

Zeitschrift: Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross
Herausgeber: International Committee of the Red Cross
Band: - (1953)

Vorwort: Introduction
Autor: [s.n.]

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INTRODUCTION

In pursuance of its traditional activities, the International Committee continued in 1953 to assist victims of the World War. The close of the Korean conflict, hostilities in Indochina and disasters in Greece, Japan and the Netherlands had consequential effects upon its work. Further, an important consultation of experts was held to discuss the question of assistance to political detainees, in view of the situation caused by disturbances in certain countries.

The International Committee continued to make representations concerning the ratification of the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949; that important question was given particular consideration at the meeting, on October 30, at the ICRC headquarters, of a number of representatives of National Red Cross Societies who were attending the meetings in Geneva of the Executive Committee of the League of Red Cross Societies. The ICRC also continued to pursue the studies required by the *Commentary*, and for giving effect to the provisions of the Conventions.

The relations of the ICRC with other Red Cross bodies, and various organisations concerned with humanitarian questions, showed favourable progress.

The celebration of the "International Red Cross Day" was particularly successful in 1953, the ceremony of May 8 having coincided with the 125th anniversary of the birth of Henry Dunant, the promoter of the Red Cross movement; on that occasion most stirring messages were broadcast all over the world.

