

# India and Pakistan

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*it must leave the way open, free of obstacles, for the great task of resettlement which you will have later to examine.*

*"In this way, a vital humanitarian work, of primordial importance to refugees in the Middle East, will have been brought fruitfully to a close. Looking beyond the present vast number of people in distress, the operation has served as a model of relief methods that may be applied again for the alleviation of suffering throughout the world."*

Interest in the ICRC work in Palestine led the Swiss publishing firm, Messrs Ringier and Co., Zofingen, to send a member of its staff to report on it. The resulting account, illustrated with numerous original photographs, appeared in several international weeklies.

The ICRC Information Service produced a documentary film: "The Homeless in Palestine", on the work of the Commissariat. The film runs for fifteen minutes, and English, French and German versions of it were made.

### III. — INDIA AND PAKISTAN

In the Indian Peninsula, the work of the ICRC was confined almost exclusively during 1949 to dealing with the victims of the Kashmir troubles.<sup>1</sup>

The struggle between the two *de facto* authorities in Kashmir maintained the tension between the Indian Union, supporting the Jammu-Kashmir authorities, and Pakistan, protecting Azad-Kashmir.

The United Nations had succeeded in imposing an armistice at the beginning of 1948, but the situation continued restive. Profound divergences remained and claims on both sides were vehemently put forward. The solution of the human problems which arose was consequently slow and difficult, although Delegates met everywhere with a cordial reception.

Eighteen months after the armistice was concluded, the

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<sup>1</sup> See *Report 1947-1948*, p. 95.

prisoners of war were not yet exchanged. The Azad-Kashmir authorities hesitated to hand over the 600 prisoners they held in Attock Camp and the 73 in Gilgit, against the 75 Moslems held by Jammu-Kashmir in Yol Camp. All three camps were visited by Delegates, to ensure that the Geneva Conventions were respected in them. They found—besides drawing up lists of the wounded, who were exchanged in February, 1949—that there were sixty more Moslem prisoners of war, whose capture had not yet been notified.

Slowly, the Governments of India and Pakistan were brought to accept the Committee's view that captives should be handed over by categories, not man for man. Following the return of the wounded and of political detainees, a general exchange of prisoners of war took place in April 1949. All these operations were supervised by the Delegates.

The Committee, moreover, seconded the Governments in dealing with the consequences of the fighting, tracing the missing, and the women and children abducted by the armed forces. At the beginning of the year, 140 women and children in Datyal Camp (Pakistan) were exchanged against 254 women in Mahallah Ustad Camp (India).

The most dramatic feature of the conflict was, however, the presence of almost 700,000 refugees, mostly in camps, although some were living with the local population—themselves suffering great hardships. The continuing insecurity in Kashmir made it impossible for these people to return to a normal mode of living.

Delegates visited many camps, including Wah (Pakistan) with 20,000 Moslems, and Darhal, where there were an equal number of Indians. But the Committee, lacking the necessary funds, could do no more than draw attention to their distress. After detailed investigation on the spot, the Delegates, in conjunction with the medical officers consulted, drew up lists which indicated that clothing, blankets, and medical supplies (multivitamins, sulfamides, and anti-malarial products) were the most urgent needs in order of priority. In November, 1949, the ICRC decided to send medical relief to the National Societies in both India and Pakistan.