have certain powers, in particular that of electing the managing committee or at all events the majority of the latter's members.

All we have said above applies to Red Cross Societies, but it cannot of course refer to the International Committee. The latter is not an executive body and its credit rests on its moral

¹ In most countries a citizen merely has the right to elect Members of Parliament.

authority on a world-wide level ; there is therefore no need for it to be constituted in accordance with the same rules as the Societies. It has, in actual fact, chosen the method of recruitment which best suits the work it has to do, namely that of co-optation. Experience has shown that this system is particularly suitable to its role as a neutral agent in time of war and as the guardian of a doctrine. It has been recognized, after prolonged discussion at international assemblies, that the Geneva Committee could not carry out its mission if its membership were based on a system of proportional representation and it were thus subject to parliamentary instability.

On the other hand, the International Red Cross and the League are organized on democratic lines, all the National Societies being regarded as equals, as we shall see in a moment.

(To be continued.)

JEAN S. PICTET.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

Return from a mission to the Middle East

Miss A. Pfirter, Head of the Nursing Section of the International Committee of the Red Cross, has returned to Geneva after an extensive tour, including visits to Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Iraq, on which she left last January. She has brought back with her many interesting impressions of the humanitarian work being done in that vast area of the world, of which we are able to give only a brief outline in the following notes.

Her main object was to study, on the spot, the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' training of voluntary medical personnel, and in the course of her tour it became clear that this question is being handled in widely differing ways in the various Middle Eastern countries. Some countries, like Egypt, adapt their ideas to the needs of the moment. In Cairo, for instance, Miss Pfirter witnessed an exercise organized by the Ladies' Committee of the Egyptian Red Crescent, the first of its kind, which took the form of a mock air-raid; first aid for the wounded and sick, and arrangements for their evacuation were studied in collaboration with the Junior Red Crescent.

In Cairo she also had the opportunity of visiting a « rehabilitation » centre for invalids which is soon to be opened, one of the most modern to be seen. It comprises several inter-communicating buildings where all the processes of rehabilitation,

from the fitting of artificial limbs to vocational reeducation, will be carried out by qualified workers and technicians of the Social Service.

In all the countries visited, Miss Pfirter received a most cordial welcome, since the question which it was her main purpose to study is one of great current interest: the training of voluntary medical personnel is one of the more important tasks the National Societies are attempting, but also one of the most difficult, in view of the prevailing social conditions and the absence of any effective preparation for dealing with war-time problems. Miss Pfirter had the privilege of meeting Ministers of Health, officers of military medical services, directors of welfare institutions, deans of the faculties of medicine, officials of the medical and medico-social services, and ex-servicemen's associations.

Through visits to hospitals and dispensaries in each country, she was also able to see something of the training of professional medical personnel. The successful work carried out by private welfare organizations which she was able to observe in many different places showed that, there as elsewhere, such institutions are very advanced. Rehabilitation centres for physically handicapped and deficient children and adolescents—blind, deaf-and-dumb, or mutilated—show how helpful and constructive private undertakings have proved, since, when they have acquired official status, they are able to continue their work, with increased resources.

Nursing schools have an essential part to play in the training programme for medical personnel. The Public Health School at Beirut, which has public health students from all over the Middle East, is particularly interested in these problems, and invited Miss Pfirter to give a talk; she gave a short account of the work of the Red Cross and also referred to such questions as the recruiting, enrolment, and instruction, and the duties and protection of Red Cross medical personnel. Miss Pfirter was, in fact, asked in a number of places to speak on the work of the Red Cross, notably at the plenary meeting of the Lebanon Red Cross Committee, and to the Red Crescent Ladies' Committees in both Syria and Iraq.

We should mention that only those with the most distinguished records of service are elected as members of the Ladies' Committees, which all show a spirit of the greatest goodwill, and work whole-heartedly for the social development of their countries. Women are playing an ever greater part in the effort to bring about improved social conditions, and this is clearly seen in the great variety of humanitarian tasks they undertake. In Iraq, for instance, Miss Pfirter visited an exceptionally interesting institution, founded by the Red Crescent Ladies' Committee: an orphanage, the first of its kind in the country. Its organization was so good that the Iraqi Government adopted it as a model for homes which it is now itself setting up, thereby following the inspiring example given by this National Society, which is endeavouring to pursue the true work of a pioneer and seeking new fields in which its achievements may, in their turn, serve as examples.

In Jordan, the Red Crescent Ladies' Committee have, entirely with their own resources, founded a hospital for women and children, which they are extending as and when they can. Miss Pfirter paid a visit to this hospital, in Amman, and was much impressed by the excellent way in which it was run and the very welcoming atmosphere.

Humanitarian work is thus developing everywhere. The main problem, which also applies to the training of medical personnel, is to create the technical means which—in realization of a wish universally expressed—will make it possible to deal effectively with disasters of any kind. In this, the Red Cross and Red Crescent have a great task to accomplish in the Middle East.

ICRC MISSION TO ALGERIA

It will be recalled that the "Revue internationale" reported the circumstances under which the International Committee sent delegates to Algeria to visit detention camps, in 1955.

When events in North Africa subsequently took a more serious turn, the ICRC once again offered its services, in order to pursue its traditional humanitarian work in those regions. On 26 March last M. Léopold Boissier, President of the ICRC, met the President of the French Council, M. Guy Mollet, in Paris and informed him of the International Committee's desire to send delegates to visit the detention camps where persons deprived of their liberty as a result of events were being held. He emphasized that, in his opinion, the gravity of the events warranted the intervention of a neutral body.

Several days later the French Government agreed to the idea of the ICRC sending delegates to Algeria, and the mission left Geneva on 12 May, 1956. Neither their departure nor their work on the spot, however, was disclosed to the public. It was only through the statements made by M. Guy Mollet on 23 June at a reception given in his honour at the "Maison de l'Amérique latine", and a press communiqué which followed, that the general news of the ICRC mission to Algeria and the work it was doing was brought to the notice of the public.

We are now able to give some details about this mission, which returned to Geneva on 28 June after spending almost seven weeks in Algeria. The delegates forming it were M. Claude Pilloud, head of the mission, M. Pierre Gaillard and M. René Bovey, accompanied by two doctors, Dr. Willener and Dr. Gaillard.

The ICRC delegates were able to visit internment centres for persons placed in assigned residence, and also prison establishments for persons detained as a result of events.

The French Authorities placed no difficulties in the way of the delegates but, on the contrary, gave them every practical assistance, particularly by providing transport. During their visits the delegates had an opportunity of distributing small quantities of relief supplies, and proposed whatever improvements they considered necessary in the conditions, to the camp authorities and directors of prison establishments. Their observations and suggestions were embodied in a report made on their return to Geneva, which served as a basis for an official communication addressed to the French Government with a view to ensuring appropriate action being taken.

M. de Traz, special representative of the ICRC, had previously made contact in Cairo with the Algerian representatives of the "Front de libération nationale". He asked for the Red Cross to be allowed to receive and transmit news of French prisoners, and for the prisoners to be able to correspond with their families and receive parcels; finally, he sought authority for the International Committee to send a mission, similar to that sent to the French side, to visit camps and prison establishments. The ICRC awaits a reply to these requests.

As M. Boissier recently emphasized to representatives of the Press, the ICRC's role is a very difficult one, since its intervention is needed in situations which cannot be defined in terms of law, like the troubles in North Africa. It is, however, for that very reason—because we are in the midst of a period rife with disturbances and revolutions—that the ICRC is striving to pursue its humanitarian mission.

THE RED CROSS IN ASIA

A MISSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE TO THE FAR EAST

At the end of March, 1956 a mission of the International Committee of the Red Cross left Geneva for an extensive tour of Asia. Mr. William H. Michel, Special Delegate, and Mr. Eugène de Weck, Head of Section, were to follow a schedule taking them successively to India, North Korea, China, Japan and South Korea. Continuing their journey to Hong Kong, they were to separate there, Mr. Michel proceeding to Indonesia, and Mr. de Weck to Manila before his return to Geneva at the beginning of July, by way of Viet Nam and Thailand. Mr. Michel returned to Geneva a few days earlier, after making a stop in Malaya.

It will be seen what a vast area the delegates covered, on what was a "goodwill" tour, since its primary purpose was to make or renew contacts, and to bear a message from the founder body in Geneva to the National Red Cross Societies of all the countries visited, which have now reached such a high stage of development. The journey was a rapid one, and the travellers had scarcely time to recover their breath in the capitals where they alighted. It was made entirely by air, except for the stretch between Hong Kong and Canton, which was covered by train; and immediately the delegates arrived, often even at the airport, a programme was drawn up to make use of every minute. How could it be otherwise when they landed in countries of great human interest, where one constantly finds as keen a wish to give as to receive, and where, too, the scenery commands such admiration?

The principal object of the mission was thus to visit the National Red Cross Societies, and study with them a number of problems referred to in the course of the conversation with Mr. Michel and Mr. de Weck which forms the subject of this article. Also, the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Korea having recently been recognized by the International Committee, the delegates' visit to Pyongyang represented the Committee's first official contact with that Society.

It should first of all be said that, everywhere they went, the International Committee's delegates were given the most cordial welcome. They were received with the sense of human relations so characteristic of countries which have an ancient and rich civilization as their heritage: Mr. Michel, unexpectedly, had particular occasion to appreciate this quality, when he fell ill in Peking, and met with the greatest possible kindness on the part of the Chinese Red Cross. The task of the mission was thus made much easier, all the more so as the Swiss diplomatic representatives and the International Committee's delegations in the countries visited also received them with extreme courtesy. The International Committee will find the greatest advantage in having established a direct link, if it may be so described, with those who represent it in far-off places, and give such devoted service to its cause—with Mr. Mittner in Manila, Mr. Angst in Tokyo, Mr. Calderara in Hong Kong, Mr. Leuenberger in Saigon, Mr. Salzmann in Bangkok and Mr. Pfrunder in Singapore.

The number of problems, impressions and reflections resulting from such a journey can well be imagined. As we have only limited space at our disposal, however, we have had to concentrate on questions of a very general nature.

The next International Red Cross Conference is to be held at the beginning of 1957. Is it not arousing great interest, Mr. Michel, in view of the important problems to be discussed at the Conference, and also because it will take place in the heart of Asia, at New Delhi ?

All the National Societies we visited are preparing to take part in the Conference, and certain items on the agenda, in particular the " Draft Rules for the Protection of the Civilian Population from the Dangers of Indiscriminate Warfare " were the subject of comments on our part. The National Societies are very much concerned with general Red Cross problems, and are conscious that in a changing world such as ours, their tasks are bound to increase. The numbers of their members are continually growing in proportion to their needs, which are so great. The work of the Red Cross in itself constantly attracts new members, and the Asiatic Red Cross Societies who will be taking part in the discussions at New Delhi will represent an important section of the great Red Cross family.

In Peking the Chinese Red Cross kindly arranged for us to see numerous establishments, including local centres for giving and teaching first aid, advising mothers and expectant mothers, and giving individual health education. The town is divided into 8 districts comprising in all 100 basic centres each having an average of 10 first aid posts ; these posts are equipped to receive the wounded and sick, and are permanently staffed by medical assistants. Each contains a bed, a stretcher, medical supplies and instruments for light surgery.

Activities on such an extensive scale not only raise the standard of public health, but also, through the power of example and the results achieved, undoubtedly help to bring new forces under the Red Cross flag.

This is, indeed, a necessity ; for the programme for the development of health instruction and the safeguarding of

public health outlined to us by Madame Li Teh-chuan, Minister of Health and President of the Chinese Red Cross, and by the Management Committee of the Society, is a very ambitious one and can only be realized with the aid of thousands of Red Cross workers. The North Korean Red Cross has similar aims in view, and is introducing into the factories, workyards and schools, teams of workers whose task is to provide health education and assistance at a rapid a rate on a par with the great effort of reconstruction in which everyone is engaged.

Might not the considerable increase in both their activity and the number of their members prove a source of difficulty for the National Red Cross Societies? Might they not have trouble in ensuring that all their members understand the true Red Cross ideal—the call for aid to all without distinction, which was uttered by the founder of our movement?

Perhaps so, though it is difficult for me to answer questions of such great significance to the Red Cross as a whole. But should we not remember that it is action which upholds the ideal? One might say, metaphorically speaking, that there are such vast fields for the Red Cross to harvest in Asia that there will never be harvesters enough. Future generations, who will appreciate the results and enjoy better health, will become convinced—or so we hope—that the principle of solidarity extended to all without distinction is really effective.

You had the opportunity of visiting a school in Peking, where a branch of the Junior Red Cross has already set a fine example of healthy competition in hygiene work. These young people correspond with other young people abroad, and their work—like that of every Junior Red Cross in fact—represents throughout the country the makings of a better world, and the hope of peace for the future.

The Red Cross is firmly established in Asia, animated by secular or religious motives, according to the region. Political or other changes do not alter this fact, as we have noticed on

many occasions. In Malaya, for instance, the British Red Cross is still continuing its work. This territory, however, is on the point of becoming autonomous ; a Government has already been formed under the Tengku Abdul Rahman. I visited Kuala Lumpur, the capital, to meet the Head of the Government and to see whether the International Committee's assistance is required in those areas. The Tengku informed me that as soon as independence was proclaimed, his country would form a National Red Cross Society and accede to the Geneva Conventions.

Since you mention the possibility of action being taken in those regions by the International Committee, could you tell us whether you and Mr. de Weck were able to visit persons interned in camps—the traditional task of the International Committee ?

In Japan and South Korea we paid visits to the Omura and Pusan camps, respectively. It would be too complicated to explain why nationals of these two countries have been interned, in many cases for some years. Japanese fishermen are interned at Pusan, and Korean nationals, some 15,000 men, women and children, at Omura. I may say, however, that an official report on these visits has been sent from Geneva to the Governments concerned. I should add that the International Committee's delegates did not wait for this report to be sent—in accordance with certain customary rules—but immediately approached the respective Governments with our suggestions for improvements and changes which, in our opinion, should be made as soon as possible.

When speaking of Japan, I should point out that although our stay there was short, we were able to have a number of meetings with the leading members of the Japanese Red Cross and with members of the Government. The Japanese Red Cross has always been one of the most active Societies and has kept in particularly close touch with Geneva. We were able to appreciate what an important part it plays in the fields of health and social welfare when we visited one of the Society's 160 hospitals, all of which are under its own management.

Did you discuss any other problems with the Red Cross Societies and Governments of the countries you visited ?

The Geneva Conventions. We had a number of meetings with the Government authorities, always, naturally, in conjunction with the National Red Cross Societies, who are fully conscious of the importance of their countries' acceding to the Geneva Conventions. In North Korea, as well as China, South Korea and Indonesia, the National Red Cross Societies will continue to take all necessary steps to hasten their Government's accession, and we had the opportunity of explaining that accession by all countries without exception would give still greater force to the Geneva Conventions and make them more effective.

I do not wish to conclude without mentioning the many fruitful and constructive conversations we enjoyed, in each of the countries we visited, with members of the National Red Cross Committees and in our meetings with doctors, directors of centres, Junior Red Cross leaders, nurses and social workers. All this activity is a striking proof of the vitality of the Red Cross in Asia.

As stated, Mr. de Weck spent several days in the Philippines on his way back to Geneva. We will therefore ask him to say a few words about the conversations which he had there. They concerned the difficult technical problems involved in the application of Article 16 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which provides for compensation for prisoners of war formerly detained by Japan who suffered undue hardships during their captivity. Mr. de Weck had been requested to discuss this subject with both the Philippine authorities and the Philippine Red Cross; the latter will later be called upon to act as the official agency for the distribution of compensation to the former prisoners of war.

One of the objects of my visit to Manila was, in fact, to discuss with the Government authorities and the National Red Cross Society the problems involved in the application of what, in Geneva, we commonly call " Article 16 ". The " Revue

internationale" has already had occasion to mention them; I would therefore just like to say how glad I was to have an opportunity of seeing, on the spot, in the Philippines—as in all the countries we visited in the Far East—the relief work being done under conditions and in the face of obstacles which, from afar, we can hardly imagine.

On my return journey I made two more stops, at Saigon and Bangkok. In the first town, where I stayed only a short time, I visited the Viet Nam Red Cross Society, and in the second I had the opportunity of learning, among other things, of a most original undertaking of the Thai Red Cross. This Society has assumed responsibility for the production of anti-snakebite serums. I paid a visit to the institute which prepares the serum and was able to see the "snake farm" which it runs—an indispensable part of the undertaking. This is an example of the variety of tasks carried on to-day under the Red Cross flag; it also proves that the Red Cross is carrying out its true mission, which is to act everywhere and in all spheres as a pioneer, always ready to withdraw later if its work can be taken over by the official authorities.

May we recall, in this connection, that South Korea's activity in the field of social assistance particularly impressed the International Committee's delegates, who visited the Incheon sanatorium and some very well equipped health centres.

All the countries visited had suffered greatly from war and its consequences, which take so long to repair, and serious disturbances are still taking place in different parts of South East Asia. Yet everywhere one finds the same will to reconstruct; the delegates were struck by the immense needs which still exist, but they were also deeply impressed by the efforts, new ventures and achievements of minds in which the humanitarian ideal is constantly present. Mr. Michel spent a few days in Indonesia, and was able to make a detailed tour of several establishments which, in view of the extremely difficult circumstances, bear witness to the finest spirit of human fellowship on the part of both their founders and those who serve there: examples were a blood-bank, a home for old people, a blood transfusion centre, an institute for the blind and a

sanatorium—situated either in Djakarta, Bandung or the surrounding country.

India is preparing to welcome the XIXth International Red Cross Conference. When passing through New Delhi last April, the mission was able to see the special premises which were being built, and that the technical and administrative arrangements were well advanced. The Red Cross campaign in the Far East to overcome the consequences of disease, war, natural disasters, ignorance and poverty will give the Conference much to reflect upon and great reason for hope in the future.

J.-G. L.

REVUE
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SUPPLEMENT

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RED CROSS PRINCIPLES

XIII

7. Equality of the National Societies

All National Societies have the same international rights.

As we have seen, National Red Cross Societies vary very greatly in importance from one country to the next: they may be rich or poor, have many members or few, they may or may not possess hospitals or run certain services. From the material standpoint, Red Cross Societies are not equal, any more than men are all the same.

Nevertheless, the Societies were from the first established on a footing of equality, equal rights at the international level making up for their actual inequality. This point of view was accepted automatically, and there was no need for a specific rule on the subject; for a long time the question was not even raised¹.

In 1921, however, the International Committee of the Red Cross deliberately referred to the "equality of the National Societies" when introducing a summary of its fundamental principles into its Statutes. That reference remains to this day in the various documents in which the "summary" appears. Although the principle which we are considering was thus placed among the institution's basic principles, it is nevertheless of a

¹ In 1869, however, the IInd International Red Cross Conference passed the following singular resolution: "The Central Committee of a small State may place itself, in respect to a larger one, in a relation similar to that which exists between Provincial Committees and the National Central Committee". This resolution does not seem to have ever been put into practice, we are glad to say.

purely organic character. Why then did the International Committee wish to give it such weight? It must be remembered that at that time the League of Red Cross Societies had just been formed on a very different basis; as in the case of the League of Nations, the five great victorious Powers played a leading part in the federation, membership of which was limited to the Societies of those Powers and of their allies during the First World War. Many people felt that this arrangement showed a partisan spirit and was incompatible with the ideals of the Red Cross movement. The system was changed shortly afterwards when the League opened its doors to all Red Cross Societies on a footing of equality, thus paving the way to the universal solidarity which is today its greatest source of strength. The principle of the equality of Red Cross Societies was but enhanced as a result of this experience.

Only one feature of the former system has been retained: the Societies of the Great Powers have nearly always been represented on the League's Executive Committee¹ which has the direction of affairs in its hands in between the Sessions of the Board of Governors. This cannot be said to infringe the principle of equality of rights, however, as it does not follow from any statutory provision, but represents the freely expressed will of the Societies which elect the Executive Committee. It is doubtless felt, not without reason, that the experience and resources of the more prosperous Societies will be useful to the community and that the way they have developed is in itself a reason for placing them in control.

In interstate relations, it may well be legitimate to seek some sort of compromise between the individualistic conception and the power factor. A great nation has, admittedly, more power to organize the world than a small country has, and in a federation of States a solution which is considered very sound is for the legislative power to be shared by two chambers, one formed of representatives of States without regard to the latter's size, the composition of the other being in proportion to the numbers of inhabitants represented.

¹ This is also true of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross, the institution's co-ordinating body.

But what holds good in one sphere does not necessarily apply to another. Equality of rights appears to be the most suitable rule for an institution which is not moved by the same motives or interests as the State, but devotes itself wholly and exclusively to the human being, taking no account of his strength or weakness. There would otherwise be a danger of introducing politics into the Red Cross, and of a struggle for influence taking place within the movement. The equality of the Member Societies of the International Red Cross reflects the great principle—adopted unreservedly by the Red Cross movement—of the equality of all men in the face of suffering. The Red Cross is essentially individualistic in its approach. The equality of the National Societies is also a consequence of their desire for independence. For how could a Society be considered as fully independent, if others had more say than it in international matters? This equality must, finally, be regarded as a consequence of the spirit of universalism which imbues the Red Cross. The knowledge that new Societies will immediately become the equals of those formed at an earlier date, will encourage the formation of Red Cross Societies in all countries where they do not yet exist.

8. Unity

In each State there can only be one Red Cross Society, directed by one central body. The activities of the Society must embrace the whole country.

Under this heading we shall consider three things: the first two—that the Society must be the only one of its kind and that it must be centrally controlled—relate to the form of the Society; the third point—that its action must embrace the whole territory—concerns its actual object.

As early as 1869, the IInd International Red Cross Conference laid down that “in each country, relief to the military wounded

and sick should, as far as possible, be centrally directed ” and that “ all local Societies of a country should be united through a national Central Committee ”. The same Conference added “ The effective union of all Relief Societies in a country by close and practical co-operation should be sought, in order to ensure that the best use is made of their potentialities in time of peace or of war ”. When Gustave Moynier formulated four organic principles in 1874, he referred in the following words to the one with which we are concerned here, the principle of centralization : “ All the National Societies recognize that unity of direction is required in order to make good use of relief supplies in time of war. They therefore include in their sphere of action the whole territory of the State to which they belong, and they have at their head a single central or higher body . . . Centralization is also necessary from the point of view of the relations of the National Societies with one another, such relations being a matter for the Central Committees alone.”¹

Ten years later the International Committee of the Red Cross included the above ideas among the conditions for the recognition of new National Societies. They appear in the following form in the most recent version of the “ Conditions for Recognition ”, which, as we know, were revised in 1948 : “ Be the only National Red Cross Society of the said State² and be directed by a central body which shall alone be competent to represent it in its dealings with other members of the International Red Cross . . . Extend its activities to the entire country and its dependencies.”

The reasons why there must be only one Red Cross Society in each country are of a practical nature, but are none the less imperative ; the efficiency of the Society’s relief action depends on it. Just try, for a moment, to imagine the confusion which would soon reign in a country where several charitable bodies, appealing to the very same principles, tried to carry out the same duties independently !

¹ *Ce que c'est que la Croix-Rouge*, Geneva, 1874.

² An independent State where the Geneva Convention is in force.

Centralized control is also necessary, and for similar reasons. If there must be only one Red Cross Society, it must, by the same token, receive all its orders from a single Central Committee, just as an army can only obey one General Staff. It is essential to concentrate all available forces and resources in the same hands, in order to achieve proper co-ordination. This applies to all levels of the administrative machine. Owing to the improvised nature of certain humanitarian activities, and from a commendable desire not to discourage voluntary effort and individual initiative, there is too often a tendency to tolerate indiscipline, constant consultations and vaguely defined powers ; conception is too often confused with execution, and decisions on questions of principle with particular cases. The result is a lack of authority, a very harmful dispersal of responsibilities. "Amateurism" is the bane of charitable organizations.¹ The advantages of a form of organization with clearly defined ranks and grades can be very well combined, as we shall see later, with the system of territorial decentralization.

Although the work of the Red Cross has widely varying aspects, it is nevertheless characterized by a spiritual unity which cannot be ignored. In the mind of the public, activities carried out under one flag and in the name of the same ideal are inseparable : they affect one another and only assume their full significance when considered as a whole. The effect of success or failure at one particular point will therefore be felt by the whole organization. This is also true of the activities, of such a varied nature, carried out by the International Committee in countries which are at war. Whether one is visiting internment camps, informing families of the fate of a relative or distributing relief, one always finds a connecting link, some common point of contact ; and one's left hand must know what one's right hand is doing.

Yet another reason for centralized control is that a Red Cross Society can only be represented by a single body in its relations with the outside world and with other members of the International Red Cross.

¹ Just as "red tape" is. They are the two extremes.

The rule of uniqueness has not always been strictly enforced, however. In France, for example, there were for a long time—and for very sound reasons—three different societies, whose activities were coordinated, from 1892 on, by a single Central Committee. They were amalgamated in 1940.

In the federative nations a distinct tendency towards decentralization is to be noted, the local branches often receiving very wide powers. Similarly, in unions of States, the Societies of individual States generally have certain distinguishing features, or may even be completely independent. This, incidentally, is merely a reflection, on the Red Cross level, of the situation on the political plane.

In certain countries other charitable bodies are affiliated to the Red Cross Society, which allows them to make use of the emblem without, however, losing their own identity. Although one is glad to see the Red Cross become the rallying point of men and women of good will, such a system is not without its risks. It will therefore be well for the Society to fix its relationship with the affiliated associations in the most precise fashion, in order to ensure that the Central Committee does not lose any of its authority and that the principles of the Red Cross are always respected.

A National Red Cross Society is thus master in its own house, in its own special sphere. The International Red Cross Conferences¹ have laid down very clearly that a National Society cannot establish a section in a foreign country or send a mission there without permission from the Red Cross of the country concerned.

Since there can only be one Red Cross Society in a country, the activities of that Society must clearly embrace the whole of the territory and its dependencies. The principle of universality, which applies to the international sphere, becomes on a national level, the principle of total or all-embracing action. It is then universalism within geographical limits, universalism adjusted to the requirements of the National Societies but

¹ Geneva, 1921, XI; London, 1938, XII; Stockholm, 1948, XV.

essentially the same as that on which the worldwide movement is based. We shall not, therefore, revert to the subject here. For the same reason, as we shall see further on, a National Society must undertake all the activities for which the Red Cross is traditionally responsible, unless they are already carried out by other organizations. It will be seen that the combined effect of these rules is to permit the Red Cross to be present everywhere. It can thus endeavour to ensure that no suffering remains unrelieved within its own particular sphere.

In order to cover the whole national community, the system most widely adopted is that of territorial decentralization. It is undoubtedly the best one. Local branches are formed in all the provincial centres and in all large towns. These branches may sometimes have smaller sub-branches in localities of minor importance, in urban districts or even in blocks of flats. This enables the Red Cross to "infiltrate" by degrees among the population, penetrating into all circles, carrying out its traditional mission and finding the necessary helpers there.

9. Solidarity

Having the same aims, Red Cross Societies have established mutual relationships and recognize that it is their duty to help one another.

We have already spoken of the fellowship which exists among men. We are now concerned with the solidarity or sense of fellowship which unites the Red Cross Societies. As we have seen, they are completely independent and have equal rights. But while remaining their own masters and retaining their freedom to act as they like, they are at the same time linked by a community of aims and interests.

Solidarity has two meanings so far as the Red Cross is concerned. It is in the first place a fact. Red Cross Societies have the same end in view, are engaged in similar activities, follow the

same principles and have the same emblem ; there is therefore a bond between them ; they are to some extent members of the same body, so that any failure or success on the part of one of them affects them all. In this sense of the word, "solidary" is indeed the opposite of "solitary".

But solidarity is not only an existing fact ; it is also a tendency, an ideal. Realizing that cooperation is better than isolation, the Societies cultivate mutual aid, each of them working in the general interest, in order that all may prosper. That is the difference between humanitarian action and individual charity. The latter is free from all idea of reciprocity, it is a gesture for which no charge is made, no return expected ; that is the cause of its greatness, but also a source of weakness. The Red Cross, for its part, has taken root in an organized world, in a world endowed with a memory.

Solidarity in the ideal sense has been one of the institution's firmly established principles from the beginning¹. One reads, for example, in the resolutions of the Conference which founded the Red Cross in 1863 that : "The exchange of communications between the Committees of the various countries shall be made for the time being through the intermediary of the Geneva Committee", and in 1874 Gustave Moynier expressed the principle of solidarity in the following words : "The Societies of nations which are not engaged in a war must come to the help of those of the belligerent nations". At the same time he described the care given by the National Societies of both sides to the wounded of the adverse party, as "mutuality". In 1877 Moynier published a most interesting plan for a "Red Cross Federation"—a plan which might be termed prophetic². After emphasizing the independent character and diversity of the National Societies, he goes on as follows : "Nowadays... no

¹ Having witnessed the suffering in the war in Italy, Henry Dunant started a charitable movement in Switzerland, a neutral country, with the result that medical supplies and even doctors were sent to the Transalpine battlefields. This was four years before the Red Cross was founded.

² *Bulletin international des Sociétés de secours aux militaires blessés*, Geneva, January 1877, p. 12 et seq.

one denies that mutual aid is a duty, but it is regarded as a matter for one's own decision; now a pact would transform vague professions of faith into formal promises... There would then be a contract, in the form of a mutual guarantee, each party to which would, in exchange for his commitments, know for certain that he would not be without the help of his confederates should he need it... The true interests of the Societies, just as much as their generous sentiments, should therefore lead them to affirm solemnly their solidarity in the face of misfortune". The writer then observes that solidarity is only possible if the Societies mutually inspire one another with confidence not only in the spirit which animates them but in their resources and ability to act effectively. He concludes as follows: "The interests of the federation would demand that it should not be left with no one to represent it in the intervals between its sessions. Surely someone should be there, at his post, to ensure, in a general way, that the members of the federation do not neglect the obligations they have contracted".

A reference to solidarity it also to be found in the texts which specify the conditions for the recognition of new National Societies. The latest version is worded as follows: "Adhere to the Statutes of the International Red Cross, share in the fellowship which unites its members—the National Societies and the international bodies—and keep in close touch with them. Honour the fundamental principals of the Red Cross..."

The International Red Cross Conferences have, for their part, adopted a great many resolutions on the subject of solidarity. They speak of mutual collaboration, regular contacts and friendly agreement.

How were the first seeds of solidarity sown in the world of the Red Cross, and what form does that solidarity take? The Societies first came into contact with one another in connection with the care given to the wounded of other nationalities, and also when disabled members of the services and medical personnel were repatriated. The profit to be gained by a mutual exchange of experience in these fields was soon realized. But

the extent to which such relations exist today between different Red Cross bodies is certainly due above all to the development of the movement's peace-time activities. The idea of federation, originally conceived by Gustave Moynier, was not brought up again until after the First World War. The League of Red Cross Societies was then founded, and grew steadily in size and importance¹. At the same time the practice of mutual aid was adopted to a greater and greater extent. When a country is afflicted by war or civil war, by a natural disaster, like an earthquake or floods, or by a social scourge, such as a famine or epidemic, and the National Society is unable to cope with it, it is customary for the Societies of neighbouring countries to lend willing assistance in the form of personnel, equipment and stores. This side of the Red Cross' work has become of such importance today that it is well to consider it for a moment.

As we have seen, Red Cross Societies are constituted on a territorial basis. Their help is given primarily to the inhabitants of their own country and they are not expected to distribute their resources all over the world. It is, as a rule, the international Red Cross bodies which endeavour to apply on a worldwide scale the principle of the equality of all men. But the Societies also enter the international field when they lend their voluntary aid to the Red Cross of a country stricken by disaster. The help they bring may not always be as abundant as that received from other sources, but it is nevertheless of great significance, of great symbolic value, because it is disinterested. When a Red Cross Society ministers to the citizens of its own country, it is carrying out its duty, but it is not doing anything out of the way, or showing itself to be different in any essential respect from other charitable organizations. On the other hand, when it spreads its benefits beyond the frontiers of its country, freeing itself from the influence of national interests and undertaking a work of charity which

¹ In the words of the circular announcing its formation, "the aim of the League is to apply in practice that principle of spiritual fellowship and international mutual help which is one of the fundamental ideas of the Red Cross, and one of its characteristic and generous features".

may even be unpopular, it is, in the words of Max Huber, a truly "Red Cross" body.

National Red Cross Societies usually refer to each other as "sister societies". And these are more than mere meaningless words. Fellowship in the face of suffering makes the Red Cross a real family and is closely akin to the original gesture of the man who, moved by pity, approached an unknown sufferer to soothe his pain—to the gesture of Henry Dunant on the evening of a great battle, a very simple gesture which changed the face of the world.

We do not say, however, that mutual aid has no utilitarian motive. We find here the dual inspiration which we have already met so often when studying the underlying bases of our institution. The Red Cross is not wholly made up of spontaneous bursts of enthusiasm, burning brightly like a fire fanned by the wind; it is also the fruit of deliberate reasoning, of careful reflection and foresight. When a Red Cross Society helps its neighbour in the latter's hour of need, it may well hope to be helped in its turn should it ever meet with misfortune. International relief action has indeed come to be regarded as a form of insurance against adversity. The help given is a premium paid on a reciprocal basis by those who have escaped the calamity. It was, for instance, the idea of covering future risks which led in 1927 to the creation, by an international Convention, of the International Relief Union for the provision of relief in cases of natural disaster. Unfortunately the Union has not achieved the results expected of it, mainly because calamities appear to occur continually in the same parts of the world.

In wartime, there are two different forms of mutual aid: the assistance lent to each other by the Societies of allied countries, directly, without any intermediary, and the help given to the belligerents by the National Societies of neutral countries. We have already discussed this subject and will not revert to it here.

The assistance given to one another by National Societies in the event of a disaster has passed through three successive stages: to begin with relief action was coordinated by the

League ; later on appeals were made to Red Cross Societies by the League, at the request of the Society which had sustained the disaster ; and there are, finally, the agreements on the mutual provision of relief, concluded by the Societies of a given region. This last system, which has only recently been adopted in practice, marks a great advance. Agreements of this kind have been concluded between the Societies of Latin America and also between those of the Scandinavian countries. Although they do not go as far as G. Moynier recommended in 1877, or make the duty of mutual aid an absolute obligation, they nevertheless imply a moral engagement. With the same end in view the Red Cross Conferences have recommended that common funds for the provision of relief should be established.

Mutual aid, a comparatively new branch of Red Cross activity, but in such complete conformity with the ideals of the movement, is making great strides today and promises excellent results in the future. It is earnestly hoped that it will provide National Societies with an opportunity of drawing the bonds of friendship still closer by displaying in day-to-day collaboration the spirit of human fellowship which is one of their finest attributes.

JEAN S. PICTET

(To be concluded.)

**DRAFT RULES FOR THE LIMITATION OF THE DANGERS
INCURRED BY THE CIVILIAN POPULATION
IN TIME OF WAR**

INTRODUCTION

Nearly a century ago the Red Cross was born of the suffering observed on a battlefield. Since that time it has been organized and has grown, and its spirit of self-sacrifice has reached the four corners of the earth. It has, moreover, drafted the rules of humanitarian law, to mitigate the evils engendered by war. It deplores, more than ever, the possibility of recourse being had to war and its constant endeavour must therefore be to improve the peaceful relations which exist between the nations of the world.

There is still a danger, however, of force being used to settle disputes between States.

Since the Red Cross is essentially neutral in political matters, it cannot take direct action to prevent or stop wars, except by rejecting the very idea of war ; but it does at least strive continuously to limit their tragic consequences. It must do more than that, however : it must make every effort to ensure that if violence is used, as is always possible, certain humane rules, implemented by practical measures taken in good time, protect the people who are not taking part in the struggle. The Red Cross must multiply its efforts to achieve this, so long as it cannot, unfortunately, regard an outbreak of war as impossible.

In view of the developments which have taken place in methods of making war, and the continual invention of new weapons, a conflict would today be a catastrophe out of all proportion to the ends it might be hoped to attain. Everyone knows that the extensive use of certain weapons would mean extermination of whole nations and the end of civilization. The greatest courage and devotion would be unavailing under such circumstances, and the recent Geneva Conventions would

themselves be ineffective if the belligerents were unrestricted in their choice of means and methods of warfare.

It is true that certain restrictions do in fact exist. They found expression in the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907. But those rules are too often forgotten, or their validity questioned, on the grounds that one cannot stand in the way of scientific progress and that principles recognized before the time of air warfare and nuclear weapons no longer hold good. Furthermore, the fact that recourse has been had very generally to the system of indiscriminate bombing seems to have led to its becoming, as it were, an accepted practice, and given rise to a kind of fatalism.

Can the Red Cross accept such a state of affairs? Certain military considerations must give way to the demands of humanity. Reason must be the master of scientific inventions and although the law cannot disregard them, it must not merely recognize the effects they produce ; it must control them.

Convinced of this, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and encouraged by a resolution adopted unanimously by the National Societies at the XXIIIrd Session of the Board of Governors, drew up these *Draft Rules* with the help of experts designated by the Societies. The Committee wishes to thank them for their valuable contribution to this work.

The Draft Rules are now submitted, with the Committee's comments, to all National Societies and all Governments, with a view to their discussion at the XIXth International Red Cross Conference which is to be held in New Delhi early in 1957. The International Committee will there submit a resolution on the Rules.

Certain quarters, possibly considering that these Draft Rules are too complicated, would have regarded the prohibition, pure and simple, of certain weapons as the only sound solution. Others may, on the contrary, consider that the Draft Rules should contain more technical details. The International Committee is not qualified to decide between differing opinions of that kind and has therefore approached the matter solely from the Red Cross angle.

It is necessary to proceed by easy stages, however ; for the experience of a century has shown us that if legal texts are to be accepted, ratified and applied they must take certain hard facts into account.

It is Governments which will have to draw their own conclusions from the enclosed Draft and seize the opportunity—perhaps the last—which it offers them. If they think fit, they can modify it, cut it down or add clauses of a more definitely technical description, or prohibitions of a more detailed or sweeping nature.

The International Committee of the Red Cross feels that it is fulfilling its duty in proposing that they should take the results of its work as a basis for discussion.

RULES FOR THE LIMITATION OF THE DANGERS INCURRED BY THE CIVILIAN POPULATION IN TIME OF WAR

Preamble

All nations are firmly convinced that war should be banned as a means of settling disputes between man and man.

However, in view of the need, should hostilities once more break out, of safeguarding the civilian population from the destruction with which it is threatened as a result of technical developments in weapons and methods of warfare,

The limits placed by the requirements of humanity and the safety of the population on the use of armed force are restated and defined in the following rules.

In unforeseen cases, the civilian population will still have the benefit of the general rule set forth in Article I, and of the principles of international law.

* * *

Chapter I. — Object and Field of Application

ARTICLE I

Object *Since the right of Parties to the conflict to adopt means of injuring the enemy is not unlimited, they shall confine their operations to the destruction of his military resources, and leave the civilian population outside the sphere of armed attacks.*

This general rule is given detailed expression in the following provisions:

ARTICLE 2

The present rules shall apply:

- Field of application
- (a) *In the event of declared war or of any other armed conflict, even if the state of war is not recognized by one of the Parties to the conflict.*
 - (b) *In the event of an armed conflict not of an international character.*

ARTICLE 3

Definition of term "attacks" *The present rules shall apply to acts of violence committed against the adverse Party by force of arms, whether in defence or offence. Such acts shall be referred to hereafter as "attacks".*

ARTICLE 4

Definition of term "civilian population" *For the purpose of the present rules, the civilian population consists of all persons not belonging to one or other of the following categories:*

- (a) *Members of the armed forces, or of their auxiliary or complementary organizations.*
- (b) *Persons who do not belong to the forces referred to above, but nevertheless take part in the fighting.*

ARTICLE 5

The obligations imposed upon the Parties to the conflict in regard to the civilian population, under the present rules, are complementary to those which already devolve expressly upon the Parties by virtue of other rules in international law, deriving in particular from the instruments of Geneva and The Hague.

Relation with
previous Conventions

Chapter II. — Objectives barred from Attack

ARTICLE 6

Attacks directed against the civilian population, as such, whether with the object of terrorizing it or for any other reason, are prohibited. This prohibition applies both to attacks on individuals and to those directed against groups.

Immunity of the
civilian population

In consequence, it is also forbidden to attack dwellings, installations or means of transport, which are for the exclusive use of, and occupied by, the civilian population.

Nevertheless, should members of the civilian population, Article II notwithstanding, be within or in close proximity to a military objective they must accept the risks resulting from an attack directed against that objective.

ARTICLE 7

In order to limit the dangers incurred by the civilian population, attacks may only be directed against military objectives.

Limitation of
objectives which
may be attacked

Only objectives belonging to the categories of objective which, in view of their essential characteristics, are generally acknowledged to be of military importance, may be considered as military objectives. Those categories are listed in an annex to the present rules.

However, even if they belong to one of those categories, they cannot be considered as a military objective where their total or partial destruction, in the circumstances ruling at the time, offers no military advantage.

Chapter III. — Precautions in Attacks on Military Objectives

ARTICLE 8

Precautions to be
taken in planning
attacks

The person responsible for ordering or launching an attack shall, first of all:

- (a) *make sure that the objective, or objectives, to be attacked are military objectives within the meaning of the present rules, and are duly identified.*

When the military advantage to be gained leaves the choice open between several objectives, he is required to select the one, an attack on which involves least danger for the civilian population:

- (b) *take into account the loss and destruction which the attack, even if carried out with the precautions prescribed under Article 9, is liable to inflict upon the civilian population.*

He is required to refrain from the attack if, after due consideration, it is apparent that the loss and destruction would be disproportionate to the military advantage anticipated:

- (c) *whenever the circumstances allow, warn the civilian population in jeopardy, to enable it to take shelter.*

ARTICLE 9

Precautions to be
taken in carrying
out the attack

All possible precautions shall be taken, both in the choice of the weapons and methods to be used, and in the carrying out of an attack, to ensure that no losses or damage are caused to the

civilian population in the vicinity of the objective, or to its dwellings, or that such losses or damage are at least reduced to a minimum.

In particular, in towns and other places with a large civilian population, which are not in the vicinity of military or naval operations, the attack shall be conducted with the greatest degree of precision. It must not cause losses or destruction beyond the immediate surroundings of the objective attacked.

The person responsible for carrying out the attack must abandon or break off the operation if he perceives that the conditions set forth above cannot be respected.

ARTICLE 10

It is forbidden to attack without distinction, as a single objective, an area including several military objectives at a distance from one another where elements of the civilian population, or dwellings, are situated in between the said military objectives.

Target-area bombing

ARTICLE 11

The Parties to the conflict shall, so far as possible, take all necessary steps to protect the civilian population subject to their authority from the dangers to which they would be exposed in an attack— in particular by removing them from the vicinity of military objectives and from threatened areas. However, the rights conferred upon the population in the event of transfer or evacuation under Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 Aug. 1949 are expressly reserved.

"Passive" precaution

Similarly, the Parties to the conflict shall, so far as possible, avoid the permanent presence of armed forces, military material, mobile military establishments or installations, in towns or other places with a large civilian population.

ARTICLE 12

The Parties to the conflict shall facilitate the work of the civilian bodies exclusively engaged in protecting and assisting the civilian population in case of attack.

Civil Defence bodies

DRAFT RULES

They can agree to confer special immunity upon the personnel of those bodies, their equipment and installations, by means of a special emblem.

ARTICLE 13

Intentional exposure
to danger

Parties to the conflict are prohibited from placing or keeping members of the civilian population subject to their authority in or near military objectives, with the idea of inducing the enemy to refrain from attacking those objectives.

Chapter IV. — Weapons with Uncontrollable Effects

ARTICLE 14

Prohibited methods
of warfare

Without prejudice to the present or future prohibition of certain specific weapons, the use is prohibited of weapons whose harmful effects—resulting in particular from the dissemination of incendiary, chemical, bacteriological, radioactive or other agents—could spread to an unforeseen degree or escape, either in space or in time, from the control of those who employ them, thus endangering the civilian population.

This prohibition also applies to delayed-action weapons, the dangerous effects of which are liable to be felt by the civilian population.

ARTICLE 15

Safety measures
and devices

If the Parties to the conflict make use of mines, they are bound, without prejudice to the stipulations of the VIIIth Hague Convention of 1907, to chart the mine-fields. The charts shall be handed over, at the close of active hostilities, to the adverse Party, and also to all other authorities responsible for the safety of the population.

Without prejudice to the precautions specified under Article 9, weapons capable of causing serious damage to the civilian population shall, so far as possible, be equipped with a safety device which renders them harmless when they escape from the control of those who employ them.

Chapter V. — Special Cases

ARTICLE 16

When, on the outbreak or in the course of hostilities, a locality is declared to be an "open town", the adverse Party shall be duly notified. The latter is bound to reply, and if it agrees to recognize the locality in question as an open town, shall cease from all attacks on the said town, and refrain from any military operation the sole object of which is its occupation. "Open towns"

In the absence of any special conditions which may, in any particular case, be agreed upon with the adverse Party, a locality, in order to be declared an "open town", must satisfy the following conditions:

- (a) *it must not be defended or contain any armed force;*
- (b) *it must discontinue all relations with any national or allied armed forces;*
- (c) *it must stop all activities of a military nature or for a military purpose in those of its installations or industries which might be regarded as military objectives;*
- (d) *it must stop all military transit through the town.*

The adverse Party may make the recognition of the status of "open town" conditional upon verification of the fulfilment of the conditions stipulated above. All attacks shall be suspended during the institution and operation of the investigatory measures.

DRAFT RULES

The presence in the locality of civil defence services, or of the services responsible for maintaining public order, shall not be considered as contrary to the conditions laid down in Paragraph 2. If the locality is situated in occupied territory, this provision applies also to the military occupation forces essential for the maintenance of public law and order.

When an "open town" passes into other hands, the new authorities are bound, if they cannot maintain its status, to inform the civilian population accordingly.

None of the above provisions shall be interpreted in such a manner as to diminish the protection which the civilian population should enjoy by virtue of the other provisions of the present rules, even when not living in localities recognized as "open towns".

ARTICLE 17

Installations
maintaining dangerous
forces

In order to safeguard the civilian population from the dangers that might result from the destruction of engineering works or installations—such as hydro-electric dams, nuclear power stations or dikes—through the releasing of natural or artificial forces, the States or Parties concerned are invited:

- (a) *to agree, in time of peace, on a special procedure to ensure in all circumstances the general immunity of such works where intended essentially for peaceful purposes:*
- (b) *to agree, in time of war, to confer special immunity, possibly on the basis of the stipulations of Article 16, on works and installations which have not, or no longer have, any connexion with the conduct of military operations.*

The preceding stipulations shall not, in any way, release the Parties to the conflict from the obligation to take the precautions required by the general provisions of the present rules, under Articles 8 to 11 in particular.

Chapter VI. — Application of the Rules ¹

ARTICLE 18

States not involved in the conflict, and also all appropriate organisations, are invited to co-operate, by lending their good offices, in ensuring the observance of the present rules and preventing either of the Parties to the conflict from resorting to measures contrary to those rules.

Assistance of third parties

ARTICLE 19

All States or Parties concerned are under the obligation to search for and bring to trial any person having committed, or ordered to be committed, an infringement of the present rules, unless they prefer to hand the person over for trial to another State or Party concerned with the case.

Trial and judicial safeguards

The accused persons shall be tried only by regular civil or military courts; they shall, in all circumstances, benefit by safeguards of proper trial and defence at least equal to those provided under Articles 105 and those following of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War of August 12, 1949.

ARTICLE 20

All States or Parties concerned shall make the terms of the provisions of the present rules known to their armed forces and provide for their application in accordance with the general principles of these rules, not only in the instances specifically envisaged in the rules, but also in unforeseen cases.

Diffusion and details of application

¹ Articles 18 and 19, dealing with the procedure for supervision and sanctions, are merely given as a rough guide and in outline; they will naturally have to be elaborated and supplemented at a later stage.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

News Items

In the last two official reports on its work, submitted by the Arolsen International Tracing Service, which cover the period 1 October, 1955 to 31 March, 1956, mention is made of various documents, lists, individual index cards, etc., obtained by this service between those dates.

The documents in question contain the names of 104,006 victims of Nazi persecution. As regards more than half of them—55,767, to be precise—the information derived from the archives of the Central Prisoners of War Agency, and was transmitted by the International Committee of the Red Cross to the International Tracing Service; thus enabling the latter to wind up a large number of cases, left in abeyance owing to lack of sufficient data.

* * *

On 14, 16 and 18 August the ICRC Broadcasting Section made a new series of test broadcasts on the 41.61 m. 7210 kc. wavelength, allotted to the International Committee. Similar broadcasts have, it may be recalled, been made periodically since 1951, for the purpose of checking the audibility and propagation of this frequency, while at the same time attracting the attention of short-wave listeners. As on previous occasions, the Broadcasting Section gave advance notice of the broadcasts to the following: European National Red Cross Societies and those of neighbouring countries;

ICRC delegates and correspondents; a number of amateur radio associations; broadcasting corporations and the appropriate departments of the postal, telegraph and telephone services; and also to the many private listeners who now make a point of picking up these broadcasts and sending the ICRC their comments. In this connexion, 1,225 sets of programmes and reception report cards were sent out by the Committee. Wave-length propagation conditions have changed considerably since last winter, owing to sun-spot developments, and it will, therefore, be of great interest to learn the results of this latest series of tests.

* * *

At the joint session of the European Association for the Study of Refugee Problems (EAR) and the World Association for the Study of Refugee Problems (WAR), held at Vaduz at the beginning of August, the ICRC was represented by Mr. H. G. Beckh and Mr. H. Coursier. On the conclusion of this conference, some fifty of the delegates travelled to Geneva, where they were received at the headquarters of the International Committee by the Executive Director, Mr. R. Gallopin. They were given short lectures and shown films, on the work of the ICRC.

* * *

Several ICRC representatives have recently visited Geneva to report on their work, and to discuss with the directors various problems relating to the International Committee's activities in the countries where they are living. Among them were: Mr. Müller, ICRC correspondent in Cairo, who returned to his post on 22 August; Mr. Vust, delegate in Algeria, and Mr. Vautier, delegate in Morocco.

* * *

At the session of the General Council of the International Union for Child Welfare, held at Bonn from 30 July to 4 August, 1956, the ICRC was represented by Mr. H. G. Beckh, who was careful to stress the traditional cooperation and the unity of ideas

which link these two organizations. He reported that the work of reuniting families, begun by the ICRC during the war, and in which the National Red Cross Societies take an active interest, was progressing most satisfactorily. So far, some 115,000 persons, many of them children, had been reunited in this way.

* * *

As the result of the entry into force in the German Federal Republic of a law providing for payment of compensation to former German prisoners of war, the Central Prisoners of War Agency in Geneva has, since March 1955, been receiving an ever increasing number of requests for captivity certificates. The latest totals recorded are 1,717 for July, and 3,200 for August.

The requests from Germany emanate from the Public Assistance Offices (Fürsorgeämter), to which ex-prisoners must send their applications. Since the compensation paid is in proportion to the length of time spent in captivity, excluding any periods when the person concerned was employed as a paid civilian worker, the chief difficulty encountered by these offices is to find out whether an ex-prisoner has worked in a civilian capacity and, if so, when and for how long. Here, once again, the Central Agency's card-indexes have proved the only source from which the required particulars, that is to say, the date of capture and those of the beginning and the end of employment, can be obtained. In the majority of instances, these particulars are to be found in these records.

* * *

On the occasion of his mission to the Middle East, last December, Mr. de Traz called at Cyprus and there visited persons under detention as a result of recent events. After his visit, the International Committee's special representative arranged for the sum of 10,000 Swiss francs to be made available to these detainees for the purchase of relief supplies. The ICRC has since received a letter of thanks from the camp leaders of the Kokkino Trimithia camp.

* * *

At the invitation of the ICRC, the President of the Red Cross Society of the German Federal Republic, Dr. Weitz, and the President and Vice-President of the Red Cross of the People's Republic of Rumania, Dr. Belea and Mrs. Mesaros, met in Geneva at the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross, where they were received by the President, M. Léopold Boissier. Current questions of interest to the three Red Cross organizations were discussed in a spirit of friendly and mutual understanding; one of these being the problem of reuniting families. The parties to the meeting agreed to continue to take an active part in this great humanitarian work.

From Geneva, Dr. Belea and Mrs. Mesaros, accompanied by Mr. Beckh, travelled to Bonn at the invitation of the German Red Cross.

* * *

As announced at the time, a mission was sent to Algeria by the International Committee of the Red Cross, to visit the detention camps where persons deprived of their liberty as a result of current events are being held.

A report was subsequently communicated to the French Government.

M. Guy Mollet, President of the Council, consented to a meeting with the head of the ICRC mission, M. Claude Pilloud, which took place in Paris on 29 August. Discussion centred principally on the mission's findings and the continuance of the International Committee's humanitarian work on behalf of the victims of existing conditions in Algeria.

* * *

The fourth conference on International Medical Law was held in Geneva, at the headquarters of the International Committee, on 3 and 4 September. It was attended by representatives of the International Committee of Military Medicine and Pharmacy, the World Medical Association and the International Committee of the Red Cross; and also by an observer from the World Health Organization.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

A number of problems relating to the protection of medical personnel of all categories, especially in the case of conflicts other than those between nations, were examined during the discussions. They resulted, first and foremost, in the establishment of a number of draft rules intended to provide such protection to the fullest possible extent. These rules will be submitted to the organizations concerned, for adoption. The same procedure will be followed as regards a draft code of medical ethics in the time of conflict, also framed at this meeting.

The Revue internationale will, in due course, publish a comprehensive study on this important work, which, if it achieves the hoped for results, will undoubtedly help to ensure increased protection for civilian medical personnel during hostilities.

REVUE
INTERNATIONALE
DE LA
CROIX-ROUGE

SUPPLEMENT

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RED CROSS PRINCIPLES

XIV

10. Foresight

The Red Cross must always be ready for the tasks with which it may be faced.

To forestall possible objections let us say at once that we do not intend to make principles out of mere recommendations or sound administrative axioms. But the requirement with which we are now dealing has been recognized ever since the Red Cross was founded and is, in fact one of the most characteristic features of the Red Cross. To-day the principle of foresight seems to us as important as ever, and we are therefore leaving it the place given it by the founders of the institution.

Henry Dunant did not become the founder of the Red Cross through the mere fact of having looked after the wounded : others had done that long before he did. His stroke of genius lay in grasping the fact that relief work to be effective must be prepared in peace-time on a permanent basis. Realization of that truth led to the birth of the Red Cross, and to the improvement which took place at the same time in Army Medical Services ; thanks to it millions of lives have been saved¹. Previously

¹ During the Crimean campaign (1854-1856) 60% of the wounded died for lack of adequate care or because it was given too late. It is estimated that during the First World War 7.5% of the wounded succumbed, while the same figure for the Second World War—for armies organized on modern lines—was only 2.3%. And we must not forget that during the campaigns of the XIXth Century, the army death rate from disease was from 3 to 5 times as high as the casualties caused by arms.

arrangements concerning the wounded had sometimes been made in agreements concluded between the commanders of the opposing armies ; but agreements of that kind only held good for the one campaign, and when there was a great battle, the medical services were unable to cope with the heavy casualties, no one having been willing to face the possibility of such a situation occurring ; and each time this cost the lives of thousands of men, who died of infection, although they could have recovered if cared for in time.

In order to be ready in advance, Red Cross Societies set to work in peace-time, working without respite, training the staff and preparing the equipment they would need if war broke out—practising, improving their methods, following scientific developments and above all ensuring that they could mobilize without delay. Permanence¹ and rapidity are essential to the work of the Red Cross. The Scout motto “ Be prepared ” might well have been adopted by the Red Cross too.

In 1874, G. Moynier wrote as follows on the subject of foresight : “ The necessity of not waiting until war has actually broken out before hastily improvising means of assisting the wounded and sick, and the advisability of making use of periods of peace to prepare for war, are now axiomatic. Hence the permanent character of relief societies and their duty of displaying foresight.”

It was, in fact, this requirement which during the last century caused Red Cross Societies to carry out charitable work, in peace-time, on behalf of the civilian population. Red Cross workers could not be left with nothing to do ; they had to practise and fill in their time. So National Societies started looking after sick civilians, opening nursing schools, and taking action when natural disasters occurred. Since then, the peace-time work of the Red Cross has become an end in itself.

The instance we have just quoted shows clearly enough, however, that the wartime work of the Red Cross, for which

¹ This requirement makes one wish that the directing staff of Red Cross bodies could remain in their posts for long periods and that they should not be constantly changed, as is often the case. They must give dedicated service, and men of experience, with a thoroughgoing knowledge of facts and theory, are needed.

it was originally created, still takes precedence. Its other activities, which may be the most extensive to-day, nevertheless come second owing to their nature. Other charitable organizations can look after sick civilians, cripples and children, but for the Red Cross the crucial test is war. In wartime it reverts to its original, specific role. When distress suddenly becomes widespread, when international relations are broken off, and sometimes even the machinery of government breaks down, then it is that the Red Cross and its protective sign are irreplaceable and may, perhaps, come as a last hope. Under these exceptional circumstances, when suffering and destruction are deliberately brought about by men, the Red Cross defends interests of supreme importance ¹.

The Red Cross must therefore be prepared for any contingency. It should, moreover, always prepare for the worst. It disapproves of war more than anyone else does, since it must try to snatch its victims from it even in the very thick of the struggle, but the outbreak of war must never take it unawares. The fact that States have powerful armies, even for purely defensive purposes, clearly means that they do not regard war as an impossibility.

One must at least draw a lesson from tragic experiences, and an example will show us what the consequences of a want of foresight may be. In 1907, the Hague Conference decided not to enact detailed provisions improving the position of civilians in wartime, since it was felt that the immunity they enjoyed was not open to question. The First World War refuted that opinion in the plainest possible fashion. In 1921, the International Committee of the Red Cross proposed that a separate Convention for the protection of civilians should be concluded. But official circles felt that this was not expedient, with the result that the Diplomatic Conference of 1929 merely defined the status of members of the armed forces. In spite of further efforts by the Red Cross, a Diplomatic Conference to discuss the protection and status of civilians was only arranged for

¹ In 1888, the International Committee adopted the motto *Inter arma caritas*. Several Red Cross Societies have also adopted it, while others have added to it, their motto being: *In bello et in pace caritas*.

1940. That was too late, and during the whole of the Second World War the civilian population, once again without any form of protection, endured indescribable sufferings. The Convention finally appeared in its present form in 1949.

The conditions for the recognition of new Red Cross Societies refer to foresight in the following terms : " Become prepared in time of peace for wartime activities " ¹. The former version of this text added : " If necessary include all branches of the Army Medical Service in its programme ". This last provision has been dropped, as medical services have made such progress that they sometimes no longer need assistance. Besides, a requirement of that kind has become too restrictive in view of the way the field of activity of Red Cross Societies has extended since that time. Since there can only, as we have seen, be one Red Cross Society in each country, it follows that that Society's activities must embrace the whole national territory, and also that it must undertake all the duties for which it is qualified, provided nobody else is doing so. Its action on the national level is therefore total, just as the action of the Red Cross on an international level is universal.

Efforts have been made to give an even tenor to the work of the Red Cross by providing it with regular peace-time occupations, but the temporary character of its primary function—its intervention when crises occur—is still its dominant feature. It rises to special occasions ; it has sudden bursts of activity. Although it has a permanent staff, trains voluntary workers in advance and keeps them ready for immediate action, they only take the field when the need arises.

This means that the Red Cross will stand aside if any other organization can settle a given humanitarian problem satisfactorily. For if the Red Cross is to leave no suffering without a remedy, constantly on the alert to detect new cases of adversity, if it must be ready to intervene when no one else can do so and the victims have no natural protector, it must take care not to dissipate its strength without any necessity.

¹ The same idea is expressed as follows in the League's principles : " A Red Cross Society must be able and ready to carry out those services in war which are the special duty and privilege of the Red Cross ".

It must not be worried, as so many organizations are, at the thought of losing its "customers". For it must pay that price for keeping its resources intact, its weapons always sharp and ready primed for the great humanitarian conquests which one day it alone may be in a position to undertake.

It is certainly most useful when the Red Cross itself sends relief to a place where destitution is rife. But that is not, usually, enough : it is also necessary to approach the authorities concerned and get them to solve the problem once and for all, making further relief action superfluous.

We thus pass quite naturally from the subject of foresight to that of prevention. The best way of fighting suffering is to prevent its occurrence—to find out the real trouble and nip it in the bud. Prevention is better than cure. The Red Cross therefore takes preventive as well as remedial action.

In medicine, prevention is known as prophylaxis or the prevention of disease and includes vaccination, instruction in hygiene and the early detection of diseases. The National Societies engage in these activities, which are becoming more and more general.

In the legal field, "prevention" means drawing up international rules to protect human beings from the dangers of war. From its inception, the International Committee of the Red Cross has, as we know, endeavoured to extend and improve the provisions of humanitarian law in the light of experience, and the Geneva Conventions are mainly its work.

It is, finally, under this heading that we must consider the part played by the Red Cross in promoting peace¹. As the pioneers of the movement wrote, "the great collective iniquity called war is only one of the forms of evil in the world"². The coming of peace may be regarded by the Red Cross as a final goal, an ultimate consequence of its ideal. When discussing neutrality, we saw that there are limits to what it can do in this sphere. The actual means it can employ for eliminating

¹ See *The Red Cross and Peace*, by Jean-G. LOSSIER and Jean S. PICTET, Geneva, 1952.

² G. MOYNIER and L. APPIA, *La guerre et la charité*.

RED CROSS PRINCIPLES

war from human relations are limited. But in this crusade against war, the Red Cross nevertheless represents an important moral factor. It symbolizes peace. In its own field, it creates an atmosphere which lends itself to agreement, spiritual harmony and reconciliation.

We have spoken of the work of the Red Cross in war and in peace ; its actions in the very thick of the struggle are still acts of peace. When it raises the standard of charity in the midst of battles, it represents the promise of a better world, which the combined efforts of all men will one day make it possible to build.

Final Summary

Having now come to an end of our survey, we feel that it will be well to set out here the different principles we have formulated and discussed. Our doctrine may be summarized as follows :

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

1. **Humanity.** — The Red Cross fights against suffering and death. It demands that man shall be treated humanely under all circumstances.
2. **Equality.** — The Red Cross is ready to come to the help of each individual, equally and without any form of discrimination.
3. **Due proportion.** — The help available shall be apportioned according to the relative importance of individual needs and in their order of urgency.
4. **Impartiality.** — The Red Cross will act without favour or prejudice towards or against anyone.
5. **Neutrality.** — It must observe strict neutrality in the military, political and philosophical spheres.

RED CROSS PRINCIPLES

6. **Independence.** — It must be independent of all authorities and free from every influence.
7. **Universality.** — The work of the Red Cross must extend to all men, and all countries.

ORGANIC PRINCIPLES

1. **Selflessness.** — The Red Cross must not reap any advantage from its activities ; it is only concerned with the humanitarian interest of the persons who require help.
2. **Free service.** — It offers its services free of charge.
3. **Voluntary service.** — It is an expression of private charity and a spirit of service, an institution for the provision of voluntary relief.
4. **Auxiliary.** — It cooperates with the public powers.
5. **Autonomy.** — It must have a sufficient degree of autonomy in its relations with those powers.
6. **Multitudinism.** — The ranks of a National Red Cross Society must be open to all the citizens of the country concerned. The Society must be organized on a democratic basis.
7. **Equality of the National Societies.** — All National Societies have the same international rights.
8. **Unity.** — In each State there can only be one Red Cross Society, directed by one central body. The activities of the Society must embrace the whole country.
9. **Solidarity.** — Having the same aims, Red Cross Societies have established mutual relationships and recognize that it is their duty to help one another.
10. **Foresight.** — The Red Cross must always be ready for the tasks with which it may be faced.

SUMMARY

The fundamental principles of the Red Cross are : humanity, equality as between men, the principle that relief must be proportionate to the needs, impartiality, neutrality in the military, political, denominational and philosophical spheres, independence and universality.

The movement's organic principles are : selflessness, free service, voluntary service, auxiliarity, autonomy, multitudinism, equality as between the National Societies, unity, solidarity and foresight.

JEAN S. PICTET

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

Red Cross action in Hungary

October 27. — In reply to the appeal launched from Budapest by the Hungarian Red Cross Society the International Committee of the Red Cross has despatched to its permanent delegate in Vienna, Mr. Guido Joubert, 600 units of human albumine ready for transfusion as well as a quantity of field dressings. This gift, which was transported to Vienna by the Swiss Red Cross, will be conveyed to the Austro-Hungarian frontier, where it will be handed to the Hungarian Red Cross as soon as it had been possible to establish contact with it. Mr. H. G. Beckh, special delegate of the ICRC, left Geneva early Saturday for Vienna with a view to establishing this contact.

October 28. — Communication was established by phone, in the course of Sunday afternoon, with the Central Committee of the Hungarian Red Cross in Budapest, which confirmed the need for urgent assistance and requested blood plasma, medical supplies and food for many thousands of victims. The spokesman of the Hungarian Red Cross moreover underlined that all necessary steps would be taken to allow a Swiss plane to land at the civil airport of Fery-Hegy near Budapest on Monday morning.

The International Committee of the Red Cross, in close contact with the Swiss authorities and the Swiss Red Cross, has immediately taken all necessary steps towards this end. A special Swissair plane with a crew of volunteers, aboard which a delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross Mr. René Bovey will also travel, is scheduled to leave Kloten Airport near Zürich in the course of Sunday night, arriving Monday morning in Budapest.

This plane will touch down in Vienna where it will pick up the International Committee of the Red Cross's special delegate on the spot Mr. H. G. Beckh. These two delegates have as their mission to convoy the supplies donated by the International Committee of the Red Cross and also by various other national Red Cross Societies. These supplies are at present being centralised by the Austrian Red Cross Society, which for its part is organising a shuttle service of trucks in the direction of the Czech-Hungarian frontier. Two Hungarian planes, also loaded with relief supplies, will escort the Swiss plane from Vienna to Budapest.

The International Committee of the Red Cross will continue to pursue its efforts with a view to assisting, without distinction, all victims of events all over Hungary.

October 29. — In the course of Monday, the International Committee of the Red Cross initiated and established an air-lift between Vienna and Budapest by means of a Douglas D.C. 3 freighted from « Swissair » and also two Hungarian planes which flew in from Budapest, Sunday evening.

The International Committee's plane made two trips, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. On the first trip, as well as relief supplies, it flew two delegates from the International Committee ; Messrs. Bovey and Beckh into Budapest, where they arrived at 11.15 a.m. and immediately took contact with representatives of the Hungarian Red Cross.

In the course of their trips the planes rushed over five tons of urgently required relief into the city : 2600 kg of blood plasma, donated by the International Committee, 1674 kg of various medical supplies (human albumine, antitetanos and antigangrene sera) donated by the Swiss Red Cross, as well as 680 kg of concentrated foods. The value of these gifts is about 60.000 Swiss francs.

Gifts have been flowing in to the Austrian Red Cross and the permanent Delegation of the International Committee in Vienna all day and will be shipped on to Hungary tomorrow and on subsequent days. One of the most important of these gifts is from Britain : 72 tons of various relief supplies flown in to Vienna on 24 aircraft from München-Gladbach airfield.

In the course of the last 24 hours the following have announced considerable gifts : the American, Liechtenstein, Irish, Danish, Belgian, Swedish, Finnish, Netherlands, Canadian, British, New Zealand, East German, Italian, French and Luxemburg Red Cross Societies as well as various other private Relief Agencies in Europe and overseas. These gifts include blood plasma, dressings, antibiotics, sedatives, food and also gifts in money to a value of over 450.000 Swiss francs. As this release is being drafted new gifts and offers of help are being received every hour.

The International Committee has just received a preliminary report from one of its delegates on the spot, according to which supplies of blood plasma now appear sufficient for present needs in Budapest. On the other hand the hospitals and dispensaries in Budapest and in the provinces have been hard hit by events and there is a serious lack of hospital equipment and supplies including ambulances, and also of powdered milk and foods especially for small children. This report has been confirmed by the Hungarian Red Cross which again phoned to Geneva on Monday.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

The International Committee of the Red Cross will continue to keep the Press informed, by means of daily news releases, of the development of its action which it will now seek to extend to the whole of the country.

November 1. — The air-lift set up by the ICRC between Vienna and Budapest continued to function all day Tuesday and Wednesday. Five return flights took place, enabling the ICRC to hand over to the Hungarian Red Cross approximately 15 tons of relief, made up more especially of food, special foods for infants and children, tonics and various medical supplies, including antibiotics and antigangrene serum. The ICRC plane, in the course of its third trip, on Wednesday afternoon, unfortunately had to return in mid-flight as permission to land could not be given.

Independently of this operation the delegates of the ICRC have continued to endeavour to extend their action of assistance and protection to other regions in Hungary. For this purpose one of the International Committee's representatives went into the Győr region on Tuesday.

The ICRC has, moreover, decided to recall by means of an appeal, which will also be broadcast, to the forces of the various factions in presence, the elementary rules of humanity contained in the Geneva Conventions.

In the light of its delegates' first reports and also of more recent information supplied by the Hungarian Red Cross, the ICRC addressed a second appeal in Tuesday to 26 National Red Cross Societies giving them supplementary information on needs and the relief required to meet them.

Finally, with a view to reinforcing its delegation on the spot the ICRC has now sent Mr. Ch. Ammann and Mr. J. de Preux. They arrived in Vienna on Tuesday and Wednesday.

November 2. — Considerable gifts for the victims of the events in Hungary continue coming in at the same rhythm as in the course of the past few days, which clearly shows the importance of the feeling of fellowship engendered by these events, and the efficacy of the Red Cross' appeals. Since it has not been possible to use the Budapest airport since Wednesday evening, the International Committee' airlift was suspended all through Thursday. The International Committee of the Red Cross has, however, kept the plane it chartered for this purpose in Vienna, as it still hopes to be able to resume the dispatch of consignments by air in the very near future.

With regard to the province, one of the ICRC delegates will today endeavour to establish the necessary contacts with a view to the trans-shipment of medical supplies and food which will be distributed according to needs.

In view of the recent development in the situation, the International Committee has requested the National Red Cross Societies to suspend the dispatch of consignments of fresh blood plasma and all perishable goods; existing stocks in Vienna will be rapidly distributed as soon as the situation in Hungary allows.

November 3. — Since the interruption, on Wednesday, of the air-lift set up by the ICRC for carrying relief supplies from Vienna to Budapest, its delegates in Austria have been obliged to limit their activities to the area near the Austro-Hungarian frontier. One delegate again went to the Győr district, where his presence prevented summary executions from being carried out.

Owing to the speed at which the situation has developed, the position has become more and more confused, and the transport of relief supplies by road may also be stopped. Nevertheless, three convoys, made up of lorries belonging to the Austrian Red Cross and to other National Societies which have sent teams to Vienna, are to attempt to cross the frontier on Saturday at three different points, and to penetrate as far as possible into Hungarian territory. Their mission, which is being carried out under the auspices and on responsibility of the ICRC, is primarily to supply hospital with foodstuffs and medicaments.

Furthermore, the ICRC Delegation confirms that a German Red Cross medical team has succeeded in reaching the Hungarian capital, where it is already engaged in relief work.

The ICRC has, for its part, approached all the authorities concerned, with the request that Red Cross convoys be respected and that its representatives suffer no interference in carrying out their work.

November 5. — By reason of the great influx at Vienna, of Red Cross relief arriving from the different countries for the Hungarian people, new measures were announced today by the ICRC and the League to assure the efficacious operation of this Red Cross action.

The delegates of the ICRC have instructions to direct the distribution of relief on Hungarian territory, as soon as the border is reopened. The League has appointed a delegate-coordinator at Vienna, Henrik Beer, General Secretary of the Swedish RC, assisted by representatives of the Canadian, Finnish and Norwegian Red Cross Societies, who will undertake the administration of relief already at Vienna and en route. Consequently, Mr. Beer will coordinate the arrival in Vienna of Red Cross personnel as well as the storage, such sorting as may be necessary, and daily inventories of stocks.

He will put at the disposal of ICRC delegates, according to needs, the relief intended for distribution in Hungary.

As concerns Red Cross aid to Hungarian refugees arriving in Austria, the Austrian Red Cross in giving emergency assistance to

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these persons. Should it prove necessary, the ICRC and League will make available supplies from the international stocks assembled at Vienna to aid in this task.

Should the relief sent to Vienna, or announced, appear insufficient to meet the needs of the Hungarian population, or refugees, the ICRC will address a further appeal to National Societies for additional aid.

November 7. — (Joint communication ICRC and LRCS). The International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies announced today that they have assumed responsibility to meet basic needs of 10,000 of the Hungarian refugees who have crossed the border into Austria in the past few days. This includes provision of foodstuffs, blankets, sheets, cutlery, etc., for the next 30 days.

A part of the Red Cross supplies sent to Vienna by numerous National Societies for the Hungarian people is being utilised—with the consent of the donor Societies—for the refugees in Austria who are being accommodated in camps established at Traiskirchen, Graz and Judenau. Red Cross staff of a half-dozen nationalities are working in the camps round-the-clock, distributing supplies, operating field kitchens and assisting doctors and nurses in medical clinics.

Governments of various countries offering relief to the Austrian Government for the Hungarian refugees on Austrian territory, are being asked by that Government to channel emergency relief through their respective National Red Cross Societies.

At the time of going to press, we received the following announcement to the effect that a ICRC relief column has crossed the Austro-Hungarian frontier.

November 11. — (Joint communication ICRC and LRCS). The second phase of the International Red Cross relief operation for Hungary began today with the departure of a convoy bound for Budapest.

The 15-vehicle unit crossed the border at approximately 11 o'clock this morning. The convoy carried 27 tons of food, drugs, and hospital supplies. It is expected that representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Budapest will meet the convoy and arrange distribution of the relief supplies.

The Red Cross and the Suez Conflict

On hearing of the events in Egypt, the International Committee of the Red Cross requested the Governments of the countries involved in the conflict to take all necessary measures to ensure the application of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 for the protection of the wounded, prisoners of war, and also civilians.

Egypt, France and Israel are already bound by these Conventions. As regards the United Kingdom, the Prime Minister informed the International Committee that, pending their formal ratification, the British Government accepted them and intended to apply their provisions, should the occasion arise.

In its broadcast of November 2, 1956, the International Committee, for its part, stated its readiness to assume the duties assigned to it under the Geneva Conventions, and to take any humanitarian action made necessary by events. It drew attention, in particular, to the existence in Geneva of the Central Prisoners of War Agency, to which nominal rolls of captured members of the armed forces, and information on any civilians arrested or interned, should be sent, so as to enable it to relieve the anxiety of their families.

Lastly, in a broadcast message in several languages, the International Committee gave a summary, for the use of all combatants, of the essential principles of the Geneva Conventions, in regard to the respect due to human beings.

The ICRC also asked the Egyptian Red Crescent whether it was in need of relief supplies or wished an appeal to be sent to the various Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. At the same time, it took all necessary measures to strengthen its delegations in the Middle East, and opened a special relief fund for the benefit of the victims of the conflict in Egypt into which the donations already received, and those still to come have, or will be, paid.

The Egyptian Red Crescent has accepted our offer and asks for blood plasma, antibiotics and dressings. With the assistance of the Red Cross Societies and the League, the ICRC is now collecting the relief supplies needed to make up a first consignment for despatch by air.

On November 8, Dr. Gaillard, doctor-delegate of the ICRC, left Geneva for Israel, where it will be his duty to visit prisoners of war in the hands of that country's forces.

In Cairo, where enquiries for news of relatives are flowing in, an Information Office is being set up with the help of workers recruited locally by the delegate of the ICRC; the latter will also give his assistance to prisoners of war in Egyptian hands.

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

News Items

Repatriation of Germans. — *Some official agencies, including the Tracing Service of the German Red Cross at Munich and Hamburg, are so good as to pass on the ICRC the names of former prisoners of war or civilian internees returning from the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, as and when they arrive in their home country.*

The latter are mostly people in whose interests the ICRC has been working for many years. Without going into details, mention may be made of the following activities undertaken on their behalf: the transmission of messages for civilians; efforts to obtain news for relatives; the dispatch of parcels with food, clothing or medicaments to make captivity more tolerable, and so forth. In some cases, the persons on whose behalf the ICRC has been working have been freed and repatriated; in others, no reply has been received, or alternatively negotiations have been resumed with the governments concerned after long correspondence with the national societies concerned.

Notifications of repatriation are of the greatest use to the ICRC, since they enable it to keep its card-index up to date, and to complete the personal files kept at the Central Prisoners of War Agency.

The return of Spaniards to their country. — *At the end of September and at the beginning of October of this year, two convoys, comprising 513 and 461 persons respectively, arrived at Valencia*

from Russia, accompanied by representatives of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR. The returned prisoners, whose health was good, were welcomed by the President of the Spanish Red Cross and the ICRC delegate in Madrid was informed of their arrival by the Spanish Red Cross.

Greeks leave Albania. — *Following on the successful conclusion of negotiations between Albania and Greece, 217 Greek ex-prisoners of war or internees, held in Albania for a number of years, were able to return to their country in August.*

At its request, nominal rolls of the persons repatriated were supplied to the ICRC by the Greek Red Cross.

Japanese freed in China. — *Notification has also been received of the embarkation at Tientsin on 25 August of 345 former Japanese prisoners of war in China, who have now been permitted to go back to Japan.*

The ICRC had approached the appropriate Red Cross Societies on many occasions on their behalf.

Further ratifications of the Geneva Conventions of 1949. — *During the interval between the two International Red Cross Conferences at Toronto (September 1952) and New Delhi (January 1957), the ICRC intensified its efforts for the general ratification of the Geneva conventions of 1949. As a result of its approaches to National Societies, considerable progress was made. To the twenty ratifications or accessions obtained prior to the Toronto Conference, must now be added thirty-eight more received during subsequent years; ten since the beginning of 1956. During the current year, the Swiss Federal Council has notified the International Committee of the following ratifications of, or accessions to the Conventions: Panama (10 February), Venezuela (13 February), Irak (14 February), Peru (15 February), Liberia (22 May), Greece (5 June), Morocco (21 July), Argentine (18 September), Afghanistan (28 September), Laos (October 29). This brings the number of States parties to the Conventions up to 58. The International Committee of the Red Cross hopes that other ratifications or accessions will be announced prior to the*

meeting of the XIXth International Conference of the Red Cross in January of next year.

Preparations for the XIXth International Conference of the Red Cross. — *The preliminary documentation, and nearly all the reports to be submitted to the Conference by the ICRC, have already been circulated to National Societies and Governments, members of the Conference, in the three working languages, that is to say: French, English and Spanish. This is also the case as regards the Draft Rules for the Limitation of the Dangers incurred by the Civilian Population in Time of War; at present being published in the Revue Internationale.*

The ICRC has noted with interest the information provided in the first number of an information bulletin, issued by the Indian Red Cross for the benefit of the participants in the Conference. This booklet provides general information on the organisation of the Conference: agenda, commissions, reports of National Societies, conference premises, participants, working languages, translation and interpretation, etc. It also provides practical information on living conditions at New Delhi: climate, currency, hotels, restaurants, means of transport, passport regulations, rates of exchange, custom regulations, etc. A black and white map will be found very useful in preparing journeys inside the country itself.

Visitors to the ICRC. — *During a brief stay to Geneva, the President of the Republic of Liberia, His Excellency Mr. William V. S. Tubman, honoured the International Red Cross by visiting ICRC headquarters. He was welcomed on behalf of the ICRC by Mr. L. Boissier and Mr. F. Siordet, President and Vice-President respectively; and by Mr. Nicholson, Vice-President of the American Red Cross and Mr. Pachkow, of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR, both Vice-Presidents of the League, supported by Mr. de Rougé, Honorary Vice-President and Secretary General, for the League.*

The President of Liberia—a country which acceded to the Geneva Conventions in 1954—was very interested in the account given him of the two organisations' activities and paid a long visit to the Central Prisoners of War Agency.

Meeting of the Standing Commission. — *The Standing Commission of the International Red Cross met at headquarters in Geneva on 30 October 1956, with Mr. André Francois-Poncet as chairman. The object of this extraordinary meeting was to examine various requests for additions to the agenda of the XIXth International Conference of the Red Cross, to be held at New Delhi at the beginning of next year.*

Medical personnel and care of the sick. — *At the ICRC headquarters Dr. Amamou Abdel Kader, who directs the "Ecole professionnelle d'assistance aux malades" at Sfax (Tunisia), had discussions with Miss Pfirter on various questions relating to the status of Red Cross and Red Crescent nurses, the role of the National Societies as regards the training of medical and nursing personnel, and care of the sick and wounded.*

Visit of British journalists to ICRC headquarters. — *On 22 September, the ICRC had the pleasure of welcoming the editors of the following newspapers: Manchester Guardian, Glasgow Herald, Birmingham Post, Birmingham Gazette, Newcastle Journal. They were received by the President of the International Committee, Mr. Léopold Boissier, who was particularly anxious to answer their questions personally, and gave them a very comprehensive description of what the ICRC was doing in the field of law and humanitarian work. During their visit, the British Press representative learnt a great deal about the ICRC's past and present activities and the way in which the Committee's work had developed. They were also given detailed information on the Conventions of 1949*

The International Committee very much appreciates this fresh evidence of the interest taken by the British public in its functions and humanitarian work. Such contacts always help to strengthen the almost century-old bond of mutual understanding between the United Kingdom, the native land of Florence Nightingale, and the Geneva organization.

War veterans' congress. — *At the XVth Congress of the "Fédération Française des Anciens Combattants", held at*

Nice from 20-22 September, 1956, the ICRC was represented by Mr. Frédéric Siordet, Vice-President.

ICRC delegates in various parts of the world. — Mr. David de Traz, ICRC delegate in the Middle East, left Geneva by air on 19 September for Cairo. He returned to Geneva on 1 October, and, after making a report to the International Committee, left again for Beirut.

Mr. Pierre Gaillard, head of section, Executive Division, and Dr. Alexis Louis Gaillard arrived in Algiers on 17 October, on a third tour of investigation in Algeria. This does not mark a new phase in ICRC activities, but forms part of a series of visits paid by delegates of the International Committee to various parts of North Africa to investigate conditions in detention camps.

Several ICRC delegates have recently visited Geneva to report on their work; among them was Mr. G. Joubert, ICRC delegate in Vienna, who was here from 30 September to 10 October. The delegation in Vienna is continuing its work of reuniting the dispersed members of families belonging to German ethnical groups, temporarily in Austria on their way to Germany or other European or overseas countries—Yugoslav nationals separated as a result of war conditions, or Greek nationals repatriated from Eastern countries, for instance. Mr. Joubert personally accompanied a number of convoys between the Hungarian frontier and Vienna. Welfare work on behalf of the Austrian population itself is mainly concerned with the war disabled and child victims of war, to whom our delegate distributes relief supplies sent direct from Geneva. During the last few months, the ICRC delegation has made helpful contacts with various authorities represented in Vienna. Mr. Joubert reported that the International Committee's humanitarian work was meeting with very great sympathy on the part, not only of the Austrian authorities and Red Cross, but also of other organizations working in the same field, and of foreign Government representatives and missions.

Mr. Pfrunder, ICRC delegate in Singapore, received permission from the authorities to visit detention camps in that area. From his report on his visit to the Ipoh camp and his investigation of

the living conditions of the detainees, it appears that the latter are humanely treated.

Relations with various countries. — *At a seminar on the status of women in the USSR, held in Moscow from 15 to 30 September, the ICRC was represented by Miss Pfirter, Head of the Nursing and War Disablement Section.*

Miss Pfirter also visited the Alliance of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. She returned to Geneva on 2 October.

Mr. H. G. Beckh, member of the ICRC Executive Division, left Geneva on 7 October for Bucharest, by air, where he had further conversations with the authorities and Rumanian Red Cross leaders on the subject of reuniting "Volksdeutsche" families. On the outward journey he stopped at Prague, and on his return journey both at Prague and Budapest. He thus had the opportunity to exchange views with the leaders of the Hungarian and Czechoslovak National Red Cross Societies. He arrived back in Geneva on 17 October.

Mr. Horneffer, of the Executive Division, left Geneva on 3 October for Budapest, and returned to ICRC headquarters on 11 October.

Aid to Greece. — *Mr. C. Amman, of the Executive Division of the ICRC, left Geneva at the beginning of October by "Swissair" for Athens, where he is distributing relief supplies to the civilian population (political detainees). He is spending about four or five weeks in Greece.*

End of the Trieste refugee scheme. — *During the last three years the Revue internationale has on several occasions given prominence to the ICRC's activities on behalf of 102 tubercular refugees from Eastern Europe, who were transferred from a reception centre in Trieste to Leysin, in Switzerland, for medical treatment.*

The resettlement of the refugees when cured, and of their families, in several West European and overseas countries, carried out throughout with the devoted assistance of Miss Marion Rothenbach and other social assistants, meant the conclusion of this work.

The Red Cross on the air. — *Radio Interredcross, Geneva, has started broadcasting on the wave-length allotted to the International Committee of the Red Cross (41.61 m. 7210 kc.). At 7 a.m., 12.30 p.m., 4 p.m., and 9 p.m., Central European Time, it broadcasts Red Cross news, information on the latest developments, with particular reference to relief work undertaken or co-ordinated by the ICRC, and also appeals issued by the International Committee.*

The broadcasts are in Russian, Hungarian, Hebrew, and Arabic, and occasionally in French, English or German.

**REVUE
INTERNATIONALE
DE LA
CROIX-ROUGE**

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

THE ICRC RELIEF ACTION IN HUNGARY

“The events in Hungary have deeply moved the world. From all sides generous and spontaneous offers of assistance are flooding in to the central organizations of the Red Cross”, said the President of the ICRC on 29 October, 1956, in a statement on Radio Geneva, after the Budapest rising, explaining how the Committee would assist the victims of the events through Hungary. “Already”, he added, our delegates are in Budapest. The information they obtain on the spot will enable us to bring to the victims, whatever their origin or opinions may be, the plentiful supplies coming in from all sides and particularly from the National Societies of the Red Cross, advised by their federation, the League. Thus the universal urge to help will find expression in rapid and effective action based on the desire to assist the suffering”.

However, while the International Committee wished to bring to the Hungarian people immediate assistance on the scale their needs required, it realised that seriousness of the situation would probably make it difficult to accomplish its traditional tasks of assistance and protection. To try to ensure that at least some of the principles of humanity were observed when force was unleashed, from 31 October onwards it broadcast on its own wavelength reminders of some of the fundamental principles embodied in the Geneva Conventions and binding on all peoples.

In the last number of the *Revue internationale* we were already able to include various items of information regarding the ICRC relief action in Hungary, but now that we have more information at our disposal and that the action has developed considerably in scope, we consider it a suitable time to publish a general review of the ICRC's activities since the end of October 1956.

THE VIENNA-BUDAPEST AIR LIFT

During the afternoon of Sunday, 28 October, the ICRC in Geneva received an appeal from the Central Committee of the Hungarian Red Cross asking for immediate assistance for several thousand victims and stating that preparations were being made to permit a Swiss plane to land next morning at the aerodrome of Ferihegy-Budapest.

The International Committee forthwith appealed to twenty-six National Societies of the Red Cross, and, after making the necessary arrangements in agreement with the Swiss Federal authorities and the Swiss Red Cross, which was to play a very active part in all these events, chartered an aeroplane, the crew of which volunteered for the task. It was decided to take off that very evening. Late on Sunday, 28 October, the ICRC plane, loaded with supplies and accompanied by an ICRC delegate, left Klotten for Vienna. It had been arranged that two Hungarian aircraft, also carrying supplies, would escort the Swiss plane from Vienna to Budapest. On the morning of Monday, 29 October, the first consignments from the International Committee reached Budapest. During Monday and Tuesday the ICRC Vienna-Budapest airlift worked satisfactorily and on the evening of the 30th the Hungarian Red Cross announced that it had already gratefully received 90 tons of blood plasma, dressings, medicaments, foodstuffs and blankets, all carried by the Swiss plane and its two Hungarian escorts.

Another two-way flight took place on the Wednesday morning, but that evening during its sixth run the ICRC plane was unfortunately obliged to turn back, since permission to land had not been granted.

From that time onwards the Budapest aerodrome could not be used and on Thursday the airlift ran no more. However, the DC3 remained on the airfield at Vienna ready to take off if it should again become possible to send supplies, but the route was no longer free. With some misgivings the International Committee decided on Saturday 3 November to send the plane back to Switzerland.

THE ICRC DELEGATES

The ICRC in Geneva was in constant touch with Vienna, where the Austrian Red Cross has shown untiring devotion, and with Budapest. In Austria it was represented by Mr. Joubert and it was intended to send several delegates to Hungary. Mr. Beckh arrived in Vienna during the afternoon of Sunday, 28 October; Mr. Bovey

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had followed immediately in the ICRC plane and reached Vienna on Monday morning. The task of these two delegates was to accompany into Hungary the consignments sent from Geneva by the ICRC and the supplies from various sources assembled in Vienna by the Austrian Red Cross.

On 29 October Mr. Beckh accompanied Mr. Bovey on the ICRC plane's first flight to Budapest-Ferihegyi, where they handed over the supplies to members of the Hungarian Red Cross. Information obtained on the spot enabled them to draw up a preliminary list of the needs of the people of Budapest. The Swiss and Hungarian aircraft were sent back to Vienna for further supplies, of which the Hungarian Red Cross took immediate charge each time.

The two ICRC delegates thus made several return trips by air between Vienna and Budapest to accompany relief supplies. They also visited in Hungarian hospitals persons wounded in the recent fighting.

On 30 October Mr. de Preux who had been sent from Geneva, Mr. Ammann, head of the Relief Section, who had interrupted his mission of assistance in Greece, and Mr. Meyer, a former delegate who had offered his services temporarily to the International Committee, came to reinforce the delegation in Vienna, while Mr. Beckh and Mr. Bovey strove to extend their activities to the various parts of Hungary.

Mr. Beckh drew up a complete list of the requirements of the people in Western Hungary and established a preliminary plan for sending relief columns. In the regions near the Austro-Hungarian frontier at Győr, his presence prevented summary executions and he obtained a written undertaking from the leader of the Hungarian combatants that the Geneva Conventions would be respected. At Sopron he visited detainees and then went back to the ICRC delegation in Vienna to deal with the refugees who were beginning to flood in.

After the frontier had been closed, he visited all the refugee reception centres or camps of any size in Austria so that by 4 November the ICRC representatives were able to state what would be required. On 7 November he returned to Geneva.

At Budapest Mr. Bovey had remained in touch with the Hungarian Red Cross and the representatives of other Red Crosses. There was much remaining to be done in supplying the hospitals with medicaments, foodstuffs and medical stores. The situation in the Hungarian capital was becoming critical. The general strike had interrupted transport and there was a risk that supplies for one-and-a-half million inhabitants might no longer be certain. In this situation Mr. Bovey was rejoined at Budapest by Mr. de Preux who had twice succeeded with an ICRC driver in crossing the frontier with a medical and supply convoy of the Austrian Red Cross.

On Sunday, 4 November, Russian troops reoccupied Budapest and the delegates were no longer able to send us news of their activities. It was not until 12 November that they managed to reestablish contact with Geneva.

THE FLOW OF RELIEF SUPPLIES TO VIENNA

On 30 October the Committee had received a telegram from the Hungarian Red Cross thanking the ICRC for its assistance to the Hungarian people in their distress. A list of requests followed "Have lost all vehicles need as far as possible ambulances lorries and all types of motor vehicles, surgical instruments, X-ray equipment, aureomycin, anti-tetanus serum, vitamins, baby foods, condensed milk, fats, building materials, timber, cement and glass. Please transmit National Societies".

A new appeal went out to the National Societies immediately.

While gifts in money and offers of help came to Geneva from many organizations, collections had been made in numerous countries and Vienna became the main centre to which aid for Hungary flowed.

By 31 October the amount of relief received in Vienna was estimated at 1,200,000 Swiss francs. Other gifts to the value of 1,500,000 francs had been promised. A month later the gifts had reached a total of more than 40 million Swiss francs in value and more than 1730 tons in weight, made up of 810 tons of foodstuffs, 510 tons of medicaments and clothing and 410 tons of equipment for relief camps, and coming from the National Societies of the Red Cross of almost 50 countries.

An idea can be gained of the scale of this movement of goodwill from the following list of countries and territories which have taken part in the action:

Argentina - Australia - Austria - Belgian Congo - Belgium - Brazil - Bulgaria - Canada - Chile - Colombia - Czechoslovakia - Denmark - Ethiopia - Federal Republic of Germany - Finland - France - German Democratic Republic - Great Britain - Greece - Guatemala - India - Ireland - Italy - Japan - Lebanon - Liechtenstein - Luxemburg - Malta - Monaco - Morocco - Netherlands - New Zealand - Norway - Pakistan - Portugal - Rumania - Spain - Sweden - Switzerland - Turkey - USA - USSR - Union of South Africa - Uruguay - Venezuela - Vietnam - Yugoslavia.

The supplies sent by the National Societies of the Red Cross and other bodies to which the ICRC appealed, and the reserves which the donors intended to establish in Vienna, reached such proportions that it became difficult to cope with the ever-increasing flow; in the shortest possible time it was necessary to unload, check and pack

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thousands of bottles of penicillin containing several million units, thousands of flasks of blood plasma and human albumen, ether, large quantities of morphine and various medicaments, thousands of rolls of bandages, and plaster, hundreds of tons of dressings, blankets, clothing and foodstuffs, and blood transfusion apparatus; sites had to be found for the motorized relief columns and accommodation for the escort teams. The reception, sorting and preparation of parcels for despatch across the frontier as soon as it was reopened went on unceasingly. The League and the ICRC delegates had set up an efficient system of supervision to avoid losses. While some losses were inevitable in view of the risks which the transport columns faced, the precautions taken reduced them to a negligible proportion.

THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ICRC AND THE LEAGUE

An agreement was signed on 2 November between the International Committee and the League of Red Cross Societies, specifying that the international Red Cross relief action in Hungary would be conducted by the ICRC while the League would coordinate in Vienna the relief supplies for the Hungarian people received from National Societies.

The text of this agreement and of the amendments to it made on 27 November is as follows:

- (1) *In consideration of the troubled conditions in Hungary at the present time, and in accordance with the Statutes of the International Red Cross and the Agreement concluded between the League and the Committee in 1952, all operations connected with the forwarding, allocation, and distribution in Hungary of gifts of National Societies are placed under the direction of the ICRC Delegation in Hungary, acting in cooperation with the Hungarian Red Cross and possibly of other qualified relief organisations.*
- (2) *As circumstances required that a large part of the relief supplies from national societies intended for Hungary should first be assembled in Vienna, the handling of gifts from National Societies already in Vienna or which may subsequently be in Vienna, are placed under the direction of the Representative of the League of Red Cross Societies, acting in cooperation with the Austrian Red Cross.*
- (3) *The ICRC Delegation in Hungary and the Representative of the League of Red Cross Societies in Vienna will exchange Liaison Officers in order to ensure the coordination of their respective operations.*
- (4) *In view of the above, it will be for the Representative of the League of Red Cross Societies to coordinate gifts of National Red Cross Societies on their arrival in Vienna, to watch over them, arrange for their warehousing and sorting, and for the establishment of a daily inventory, by category of article.*

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- (5) *It will be for the Representative of the League of Red Cross Societies to place at the disposal of the ICRC Delegation in Hungary whatever relief supplies it may request according to needs, and in conformity with a plan established in agreement with the Hungarian Red Cross or other qualified relief organisations. These relief supplies will be handed over to the Representatives of the ICRC either in Vienna or at a frontier post for forwarding by them and subsequent distribution by the Hungarian Red Cross or other qualified bodies under the auspices of the ICRC.*
- (6) *The transport vehicles of the National Societies, with the exception of those belonging to the Hungarian Red Cross, will be assembled in a car park under the management of the League Representative in Vienna, who will hold available the vehicles required by the Delegation of the ICRC in Hungary for the forwarding of relief supplies in that country.*
- (7) *If the relief supplies assembled in Vienna or announced by the National Red Cross Societies are not adequate to meet the requirements of the ICRC Delegation in Hungary, the latter will inform the ICRC, which will launch the necessary appeals to the National Red Cross Societies for additional relief.*
- (8) *It is understood that the delegates of donor National Red Cross Societies will have the possibility, whenever circumstances permit, of personally observing the manner in which their gifts have been utilised on the spot.*
- (9) *It is also understood that, as soon as circumstances permit, the ICRC will facilitate the installation in Hungary of any medical units which the National Societies may desire to send there. Their installation on Hungarian territory will however have to be arranged under a plan established between the ICRC and the Hungarian Red Cross, in order to ensure their most efficient use.*
- (10) *In order to ensure as perfect a balance as possible between supply and demand of relief for Hungary, the International Committee and the League will endeavour to centralise in Geneva as much information as possible on non Red Cross relief.*
- (11) *The above provisions constitute the general principles on the basis of which the ICRC Delegation and the Representative of the League will settle practical details of application.*

ADDENDUM

- (a) *The provisions of the present Agreement relating to gifts from National Societies also apply to any personnel and relief equipment which Societies may send to Vienna for Hungary.*
- (b) *Action on requests concerning individual cases, news transfers, etc., comes within the competence of the ICRC.*
- (c) *The present Agreement will remain in force as long as the disturbed situation which led to its establishment continues to exist. The ICRC and the League will subsequently examine the situation jointly.*
- (d) *As regards the Hungarian refugees in Austria, the Austrian Red Cross is primarily responsible for assisting them at the national level. If supplementary relief supplies have to be drawn from the general reserve in Vienna, the representatives of the League and the ICRC in Vienna will jointly decide upon the measures to be taken, in conjunction with the Austrian Red Cross.*

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- (e) *National Societies will be kept regularly informed about the action taken by the ICRC and the League. Since the present agreement has been concluded with a view to ensuring the smooth running of the relief action undertaken for the benefit of the Hungarian people, the ICRC and the League request National Societies to consult Geneva before despatching further consignments of relief supplies, but without, for that reason, suspending any present or future national collection of contributions.*

* * *

Following the joint decision to entrust the League with the relief operation for refugees from Hungary to Austria, it has been agreed to make the following amendments to the Agreement concluded on 2 November 1956 between the ICRC and the League:

- (1) *The ICRC will not only undertake the forwarding, allocation and distribution of relief in Hungary (as provided for in the Agreement of 2 November), but also the handling in Vienna of gifts assigned to the relief operation in Hungarian territory.*
- (2) *The League will undertake, in Austria, the administration and distribution of relief assigned to Hungarian refugees on Austrian soil. This work will be carried out with the cooperation of the Austrian Red Cross and according to the undertakings entered into by the League.*
- (3) *The gifts in cash or in kind which have not been earmarked for a specific purpose, will be allocated by common agreement according to needs, by the representatives of the ICRC and the League representative at Vienna. These will determine the share of this relief that will go to Hungary and be placed at the disposal of the ICRC, and the share that will be used for the refugees, under the responsibility of the League.*
- (4) *The ICRC and the League will consult together on the appeals to be addressed to National Societies in order to obtain additional relief for the above-mentioned operations.*
- (5) *The technical measures relating to the execution of the present Agreement will be the subject of a special arrangement.*

ICRC MEASURES TO SAFEGUARD ITS DELEGATES AND VARIOUS RELIEF MISSIONS

At Geneva, where activity was intense, the ICRC took immediate steps to ensure the safety of its delegates, and also for the protection of the members of relief missions of various nationalities who remained in Hungary.

On the afternoon of Friday, 2 November the President of the ICRC sent to both the USSR Delegation to the European Office of the United Nations and to Mr. Joseph Marjai, Hungarian Minister at Berne, a memorandum on the action taken by the ICRC since 29 October in response to the Hungarian Red Cross appeal. Drawing attention to these operations, carried out in conformity with the

provisions of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross statutes, and conducted in the field by Mr. Amman, Mr. Beckh, Mr. Bovey, Mr. Meyer and Mr. de Preux, all of Swiss nationality, he requested the Hungarian and Soviet Authorities to facilitate the International Committee's humanitarian work and take the necessary measures to safeguard the persons and property engaged therein. The following day, he sent a copy of this document to Mr. Shepilov, USSR, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and added details of the support given to the ICRC's work by mobile medical units and transport columns of various National Societies, placed under the protection of the Red Cross flag, which had to travel on Hungarian territory to carry out their humanitarian tasks. Referring by way of example, to the presence of ICRC delegates and a German Red Cross medical unit in Budapest, and of two Austrian Red Cross food supply columns in the west and south-west of Hungary he asked the Minister to instruct the Soviet diplomatic and military Authorities to ensure the protection of the Red Cross delegates and of persons, of whatever nationality, in the service of the Red Cross in Hungary.

Following these messages, the ICRC sent a telegram asking the Alliance of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR in Moscow to enquire into the safety of its representatives, and to facilitate their task and their means of contact with the International Committee.

ICRC APPEAL FOR A TRUCE

The situation was serious. On 4 November the Hungarian Red Cross, in one of the last telephone calls received from Budapest, requested the ICRC to intervene to secure the application of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention for the protection of civilians during the fighting raging in the capital.

The ICRC immediately made another appeal to the Hungarian and Soviet Authorities. It also broadcast both on its own wave-length, and on others put at its disposal by various stations, a message to the responsible leaders in the fighting in Budapest, appealing for a truce to enable those wounded during the last battles to be picked up and cared for. This message was issued in accordance with the provisions of Article 15 of the First Geneva Convention.

NEGOTIATIONS FOR FORWARDING RELIEF SUPPLIES

Preparatory work. — The destitute condition of the Hungarian population, as shown by the daily flow of refugees into Austria, made it more and more necessary to intervene. Everything had to be done to resume the distribution of relief supplies drawn from the considerable stocks supplied by the National Societies.

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In Vienna, the International Committee's delegates continued their preparations to fill the gap left by the ending of the air-lift.

The ICRC had given its approval to a scheme whereby the vehicles of the Austrian Red Cross and other National Societies which had sent motor units to Vienna would be divided into three mobile columns and would attempt to cross the frontier at three different points, with a view to penetrating as far as possible into Hungarian territory. These medical and relief units, placed under the International Committee's responsibility, and escorted by its delegates, would first supply foodstuffs and medicaments to hospitals. The frontier between Austria and Hungary was, however, still closed. On Sunday, November 4, the ICRC endeavoured, with the Yugoslav Red Cross, to find a means of sending relief supplies in transit through that country. Similar discussions on the subject were held with the Czechoslovak Red Cross.

On November 6, the President of the International Committee also appealed to the President of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR; he recalled the principles and the methods applied for the intervention of the ICRC in Hungary, and stressed the need for sending further consignments, and making fresh distributions, at the earliest possible moment. In his letter he stated that, with this end in view, land convoys were being prepared in Vienna which, he hoped, would take the road to Hungary in the very near future.

Despatch of the first convoy. — On November 8, the ICRC Delegation, Vienna, informed the ICRC in Geneva that the preparatory work was finished.

The convoy consisted of a transport column of 15 vehicles, loaded with 25 tons of foodstuffs and 2 tons of medicaments, and manned by 38 persons; a medical unit (Danish) of 35 vehicles, accompanied by 78 persons, and an Italian unit of 15 vehicles, accompanied by 50 persons, i.e. a total of 65 vehicles and 166 persons, including delegates, doctors, nurses, interpreters, drivers and mechanics. Both persons and vehicles were internationalized under the Red Cross flag.

The ICRC sent other delegates and in particular MM. Châtillon, Haas and Willemer, to accompany the transport units. The head of each convoy received the necessary instructions to the effect that the relief supplies were to be carried to Budapest and handed over to the delegates of the International Committee who might still be there or, if not, to the Hungarian Red Cross. Should it not be possible to reach Budapest, distributions could be made on the spot by the delegates and escorts, in accordance with the Red Cross principles of impartiality, and taking into account the most urgent needs. In

order to prevent misappropriation or removal of supplies, strict instructions were given that the supplies should not be left in the hands of non-qualified persons.

The ICRC then made a choice between the various routes suggested, and decided that the first unit of 15 vehicles, escorted by Mr. Willemer, should try to cross from Austria to Hungary at Sopron. The same evening, it informed the Hungarian and Soviet authorities that the departure would take place the following day, November 9; the telegram for Budapest could not be despatched, on account of the interruption in postal communications, and the information was therefore communicated to the Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires in Switzerland. In Vienna, Mr. Meyer remained in contact with the diplomatic representatives of the USSR and Hungary.

The convoy—all the vehicles had been painted white and bore the red cross emblem—presented itself at the Hungarian frontier on Friday evening. It stopped there until Monday morning, November 11. On that day, authority to cross the frontier was granted and, at 11 a.m., the first ICRC relief convoy penetrated into Hungarian territory and continued on its way to Budapest.

On Monday, November 12, Mr. Bovey, who had remained in Budapest, telephoned to the International Committee in Geneva, to confirm the safe arrival of the convoy, and the unloading of the supplies. During the day the convoy returned to Vienna in order to fetch further relief supplies.

Progress of operations. — The ICRC at once decided to send a second relief column, which would follow the same route as the first. Mr. Haas was in charge of the second convoy of 38 vehicles, carrying 120 tons of foodstuffs and medicaments. The column was split up into several small units which also crossed the frontier at Sopron and arrived at Budapest.

From that time onwards, all convoys under the International Committee's responsibility were allowed to enter Hungary.

Relief supplies, escorted by Mr. Châtillon, were also shipped by the Danube.

Between November 9, when the first column was despatched, and December 4, sixteen journeys were made to and fro between Vienna and Budapest, enabling the transport of 570 tons of relief supplies; 1,057 tons of flour were sent by river. So far over 1,600 tons of sundry relief supplies have been handed over to the ICRC delegates in Budapest who supervise their distribution by the Hungarian Red Cross.

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AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ICRC, THE HUNGARIAN RED CROSS AND THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT

At the start of this second stage of the relief action, the ICRC gave to M. R. Gallopin, Executive Director, the task of making contact in Austria with the new leaders of the Hungarian Red Cross. On November 15 and 16, M. Gallopin met in Vienna Dr. Georges Killner, Professor Tibor Nonay, Professor Boldizar Howath and M. Michel Guédényi, i.e. the Executive Director, Members of the Executive Committee and Head of the Foreign Relations Section of the Hungarian Red Cross, and stated the conditions under which the ICRC would undertake the supervision of the relief operations entrusted to it. These conditions were accepted and an agreement embodying them was signed in Vienna on November 16, 1956, and was immediately ratified by the Hungarian Minister in Vienna, by direct authority of the Hungarian Government.

The terms of the agreement are as follows:—

- (1) *The International Committee of the Red Cross assumes the control of the distribution in Hungary of relief supplies for the Hungarian population which have been or which will be entrusted to it by national Red Cross Societies, either directly or through the intermediary of the League of Red Cross Societies.*
- (2) *The International Committee of the Red Cross will also assume the control of the distribution of donations made of behalf on the Hungarian population which have been or which will be entrusted to it either directly or through the intermediary of the Secretary General of the United Nations organization acting in agreement with the Hungarian Government.*
- (3) *The distribution of these supplies through the neutral intermediary of the International Committee of the Red Cross shall be carried out in accord with the fundamental principles governing its action, that is to say; strict impartiality and without any discrimination whatsoever other than that of the needs of the persons to be assisted.*
- (4) *Towards this end the International Committee of the Red Cross shall, in agreement with the Hungarian Red Cross, draw up various programs for assistance which shall be carried out progressively according to the urgency of the needs to be met and function of the available supplies. As an example, it has already been foreseen that assistance should in the first place be given to the sick, the wounded of all kinds, infants, expectant mothers, the aged and the infirm.*
- (5) *All facilities shall be given to the International Committee of the Red Cross in order to enable it to set up a delegation in Hungary immediately, which shall include the following personnel required in order to:*
 - (a) *draw up, in agreement with the Hungarian Red Cross, the programs for assistance mentioned above,*
 - (b) *assure the protection and the management of the warehouses which the International Committee of the Red Cross will set up in the principal distribution centres,*
 - (c) *assure the transportation of supplies to or from these warehouses,*

- (d) *assist in the actual distribution of supplies and in reporting back to the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva on these distributions for the information of donors.*

This personnel, mainly consisting of Swiss citizens, shall be placed under the orders of a Delegate—in—Chief, with Headquarters in Budapest, who will be acting in close liaison with the representatives designated by the Hungarian Red Cross for this purpose.

- (6) *In order to allow the efficient execution of the strictly humanitarian action of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Hungarian Red Cross and the Hungarian Government shall see that in the exercise of its functions, the Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Hungary receives all aid and protection from all authorities civil or military.*
- (7) *The general dispositions of the present agreement shall be completed by a technical plan of operations drawn up in agreement between the representatives of the Hungarian Red Cross and the Delegate-in-Chief of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Budapest.*
- (8) *The sole object of the present agreement being the distribution of relief supplies to the Hungarian population it cannot be interpreted as restricting the other humanitarian activities which the International Committee of the Red Cross may be called upon to exercise in Hungary in conformity with the statutes of the International Red Cross or the provisions of the Geneva Conventions.*

THE PLAN FOR SUPPLYING FOODSTUFFS FOR HUNGARY

On the basis of the agreement concluded with the Hungarian Government and Hungarian Red Cross, the ICRC has drawn up a food programme for Hungary divided into three operations, i.e.

Distribution of milk to children. — 173,000 children under 6 years of age will receive a daily ration of 100 gr. powdered or condensed milk and 1 capsule cod liver oil.

One distribution per week will be made, as from December 5, at the Infant Welfare Centres.

Distribution of food in schools. — From 50,000 to 150,000 school children from 6 to 16 years of age will be given a hot meal daily, consisting of 10 gr. fats, 50 gr. meat (or cheese or tinned fish), 50 gr. cereals (rice, flour paste foods, oat-flakes, barley, flour, pulse and farinaceous foods), 50 gr. powdered milk, 1 roll of bread; ro: 10 gr. sugar, 50 gr. cereals, 50 gr. powdered milk, 1 roll of bread.

The programme will start on or about December 8 by distributions to 50,000 children in parts of the city which have suffered the greatest damage; it will gradually be expanded to include all school children of the ages mentioned above. The distributions will take place in the schools or in adjacent buildings.

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Distribution of food parcels to persons in distress. — About 100,000 persons in distress (namely, those whose dwelling has been partly or entirely destroyed, families deprived of their breadwinner, disabled and aged persons and families with more than four children) will receive one standard food parcel per week, sufficient for feeding four persons, each individual ration consisting of 500 gr. meat or fish, 250 gr. fats (butter, cooking-fat, oil, margarine), 250 gr. powdered milk or a tonic preparation, 50 gr. soap, as well as, when available, cheese, eggs, tinned vegetables or fruit, chocolate, coffee, tea, etc.

Apart from the food programme, the very great need for coal, clothing, window-glass, etc., should be taken into account.

As regards medicaments, fairly large stocks have now been built up in Budapest by the ICRC. They will be replenished as fast as they are drawn upon.

The food programme is expected to be continued for the duration of the winter and until the end of April. However, the supplies the ICRC has available do not seem likely to last beyond January 15 and further donations would therefore be required to enable the entire programme to be carried out.

ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES

As regards assistance to refugees, this is the concern, firstly of the Austrian Government, assisted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration, and, secondly, the Austrian Red Cross, supported by the Red Cross movement throughout the world.

In view of this very important aspect of the matter, which is a question of accommodating, feeding and giving medical treatment and assistance of every description to thousands of persons, whose numbers will continue to increase until they leave Austria for other countries of asylum, the ICRC and the League have entered into an agreement. According to this agreement, the Red Cross relief supplies stocked in Vienna have been divided. One portion, taken over by the League, will be used for assisting refugees in Austrian territory, the remainder, handled directly by the ICRC, is to enable the relief action in Hungary to be continued.

Reference should be made to the great effort made on behalf of the Hungarian refugees by various National Red Cross Societies, in particular the Austrian and Swiss Red Cross Societies, and by the League of Red Cross Societies.

ASSISTANCE GIVEN BY THE ICRC TO THE HUNGARIAN REFUGEES

The ICRC is in a position, through its Central Agency for Prisoners of War, to give valuable assistance to Hungarian refugees who wish to remain in contact with other members of their families.

The broadcasting of the names of persons wishing to receive news of their relatives over the Radio-Intercroixrouge short wave-length was started on November 13. These persons are also requested to make use of the Red Cross Civilian Message Forms which can be obtained from the National Societies for transmission to the ICRC. By December 4, 1956, nearly 9,000 messages had reached the ICRC, and 3,324 of them had been broadcast. In addition, the messages will be sent by ordinary mail to Hungary as soon as the Hungarian Red Cross or the ICRC Delegation in Budapest are able to forward them to the addresses.

The card-index will enable a census to be made of the Hungarian refugees, and to keep track of those who have gone abroad. This procedure met with the warm approval of the National Red Cross Societies, to which the ICRC has recently send cards printed in four languages (Hungarian, German, French and English) to be filled in by all refugees on their arrival in the reception centres, or when they move.

These measures will enable the ICRC to perform one of its traditional functions—the reuniting of families which had been split up.

AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

It will have been seen that the agreement with the Hungarian Red Cross also mentions the possibility of the International Committee assuming the control of the distribution of relief supplies entrusted to it through the Secretary General of the United Nations. The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross concluded an agreement with the United Nations on December 4, 1956, whereby the ICRC assumes responsibility for the distribution in Hungary of relief being given by the United Nations to the population of that country, in accordance with the resolution of the General Assembly meeting of November 9.

The agreement provides that relief shall be distributed in accordance with Red Cross principles and in the spirit of the Geneva Conventions, that is to say, without discrimination and taking only need into account.

The agreement reads as follows :

- (1) *The Committee, at the request of the Secretary-General, agrees to use any funds as may be transferred to it by the United Nations for the exclusive purpose of providing immediate aid to the population*

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of Hungary, in particular by furnishing medical supplies, foodstuffs and clothing. The responsibility assumed by the Committee in this respect will commence upon receipt of any such funds and will terminate after the distribution of relief supplies to the Hungarian population or, in the event of cessation of the programme upon return to the United Nations of any unused portion of such funds or of supplies purchased with such funds.

- (2) The Committee will undertake responsibility for the distribution of such supplies as may be furnished by the United Nations. The Committee may indicate to the United Nations the types of relief goods regarded as most appropriate for the purpose of the programme.*
- (3) In accordance with the principles of the Red Cross and in the spirit of the Geneva Conventions, the Committee will distribute relief under this programme without discrimination and on the basis of need alone.*
- (4) While making every effort to carry out this programme as rapidly as possible, the Committee will retain responsibility for the schedule (French "cadence") of distribution of relief supplies. In the event of difficulties or obstacles arising in the execution of the programme, the Committee will, if necessary, report to the United Nations but it will be solely responsible for taking appropriate measures.*
- (5) The Committee will supply all organizational, supervisory and technical personnel, services and equipment required for the operation of the programme.*
- (6) The United Nations will defray such administrative and operational costs of the Committee attributable to the performance of the United Nations relief programme as may be agreed between the United Nations and the Committee.*
- (7) The Committee will be the sole agency to carry out the relief programme on behalf of the United Nations with the contributions made pursuant to resolution 399 adopted by the General Assembly at the Second Emergency Special Session on 9 November 1956. This shall not be construed to limit the right of other United Nations agencies to carry out assistance programmes in accordance with their terms of reference and in agreement with the Hungarian authorities.*
- (8) The United Nations recognizes the Committee as an independent and autonomous organization which undertakes to perform the services envisaged in this agreement. The performance of such services will not in any way place the Committee in a subordinate position towards the United Nations, and the Committee will not be required to carry out any other task than those set forth in this agreement.*
- (9) The Committee will submit to the Secretary-General monthly operational reports and financial report of costs incurred in the performance of its responsibilities under this agreement.*
- (10) The United Nations and the Committee will act in close collaboration in regard to the planning and the implementation of the programme. In particular, the Committee will extend full co-operation to any representative who may be sent to Hungary by the Secretary-General in connexion with the programme.*
- (11) Nothing contained in this agreement will affect any of the other activities which the Committee already is carrying out or may carry out in Hungary in the performance of its traditional role.*

- (12) *This Agreement may be terminated by either party on one week's notice subject, if possible, to prior consultation. The termination of this Agreement will not affect the responsibilities of either party under the Agreement with respect to the completion of the distribution of supplies still outstanding at the date of termination.*

These operations, carried out in rapid succession during the past few weeks, are still continuing at the time of going to press. M. Georges Rutishauser, as General Delegate, will direct the sections which, in Vienna and Budapest, deal with the forwarding and distribution in Hungary of the relief supplies entrusted to the ICRC. There is a considerable need for coal, clothing, foodstuffs, etc. As to medicaments, relatively large quantities are at present stocked in Budapest, and the ICRC has planned to replenish these as rapidly as they are drawn upon. It must be pointed out, however, that the funds at the International Committee's disposal for relief in general appear likely to be exhausted by February 15 next. Consequently, further donations will be necessary to enable the relief programme for the Hungarian population to be continued after that date.

The ICRC Relief Action in the Middle East

Near a landing-strip at Cairo Airport a group of persons was waiting the arrival of the special aircraft chartered by the ICRC, the first foreign plane to land at Cairo since the start of military operations. It drew near enough to show the large red crosses painted on the wings and the fuselage and, a few minutes later, came to a stop opposite a line of motor trucks. The four tons of relief supplies—medicaments and dressings—were immediately unloaded. Shortly afterwards the Egyptian Red Crescent wrote to the ICRC saying: "We wish to express our deep appreciation for your generous assistance in this time of stress".

* * *

The story of the aircraft is very simple. On the first day of the Middle East conflict, the ICRC appealed to all the parties concerned to apply the provisions of the Geneva Convention, and stated its readiness to assume all its traditional responsibilities. A special relief fund for the victims of the events was at once opened. Soon contributions had been made by some thirty National Societies, thus, enabling the purchase of medicaments carried by the special aircraft.

At the same time, the ICRC increased the number of its representatives in the region. The permanent delegation in Cairo was enlarged, and new offices opened at Port Saïd, Alexandria and, on the other side of the line, at Tel Aviv.

* * *

On his arrival in Cairo, Dr. Grosclaude who, on the International Committee's behalf, escorted the first consignment of relief supplies, decided to send part of the medicaments under his supervision to Port Saïd. With the help of the Egyptian Red Crescent, he obtained the Egyptian authorities' consent for a special train to be sent to that port under the protection of the ICRC. The most difficult task remained, however, that of crossing the demarcation line controlled by the occupying forces. Negotiations through the ICRC in Geneva

were immediately opened and permission to cross the line was granted. The convoy, also accompanied by a member of the Egyptian Red Crescent, reached its destination on November 16.

Two days later, another aircraft, lent by the Danish Red Cross, left Geneva Airport. It carried three tons of medicaments and dressings consigned to the Egyptian Red Crescent.

* * *

Although besieged with requests for immediate assistance, the delegates of the ICRC are not, on that account, neglecting their traditional duties. At Tel Aviv, Dr. Grosclaude, sees that the provisions of the Geneva Conventions are duly applied and receives all facilities from the authorities for that purpose. He makes regular inspections of three prisoner-of-war camps and two hospitals. He is thus informed of the position of about five thousand persons under detention. He makes frequent distributions of fruit juice, cigarettes, sports requisites, indoor games, etc.

Anxious to find out the position of the civilian population entitled to protection under humanitarian law, Dr. Grosclaude applied to the Military Governor for authority to visit the Gaza district; this was granted and enabled him to see for himself the living conditions of persons dwelling in that area.

In the Suez Canal Zone, the ICRC delegate, Mr. M. Thudicum, visits the camps for Egyptian prisoners of war held by the French and British forces. Nominal lists of detained persons are also sent to the Central Prisoners of War Agency, Geneva, which forwards them to the authorities concerned.

* * *

In Geneva, the Central Prisoners of War Agency is once more at the height of activity. Thousands of persons without news of those they cherish, held prisoner or missing, place their last hope in receiving a Civilian Message of twenty-five words, and their requests for enquiry are sometimes addressed merely to "CICR Genève". Within a fortnight, 3,500 messages have passed through the Agency, of which over 600 brought news to the addressees of men captured on the battle-fields.

* * *

Among all the duties of the ICRC representatives, the repatriation of the seriously wounded is often one of the most moving. Twenty-six of them were being cared for in Israel, and the Government offered

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to send them back to their country. The ICRC delegate in Tel Aviv took up the matter immediately ; the entire Red Cross organisation was informed and applications were made to the proper authorities. Within a few days the transfer had been arranged. Two medical aircraft, bearing the red cross emblem, were lent by the Italian Government. Finally the ban on any plane landing in Egypt which had touched down in Israel was lifted and, for the first time since 1948, direct communication between Lydda and Cairo was authorised.

After one day's delay, the operation took place on December 5.

* * *

Meanwhile, in Egypt, the ICRC delegates continued the relief action. At Port Said, Mr. Thudicum, appointed Chairman of the local relief co-ordination committee, purchased and distributed condensed milk for children. Medicaments and foodstuffs were needed, but the problem was to get them to Port Said. Negotiations were opened by Mr. de Traz, ICRC general delegate for the Middle East, and as a result the relief convoys of the ICRC and the Egyptian Red Crescent are now being sent from Ismaïlia to Port Saïd.

The work of the Cairo Delegation has increased, the ICRC having suggested to the Egyptian authorities that it should assume the duties of a Protecting Power on behalf of all persons who, being stateless, were deprived of protection. Moreover, the detention centres for British, French and Israeli civilians are visited, relief measures have been started and, in so far as possible, the delegates of the ICRC are seeking to alleviate suffering.

The relief action is therefore being pursued in every field.

The final stages of an important undertaking on behalf of former prisoners of war

It will be remembered that, according to Article 16 of the Peace Treaty with Japan, signed at San Francisco in September 1951, the International Committee of the Red Cross was given the task of distributing to former prisoners of war in Japanese hands, who were nationals of the Powers party to the Treaty, compensation for hardships suffered during their captivity. This compensation was to be paid out of Japanese assets held in neutral or ex-enemy countries and which Japan relinquished for that purpose.

The *Revue internationale*¹ has already informed its readers of the work achieved by the International Committee to prepare for the distribution of these funds. As we know, the beneficiary States were to provide the ICRC with a complete list of the former prisoners of war among their nationals, since the amounts distributed in each country were to be in direct proportion to the total number of former prisoners of war in Japanese hands.

The final date for sending in these lists was April 30, 1956. After that date the lists had to be checked by the ICRC, to make sure that they contained no repetitions of names, and included no-one outside the categories mentioned in Article 16.

This work was carried out as rapidly as possible, both in Geneva and in the countries concerned, where representatives

¹ See *Revue internationale*, English Supplement, May 1956.

of the ICRC made sample checks of the documents used for the preparation of the lists.

The International Committee of the Red Cross would have preferred to make a single distribution of funds, but it became obvious that it would take considerable time, perhaps several months even, to settle matters in some countries, either because the lists supplied had not been adequately checked, or because no agreement had been reached on the method of distribution. The Committee felt, however, that it would be unfair to postpone any longer the distribution of compensation to former prisoners of war in countries where those two points had already been dealt with.

It therefore suggested to the beneficiary States that it should proceed with the first distribution wherever it was possible to do so and at a meeting held in London on November 8, 1956, this suggestion was adopted. The following points of interest emerge from the memorandum submitted by the ICRC to the meeting, and the decisions taken :

The former prisoners of war of fourteen countries will receive compensation :

The ex-prisoners of war of ten States will share in the first distribution which amounts to a total of 1,891,136.11.02 pounds sterling, and 5,290,203.18 US dollars¹, calculated on the basis of a total of 153,206 recipients :

The share accruing to four countries, i.e. 802,269.13.8. pounds sterling and 2,244,242.82 US dollars, calculated on the basis of a total of 64,994 recipients, will be temporarily set aside :

The checks made so far have shown that 9,980 names should not have been placed on the lists submitted to the ICRC, and have therefore to be deleted :

The interest on the capital entrusted to the ICRC for distribution to former prisoners of war, which it has invested,

¹ Payment will be made in these two currencies (pounds sterling and US dollars) in equal parts and at the same time, in the same manner as the ICRC received the funds.

constitute a reserve fund which will be distributed when decisions have been taken regarding the four countries whose shares have, as stated above, been temporarily set aside.

As and when it receives the necessary technical information required, the ICRC is handing over to the national associations designated for the distribution of compensation the shares due to prisoners of war formerly held by the Japanese forces who suffered undue hardships. By the time this article appears, the majority of the beneficiaries in the ten countries participating in the first distribution will probably have received the share to which they are entitled.

The other beneficiaries, nationals of four countries, should not have to wait long for their compensation, as the ICRC is making every effort to solve the outstanding problems with all possible speed, and trusts that the authorities concerned will do all in their power to speed up the operations which must precede the distribution of the funds. The important and responsible task assumed five years ago by the International Committee, and which it is carrying out with close regard to the interests of the former prisoners of war, will then be completed.

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