

# Traditional activities

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### *III. — TRADITIONAL ACTIVITIES*

#### **A. Wounded and Sick of the Armed Forces**

##### **1. MEDICAL PERSONNEL**

The work of the ICRC in collaboration with the Nursing Bureau of the League of Red Cross Societies has for its object the encouragement and support of National Societies, in order that qualified personnel may be available at all times to assume their duties in conjunction with Army Medical Services.

The Florence Nightingale Medal (as it is well known) confers distinction upon Red Cross nurses and voluntary aids for devotion to duty. Information on this foundation will be found under Page 45.

##### **(a) Individual Requests.**

In pursuance of traditional measures for assistance to medical personnel, the ICRC gave effect to numerous requests received from nurses who wished to find employment abroad, more particularly in leper hospitals.

##### **(b) Status of Women Members of Medical Personnel of Armed Forces.**

The position of the women members of the medical personnel of armed forces varies from one country to another, and such differences are liable to raise difficulties in cases where medical teams of various nationalities may be called upon to collaborate in time of war.

During 1953 the ICRC pursued its work in connection with the uniformity of status and enrolment conditions of the medical

personnel. Discussions on the subject took place with the International Information Office for Military Medicine and Pharmacy.

**(c) Surveys and Publications.**

In the course of the year the ICRC sent to all National Red Cross Societies and to national Nurses Associations the booklet entitled "Medical Personnel assigned to the care of the wounded and sick in the armed forces"; another booklet, "The Doctor in the Geneva Conventions of 1949", was also circulated.

## **2. DISABLED**

**(a) General Remarks.**

The assistance of the ICRC in this connection varies according to the countries concerned. In countries of advanced social legislation it only intervenes when the situation resulting from events of war, or the great number of refugees (as in Germany for instance) makes it necessary, or in exceptional cases when individual assistance will enable a disabled person to find remunerative employment. In other countries it seeks, by circulating information in its possession or acquired, and by giving collective relief, to encourage and to facilitate the creation of a social aid scheme adapted to the needs of the disabled.

Assistance to the disabled cannot be limited to former members of the armed forces, for the events of war have also made a great many victims among the civilian population, to whom most social legislations grant the benefit of allowances equal to those allotted to war disabled who belonged to the armed forces; the extension of the humanitarian work of the ICRC to those new categories of disabled persons was sanctioned by the new ICRC Statutes (Article 4 d). This resulted in a wide exchange of correspondence which has led to closer contacts between the ICRC and National Red Cross Societies, the United Nations Social Activities Division, International Labour Office, International Union for Child Welfare, International Federation of War Veterans Organizations, International Sponsorship of War Orphans, International Society for the

Welfare of Cripples, American Foundation for Overseas Blind, *Pro infirmis*, International Social Service, International Rescue Committee, International Committee for Aid to Intellectuals, European Student Relief, American Joint Distribution Committee, Evangelisches Hilfswerk, International Conference of Catholic Charities, World Council of Churches, YMCA and YWCA.

The funds in favour of the disabled at the International Committee's disposal come from various sources ; Pridham legacy for the Finnish and Polish disabled ; Fanny Hess legacy for the disabled, balance of the Corrigan fund for war victims ; numerous individual cash donations placed in a special account which serves for assisting disabled of all nationalities ; the balance of the collection made among German prisoners of war in Canada and the United States on behalf of German war disabled and " Volksdeutsche " refugees and repatriated. The ICRC also receives gifts in kind : crutches, watches for the blind, used clothing with which, when distributing, a few new garments are included in practically all cases.

**(b) Relief Measures.**

The last reports emphasised the development of the work of the ICRC on behalf of the disabled. This made further progress during 1953, the total value of individual and collective relief provided for the disabled having increased from Sw. Fr. 94,000. to Sw. Fr. 147,000 in value.

All the requests for individual and collective relief, for nationals of 28 different countries, are studied in conjunction with the National Red Cross Societies and other organisations concerned. When individual requests are received for pharmaceutical products, medical prescriptions must be provided, and for relief of other descriptions, if the applicant does not send an attestation of needy circumstances issued by an official authority or a person of trust, an enquiry is opened on the spot.

In connection with *collective relief action*, for the value of over Sw. Fr. 130,000., the ICRC distributed relief for war disabled in Albania, through the National Red Cross Society,

for a total amount of Sw. Fr. 13,431. In Germany it contributed towards the purchase of an encephalograph apparatus for the Association of Friends of Brain-Wound Sufferers; it provided artificial limbs for 115 young "Volksdeutsche" amputees, two invalid carriages, 75 pairs of crutches, and parcels of tonics, particularly for the disabled refugees of Berlin and Göttingen, at a cost of over Sw. Fr. 72,000.—. A distribution of orthopaedic apparatus is being made in Austria.

Braille watches were sent to war-blinded in Austria, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Jugoslavia and Poland.

In addition the ICRC supplied the Egyptian Red Crescent Society with ample data on the subject of relief to the disabled.

*Individual requests*<sup>1</sup> for relief necessitated the investigation of 1,500 new cases. Nearly 400 disabled persons of some 20 nationalities were given direct aid by the ICRC, at a cost of over Sw. Fr. 16,000.

The ICRC corresponded with National Red Cross Societies in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Jugoslavia, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the USSR for the investigation of individual requests for assistance received from disabled persons who resided or had taken refuge in those countries.

All information on assistance to young mutilated Italians will be found below page 31, and on aid to the disabled in *Asia* (South East Asia, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam; Korea), and in *Europe* (Greece) below page 49 and following.

## **B. Prisoners of War and Internees**

### **1. TASKS DEVOLVING UPON THE ICRC UNDER THE PEACE TREATY WITH JAPAN**

By the terms of Article 16 of the Treaty, the ICRC should obtain the assets, or the equivalent of the assets, belonging to Japan or her nationals, in neutral countries or those who were

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<sup>1</sup> As an example, it was ascertained that for 100 requests received from Germany, 85% were given favourable effect (35% by the ICRC and 50% with the co-operation of the German Red Cross Society).

former enemies of the Allies. The product of the liquidation of the assets (or their equivalent) would revert, on a basis considered equitable by the ICRC, to ex-prisoners of war in Japanese hands or to their families.

In March 1953, at the invitation of the United States and the United Kingdom, the Governments representing the beneficiaries under Article 16 met in London, in order to study the means of ensuring the application of the Article. The ICRC, also invited to the meeting, sent a mission to London headed by M. Paul Carry.

The Conference studied the various questions for the application of Article 16, and took certain decisions not only for the interpretation of the Article but also for the procedure to be followed for its execution. It was provided that the Governments concerned should designate an Executive Committee composed of representatives from Pakistan, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

It will be for the Executive Committee to conduct the necessary technical negotiations, both with Japan and the other Governments, it being understood that all important decisions which are dictated by circumstances will be referred to a future meeting of the Conference.

The Executive Committee, which started its work in September, came to decisions upon the definition of the beneficiaries under Article 16, the distribution of compensation between the various States and representations to be made to the Japanese Government. It has already been decided that the distributions of the funds to national bodies would be made in direct proportion to the number of ex-prisoners of war belonging to each Power concerned.

In order to prepare for the distribution of the funds, Governments were requested to submit their lists of prisoners to the ICRC.

The application of the provisions of Article 16 now depends upon the evolution of the negotiations actually being pursued between the Japanese Government and States holding the assets in question.

## **2. VISITS TO PLACES OF DETENTION**

The delegates of the ICRC made 89 visits to various places of detention—prisoner of war and civilian internee camps, hospitals, prisons, places of exile, etc.—in Asia and Europe. In addition, approaches were made from Geneva on behalf of detained or interned persons.

All useful information will be found on page 49 and following concerning visits and representations.

## **3. INTERVENTION IN FAVOUR OF FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR**

It will have been seen from previous reports that the ICRC lent its services with success for the adjustment of records, the issue of certificates for the allocation of pensions and indemnities, in particular at the request of former prisoners of war or civilian workers who contracted diseases during their captivity or period of work. The cases placed before the ICRC were of most varied descriptions, and investigations were carried out in all countries where prisoners were held, with the exception of the Far East. The reader will find below a chapter concerning the work of the Central Prisoners of War Agency and supplementary information, in particular concerning certificates of captivity for the purpose of helping those concerned to obtain the adjustment of situations which were often of a delicate nature. In 1953 the ICRC gave information and useful advice for the settlement of intricate problems connected with the liquidation of large accounts. It may be found surprising that such questions should not yet be settled, eight years after the close of hostilities. This is due to the fact that at the time some categories of persons were no longer under the protection of their country of origin and were not able to benefit by the settlements made between the Powers concerned. Their cases are examined by the High Commissioner for Refugees, and the competent administrations, and the ICRC supplies data in its possession whenever requested to do so by the persons in question.

## **C. Civilian Populations**

### **1. ASSISTANCE TO CHILDREN**

#### **(a) Repatriation of Greek Children.**

The ICRC and the League continued in 1953 to pursue their efforts on behalf of Greek children still in Yugoslavia who had been identified and were due to be repatriated<sup>1</sup>. At the date of the publication of the present report 578 children had been repatriated.

The seventh convoy took place on April 27, 1953; it was composed of 40 children.

#### **(b) Young mutilated Italians.**

One of the dramatic and less well-known consequences of the last war is the number of victims still being made by explosions of military appliances left lying in the ground, which have caused the mutilation of numerous children. In Italy the average number of these tragic accidents amounts to about 1,600 every year.

The President of the ICRC, in September 1953, concluded an agreement with Professor Longhena, President of the Italian Red Cross, whereby some of the children who were in particularly distressing circumstances—chosen by the doctor-delegates of the ICRC and Italian doctors—would be admitted to suitable orthopaedic establishments in Switzerland.

#### **(c) Displaced Yugoslav Children.**

The Yugoslav Red Cross submitted several lists to the ICRC containing the names of over a thousand children who were removed beyond the frontiers of that country as a result of the events of war, and whose trace was sought by the Yugoslav authorities.

As some of the information contained in the lists seemed to require clarification, the ICRC requested the Yugoslav Red Cross

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<sup>1</sup> See also below page 74.



Society to send it the supplementary information required and the applications from the children's families which are always necessary in such cases. All the children for whom the ICRC received applications from families were the object of investigations with the Red Cross Societies of the countries concerned, and the replies were communicated, as and when received, to the Yugoslav Red Cross Society.

## 2. REUNITING OF FAMILIES

### (a) "Volksdeutsche" Populations and East Germans.

By the beginning of 1953, the untiring efforts of the ICRC had enabled 68,647 adults and children to be united with their families. By the end of the year, 81,655 persons had been able to join their relatives in various countries. If one considers family relationships in each case, it may be estimated that over 250,000 persons benefited directly or indirectly by the International Committee's action as a whole.

In spite of these encouraging results, there is still much to be done. Whereas some of the ills engendered by war may be attenuated with the passing years, suffering caused by the dispersing of families always remains acute, and it can hardly be imagined that, eight years after the close of hostilities, many thousands are still anxiously awaiting the time of their reunion.

In spite of numerous approaches it has not been possible to induce certain governments—who first showed a co-operative spirit and later suspended the convoys—to come back upon their decision.

In other countries however the ICRC met with great comprehension thanks to which satisfactory results could be obtained, both for the transfer of adults, and for uniting individual children with their families in other countries.

In addition, on the basis of agreements which were entered into at Salzburg with the representatives of the German and Austrian Republics, it was possible for a few transfers of "Volksdeutsche" to take place between the two countries in 1953.

## Reuniting of Families

### (b) Summary as on December 31, 1953.

POLAND — German Federal Republic, via Friedland Transit Camp :	
Adults and children . . . . .	44,476
CZECHOSLOVAKIA — German Federal Republic, via Furth i/W Transit Camp and (partially) Friedland :	
Adults and children . . . . .	16,971
U.S.S.R. — German Federal Republic, via Friedland Transit Camp :	
Adults and children . . . . .	2,133
JUGOSLAVIA — German Federal Republic, via Piding Transit Camp :	
Adults . . . . .	12,560
Children . . . . .	1,310
JUGOSLAVIA — Austria :	
Adults . . . . .	1,200
Children . . . . .	588
JUGOSLAVIA — German Democratic Republic via Austria and the German Federal Republic :	
Children . . . . .	28
JUGOSLAVIA — France, via Austria :	
Children . . . . .	11
JUGOSLAVIA — Great Britain, via Austria and France :	
Children . . . . .	8
JUGOSLAVIA — Switzerland, via Austria :	
Child . . . . .	1
JUGOSLAVIA — United States of America :	
Children . . . . .	5
JUGOSLAVIA — Venezuela :	
Child . . . . .	1
AUSTRIA — German Democratic Republic, via German Federal Republic :	
Children . . . . .	14
RUMANIA — German Federal Republic, via German Democratic Republic :	
Adults and Children . . . . .	999
AUSTRIA — Germany and vice-versa . . . . .	1,350
Total . . .	81,655

During the year another convoy of individual children was sent from Austria to join their parents in the Democratic German Republic.

For the reuniting of families it was not only necessary to make searches, compile lists, make various approaches, organise transport facilities and obtain exit, transit and entry visas, but also to give considerable material aid. A great many of the persons transferred required assistance, particularly in transit camps where the distribution of clothing, underclothing and toilet requisites alone involved expenditure exceeding 100,000.— francs. The supplying of prostheses, for the purpose of helping mutilated persons to take their place in the economic life of countries of resettlement, called for a still greater outlay. Unfortunately, in this field as in many others, the resources of the ICRC are far from sufficient to meet requirements.

The following summary gives the details of the work of reuniting families, under the direction of the ICRC, as on December 31, 1953.

### **3. REFUGEES AND STATELESS PERSONS**

The ICRC had, in most cases, to solve three problems :

to facilitate the emigration of refugees from countries where they had been temporarily received, to enable them to reach another country willing to grant them permanent shelter :

to make their resettlement in good conditions possible by finding them employment ;

to ensure suitable living conditions for aged or ailing refugees whose further transfer could not be considered.

#### **(a) Legal Assistance.**

It will be recalled that the participation of the ICRC and National Red Cross Societies in legal assistance was recommended by resolutions of the International Conferences of Stockholm and Toronto. The latter, after having thanked the ICRC for the initiative it had taken in order to co-ordinate

the efforts to give practical effect to legal assistance, invited it to carry on its activities in conjunction with the League of Red Cross Societies, National Societies, and the governmental or non-governmental organisations which might contribute to the solution of the refugee problem.

In 1953, legal assistance under the auspices of the Red Cross was extended to the following countries of America and Europe :

*America :*

Brazil. — The Legal Assistance Section of the Brazilian Red Cross continued its work according to the plan outlined in this connection in the *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge* (January 1953).

Argentina. — A similar effort is to be found in that country where a Legal Assistance Section has been instituted by the Government with the assistance of the Argentine Red Cross Society.

*Europe :*

Austria. — The body formed, as a result of the approaches of the International Committee's delegate, by the Austrian Red Cross Society in conjunction with the Bar Council, continued its work of which the results were most encouraging <sup>1</sup>.

Greece. — The reports on the work of the Legal Assistance Section for refugees and stateless persons, which has been functioning for three years, were noted by the ICRC with great interest <sup>2</sup>.

Italy. — The Legal Assistance to Aliens Section (AGIUS), which has been an independent Section of the Italian Red Cross Society since 1945, continued its valuable work <sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, March 1953. — <sup>2</sup> Do. March 1952. — <sup>3</sup> Do. May 1953.

**(b) Travel Documents.**

It has been ascertained during the last few years that many difficulties were solved thanks to the ICRC Travel Document 10,100 bis, which was recognised by about thirty countries <sup>1</sup>.

In 1953 the ICRC again issued 199 of these documents and prolonged 36. In most cases the documents were issued for refugees or stateless persons in Cairo, Innsbruck, Shanghai, Tokyo and Trieste.

**(c) Refugees in Trieste.**

From the close of the second world conflict a great flow of refugees of the most varied nationalities passed through Trieste, where they were helped by the military authorities.

Early in 1953, the ICRC, with the financial support of Swiss Relief to Europe, sent a social worker to Trieste to set up a programme of vocational training for certain post-tubercular refugees. The carrying out of the programme was of course greatly modified by the decision of October 8, providing for the withdrawal of the occupation troops from Zone A, Trieste; the urgent question then arose of looking after the refugees who had until then been placed under the control of the Military Government. The case of the tubercular refugees raised particularly serious difficulties, as their state of health necessitated sanatorium treatment, which prevented all immediate emigration to a country willing to give them permanent shelter. For this reason the ICRC suggested the admission of the sick persons to hospitals in Switzerland. The Military Government immediately accepted the proposal.

The Military Government and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migrations having respectively contributed 174,000 and 165,000 dollars for the financing of the operation, the ICRC was able, thanks to the comprehensive attitude of the Swiss authorities, to transfer the sick persons to

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<sup>1</sup> The Travel Document is intended to facilitate the repatriation of displaced persons, or to allow them to emigrate to a country of their choice, or again to justify their presence in a country following events of war.

Leysin, to be placed in hospital until they could be definitely resettled in a new country. Moreover, approaches were made immediately, on general and technical levels, for the transfer with all possible speed of the hospital patients' families (about 75 persons in all) to a district near the Swiss frontier where they could reside while the patients were receiving treatment.

#### **4. FLOOD DISASTER VICTIMS**

Early in the year, during the floods which simultaneously devastated the Netherlands, the east coast of the United Kingdom, the Belgian shore and the North Sea coast of France, causing the deaths of many thousands of persons and huge material damage, the ICRC, after having informed the League of Red Cross Societies, placed its services at the disposal of the British Red Cross Society, and offered to send a convoy of eight lorries to the Belgian and Netherlands Red Cross Societies to help with relief action in the flood stricken regions. The offer was accepted by the Netherlands Red Cross Society on February 4.

##### **(a) Netherlands.**

On the same day a special mission left Geneva for the Netherlands, taking with it blankets from the ICRC reserve stores, relief supplies collected by the Basle Branch of the Swiss Red Cross Society and cases of medicines donated by the Société Hoffmann-La Roche. By February 6 the mission had already reached its destination, and was attached by the Netherlands Red Cross Society to the particularly affected area of Dordrecht, where it helped to evacuate flood victims, and to transport food supplies, personnel and material, as well as bags of sand for repairing the dikes.

##### **(b) Belgium and the United Kingdom.**

For Belgium and the United Kingdom, as for Holland, the ICRC transmitted gifts in cash, which were distributed through the National Red Cross Societies.

**(c) Japan.**

In June the Island of Kyushu, at the most southern point of Japan, was the scene of several hurricanes and torrential rain storms. The floods caused a great many deaths and led to the evacuation of large towns, the closing of hundreds of pits in the richest coalfield of the country and enormous material losses. The ICRC decided to participate, by means of a cash donation, in the relief action which was immediately organised by the Japanese Red Cross Society.

**(d) Greece.**

In the month of August a particularly violent earthquake occurred in Greece, in the detroit between Cephalonia and Ithaca, which devastated the Ionian Islands, causing enormous loss of human lives and considerable destruction. In agreement with the President of the Greek Red Cross Society the ICRC, which has a delegation in Athens, gave its services for the stricken population, and also for detained persons whose situation was even worse. On pages 39 and 54 all relevant information will be found concerning the relief supplies distributed by the ICRC to the victims of the catastrophe.

These relief actions, as a whole, no doubt exceed the usual scope of the International Committee's work in regard to natural disasters, but it will be understood that extraordinary measures were obligatory on account of the victims' great distress.

## **D. Relief in Cash and in Kind**

### **1. DISTRIBUTION**

In most cases the traditional activities of the ICRC also include the distribution of relief, in cash or in kind. The total value of such distribution for 1953 amounted to Sw. Fr. 1,193,285.--.

As it has been seen above, relief is granted to prisoners of war, internees and persons under detention, wounded or sick, the disabled, orphans, refugees and disaster victims.

## 2. TABLE OF RELIEF SUPPLIES DISTRIBUTED OR TRANSMITTED BY THE ICRC DURING 1953

*Remarks:* The figures in italics represent relief in cash. Weights are not indicated in the case of special relief items (special drugs, orthopaedic supplies, individual and intellectual relief, etc.)

Countries	BENEFICIARIES	TOTAL			
		By beneficiaries		By countries	
		Kgs.	Sw. Fr.	Kgs.	Sw. Fr.
ALBANIA	Greek nationals . . . . .	542	2,740		
	War-disabled . . . . .	196	13,431	738	16,171
AUSTRIA	Civilian population . . . . .	3,291	18,224		
	Repatriates . . . . .	—	530		
	Refugees . . . . .	2,064	17,240		
	War-disabled . . . . .	—	1,951	5,355	37,945
BULGARIA	Civilian population . . . . .	2,566	105,404		
	War-disabled . . . . .	—	237	2,566	105,641
BURMA	Civilian population . . . . .	—	1,500		1,500
CZECHOSLOVAKIA	Civilian population . . . . .	150	1,791	150	1,791
FINLAND	War-disabled . . . . .	—	807		807
FRANCE	Vercors Orphanage . . . . .	1,000	3,000		
	Displaced persons . . . . .	—	1,806		
	War-disabled . . . . .	—	1,887	1,000	6,693
GERMANY : Federal Republic	Civilian population . . . . .	488	3,650		
	" Volksdeutsche " . . . . .	400	2,260		
	" Volksdeutsche " . . . . .	—	8,000		
	" Volksdeutsche " (amputees) . . . . .	—	60,785		
	Refugees . . . . .	1,360	2,975		
	War-disabled . . . . .	159	6,788		
	War-disabled . . . . .	—	5,227	2,407	76,798 13,227
Democratic Republic	Civilian population . . . . .	749	22,303		
	War-disabled . . . . .	—	9,885	749	32,188
GREECE	Civilian population . . . . .	11,874	22,107		
	(Disaster victims, Ionian Is.) . . . . .	16,302	59,121		
	Prisoners and exiles . . . . .	36,846	263,535		
	War-disabled . . . . .	—	6,100		
	Prisoners (disabled) . . . . .	—	10,007	65,022	360,870
HONG KONG	Refugees in transit . . . . .	—	5,000		5,000
HUNGARY	Civilian population . . . . .	122	1,984		
	Displaced persons . . . . .	6,136	75,857	6,258	77,841
INDOCHINA Cambodia Laos Viet-Nam	Prisoners, military internees . . . . .	—	1,293		
	War-disabled . . . . .	—	5,501		6,794
IRAN	Civilian population . . . . .	—	10,761		10,167



Countries	BENEFICIARIES	TOTAL			
		By beneficiaries		By countries	
		Kgs.	Sw. Fr.	Kgs.	Sw. Fr.
IRAQ	Detained civilians . . . . .	198	2,250	198	2,250
ITALY	Refugees and internees . . . . .	210	1,425	430	9,519
	Tubercular war victims . . . . .	220	7,440		
	War-disabled . . . . .	—	654		
JAPAN	Civilian population . . . . .	—	7,491	421	17,841
	Civilian population (Kyushu disaster victims)	—	21,910		
	Repatriates . . . . .	421	10,350		
JUGOSLAVIA	Civilian population . . . . .	698	15,856	1,401	24,317
	"Volksdeutsche" . . . . .	178	1,105		
	German detained persons and "Volksdeutsche"	525	3,335		
	Refugees . . . . .	—	640		
	War-disabled . . . . .	—	3,381		
KOREA (South)	Civilian population . . . . .	11,157	111,545	19,529	214,168
	Detained civilians . . . . .	8,372	52,217		
	Prisoners of war . . . . .	—	39,948		
	War-disabled . . . . .	—	10,458		
NETHERLANDS	Disaster victims . . . . .	1,093	11,500	1,093	11,500
POLAND	Civilian population . . . . .	1,885	94,358	1,885	103,295
	War-disabled . . . . .	—	8,937		
RUMANIA	Civilian population . . . . .	107	1,829	107	2,554
	Displaced persons . . . . .	—	725		
SPAIN	Refugees . . . . .	—	14,836		14,920
	War-disabled . . . . .	—	84		
SWITZERLAND	Tubercular refugees in hospital . . . . .	—	1,000		1,957
	Alien war-disabled in hospital . . . . .	—	957		
USSR	German nationals . . . . .	750	6,250	1,322	10,819
	Hungarian nationals . . . . .	150	1,015		
	Italian nationals . . . . .	114	930		
	Japanese under detention . . . . .	308	2,624		
VARIOUS COUNTRIES	Civilian population . . . . .	200	1,769	524	4,208
	Persons under detention . . . . .	324	2,060		
	War-disabled . . . . .	—	379		
Total value of relief in cash . . . . .					65,818
Total value and weight, relief in kind . . . . .				111,155	1,127,467
Total value of relief supplies . . . . .					1,193,285
Value of relief supplied by the ICRC . . . . .					765,420
Value of relief supplies entrusted to the ICRC for distribution . . . . .					427,865
GRAND TOTAL . . . . .					1,193,285

In addition, *collective and individual relief* in kind was distributed directly from Geneva or by the delegations in various countries. The relief supplies consisted of medicaments, surgical equipment, dressings, foodstuffs, tonics, clothing, bedding, etc. (mainly in Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Jugoslavia and Poland).

In some cases donations in cash were given instead of relief in kind (such as transfers of funds to the German Red Cross Society as a contribution to the work of the receiving centres for refugees and stateless persons).

Individual relief action gave rise to considerable correspondence both in Geneva and in some delegations ; the number of requests for individual relief amounted to 30,000.

The above table gives details, classified by countries and categories, of the beneficiaries of the relief actions.

## **E. Central Prisoners of War Agency**

### **1. GENERAL REMARKS**

The work of the Agency in 1953 was, on the whole, almost directly related to the 1939-1945 conflict : no peace treaties having been signed with Germany and Austria, a great many ex-servicemen and civilians had not returned to their homes : eight years after the close of hostilities, national authorities, tracing bureaux and families still continued to apply to the ICRC for information concerning former prisoners of war who were missing, under detention or deceased.

From the copious information recorded in its card-indexes, the ICRC gives information, supplies applicants with certificates and personal documents (in particular certificates of nationality in support of representations for prisoners to be repatriated to their homes) and transmits petitions for reprieve, those humanitarian activities being in conformity with Article 79 of the Geneva Convention of July 27, 1929, relative to the treatment of prisoners of war.

## 2. MILITARY SECTIONS

Since the publication of the report for 1952, the various Sections of the Agency have made 120,000 checks, including 92,000 at the request of the German Red Cross Society in regard to military personnel missing from the Western theatre of war, and 5,000 for the purpose of ascertaining the exact identity of Italian ex-servicemen who died in captivity.

The Agency continued its enquiries in the USSR on the subject of missing military personnel of all nationalities, in particular German, French and Spanish. In the course of the year the Agency submitted 1,546 enquiries for the attention of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR. It also transmitted to that National Society 889 enquiry forms established by the Greek Red Cross concerning missing Greek combatants. No reply was received.

The ICRC was however successful in sending messages through the usual postal channels to persons in the USSR whose addresses were known. These family messages were written in Russian on special forms; 404 messages were sent and 151 replies were received in the course of the year. In addition, 365 reply-cards, printed in Russian, were sent to definite addresses in various camps in the USSR. Only 19 replies were received in Geneva, but it was ascertained that, in several cases, the cards had been returned directly to the families concerned.

With regard to German prisoners of war who are apparently still held in Czechoslovakia, Jugoslavia and Poland, the enquiries opened by the ICRC on their behalf were, as customary, sent to the National Red Cross Societies. Approaches were made in satisfactory circumstances to National Societies in Czechoslovakia and Jugoslavia, and in several cases prisoners of war for whom the ICRC had made enquiries were liberated and repatriated.

The Agency received :

(a) numerous requests for certificates of capture. A certain number still concerned the 1914-1918 conflict. The requests came from former Belgian, French and German combatants, of who some (as a result of bombardments during the Second

World War and the destruction of archives) and others (on account of the Polish or Russian authorities' occupation of their usual place of residence) sought from the ICRC the proof of their captivity which was essential for obtaining a pension. A still greater number came from prisoners of the 1939-1945 conflict, who were desirous of obtaining grants or emigration permits.

(b) requests from families for the opening of enquiries on military personnel deceased in captivity or interred in military cemeteries, or for former military personnel who, after having become civilian workers, had been sentenced to internment and died in camps ;

(c) requests for enquiries to be made concerning French combatants, and in particular for German, Polish, Italian and Spanish nationals fighting in Vietnam, presumed to be prisoners ;

(d) requests concerning prisoners of war in Korea. It may be recalled that for the Korean conflict the ICRC had been obliged to set up two card-indexes, each containing 280,000 cards. In one index the cards are filed in alphabetical order ; in the other by prisoner of war numbers. The card-indexes contain records of all enquiries for those missing or presumed to be prisoners in North Korean or Chinese hands, and also the names of the prisoners on the list received from Pan Mun Jom, broadcast by Radio-Peking or published in Chinese newspapers.

For all the ICRC is the last hope. Thanks to the information contained in its card-indexes and records, it is in many cases able to answer the majority of the enquiries received which, as it has been shown, refer to both the First and Second World Wars, and to new conflicts.

### 3. CIVILIAN SECTIONS

In the course of 1953 the Agency made approximately 8,000 enquiries with the object of uniting families separated by the War, of German, Polish, Yugoslav, Greek or other nationalities.

It had to follow those persons' trace, often from one continent to another, to question tracing bureaux, to find families who had lived in the same neighbourhood as the missing person, to collect and make use of the information thus obtained.

During the same period the ICRC gave its services on behalf of several Polish families who had emigrated to Western Europe or America, and who wished to have news of their relatives who had remained in Poland. For this purpose it sent 837 messages to Poland and for two-thirds of the cases it received replies.

Tracing forms for Greek nationals, established by the Greek Red Cross Society, were sent to the Red Cross Societies of several Central and East European countries. The Bulgarian Red Cross Society returned several forms giving the address in Bulgaria of the person sought. During the year 7,749 enquiries were received.

The " Civilians " Section of the German Red Cross Society <sup>1</sup> continued to deal with the reunion of " Volksdeutsche " families living in Czechoslovakia, Jugoslavia and Poland. Several individual repatriations took place, thanks to approaches made to the Czechoslovak Red Cross Society. For Jugoslavia the results were even more successful. The ICRC sent several lists to the Yugoslav Red Cross Society which allowed for the repatriation, in the course of the year, of 5,420 persons for whom numerous individual approaches had until then met with no success.

The exchange of family messages between the Arab and Israeli States was continued, through the Agency in Geneva. Moreover, thanks to the goodwill of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, Israeli nationals held in Iraq were given the possibility of corresponding with their families in Israel.

The ICRC receives the most moving messages of thanks every day from persons who have had recourse to its services.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Report on the Work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (January 1 to December 31, 1952)*.

## F. Foundations

### 1. FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE MEDAL

The essential purpose of the Florence Nightingale Medal is to reward the distinguished services of nurses or voluntary aids in caring for the wounded and sick in the often difficult and perilous circumstances of war or public disasters. On the occasion of the fourteenth distribution in 1953, after careful scrutiny of the candidates' files submitted by the Central Committees of National Societies, the ICRC awarded the medal to the following nurses and voluntary aids :

- AUSTRALIA : Miss Ethel Jessie Bowe, professional nurse with the rank of Colonel ; Miss Edith Johnson, professional nurse and midwife ; Matron Sarah Charlotte Macdonald, professional nurse.
- CANADA : Miss Florence H. M. Emory, professional nurse.
- COLUMBIA : Mrs. Blanca Marti de David Almeida, professional visiting nurse, founder and directress of the Nursing School of the Columbia Red Cross Society ; Miss Beatrix Restrepo Herrera, qualified visiting nurse and social worker, directress of the nurses of the National Relief.
- DENMARK : Miss Ellen Marie Christensen, professional nurse, Matron at the Finsen Institute.
- FRANCE : Miss Jeanne Berlie, professional nurse, Matron at the Charmettes Hospital, Lyons ; Miss Madeleine Castan, professional nurse, Head-Nurse of the Montpellier Dispensary School ; Miss Anne Chipon, professional nurse ; Miss Elisabeth Duval, professional nurse, Directress of the French Red Cross Clinical Training Centre, Nîmes ; Miss Yvonne Foltz, professional nurse, Matron of the " Santé-Secours " Centre, Rabat.



- GERMAN FEDERAL REPUBLIC : Miss Gabrielle Fries and Miss Maria Lerchl, both assistant sisters, who died in the service of their patients ; Mrs. Else Weecks, assistant sister of the German Red Cross ; Matron Beate Welschhof, professional nurse.
- JAPAN : Miss Makie Fujimoto, professional nurse and midwife, Head of the Nursing Section of the Japanese Red Cross Hospital, Himeji ; Miss Kin Kato, professional nurse ; Miss To Yamada, professional nurse and midwife, Superintendent of the pupils of the School of Nurses of the Tokyo University Hospital.
- JORDAN : Miss Nasra Aboudi, professional nurse.
- LEBANON : Miss Renée Araman, professional nurse.
- MEXICO : Miss Rosa Maria Acosta Gonzales, professional nurse, Head Nurse of the Mexican Red Cross.
- NORWAY : Sister Karen Elise Moe, professional nurse.
- PAKISTAN : Mrs. Gul Mehernosh Darrah, professional nurse and midwife. Head Nurse and Honorary General Secretary of the Pakistan Nurses Association.
- SWEDEN : Miss Gerda Höjer, professional nurse, President of the International Council of Nurses ; Miss Karin Elfverson, professional nurse, Vice-President and Rector of the High School of the Swedish Nurses Association.
- UNITED KINGDOM : Miss Daisy Caroline Bridges, professional nurse and midwife, Executive Secretary of the International Council of Nurses.
- UNITED STATES : Miss Annabelle Petersen, professional nurse.

The medals and diplomas bearing the names of the nurses and assistant nurses above-mentioned, together with a photo-gravure reproduction of Florence Nightingale, were sent to the Central Committees in the respective countries, to be formally awarded in accordance with the founders' intentions.

## 2. AUGUSTA TRUST FUND

The interest from the Fund, which is administered by the ICRC, is intended to be allocated to actions which Central Committees consider they should organise in the general interest of the Red Cross, or to women's associations for the setting up of nursing schools, or for any other humanitarian purpose of general use.

As a rule, the distribution of the funds takes place every four years, during each International Red Cross Conference.

The ICRC received no requests for allocations in 1953.

The credit balance available on December 31, 1953, amounted to Sw. Fr. 39,295.—.

## 3. EMPRESS SHÔKEN FUND

The Joint Commission, composed of three representatives of the ICRC and three representatives of the League of Red Cross Societies, for the distribution of the income from the Empress Shôken Fund, met in Geneva on February 10, 1953. It examined the statement of accounts and the position of the Fund as on December 31, 1952. From the balance available of Sw. Fr. 14,538.85.—, it decided to allocate, as the thirty-second distribution of income, the sum of Sw. Fr. 14,000.— to the following :

GERMAN RED CROSS SOCIETY (Federal Republic) :	Sw. Fr. 4,000.— towards the formation of first-aid workers among auxiliary voluntary aids and for training the population to assist in public disasters.
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BELGIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY :	Sw. Fr. 2,000.— towards its action in connection with the welfare of children.
ETHIOPIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY :	Sw. Fr. 4,000.— towards the purchase of an ambulance.
FRENCH RED CROSS	Sw. Fr. 4,000.— towards the equipment required for the centre for delicate children, " La Clef des Champs ", St. Cergues, Haute-Savoie, set up by the Villeurbanne Committee of the French Red Cross.

In view of the distribution of income for 1953, the Commission also invited the National Red Cross Societies to submit requests for allocations before December 31, accompanied by a survey on the work to which the request refers.

