

The Red Cross Institutions

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4. PROTECTION OF POLITICAL DETAINEES

In a previous report the ICRC gave a survey of its initiative in convening a Commission of International Experts in Geneva, to study the question of assistance to political detainees¹. When consulting them upon this serious and difficult problem, it had no intention of encroaching upon the rights of States; it merely wished to reassure people of all nations with regard to the humane treatment which should be provided for persons for whom a Power may consider it necessary, at any time, to take severe measures.

The consultation was invaluable for the ICRC, which is always anxious to extend its humanitarian initiatives, as well as for the victims of internal disturbances who place their confidence in the Red Cross.

In 1954, the ICRC was able to take practical measures in this connection, in Guatemala²; its intervention constituted one of the first applications of the general provisions of the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949. The latter provide that in the case of *civil war or internal disturbances, the essential principles of humanity should be observed*.

II. The Red Cross Institutions

1. INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS

(a) International Red Cross Conference.

In 1954 the ICRC examined various questions connected with the preparation of the XIXth International Red Cross Conference, which is due to be held in New Delhi.

¹ See *Report on the Work of the International Committee of the Red Cross* (January 1 to December 31, 1954), Geneva 1954, Annex, *Report of the Commission of Experts for the examination of the question of assistance to political detainees*, Pages 84 to 91.

² See below, pages 36 to 38.

(b) Standing Commission of the International Red Cross.

Two Sessions were held in 1954, the first in Oslo and the second in Geneva, in November.

(c) Meetings of the Three Presidents.

The Presidents of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross, the League of Red Cross Societies and the ICRC meet from time to time, with a view to co-ordinating efforts and for making the action of the Red Cross as efficient as possible.

In 1954 they held two regular Sessions, in Paris (March) and London (September).

2. LIAISON WITH THE LEAGUE OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES

During the past year, the ICRC continued to be in permanent contact with the League of Red Cross Societies. In addition to the monthly joint meetings, instituted for the study of matters of common interest (recognition of National Societies, relief missions, etc.) which are held in turn at the respective headquarters of each institution, meetings also took place for the examination of special cases (special missions, visits of representatives of National Societies, sundry questions, etc.).

3. RELATIONS WITH NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETIES

(a) Official recognition of National Societies.

On July 23, 1954, the *Afghan Red Crescent Society* asked to be officially recognised by the ICRC. This National Society, founded in 1923, has extended its action to various relief activities and has included in its programme the work prescribed by the Geneva Conventions. It has continued to develop during the past few years; it recently set up medical teams, is now building a hospital

and forming medical personnel, and has devoted large sums to relief action on behalf of victims of natural disasters. Moreover, by the terms of its statutes, it collaborates in war-time with the Army Medical Services. As the conditions for recognition were entirely fulfilled, the International Committee, after examining the question with the League, had pleasure in granting the official recognition of the *Afghan Red Crescent Society* as a member of the International Red Cross ¹.

The ICRC gave favourable effect to the request for recognition submitted on October 19, 1954, by the President of the *German Red Cross in the German Democratic Republic* ². By the terms of its statutes, the object of the Society (founded in 1952) is to assume the activities designated by the International Red Cross Conference and the Geneva Conventions ; it assists the State Public Health Service by forming medical teams and setting up first aid posts and, in general, it helps to improve public health by all means at its disposal. Its recognition is a mark of progress towards the universality of the Red Cross and, as in the case of the German Federal Republic in 1952, the recognition is not in any way prejudicial to the subsequent foundation and recognition of a Society whose activity would extend to the whole of the German territory.

(b) Session of November 11, 1954 ³.

On November 11, the delegates of National Red Cross Societies who were taking part in the meetings of the Executive Committee of the League, in Geneva, attended a meeting held, for information purposes, at the headquarters of the ICRC ⁴.

¹ Afghan Red Crescent Society, Kabul : Honorary President, H. R. H. Prince Ahmed Shah Khan ; President, Akhter Mohammed ; Vice-President, Chulam Hazrat Koshan.

² German Red Cross in the German Democratic Republic, Berlin : Honorary President, Otto Buchwitz ; President, Dr. Ludwig Mecklinger ; Head of the Central Offices, Hr. Hans Schöbel.

³ See *Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, 1954, pages 961 to 972.

⁴ Meetings were held, in similar circumstances, in May 1951 and October 1953.

The meeting assembled some forty participants, representing 24 countries : Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, the German Federal Republic, Greece, Iran, Ireland, Japan, Yugoslavia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Rumania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The session was entirely devoted to the study of the work undertaken by the ICRC in connection with the legal protection of civilian populations from the dangers of modern warfare ¹. The meeting gave rise to a fruitful exchange of views which showed, once more, the interest of the Red Cross representatives in the Committee's initiative.

4. FOUNDATIONS

The ICRC administers funds for the purpose of encouraging the work of National Red Cross Societies or rewarding the distinguished services of nursing personnel.

(a) Augusta Fund.

The income of the Fund, established in 1890 in memory of the Empress Augusta of Germany, is devoted either to missions in the general interest of Red Cross work, to women's associations concerned with the setting up of nursing schools, or to any other object of practical utility.

The next distribution will take place on the occasion of the *XIXth International Red Cross Conference*. National Societies have until November 1, 1955, for submitting applications for grant.

(b) Empress Shôken Fund.

The Fund was instituted in 1912 on the initiative of the Empress of Japan. Its object is to allocate funds to National Red Cross

¹ See below, pages 57 to 62.

Societies for their relief work in peace-time, in particular for the prevention of contagious diseases, and for the benefit of victims of disasters.

The Joint Commission, composed of three representatives of the ICRC and representatives of the League of Red Cross Societies, met on February 23, 1954, in Geneva, to study the applications for allocations. It decided to give favourable effect to requests for allocations submitted by six National Red Cross Societies, and the following distributions were made :

- A. Sw. Fr. 2,500 to the CEYLON RED CROSS SOCIETY, Colombo, for the development of its work on behalf of children suffering from malnutrition and tuberculosis.
- B. Sw. Fr. 2,500 to the INDIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY, New Delhi, for the development of its medico-social service.
- C. Sw. Fr. 2,500 to the INDONESIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY, Djakarta, for its First Aid Programme.
- D. Sw. Fr. 2,000 to the COSTA RICAN RED CROSS SOCIETY, San José, for the development of its programme for building up undernourished children who require special treatment.
- E. Sw. Fr. 2,000 to the SOUTH AFRICAN RED CROSS SOCIETY, Johannesburg, for setting up a day-nursery and a first aid post for non-Europeans in the Witbank district.
- F. Sw. Fr. 1,500 to the DANISH RED CROSS SOCIETY, Copenhagen, for the purchase of apparatus for the re-education of polio victims.

(c) Florence Nightingale Medal.

This medal was instituted in 1912 by the Washington Conference, to honour nurses and voluntary aids who have shown exceptional devotion to the sick or wounded in perilous circumstances due to events of war or public disasters. The award of the silver-gilt medals attached by red and white ribbons, and the diplomas,

takes place every two years. The names of the 28 nurses and voluntary aids who were awarded the medal last year are given in the previous report ¹.

The suggestions of Central Committees of National Red Cross Societies should be submitted for examination by the ICRC before March 1, 1955, accompanied by all essential information, in order that the list of recipients may be published on May 12, the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth ².

5. MISSIONS

(a) Missions of the President of the ICRC.

Early in March M. Paul Ruegger took part, with Ambassador A. François-Poncet, Chairman of the Standing Commission, and Judge E. Sandström, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the League, in a meeting of the Three Presidents, held in Paris, for the purpose of examining, in particular, the result of the Appeal inviting National Red Cross Societies to approach Governments in order to hasten the ratification of the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949 ³. The President of the ICRC was accompanied by M. L. Boissier, Member of the Presidential Council, and M. D. de Traz, Deputy Executive Director.

In April, following the meeting in Geneva of the *Commission of experts for the legal protection of civilian populations and victims of war from the dangers of aerial warfare and blind weapons*, the President of the ICRC paid further visits to Paris where he had conversations with members of the Directorate of the *French Red Cross Society*.

¹ See *Report on the Work of the ICRC. January 1 to December 1953*, Geneva 1954, pp. 45 to 47.

² See *Nomination of Candidates for the Florence Nightingale Medal*, 403rd Circular of the ICRC, Geneva, August 23, 1954.

³ See below, page 52.

In May, M. P. Ruegger, accompanied by M. F. Siordet, Vice-President of the ICRC, M. R. Gallopin, Director, and M. F. Ehrenhold, Delegate, visited Oslo, where he participated in the regular meeting of the *Standing Commission of the International Red Cross*, and the Opening Session of the *Board of Governors* of the League,

In July the President of the ICRC was received in Bonn by the Federal Vice-Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, also the President of the *Red Cross in the German Federal Republic*. He then proceeded to the Hague where he met the heads of the *Netherlands Red Cross Society*.

At the end of September, M. P. Ruegger attended the second regular Meeting of the Three Presidents, held at the headquarters of the British Red Cross, in London; he was accompanied by M. F. Siordet, Vice-President, and M. J. Pictet, Director for General Affairs.

In October, on the invitation of the President of the Belgian Red Cross Society, M. P. Ruegger took part in the official celebration of the 90th anniversary of the Society's foundation, in Brussels.

In November, he participated, with M. R. Olgiati, Member of the ICRC, in the second regular meeting of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross, held in Geneva.

In December the President of the ICRC visited Mantua, in order to study, with the authorities of the province, the representatives of the *Italian Red Cross Society* and the League of Red Cross Societies, the plans in connection with the commemoration of Henry Dunant's action at Solferino in June 1859.

The President also visited Strasburg, accompanied by Mlle. D. Werner, Delegate of the ICRC, to take part in the work of a *Commission of experts for the organisation of automatic co-operation and assistance in the event of natural disasters suffered by a Member country of the Council of Europe*.

(b) Other missions.

In addition to the missions of the President of the ICRC, mention should be made of certain special missions carried out overseas, i.e.—

LATIN AMERICA. — The Chapter entitled “ The activity of the ICRC following some recent conflicts ” ¹ gives a survey of the important results obtained by M. P. Jequier, sent from Geneva on a mission to Guatemala. Following his special mission, the delegate was able to make useful contacts with members of Governments and Red Cross authorities in Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Salvador (July 2-September 11, 1954).

FAR EAST. After the closing of the ICRC Delegation in Korea, Dr. O. Lehner, the former head of the delegation, paid visits before his return to Switzerland to the public authorities and Red Cross directorates in Burma, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaya, the Philippines, and Thailand (April 6-July 16). In addition, the ICRC entrusted Dr. F. Aguet, of the Lausanne University Hospital, with a short mission to Viet Nam (September 17-November 7).

MIDDLE EAST. In 1954, M. A. de Cocatrix was designated by the ICRC to carry out missions of a general nature, and special duties, in Saudi Arabia, Cyprus, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria (June 17-October 21).

The following list shows the missions and visits of Members of the ICRC and principal members of the staff, in 1954.

¹ See below, pages 35 to 38.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF ICRC MISSIONS AND STUDY-VISITS IN 1954

	JANUARY
<i>Munich</i>	Study-visit (M. R. Bovey)
<i>Paris</i>	Study-visit (M. R. Gallopin, Executive Director)
<i>Trieste</i>	Discussions concerning stateless refugees with the authorities and Military Government (M. M. Wolf)
	FEBRUARY
<i>Berlin</i>	Discussions with the German authorities (M. F. Ehrenhold)
<i>Lyons</i>	Ceremony for the presentation of the Florence Nightingale Medal (Mlle L. Odier, Member of the ICRC)
<i>Morzine and Thonon</i>	Visit in connection with assistance to stateless refugees from Trieste (MM. D. de Traz, Deputy-Executive Director, P. Kuhne, C. Turian, Mlle Rothenbach)
	MARCH
<i>Bonn and Frankfort</i>	Meetings with the International Tracing Service, Arolsen, and the German and Allied authorities (MM. R. Gallopin, M. Wolf)
<i>The Hague</i>	Discussion in connection with the application of Article 16 of the San Francisco Treaty with Japan (M. P. Kuhne)
<i>London</i>	Mission for Red Cross questions (M. M. Wolf)
<i>Paris</i>	<i>Meeting of the Three Presidents</i> (MM. P. Ruegger, President, L. Boissier, Member of the ICRC, D. de Traz)
	APRIL
<i>Arolsen</i>	Study-mission in connection with the <i>International Tracing Service</i> (M. P. Kuhne, Mlle P. Tombet)
<i>Hong Kong and Manilla</i>	Study-mission to South East Asia (Dr. O. Lehner)
<i>Morzine</i>	Visit in connection with assistance to stateless refugees from Trieste (M. R. Bovey, Mme E. de Ribaupierre, MM. C. Turian, J. Ruff)
<i>Munich</i>	Second study-mission in connection with the tracing of missing persons (M. P. Kuhne, Mlle P. Tombet)
<i>New York</i>	Special mission to the U.S. authorities and American Red Cross (M. D. de Traz)
<i>Paris</i>	Presidential mission (M. P. Ruegger)

	MAY
<i>Athens</i>	Mission on Red Cross matters (M. F. Horneffer)
<i>Karlsruhe</i>	Vth Session of the Congress of the Federation of Nursing Institutions and Nurses of the German Red Cross (M. R. Olgiati, Member of the ICRC, Mlle H. Nussbaum)
<i>Djakarta</i>	Continuation of the study-mission to South East Asia (Dr. O. Lehner)
<i>The Hague</i>	<i>Intergovernmental Conference for the Protection of Cultural Property in the event of Armed Conflict</i> (M. J. Wilhelm)
<i>Oslo</i>	<i>Standing Commission of the International Red Cross</i> , 23rd Session of the Board of Governors of the League (M. P. Ruegger, F. Siordet, R. Gallopin, F. Ehrenhold)
<i>Washington</i>	Celebration of the International Red Cross Day at the headquarters of the American Red Cross (M. M. Bodmer, Member of the ICRC)
	JUNE
<i>Bangkok</i>	Continuation of the study-mission to South East Asia (Dr. O. Lehner)
<i>Belgrade</i>	Mission on Red Cross matters (MM. F. Ehrenhold, H. Beckh)
<i>Berlin</i>	<i>International Congress of the Lieux de Genève</i> (M. C. Pilloud)
<i>Bonn</i>	Further meetings with the German and Allied authorities concerning the International Tracing Service (MM. R. Gallopin, M. Wolf, F. Ehrenhold)
<i>Florence</i>	<i>111rd Congress for Peace and Christian Civilisation</i> (M. P. Ruegger)
<i>Cairo</i>	Mission to the Red Cross in the Middle East (M. A. de Cocatrix)
<i>Morzine</i>	Visit in connection with assistance to stateless refugees from Trieste (M. P. Kuhne)
<i>Schaffhausen</i>	<i>Meeting of Delegates of the Swiss Red Cross</i> (Hon. President M. Huber, M. E. Nobs, Mlle L. Odier, Members of the ICRC, M. J. Duchosal, Secretary-General)
<i>Singapore</i>	Continuation of the study-mission to South East Asia (Dr. O. Lehner)

	JULY
<i>Annecy</i>	Visit for Red Cross matters (M. M. Wolf)
<i>Bonn</i>	Presidential mission (M. P. Ruegger)
<i>Hanoi</i>	Mission on Red Cross matters (M. J. de Reynier)
<i>The Hague</i>	Presidential mission (M. Ruegger)
<i>Guatemala</i>	Temporary mission on Red Cross matters (M. P. Jequier)
<i>London</i>	Discussion for the implementation of the provisions of Article 16 of the Peace Treaty with Japan (Professor P. Carry, Member of the ICRC, M. R. Gallopin)
<i>Monaco</i>	<i>Vth Congress of the International Bar Association</i> (M. H. Coursier)
<i>Munich</i>	Assistance to victims of floods in Central Europe (M. C. Ammann)
<i>Rangoon</i>	Close of the study-mission to South East Asia (Dr. O. Lehner)
<i>Riad</i>	Continuation of the mission to the Red Cross in the Middle East (M. A. de Cocatrix)
	AUGUST
<i>Bahrein</i>	Continuation of the mission to the Red Cross in the Middle East (M. A. de Cocatrix)
<i>Bucharest and Constanza</i>	Mission in connection with the repatriation of Greek nationals from Rumania (M. F. Ehrenhold)
<i>Djeddah</i>	Continuation of mission to the Red Cross in the Middle East (M. A. de Cocatrix)
<i>Florence</i>	Presidential mission (M. P. Ruegger)
<i>Frankfort</i>	Red Cross meetings concerning stateless refugees (M. M. Wolf)
<i>Managua</i>	Study-visit to Central America (M. P. Jequier)
<i>Morzine</i>	Visit in connection with assistance to stateless refugees from Trieste (MM. D. de Traz, P. Kuhne)
<i>Paris</i>	Presidential mission (M. P. Ruegger)
<i>Salonika</i>	Continuation of the mission in connection with the repatriation of the Greek nationals from Rumania (M. F. Ehrenhold)
<i>Tegucigalpa, San José, San Salvador</i>	Continuation of the study-visit to Central America (M. P. Jequier)

SEPTEMBER	
<i>Amman, Baghdad</i>	Continuation of mission in the Middle East (M. A. de Cocatrix)
<i>Hanoi</i>	Mission to the Viet Nam Red Cross (Dr. F. Aguet)
<i>London</i>	<i>Meeting of the Three Presidents</i> (MM. P. Ruegger, F. Siordet, J. Pictet)
<i>Morzine</i>	Visit in connection with assistance to stateless refugees from Trieste (Mme E. de Ribaupierre, M. C. Turian)
<i>Rome</i>	VIIIth General Assembly of the <i>World Medical Association</i> (M. C. Pilloud)
<i>Saigon</i>	Mission on Red Cross matters to South Viet Nam (M. N. Burckhardt)
<i>Teheran</i>	Continuation of mission in the Middle East (M. A. de Cocatrix)
<i>Zagreb</i>	Congress of the International Union for Child Welfare (M. F. Ehrenhold)
OCTOBER	
<i>Beirut</i>	Continuation of mission in the Middle East (M. A. de Cocatrix)
<i>Brussels</i>	<i>Celebration of the 90th anniversary of the foundation of the Belgian Red Cross Society</i> (M. P. Ruegger)
<i>Bucharest</i>	Mission in connection with the repatriation of Greek nationals from Rumania (M. F. Ehrenhold)
<i>Damascus</i>	Continuation of mission in the Middle East (M. A. de Cocatrix)
<i>Frankfort</i>	Red Cross meetings (M. M. Wolf)
<i>Jerusalem</i>	Close of the mission in the Middle East (M. A. de Cocatrix)
<i>London</i>	Discussion for the implementation of the provisions of Article 16 of the Peace Treaty with Japan (Professor P. Carry, M. M. Wolf)
NOVEMBER	
<i>Annecy</i>	Visit in connection with the Trieste refugees accommodated in Morzine (M. P. Kuhne)
<i>Berlin, Bonn, Hamburg</i>	Discussions with the German authorities (M. F. Ehrenhold)

<i>London</i>	Continuation of discussions concerning Article 16 of the Peace Treaty with Japan (M. M. Wolf)
<i>Luxemburg</i>	<i>XIVth Congress of the International Committee of Military Medicine and Pharmacy</i> (Dr. E. Gloor, Vice-President of the ICRC)
<i>Morzine</i>	Visit in connection with assistance to stateless refugees from Trieste (Dr. G. Dubois, MM. P. Kuhne, C. Turian)
	DECEMBER
<i>Mantua</i>	Presidential mission (M. P. Ruegger)
<i>Mülhausen</i>	<i>French Red Cross Exhibition</i> (M. R. Bovey)
<i>Strasburg</i>	Session of a group of experts of the Council of Europe (M. P. Ruegger, Mlle D. Werner)

III. Relations with International Organisations

1. GENERAL REMARKS

Many other public or private institutions work in the same field as the Red Cross, in particular the Army Medical Services, national Health Services and the whole of the medical and allied professions. To these agencies should be added various international organisations and numerous national or international charitable institutions, of a religious or secular nature.

2. UNITED NATIONS

(a) Relations with the United Nations Organisation

In the course of the year the ICRC sent to the United Nations headquarters in New York various complete surveys and documents in connection with activities which were likely to be discussed during the IXth General Assembly. It continued to follow the work of the Economic and Social Council, the International Law