

Information

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III. INFORMATION

Press and Information Division

CURRENT NEWS

Press

The operations which the ICRC has carried out in the world, and more particularly in areas such as the Middle East, South East Asia and the Indian sub-continent, have roused the interest of the press, radio and television. Besides the regular contact which the Press Service has maintained with reporters stationed in Geneva, by means of press conferences, interviews or telephone calls, the ICRC has continued to issue its fortnightly information notes "The ICRC in Action", in English, French, German and Spanish. By the end of the year the circulation reached almost 4,000 copies. Although primarily intended for the press, "The ICRC in Action" is also distributed to governments, National Red Cross Societies and international organizations, to many political, economic and cultural societies and associations, and to several hundred persons who wish to be informed of the ICRC's activities. The news items contained in "The ICRC in Action" were frequently used by the mass media, as were the leading articles relating to some specific aspects of ICRC action.

To ensure the best possible contacts with press and radio reporters who came to the Indian sub-continent when hostilities broke out in December 1971, the Press and Information Division sent out two of its officials. One went to New Delhi while the other reached Dacca on Christmas Day with the first team of delegates specially sent from Geneva. Not only did the two ICRC representatives make an effort to supply the reporters with full information about Red Cross activities, but they provided them, as far as circumstances permitted, with the necessary transport facilities to take them to the scene of the operations.

Radio broadcasts

Under its radio programme, the ICRC made six experimental broadcasts in 1971 from the Schwarzenburg transmitter, near Berne. The last broadcast, at the end of November, launched the new radio programme by "beamed transmission", a system that allows all the countries within a given axis to be reached, in contradistinction to the system of 360-degree circular transmission sweeping over countries close to the broadcasting point. With the help of the International Frequency Registration Board (IFRB), a technical department of the International Telecommunication Union, and with the permission of the Swiss post, telegraph and telephone administration (PTT), it proved possible to find days and hours that were free both on the Swiss short-wave radio service (Schwarzenburg) and on national broadcasting stations the world over. Thus the ICRC's programmes in English, French and Arabic are now beamed every other month to Asia, Australia, Africa and the Middle East.

GENERAL INFORMATION

New Publications

To make its activities, its organization and some of its problems better known, the ICRC published the first issue of an illustrated review called "Aspects" in August 1971. This half-yearly publication is for the time being essentially meant for the Swiss public. It is distributed by the *Société suisse de Pharmacie* and has a circulation of 45,000 copies—25,000 in German and 20,000 in French. Illustrations, especially in colour, constitute a predominant feature of this new publication.

Films

In 1971, one more film was added to the list of 16 mm films produced by the ICRC. "*Un drapeau et des hommes*", which was made by an ICRC delegate engaged in a mission in the Arabian Peninsula, recounts the institution's action in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. It also shows the work being done in that country by various surgical teams made available to the ICRC by some National Red

Cross Societies. It was first shown at the Fourth International Festival of Red Cross and Health Films on Medical and Health Subjects, held at Varna, Bulgaria, in June 1971, and was awarded second prize, a silver medal.

Visitors

Each year there has been a steady increase in the number of visitors. In 1971, almost 5,000 visitors, including a great many members of National Red Cross Societies and nurses, were received at the ICRC headquarters. Coming from every part of the world, either in groups or individually, they usually followed a two- or three-hour programme which included talks with ICRC officials about the institution's various activities, a visit to the Central Tracing Agency and the radio station, and one or more films made in the field.

International Review of the Red Cross

Two versions of the *International Review of the Red Cross* are published by the ICRC every month, one in English and the other in French. There are also monthly supplements, in German and in Spanish, containing some articles and items of information from the Review on the subject of ICRC missions and the dissemination of the Geneva Conventions. In every issue there are illustrations that show the work which the ICRC is doing all over the world.

Among the principal articles published in 1971 that deal with major humanitarian problems in the world of yesterday and today, special mention should be made of one by Mr. M. Petitpierre, a member of the ICRC, in which he surveyed the work of the ICRC and stressed its contemporary character ; one by Mr. F. Kalshoven, on human rights, the law of armed conflict, and reprisals ; one by Mr. Patrnoic, on new trends in international medical law, and one by Mr. C. Pilloud, on the protection of journalists on dangerous missions in areas of armed conflict. Again, in the realm of history, there were two studies dealing with particularly outstanding events connected with the founding of the Red Cross and its rapid development. An article by Mr. V. Segesvary referred to the birth of Red Cross solidarity during the Franco-

Prussian war of 1870-1871, while an article devoted to Henry Dunant's *Mémoires* evoked his visionary spirit and the influence he exercised in his time. In the field of international humanitarian law, two articles outlined the work and the results of the Conference of Government Experts convened by the ICRC in Geneva, in May and June 1971.

As regards events in 1971 and the tasks of the ICRC, the information given under the heading " External Activities ", about the action and missions conducted in a great many countries, contains an accurate account of the work carried out in Geneva and elsewhere by the ICRC and its delegates as well as by the Central Tracing Agency and its regional bureaux.

Under the heading " In the Red Cross World ", there were reports on National Societies and the activities carried out in various parts of the world, under the emblems of the red cross, the red crescent and the red lion and sun. Every continent was covered. There were accounts of World Red Cross Day (8 May) and the various regional training institutes sponsored by the League and in the organization of which the ICRC took part. Reference was also made to the International Red Cross meetings held in Mexico City and the activities of the Henry Dunant Institute.

Each issue of the Review concluded with an account of events in the sphere of international humanitarian law, news items on various social matters, the work of international organizations, and current efforts to disseminate the principles of hygiene and of pollution control. Lastly, reference should be made to the book reviews and bibliographical section which intellectually makes the Review a periodical open to contemporary problems.

The steadily increasing circulation of the English and French editions bears witness to the interest which the ICRC publication has roused among National Societies, in government quarters and in circles concerned with questions of international law, the history of humanitarian ideas, assistance to victims of warfare and natural disaster, and the dissemination of the principles of solidarity and mutual aid throughout the world.