

Information and publications

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Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in March, World Health Assembly (May), Economic and Social Council (July), International Telecommunication Union (August-December). The ICRC was also in constant touch with the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees.

Other organisations

The ICRC maintains relations with some governmental organisations not connected with the United Nations, in particular the International Committee of Military Medicine and Pharmacy and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM). It remained in touch with non-governmental institutions such as the World Veterans Federation, the International Council of Nurses, the World Medical Association, the International Social Service, the World Council of Churches and the International Committee for World Refugee Year. It continued to take an active part in the work of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organisations interested in Migration ¹.

In July 1959, the Conference was held in New York. The ICRC was represented by Mr. H. Coursier, Member of the Legal Department, who was elected Chairman of the next session to be held in Geneva in 1961. Following this appointment the ICRC made premises available for the Conference Bureau and the International Centre for the Co-ordination of Legal Assistance associated with this body.

The International Committee for World Refugee Year, constituted under the auspices of several charitable organisations, was also provided with premises by the ICRC, which led to considerable saving which should eventually be beneficial for refugees.

INFORMATION AND PUBLICATIONS

Owing to the various activities of the ICRC in 1959, as well as the celebration of the centenary of the Battle of Solferino, the Press

¹ See p. 49.

and Information Department was faced with numerous and sometimes delicate tasks. This service took every opportunity of spreading greater knowledge of the work of the ICRC and of making the aims and principles of the Red Cross more widely known.

Relations with the Press

The Information Department of the ICRC maintained constant and still closer relations with the Swiss and foreign press, not only by the issue of press releases (27 in 1959) but in distributing considerable documentary material in the form of articles, booklets or illustrated publications (over 4,000 were distributed during the past year). Furthermore, in his capacity as spokesman of the ICRC, the Head of the Information Department had to reply to a host of questions on various topical subjects put to him by representatives of newspapers of a great variety of countries throughout the world.

The repatriation of Koreans resident in Japan (see pp. 16-22) raised very keen interest in the Press, in the Far East in particular. On that occasion several journalists came to Geneva for information concerning the International Committee's position in the matter and the discussions between the representatives of the Red Cross Societies of Japan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

About twelve Japanese journalists thus arrived in Geneva to follow the various stages of the matter ; three journalists came specially from Seoul, the capital of the Republic of Korea and another from Pyongyang, the capital of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Information Department did its best to answer questions and spread better understanding of the work and humanitarian principles of the ICRC.

Commemoration ceremonies

The Information Department took part in the preparation of the commemorative ceremonies organised by the Italian Red Cross on the battlefield of the Franco-Austrian campaign in 1859. In particular it sent 80 photostat copies of documents relating to the origin and history of the movement to the International Red Cross Museum opened on June 27 at Castiglione delle Stiviere.

As part of the Centenary of Solferino the Information Department circulated numerous historical documents and information concerning Henry Dunant. A number of articles by members of its staff were published in the Swiss and foreign press.

The Centenary brought a greater number of visitors than usual to the ICRC headquarters. The Information Department received these groups of which some had come from the most distant places of the world and informed them of the history and activities of the International Committee, the founder body of the Red Cross.

This section is also taking part in the preparation of the Centenary of the Foundation of the Red Cross which will take place in Geneva in 1963. It has already examined various programmes and suggestions in view of this great ceremony which will coincide with the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross. In addition, it will be in charge of the Secretariat of the Committee for the Commemoration of the Red Cross Centenary which includes representatives of the ICRC, the League, the Swiss Red Cross and the federal, cantonal and municipal authorities.

Films

In another field of this section's work, reference may be made to the success of the ICRC film "Blood is still being shed . . .". This documentary film, which shows some of the International Committee's recent activities was awarded three distinctions in 1959—the "Prädikat Wertvoll" of the "Filmbewertungsstelle", Wiesbaden, the Diploma of Merit of the Italian Association for Public Relations, Venice, and commendation of the "Fonds suisse pour le film culturel", Berne. In addition, twenty-one copies of the film have been sold abroad, mainly to National Red Cross Societies.

Radio and Television

The ICRC Broadcasting and Television Office (BTO), which has its own studio (Max Huber Studio) in the Radio-Genève building, continued its broadcasts of various descriptions in 1959. On the

whole its work has increased and the voice of the Red Cross, as far as one can judge, is heard by a greater number of listeners each year.

Test broadcasts. — These broadcasts represent the most important work of the BTO and have a treble purpose ; (a) to affirm the right of the ICRC to use the “ Intercroixrouge ” wave-length which, in time of war, would serve for transmitting messages and communications of a humanitarian nature ; (b) to establish a geographical time-table for broadcasts to certain areas in Europe which varies according to the solar cycle ; (c) to accustom National Red Cross Societies to listen in to Geneva.

As in previous years, the BTO received complete reports from a certain number of listeners specially appointed to check the reception conditions for these broadcasts. In addition a great many letters and cards are received from listeners in all European countries and neighbouring areas, as well as recordings. The reports and recordings are sent to the Swiss postal authorities in Berne for checking.

International Broadcast on Red Cross Day. — For some years past on May 8—the anniversary of the birth of Henry Dunant and Red Cross Day—an international broadcast is made under the auspices of the ICRC, the League, the European Broadcasting Union and the International Broadcasting Organisation. In 1959 (for the tenth time) the BTO organised this broadcast in which an increasing number of countries take part. The programme, dedicated to the Battle of Solferino, was produced by the Italian Television Service and was an undoubted success.

The programme was transmitted direct by 18 national stations in 16 European countries. Translations or adaptations in various languages were broadcast by 18 countries in the five continents. The Swiss Short-Wave Service also prepared special versions in English and Spanish which were sent to 32 countries. In India, for instance, the broadcast was included in the English programme and translations were made into several dialects. A special version in Arabic was prepared by the BTO and sent to seven countries.

Altogether, the international programme was broadcast, either direct or recorded, by 53 countries in the five continents ; it was

the first time that so many countries have taken part in the celebration.

Special broadcasts in Spanish and Arabic. — The regular ICRC broadcasts in Spanish and Arabic have continued to be successful and seem to arouse increasing interest in the linguistic areas for which they are intended.

The weekly programmes in Arabic of 15 minutes' duration are transmitted by the Swiss Short-Wave Service. In the past year they included talks, information and interviews relating to current problems, activities and aims of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Thus, during interviews at the BTO, several leading figures of the Near East spoke of precepts in the Islamic doctrine which correspond to Red Cross principles and the rules of the Geneva Conventions. The flow of correspondence subsequent to these broadcasts was a proof of their success.

In addition to programmes transmitted direct from Geneva to the Near East by the Swiss Short-Wave Service, the BTO made 26 recordings in Arabic which were sent to transmitting stations in Tunisia and Morocco. The activities, structure and aims of the International Red Cross were the principal subjects dealt with.

The broadcasts in Spanish consisted of some thirty talks, mainly on the subject of Red Cross principles. After the broadcasts these texts were sent to Latin American countries ; translations were sent to some Red Cross Societies in other continents. They were relayed by a number of local radio stations (e.g. 17 in Mexico) or were published in Red Cross magazines and occasionally in the local press. Messages of encouragement showed that this type of information is highly appreciated by the very numerous public for which it is intended.

Various broadcasts. — The Broadcasting and Television Office again organised special broadcasts in support of the ICRC collection in Switzerland, some of which were included in the programmes of the Swiss Television Service.

Towards the end of the year the BTO arranged for the distribution to numerous transmitting stations throughout the world of the New Year Message of the President of the ICRC which was

recorded in twelve languages and sent to sixty-four transmitting stations in the five continents.

Information of topical interest, statements and interviews concerning the activities of the ICRC were broadcast by the principal Swiss stations. Television programmes were not omitted ; the BTO arranged, on behalf of the Swiss Television Service, the reporting of the commemoration ceremonies at Solferino.

The problem of frequencies. — A delicate point dealt with by the BTO, in close co-operation with the Legal Department of the ICRC, was the allocation of frequencies for fixed and mobile radio services between Red Cross organisations and National Societies in particular. This question was raised at the Administrative Radio Conference held in autumn, 1959, in Geneva, by the Delegation of the German Federal Government, at the request of the National Society of that country. The ICRC decided to support the German proposal which in no way concerned its own wave-length reserved for the transmission of humanitarian messages and at present used for test broadcasts in this connection. It therefore sent a circular letter to the National Red Cross Societies which aroused the keen interest of all and the replies enabled the ICRC to define and to justify the German proposal at the plenary assembly of the Conference. The latter adopted a recommendation which did not allocate any specific frequency to the Red Cross but suggested that national administrations should " take account of the possible need of the Red Cross for rapid communication by radio when normal communication facilities are disrupted ".

This decision does not respond in full to the wishes of the German delegation ; it marks however an important step forward from which the Red Cross will undoubtedly benefit on the national and international level.

Revue internationale de la Croix Rouge

The *Revue internationale de la Croix Rouge* continued in 1959—as it has done for so many years—to be the chronicle of the Red Cross, the organ which expresses its thought and brings its doctrine face to face with current events, where many problems which

concern the Red Cross are discussed and various news and information of interest to the Red Cross movement as a whole are published.

The Centenary of Solferino gave an occasion to look back on the origin of the Red Cross. Several articles on the subject, in particular by the President of the ICRC, Mr. F. Siordet and Dr. M. Junod, Vice-Presidents, Mr. H. W. Dunning, Secretary-General of the League, and Mr. M. Bodmer, member of the ICRC, were published in the *Revue* in 1959.

Among the important studies published in the *Revue*, mention should be made of articles entitled "Action by the Red Cross in the humanitarian field" by Princess Amrit Kaur, Chairman of the Central Managing Body of the Indian Red Cross Society, "Danish Red Cross activity in Greenland" by Mr. G. N. Bugge, Vice-Chairman of the Danish Red Cross Society, and "The assimilation of migrants and refugees in Australia" by Mr. Alfred G. Brown, National Commissioner of the Australian Red Cross Society. Articles were also contributed by the High Commissioner for Refugees, Dr. A. R. Lindt, on the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees; Dr. E. Berthet, General Director of the International Children's Centre, on medico-social problems relating to children throughout the world; Mr. F. Siordet on the evolution of the neutrality of the medical profession and the Geneva Conventions; and telegraphic communication by Mr. C. Pilloud, Head of the Legal Department of the ICRC.

Under the title "Nouvelles d'ici et de partout", the *Revue internationale* has published considerable information concerning the activities of the ICRC in Cuba, North Africa, Indonesia, Kenya, Rhodesia, Nyasaland and the Balkans; the articles were often illustrated.

The *Revue internationale* also publishes "Nouvelles de Sociétés nationales" concerning the work of Red Cross Societies in most varied parts of the world. We may also mention studies of figures or events of the past, records of conferences to which the ICRC sent representatives, or reviews of books on humanitarian law and action.

As in previous years, some articles and information published in 1959 were given in the English, Spanish and German Supplements to the *Revue*.