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PART II

The second part of the Report describes the special actions undertaken by the ICRC to alleviate distress resulting from the war, or caused by natural forces.

I. Assistance to victims of the World War

The various headings are relevant to the categories of victims, both military and civilian, dealt with by the ICRC in the course of the year. Under the heading *Protection of Members of the Armed Forces*, are included the measures taken on behalf of army medical personnel, and in the chapter under the title *Protection of Civilian Populations* an account is given of the development of legal assistance for stateless persons and refugees.

The table annexed to the present Report gives a summary of some of the documents dealt with, in this connection, in 1954¹.

1. PROTECTION OF MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES

(a) Identification of the dead, missing, wounded, sick, and prisoners of war.

The Geneva Conventions provide for the recording of information which may help to identify military personnel of the adverse party held by the belligerents, and for the transmission of the information to the *Official Information Bureaux* and the *Central Prisoners of War Agency*.

¹ See below pages 82 to 85.

The ICRC makes a methodical check of all information received, in order to exhaust every possible source of information.

(b) Sundry actions.

Among the actions pursued for the alleviation of the moral and physical distress of war victims, reference may be made to the despatching of relief supplies ¹, assistance for the purpose of repatriation, the investigation of matters in dispute, and applications to hospital establishments for the issue of medical records in connection with claims for pensions. These duties, which continue after the close of hostilities, still give rise to the exchange of correspondence with National Red Cross Societies and public authorities.

(c) Use of certain Japanese assets in favour of former prisoners of war (Article 16 of the Peace Treaty with Japan):

The ICRC continued to be engaged with the question of the compensation of some categories of former Allied prisoners of war, as provided by Article 16 of the Peace Treaty with Japan (San Francisco, September 1951).

It will be recalled, that the Article states, in particular :—

“ As an expression of its desire to indemnify those members of the armed forces of the Allied Powers who suffered undue hardships while prisoners of war of Japan, Japan will transfer its assets and those of its nationals in countries which were neutral during the war, or which were at war with any of the Allied Powers, or, at its option, the equivalent of such assets, to the International Committee of the Red Cross which shall liquidate such assets and distribute the resultant fund to appropriate national agencies, for the benefit of former prisoners of war and their families on such basis as it may determine to be equitable... ”

¹ See below, Table of Relief Supplies, pages 44 and 45.

Previous reports have described the negotiations in which the States concerned ¹ and the ICRC took part in 1952 and 1953. The object of the negotiations was to specify the amount, as well as the situation of the Japanese assets concerned, and to establish the number of those eligible for the distribution in accordance with the identification standards laid down by the ICRC.

In 1954, after new representations on behalf of the prisoners of war had been made to the Japanese Government, an agreement was signed in Tokyo on November 30, which provided that the Government would transfer to the ICRC £ 4,500,000 before the end of May, 1955.

A few lists of prisoners of war had not been supplied by December 31, 1954. The Governments' attention has been called to the need for lists to be deposited in Geneva at the earliest possible date, in order that the ICRC may proceed with the necessary examination, in view of an equitable implementation of the terms of Article 16. As it is known, the funds will be distributed in direct proportion to the number of prisoners of war who are nationals of the States concerned.

The *Supervisory Council*, consisting of Professor Paul Carry, Member of the ICRC, Chairman, MM. Hans Bachmann, Ernest Frœlich, Eugène Hasler, and Frédéric Schnorf, whose duties are to guide the ICRC in this delicate task, kept in regular touch with the negotiations, and met whenever circumstances made it necessary

(d) War-disabled.

The cost of individual or collective relief distributed by the ICRC to war-disabled during 1954 amounted to Sw. Fr. 97,200. The relief supplies consisted of prostheses and orthopaedic apparatus, Braille watches, dental equipment, assistance for the purchase

¹ Australia, Cambodia, Canada, France, Indonesia, Laos, Luxemburg, *Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, *Pakistan, Philippines, Rhodesia, South African Union, United Kingdom, Viet Nam. The countries preceded by an asterisk form the Executive Committee nominated for the study of the means of ensuring the application of Article 16.

of encephalograph apparatus for brain-wound sufferers, invalid carriages for amputees and paralytics, tools and equipment for taking up normal work, medicaments, tonics, foodstuffs and clothing.

During the same period the ICRC examined 725 new cases of war-disabled ; it gave assistance to 411, who belonged to nineteen different nationalities ; in addition, collective relief was provided for the disabled of some ten countries.

For both individual and collective relief actions, if often had recourse to the services of the National Red Cross Societies of Albania, Australia, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Jugoslavia, Poland, Spain, and the United Kingdom, and the Red Cross association of the Saar region. In other countries, the ICRC sent gifts direct to the private addresses of these war victims. Relief to war-disabled in Austria, Greece, Indo-China and Spain was distributed under the supervision of the ICRC delegates ¹.

(e) Medical Personnel.

The situation of medical personnel was the object of constant scrutiny, as National Red Cross Societies should have doctors and nurses at their disposal, in sufficient numbers, to assist the victims of conflicts and disasters. All categories of medical personnel should be able to rely upon the protection afforded by the Geneva Conventions. In conjunction with the various governmental and non-governmental agencies interested in the question, the ICRC has endeavoured to make the provisions of those Conventions known to all concerned, and continued to distribute the booklet relative to the protection of civilian hospitals and their personnel in time of war.

In conjunction with various national and international organisations, the ICRC also studied questions concerning medical personnel and equipment in some other countries.

¹ See Table of Relief Supplies, below pages 44 and 45.

In addition to the preparation of reports on these questions, in view of the next International Red Cross Conference, and the verbal or written approaches made on the subject, the ICRC carries on a regular correspondence with doctors and nurses of various nationalities who wish to obtain information concerning the possibility of employment in Switzerland and other countries ; during the year it received visits of groups of doctors and nurses from several countries, seeking for information on the work of the ICRC, and the provisions of the Geneva Convention, which are of so great importance for their work as a whole.

2. PROTECTION OF CIVILIAN POPULATIONS AFFECTED BY THE WAR

In 1954 the ICRC continued its work on behalf of civilian populations ; it distributed relief to children, adults, aged persons and refugees.

(a) Child Welfare.

During the World Child Welfare Congress (Zagreb, Yugoslavia, August 31-September 4, 1954), organised by the International Union for Child Welfare, in conjunction with the National Council of Child Welfare Associations of Yugoslavia, the ICRC took pains to emphasise the importance of the provisions concerning children of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of August 12, 1949 : the following Resolution was passed, among others, by the Congress :

“ In times of war, it is necessary to ensure the maximum protection of children under the provisions of international law. Therefore the Congress recommends the strict application of the Geneva Convention for the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and invites governments that have not yet done so to ratify it. It further recommends the adoption of a sup-

plementary agreement to make the provisions relative to the protection of children more complete than heretofore.”

“ The Congress expresses its concern regarding the children who are still separated from their families, and recommends that Governments collaborate with the competent organisations and the Red Cross, in order to take all appropriate steps to locate those children and notify the parents or near relatives so as to make it possible to plan for their reunion.”

As in previous years, the International Committee's efforts in connection with the re-uniting of parents and children gave rise to numerous representations to Red Cross Societies in Central and East European countries, which led to favourable results in a great many cases.

These interventions were not of a unilateral nature.

At the request of the *Jugoslav Red Cross Society*, which supplied the necessary particulars (nominal lists and family enquiries concerning over a thousand children presumed to be in thirteen different countries), the ICRC undertook to search for Yugoslav children who were missing as a result of events of war ; in 1954 it opened 929 new enquiries which enabled 376 children to be traced. At the end of the year, 553 enquiries were being pursued in Germany Austria, Italy and other countries, in co-operation with the public authorities and National Red Cross Societies concerned.

Transfers from West to East also took place, in the direction of the German Democratic Republic.

Further, the ICRC gave assistance on behalf of mentally deficient and necessitous children in several East European and Asian countries.

(b) Greek nationals.

The ICRC continued the action in which it had been previously engaged for the repatriation of Greek nationals. It facilitated the return from Hungary to their country of origin of 1,233 children

and adults, with the efficient aid of the Red Cross Societies of Austria, Greece, Hungary and Italy. In addition, the repatriation of 1,735 children and adults from Rumania took place, with the support of the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies, and the valuable assistance of the Greek and Rumanian Red Cross. The ICRC learned with satisfaction of the successful repatriation of 791 adults and children from Czechoslovakia and 46 children from Jugoslavia.

The ICRC noted with gratification the provisions of the Greco-Bulgarian Agreement, signed in Paris on May 22, 1954, concerning the repatriation of Greek nationals still resident in Bulgaria. The Agreement provides for the appointment of a Committee composed of three Members (the representatives of the *ICRC*, the *Greek Red Cross* and the *Bulgarian Red Cross*), to compile the lists of the persons concerned. For reasons unknown to the ICRC, which is of course still prepared to delegate its representative, the proposed Committee has not yet been constituted.

(c) Ethnical minorities.

Previous reports have described the action of the ICRC on behalf of East Germans¹ and German-speaking person often designated by the technical term *Volksdeutsche*. These people, who have been established in Central or East European countries for several generations, are not necessarily of German origin ; they not only came from territories which were later attached to Germany, but also from France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, etc. ; it was merely because they were German-speaking that they were, often erroneously, considered to be German.

In Jugoslavia, in particular, the ICRC intervened with successful results on behalf of 25,000 persons ; in 1954 it dealt with 9,600 adults, alone or accompanied by their children, and with individual children who had been allowed to join their families in Germany,

¹ See Reports on the work of the ICRC, 1948, p. 64, 1949, p. 57, 1950, p. 42, 1951, p. 47, 1952, p. 33, 1953, p. 32.

Argentina, Austria, Australia, Belgium, the United States, France, the United Kingdom and Venezuela. Special mention should be made of the services of the *Jugoslav Red Cross Society* which, by prolonged and careful search in conjunction with the ICRC, brought the work (which was often of a delicate nature) to a successful conclusion.

With the help of the authorities and the *Swiss and Czechoslovak Red Cross Societies*, the ICRC was able to facilitate the return from Czechoslovakia of a number of nuns of German origin and German-speaking, who wished to return to their parent establishment in Switzerland. The various operations involved (departure from Czechoslovakia, transport by air and arrival in Switzerland of 365 persons) took place in the most favourable conditions.

On the whole, some 100,000 persons—East Germans or “*Volksdeutsche*”—have so far benefited by the International Committee's aid.

(d) Refugees.

The ICRC continued to give assistance to refugees. In countries where it had appointed delegates, the latter endeavoured to give aid to persons in distressed circumstances and especially the aged and sick—the “hard core cases”—who experience great difficulty in making a new start in life.

Reference was made last year¹ to the admission of about 100 tuberculous refugees from Trieste to hospitals in Switzerland. The ICRC undertook this work, with helpful co-operation from many sources, by means of funds specially allocated for the purpose by the *Allied Military Government* in Trieste and the *Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration*. By the middle of the year 70 patients were still under treatment in Leysin. Refugees who were nearly cured were placed in convalescent homes in Leysin, or in the neighbourhood. About ten former patients have already taken up employment, with the help of the International

¹ See *Report on the work of the ICRC, 1953*, p. 36.

Committee's two social workers ; others have been repatriated or are on the point of leaving.

During the year the ICRC helped the patients' families to leave Trieste and to take up residence in France, at Morzine near the Swiss frontier. For practical measures in connection with accommodation, employment for adults, school attendance by children, etc., the ICRC received valuable assistance from the public authorities, who issued temporary residence permits to all persons belonging to the family groups.

The ICRC also dealt with the resettlement of the refugees. Towards the end of the year, an appeal was sent on their behalf to 31 Governments, through the National Red Cross Societies. The first replies received, in particular from France, opened up favourable prospects for the resettlement of families of agricultural workers in the Landes district.

In 1954 the ICRC continued the issue of a few *Travel Documents* to refugees or stateless persons ; the object of the document, which has been recognised by about thirty countries, is to facilitate the emigration of displaced persons to the country of their choice.

(e) A few comments on the re-uniting of families.

The re-uniting of families gave rise, in most cases, to intricate problems, where the human factor had often to be viewed from the economic and political angle. This was the case, in particular, whenever ethnical minorities were concerned. The contacts which are necessary to carry out this work of mutual aid and charity—which tends to bring contentment, to assist reconstruction and to promote the cause of peace—demands much care and tact. All questions connected with departures, transit and arrivals in another country must be arranged, to the last detail, with authorities and Red Cross Societies. The presence on the spot of delegates from Geneva, who have the confidence of the authorities¹ has often

¹ M. G. Joubert, ICRC Delegate in Vienna, dealt with repatriations from Hungary.

M. F. Ehrenhold, Travelling-Delegate of the ICRC, gave his services in Athens, Bucharest, Constantza and Salonika, for repatriations from Rumania.

been of great assistance. This confidence is most encouraging for the Red Cross, whose practical help is necessary in cases where no other institution could intervene.

Full particulars of the operations carried out will be found in the Summary on page 35.

(f) Sundry relief actions.

In 1954 the ICRC assisted sick and necessitous persons by supplying gifts in kind (medicaments, clothing and foodstuffs), which were distributed direct from Geneva or through some delegations. *Individual parcels* of medicaments were sent to 9,680 sick persons in 18 countries ; a greater number was helped by means of *collective consignments*.¹

(g) Legal assistance.

In July 1954, during the meetings of the *Biennial Conference* of the International Bar Association (Monaco, July 19-24), a representative of the ICRC informed the Association of the enquiry opened, by non-governmental organisations concerned with migration, with a view to setting up a programme for legal assistance to refugees and stateless persons, with the help of all agencies competent to deal with the question.

In conformity with *Resolution 14 of the XVIIIth International Red Cross Conference* ² the ICRC has endeavoured to promote the

¹ See Summary of Relief Supplies, pages 44 and 45.

² The XVIIIth International Red Cross Conference, approves the reports presented by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League concerning the action taken on Resolution 31 of the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference, thanks the International Committee of the Red Cross for the initiative it has taken in order to coordinate the efforts to give practical effect to legal assistance, invites the International Committee of the Red Cross to carry on its activities on conjunction with the League of Red Cross Societies.

RE-UNITING OF FAMILIES AS ON DECEMBER 31, 1954

Persons of German origin or German-speaking

Proceeding from	Country of transit	Transit Camps	Destination	*Children	*Adults
Poland	German Democratic Republic	Heiligenstadt and Friedland	German Federal Republic		45,122
Czechoslovakia	—	Furth I/W and Schirnding/Hof-Moschendorf	German Federal Republic		17,596
Czechoslovakia	—	—	Switzerland (nuns returning to their parent establishment)		356
U.S.S.R.	German Democratic Republic	Heiligenstadt and Friedland	German Federal Republic		2,133
Jugoslavia	Austria	Piding	German Federal Republic	1,458	22,665
Jugoslavia	—	—	Austria	626	1,200
Jugoslavia	Austria, German Federal Republic	Piding	German Democratic Republic	29	
Jugoslavia	Austria, Switzerland	—	France	11	31
Jugoslavia	Austria, France	—	United Kingdom	8	3
Jugoslavia	Austria	—	United States	11	
Jugoslavia	Austria	—	Canada	5	
Jugoslavia	Austria	—	Belgium	2	
Jugoslavia	—	—	Argentina	1	
Jugoslavia	Austria	—	Australia	1	
Jugoslavia	Austria	—	Switzerland	1	
Jugoslavia	Austria	—	Venezuela	1	
Rumania	German Democratic Republic	—	German Federal Republic		1,071
Austria	—	—	German Federal Republic		1,350
German Federal Republic	—	—	Austria		
Austria	German Federal Republic	—	German Democratic Republic	14	
				2,168	91,527
					2,168
			TOTAL . . .		<u>93,695</u>

* The figures under the heading "Children" refer to individual transfers of children, in particular by convoys, whereas children who accompanied members of their families are included under the heading "Adults".

development of legal assistance, in collaboration with the various Red Cross agencies, and governmental and non-governmental organisations.

It has noted with satisfaction the work of the offices and branches which have been set up to provide legal assistance, particularly in Germany, Austria, Brazil, Greece and Italy.

II. The activity of the ICRC following some recent conflicts

In 1954 the ICRC continued to give practical service in favour of the victims of disturbances and conflicts in Latin America, Asia and Europe.

I. LATIN AMERICA

Guatemala. — On being informed of the events in Guatemala, on June 21, 1954, the ICRC sent a telegram to the Guatemalan Red Cross Society, offering its services. On June 24, the ICRC stated that it was prepared to send one of its delegates from Geneva, and on June 24 and 25 it broadcast an appeal, drawing the attention of all concerned to the Red Cross principles, and earnestly requesting that the civilian population should not be the object of attacks, that suffering should be limited and that the victims should be given assistance. The message reflected the concern which was felt at the time in regard to the possibility of the mass bombing of the civilian population.

A little later, the two parties to the conflict having accepted the International Committee's offer of intervention, in the form in which it was made, the Deputy-Director of the Central Prisoners of War Agency, a former delegate in Spain, was appointed for the mission.

As the Geneva Conventions had been ratified by Guatemala in May 1954, Article 3 of the Fourth Convention (relating to armed conflict during internal disturbances) was therefore applicable. This circumstance facilitated the work of the International Committee's delegate, as the article in question provides for the