

**Zeitschrift:** Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross  
**Herausgeber:** International Committee of the Red Cross  
**Band:** - (1950)

**Rubrik:** Relief to victims of the World War and post-war conflicts

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## **VII. Relief to Victims of the World War and Post-War Conflicts**

### **CIVILIANS**

*Germany.* — The ICRC continued to be the only international agency authorized to issue to civilians in Eastern Germany the gifts of National Societies and other relief bodies.

Towards the end of 1949 and during 1950, the economic situation slowly began to improve in Berlin and Eastern Germany. For long, however, the feeding of part of the population left much to be desired. Children and sick persons had suffered so severely from under-nourishment that a return to more or less normal conditions was not enough to restore their health.

Investigations by the Berlin Delegation and the Public Health Authorities showed that children between four and fourteen were chiefly affected. Amongst the sick, the tuberculous especially needed attention. The generosity of numerous donors allowed the Committee to continue its relief to those of the children and the sick who were most in need.

Help was afforded to 10,000 children and adults in Berlin who were either tuberculous or pre-tuberculous. Extra nourishment was given to 10,000 children between four and fourteen who could not have a holiday in the country ; they received two hot meals daily in the public parks, where they spent the day. A group of 450 cancer patients, living in precarious conditions, were given food parcels.

*Clothing and foodstuffs* issued in 1950 by the Delegation to civilians in Berlin and Eastern Germany amounted to 523 tons, worth 1,693,201 francs. The principal contributors were Swiss Relief to Europe, the Australian, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, South African, and Swiss Red Cross Societies, the American

and British Friends, the Mormons, and German colonies overseas.

*Medical relief* by the Committee in Berlin and Eastern Germany amounted in the year to some 16 tons of supplies, worth 172,550 francs. Mention should be made of streptomycin provided by Swiss Relief to Europe, which allowed the Committee to supply for several months four centres designated by the Public Health Authorities (Magdeburg, Halle, Greifswald and Dresden). For all practical purposes, this was the only source of supply for hospitals and doctors in Eastern Germany. The drug was used primarily for children with tubercular meningitis.

In Eastern Germany, some 47,000 under-nourished children between four and fourteen, selected by the Delegation and the Public Health Authorities, were given an extra meal daily for three months in certain industrial centres—Rostock, Mühlhausen, Pirna, Chemnitz, Bautzen and Suhl—poorly supplied with agricultural products. Food and milk were also issued to 6,000 children, mostly war orphans, in 105 convalescent homes. Help was given to villages for children, the blind, and certain hospitals in difficulty.

A film made between 1946 and 1948 on relief in Berlin by the Delegation there, was loaned to the Danish Red Cross.

*Czechoslovakia.* — In December, a gift was made to the Czechoslovak Red Cross of an apparatus, worth 32,000 francs, for drying blood plasma.

*Individual cases.* — The Committee does not, as a rule, give individual relief—firstly, because in most cases it is impossible to examine the justification, and secondly, because the necessary financial resources are lacking. There was, however, considerable correspondence in connection with the 5,000 individual requests received during the year. Most were for foodstuffs, clothing, medicaments, or financial assistance ; some wanted information about postal or customs regulations. Persons sending relief parcels wished the Committee to take responsibility, or apply to commercial houses in order to obtain parcels. Owners were anxious to find buyers for works of art or other valuables.

Correspondence came in from all parts of the world, particularly from Germany. Although it was rarely possible to send relief, an attempt was always made to be helpful.

### REFUGEES

As noted earlier (pp. 38-41), refugees were not forgotten. Clothing and toilet articles were given to Germans who arrived from Poland and Czechoslovakia in difficult circumstances. Issues were made by the Munich and Hamburg branches of the German Red Cross in the name of the ICRC, which had provided the funds. Certain *Volksdeutsche* from Czechoslovakia, who were in particularly bad conditions, received small cash amounts, up to 20 DM each.

Other refugees of different nationalities, and stateless persons, were assisted individually, either locally by Delegates, or at Geneva when they addressed themselves directly to headquarters. Funds for dealing with such cases were unfortunately very limited.

### PRISONERS OF WAR

Prisoners held in countries which had ratified the 1929 Prisoners of War Convention had almost all returned home by the beginning of 1950. Some remained however—in France and Jugoslavia especially—either serving sentences, awaiting trial, or due to appear as witnesses. The ICRC sent fairly large quantities of relief to these last German prisoners of war detained abroad; additional amounts were provided by the German Red Cross or relatives, and forwarded to the Committee's Delegations, where such existed, or else to the Red Cross of the detaining country.

*France.* — Former prisoners of war detained for judicial reasons were assisted by the Committee, which devoted 100,000 Swiss francs to the purpose. They received clothing, under-clothing, footwear, toilet articles, vitamin products and medicaments. Dental and medical care, and artificial limbs were also provided.

Prisoners who had become civilian workers had recourse, where necessary, to the Committee, as they had already done during captivity. To the aid given, material help was often added.

*Jugoslavia.* — German prisoners of war in Jugoslavia each received in 1950 a food parcel and a parcel of medicaments and tonics ; issue was made through the Jugoslav Red Cross.

*Germany.* — Large quantities of relief were sent to repatriation camps, which mainly contained prisoners returning from the East ; this to some extent reinforced the efforts of the German authorities and Red Cross. More than twenty tons of medical supplies, two-thirds of which came from camps that had been closed down in France, were sent to Germany, together with nine tons of foodstuffs, clothing, toilet articles, and soap. Relief to the value of 300,000 francs was thus given to these men on their arrival in Germany.

*Austria.* — Prisoners helped on their return to Austria were less numerous. They were given only clothing material and medical relief, total value being 15,000 francs.

#### WAR INVALIDS

*Germany.* — Consignments of Braille watches, tools, and manuals were sent to Germany for the use of war invalids. Equipment for fifteen workshops—tailoring, cobbling, technical drawing, and carpentry—each to accommodate ten apprentices, was given for issue in the three Western zones. The total value was 13,000 francs.

*Austria.* — Aid worth 13,300 francs was given for war invalids in this country.

*Other countries.* — Arab, French, Greek, Israeli, Italian, Jugoslav, Polish, and Rumanian war-disabled also received help.

The ICRC bought 50 Braille watches for the account of the

**SUMMARY OF RELIEF IN 1950**

Country	Group	Totals			
		By group		By country	
		Kilos	Sw. Fr.	Kilos	Sw. Fr.
ALBANIA	German PoW . . . . .	746	2,238	746	2,238
AUSTRIA	Repatriated PoW . . . . .	1,062	15,015		
	Displaced persons . . . . .	37	222		
	War invalids . . . . .	1,089	13,416	2,188	28,653
BURMA	Refugees . . . . .	4,212	64,961	4,212	64,961
CZECHOSLOVAKIA	Civilians . . . . .	912	32,511	912	32,511
FRANCE	German detainees . . . . .	12,427	110,006		
	German civilian workers . . . . .	2,324	15,108		
	Refugees . . . . .	117	699		
	French war invalids . . . . .	106	1,375		
	Polish war invalids . . . . .	1,016	7,220	15,990	134,408
GERMANY	Repatriated PoW . . . . .	6,254	59,956		
Eastern	War invalids . . . . .	5,378	38,680		
	Civilians . . . . .	522,880	1,693,201		
	Total	534,512	1,791,837		
Western	Repatriated PoW . . . . .	25,706	228,277		
	War invalids . . . . .	10,878	82,361		
	Displaced persons . . . . .	236	3,558		
	“Volksdeutsche” . . . . .	12,110	52,650		
	Total	48,930	366,846	583,442	2,158,683
GREECE	Political detainees . . . . .	75,162	220,748		
	Civilians . . . . .	76,534	138,526		
	German PoW . . . . .	100	389	151,796	359,663
HONG KONG	Japanese military detainees . . . . .	5	394	5	394
INDIA and PAKISTAN	Bengal refugees . . . . .	1,906	31,278		
	Kashmir refugees (India) . . . . .	2,558	58,893		
	Civilians (India) . . . . .	960	1,200		
	Kashmir refugees (Pakistan) . . . . .	1,291	30,069	6,715	121,440
INDO-CHINA	War victims . . . . .	115	4,917	115	4,917
INDONESIA	War victims . . . . .	1,099	49,966		
	Civilians . . . . .	350	3,486	1,449	53,452
ISRAEL	Civilians, Jerusalem (New City) . . . . .	30,551	26,556		
ITALY	War invalids . . . . .	8	77	30,559	26,633
JAPAN	Refugees . . . . .	640	4,588	640	4,588
JORDAN	Japanese military detainees . . . . .	1,263	7,570		
	Civilians . . . . .	21,650	129,900	22,913	137,470
JUGOSLAVIA	Jerusalem poor (Old City) . . . . .	442,265	211,414		
	Civilians . . . . .	5,746	16,003		
	War invalids . . . . .	9	78		
	Refugees . . . . .	554	16,097	448,574	243,592
KOREA North	German PoW . . . . .	3,878	28,126		
South	Refugees . . . . .	82	394	3,960	28,520
PAKISTAN	War victims * . . . . .	922	28,648		
POLAND	Prisoners of war . . . . .	1,660	9,954	2,582	38,602
SUNDRY	(See India and Pakistan)				
	German PoW . . . . .	180	506	180	506
	Refugees . . . . .	393	2,355		
	German PoW . . . . .	43	1,681		
	Individual relief . . . . .	440	10,682		
	War invalids . . . . .	51	3,703	927	18,421
	GRAND TOTAL			1,277,905	3,459,652
	Given the ICRC for distribution . . . . .			835,596	2,203,820
	Provided by the ICRC . . . . .			442,309	1,255,832
				1,277,905	3,459,652

\* The Hungarian Red Cross had agreed to forward these supplies, but informed the ICRC on June 13, 1951, that, in spite of its efforts, it had been unable to do so.

Australian Red Cross, which issued them to Australian war blind.

More than 800 individual requests were examined. Aid was given when it could not be secured locally—sometimes because the article required was not available, sometimes because the applicant's nationality debarred him. In many cases, inquiries were made through the National Red Cross or an ICRC Delegate. In all, 137 invalids of seventeen nationalities (American, Armenian, Austrian, British, Bulgarian, Czechoslovak, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Jugoslav, Latvian, Polish, Rumanian, Russian, and Ukrainian) received assistance in various forms: artificial limbs and appliances, type-writers and knitting machines for the blind, payment of hospital expenses.

Total relief given in this way was worth about 15,000 francs.

Four films on the training of war invalids were loaned to the International Labour Office. They were shown in October at Milan and Rome, to illustrate courses given by the International Social Security Association, in collaboration with ILO.

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Distributions made in Greece, Palestine, India, Pakistan, Indonesia and Korea are dealt with in Part II.

The Table on page 63 summarises relief issued in 1950.