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with the Spanish authorities and the Spanish Red Cross and established close and friendly working contacts with that Society. In particular, he was able to follow the Spanish Red Cross Society's activities in behalf of Spanish nationals repatriated from the USSR <sup>1</sup> and concerning the victims of the events in Hungary.

After the Valencia region was devastated by severe floods, the ICRC delegate, on behalf of the International Committee, gave the Spanish Red Cross Sw. fr. 5,000 to assist the victims.

## THE NEAR EAST

In October 1956, Mr. D. de Traz was appointed General-Delegate for the Near East, with headquarters at Beirut.

Thus, when the Suez conflict broke out, the ICRC was ready, and with tact and good judgment the General-Delegate established liaison with the public authorities, the United Nations representatives and the National Red Cross Societies.

He also co-ordinated action by other ICRC delegates in the area and made frequent visits to Egypt and Israel. In most cases, it was he who negotiated agreements permitting the ICRC to take action in the Near East.

The General-Delegate also carried out a series of missions to the capitals of the Arab countries. He had discussions with leading officials in Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the Lebanon, Syria and the Sudan, with particular reference to the possibility of some of these countries acceding to the Geneva Conventions, the New Delhi Conference and assistance to Algerian refugees in Tunisia and Morocco.

In Saudi Arabia, Mr. de Traz was received by H.M. King Saud, who assured him of his country's intention of acceding to the Geneva Conventions in the near future. In the Sudan, the General-Delegate succeeded in obtaining parliamentary ratification of that country's instrument of accession to the 1949 Geneva Conventions. Shortly afterwards, the Sudanese Red Crescent requested official recognition by the ICRC ; this was accorded on November 1.

The ICRC General-Delegate, accompanied by the Head of the

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 48.

Medical Personnel and War Disablement Section of the ICRC<sup>1</sup>, also handed over to the Jordan Red Crescent about one hundred kits for voluntary medical auxiliary personnel, six medical kits and one "Rapidoc" set (complete surgical kit) and supplies of dressings.

## EGYPT

The Annual Report for 1956 gives an account of the relief action undertaken by the ICRC in the Near East after the Suez Conflict ; this work was continued in 1957.

### (1) ASSISTANCE TO PRISONERS OF WAR.

The number of Egyptian prisoners of war in the hands of the Israeli forces amounted to over 5,600 officers and men. After first being placed in transit camps from which, on the intervention of the Committee's delegate<sup>2</sup>, several hundred civilians captured by error were rapidly released, the majority of these prisoners were assembled in the permanent camp at Atlith, about one hundred kilometres north of Tel Aviv. They were visited regularly by the delegate of the ICRC who was able to converse with them without the Israeli authorities being present and was allowed to distribute relief supplies and provide cultural and religious material (copies of the Koran, books, cinema shows, musical instruments, footballs, jam, fruit, coffee, etc.) He also arranged for the exchange of family news between the prisoners and their relatives, which was authorised without restriction through the services of the Central Prisoners of War Agency, Geneva.

It was possible to arrange for the repatriation of a certain number of seriously wounded before the close of hostilities<sup>3</sup>, and the ICRC took steps for the unwounded prisoners of war to be authorised to return home. These repatriations took place under the auspices of the ICRC shortly after the close of hostilities, and in eleven stages, from January 21 to February 5. The 5,384 prisoners in Atlith camp were all repatriated in groups of about five

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<sup>1</sup> Miss A. Pfirter.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. L. A. Gaillard.

<sup>3</sup> See Annual Report 1956, p. 30.

hundred under the personal supervision of the delegate of the ICRC. In each case after making out a nominal list including the names, first names, ranks and army numbers, the roll was called in the camp by an Israeli police officer accompanied by an Egyptian senior officer in captivity. In the early morning the prisoners of war were placed in Israeli army lorries and the convoy, consisting of 25 to 30 vehicles, left the camp under escort. At the end of the morning it arrived at the demarcation line. The prisoners were then formed into detachments of 25 men and the number checked by officers of the United Nations Emergency Forces. This operation was carried out under the responsibility of Major Baron of the Israeli Army, Major Morgan of the Canadian Army, United Nations liaison officer, and Dr. Gaillard, delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Israel. After the roll-call the prisoners of war were taken by UNEF vehicles to El Arish and Misfak, where Egyptian military personnel were waiting for the convoy. The prisoners were once more formed into detachments and the number checked by an Egyptian officer in the presence of Major Morgan and the delegate of the International Committee.

When the first convoy arrived, the delegates of the International Committee in Egypt and in Israel<sup>1</sup> were present at the handing over of the prisoners to the Egyptian Authorities; Dr. Gaillard followed every stage of the operations on each occasion covering nearly 300 kilometres from the departure camp, making the same journey back to his base. Twelve journeys of this description, from January 21 to 31, represented a respectable number of kilometres, sometimes over rough roads and in somewhat difficult circumstances. Thus, in conformity with the governing principles of the Geneva Conventions, the International Committee of the Red Cross was present during the repatriation operations and could ascertain that they were carried out in accordance with humanitarian regulations.

The last repatriation of Egyptian prisoners of war took place at a great distance from the Mediterranean coast, at the most southern point of the Sinai Peninsula. It took place on February 5 at Ras Canissa, on the route leading to El Tor. The 202 prisoners

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Thudichum and Dr. Gaillard.



*In the Near East, through the efforts of the ICRC, a number of seriously wounded Egyptian prisoners of war were repatriated before the end of hostilities*



of war who were still in the Sharm El Shaik transit camp, about 25 kilometres away, were brought to the locality to be handed over to the UNEF officers, in the presence of the delegate of the International Committee in Israel<sup>1</sup>; another of the Committee's delegates, who had come specially from Cairo<sup>2</sup>, was present at El Tor when the men were taken over by the Egyptian authorities from the UNEF officers.

Moreover, on January 26, in Dr. Gaillard's presence, the few Israeli prisoners held by the Egyptian Army were handed over to the Israeli military authorities at Rafah by the officers of the UNEF, the same procedure being followed as for the repatriation of Egyptian prisoners of war. During their captivity they had been visited by the delegates of the ICRC.

The names and the personal belongings of Egyptian prisoners of war who died in captivity were also transmitted, via Geneva, to the authorities of their country.

The ICRC also opened numerous enquiries with the Israeli authorities concerning Egyptian military personnel and civilians who disappeared during the hostilities.

## (2) ASSISTANCE TO EGYPTIAN CIVILIANS.

### (a) *In occupied territory.*

The delegate of the ICRC in Israel<sup>3</sup> in the course of several other missions made enquiries as to the living conditions and requirements of the population and refugees in the occupied areas of Gaza and Sinai. At Gaza he investigated the treatment given to persons protected by the Fourth Convention and arrangements were made for him to visit at regular intervals Egyptian nationals interned in a residential area of the city. At El-Arish and at Rafah he assisted persons in need and children by making distributions of tinned milk and egg powder. In the Sinai peninsula, he made sure that no harm had been caused to the civilian population. The delegate also took part in the repatriation of civilian Egyptians interned at Gaza.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. L. A. Gaillard.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Robert.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Gaillard.

In May the ICRC sent a gift of medicaments to hospitals in the area.

(b) *At Port Said*

During the military operations in Egypt, thousands of persons left the Port Said area occupied by the Franco-British forces and sought refuge inland. In many cases these people's houses had been destroyed and they were obliged to live in camps hastily set up by the Egyptian authorities.

The delegate of the ICRC<sup>1</sup> and two leading members of the Egyptian Red Crescent<sup>2</sup> visited Port Said on February 5, 1957, to examine the situation of these persons. They were accompanied by a representative of the League of Red Cross Societies<sup>3</sup> who was passing through Egypt. From the joint report drawn up after this visit, it was seen that according to information supplied by the authorities, some 15,000 persons assembled in two camps had need of further aid. Although the Egyptian Ministry of Social Welfare supplied the necessary foodstuffs and medicaments, it was thought advisable to distribute to these persons 8,000 blankets, 250 tents, 10 sewing machines and kitchen utensils. In order to meet the situation, the International Committee again placed a delegate in Port Said<sup>4</sup> in the premises occupied until the end of December 1956 by the head of its delegation in Egypt.

Funds transferred from Geneva enabled a considerable portion of the relief supplies to be purchased locally and distributed by the delegate of the ICRC in agreement with the authorities and the Egyptian Red Crescent ; these supplies consisted of 4,000 blankets, 10 sewing machines and kitchen utensils.

In addition, an important cash donation from the Iraqi Red Crescent, received by the International Committee in Geneva following its appeal of November 1956<sup>5</sup>, was transferred to Egypt in accordance with the donor's wish and, at the request of the Egyptian Red Crescent, was used for Port Said victims. The ICRC

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Max Henri Huber.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. M. Boutros Ghali and Dr. Medhat.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. F. Daubenton.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. M. H. Huber.

<sup>5</sup> See Annual Report for 1956, p. 26.

also suggested to the Egyptian Red Crescent to make use of the balance of funds received from National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies following the events in Suez, for the purchase of relief supplies for the Port Said victims.

### (3) ASSISTANCE TO ALIEN CIVILIANS

#### (a) *Persons detained or interned*

In co-operation with the representatives of the Protecting Powers, the delegates of the ICRC visited alien civilians (in particular British) under detention or interned. They induced the Egyptian authorities to improve the detainees' living conditions, with the help of gifts received from various National Red Cross Societies.

#### (b) *Stateless persons*

The ICRC delegation also dealt with the question of stateless persons, especially Jews, who had been obliged to leave Egypt as a result of the events. The International Committee offered to act, for humanitarian duties, as the substitute of the Protecting Power on behalf of all stateless persons whose lack of a definite status deprived them of this protection.

For this purpose, from January 2 to September 14, the International Committee of the Red Cross organised 14 journeys by sea <sup>1</sup> to Naples, and later to Piraeus, thus enabling 7,190 stateless persons to emigrate in proper circumstances. The majority were bound for other countries of Europe and Israel, South America, the United States or Australasia. In Greece as in Italy, these persons received assistance from the National Red Cross Society, the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration and Jewish charitable associations.

No collective departures took place after September 14. Individual emigrants leaving the country nevertheless continued to have recourse to the services of the ICRC delegation. The delegation gives them advice and help in the numerous administrative formalities which they must perform and, in case of need, helps them to pay the cost of their journey.

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<sup>1</sup> See table, p. 26.

In 1957, a few hundred aged, disabled or destitute persons who could not, or did not, wish to leave the country, were helped by the ICRC delegation.

(4) OTHER ACTIVITIES

*In Egypt*, the ICRC intervened with the Government on behalf of 6 members of the crew of the Israeli fishing boat "DORON" arrested by the Egyptian naval forces on September 23. These seamen, held at Abassieh military prison, Cairo, were visited on November 5 by the delegates of the ICRC<sup>1</sup> who handed them a few comforts. The seamen were repatriated later with the help of the United Nations.

Other interventions were made concerning individual cases.

COLLECTIVE TRANSPORTS OF STATELESS PERSONS  
FROM EGYPT TO GREECE AND ITALY

Vessels	Destination	Date of departure	Date of arrival	Number of passengers
1) Misr . . . .	Naples	2.1.57	6.1.57	967
2) Misr . . . .	Piraeus	21.1.57	23.1.57	812
3) Misr . . . .	Piraeus	8.2.57	10.2.57	806
4) Mecca . . . .	Piraeus	4.3.57	7.3.57	1,093
5) Mecca . . . .	Piraeus	19.3.57	22.3.57	1,187
6) Mecca . . . .	Piraeus	8.4.57	10.4.57	793
7) Mecca . . . .	Piraeus	11.5.57	13.5.57	608
8) Eolia . . . .	Piraeus	24.6.57	26.6.57	180
9) Corinthia . .	Piraeus	30.6.57	3.7.57	84
10) Nefertiti . .	Piraeus	4.7.57	6.7.57	46
11) Nefertiti . .	Piraeus	21.7.57	23.7.57	195
12) Nefertiti . .	Piraeus	7.8.57	9.8.57	13
13) Nefertiti . .	Piraeus	28.8.57	30.8.57	185
14) Nefertiti . . } Corinthia . . }	Piraeus	14.9.57	16.9.57	221
				7,190

*In Israel*, the ICRC made numerous approaches to the authorities in connection with interned Egyptian civilians.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. D. de Traz and Mr. E. Muller.

On November 25, the Honorary Delegate of the ICRC in Israel <sup>1</sup> visited Shatta Camp where Egyptian or Jordanian nationals were serving sentences inflicted by the Israeli tribunals for clandestine crossings of the frontier and (as " fedayin ") for having committed acts of terrorism. A report on this visit was sent to the Egyptian Government.

(5) DELEGATION STAFF

(a) *In Egypt*

After over a year of very tiring work, the head of the delegation <sup>2</sup> returned to Geneva on October 20. His post was filled by the Resident Delegate of the ICRC in Egypt <sup>3</sup>.

The staff of the delegation (all Swiss citizens) which amounted to 9 persons in January, was reduced to 6 at the end of December <sup>4</sup>. A few staff members were also engaged locally.

b) *Israel*

Dr. L. Gaillard, sent to Israel at the beginning of the conflict, left the country at the end of January ; his post was filled by a honorary-delegate of Swiss nationality.

## NORTH AFRICA

### ASSISTANCE TO ALGERIAN REFUGEES

Owing to the events in Algeria a great many civilians, mostly women, children and aged persons, took refuge in Morocco and Tunisia.

These people, who formerly lived by farming in the border regions, crossed into the neighbouring territories without taking any means of subsistence with them.

For those who entered Morocco, the exodus began in March 1956, and a little later for the others.

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. H. Tschopp.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. M. Thudichum.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. E. Muller.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. E. Muller, Mr. E. Jaquet, Mr. N. Huber, Mr. E. Robert, Mrs. N. Robert, Miss E. Bugnot.