

Information

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III. INFORMATION

PRESS AND INFORMATION DIVISION

News

Press: ICRC operations, particularly in certain regions such as the Middle East, South East Asia or the Asian sub-continent, were of constant interest to the press, radio and television. Apart from the Press Division's regular contact with resident press representatives in Geneva, whether through press conferences, interviews or telephone calls, the ICRC continued in 1972 its fortnightly bulletin *The ICRC in Action*. Published in French, English, Spanish and German, its circulation exceeds 4,000. Not only is it handed out to the press, but also to governments, National Red Cross Societies, international organizations, many political, economic and cultural groups and associations, and to several hundred private persons who follow ICRC activities. News in *The ICRC in Action*, particularly the leading articles relating to certain special aspects of ICRC action, is often repeated in the mass media.

In December 1972, the Press and Information Division despatched one of its staff to the Lebanon, Israel and the occupied territories. This mission gave rise to a series of articles on ICRC activities in the region, several of which were reproduced in the press, and it permitted the gleaning of a large amount of material for photographic display and radio.

Radio

In 1972, the ICRC made six trial broadcasts via the Schwarzenburg transmitter near Berne. These broadcasts are of two kinds: they are either beam transmission—in French, English and Arabic—to Asia, Oceania, Africa and the Middle East, or circular transmission—in French, English, Spanish, German and Arabic—to Europe, North Africa and North America.¹

¹ See *Annual Report 1971*, p. 96.

General information

Publications: ICRC continued publishing *Aspects*, of which two issues came off the press in 1972; 25,000 copies in German and 20,000 in French.

It also issued a booklet entitled "*Protection et Assistance*" giving information on the activities and the financing of the ICRC. In German, 15,000 copies were issued, and in French 23,200.

Exhibition: From 30 September to 8 October 1972, the ICRC presented at the *Comptoir de Martigny* (Switzerland) a mobile exhibition of an entirely new design intended to make a wide public aware of humanitarian problems and the role of the Red Cross in the international community.

The exhibition, which was visited by several tens of thousands of persons, covers an area of 400 sq.m. and consists of aluminium parts which, once assembled, form a series of interlocking frames with a 3.05 m base and a 2.05 m height. The structure is covered with canvas, conferring a compact appearance to the volume. Inside there are two four-screen multivision rooms, a radio station in direct touch with various ICRC delegations, and corridors in which large photographic panels illustrate the many Red Cross activities and the circumstances in which they are carried out.

The exhibition is intended to be shown in many countries where it will make the Red Cross and its role in the contemporary world better known to the public at large.

Photographic service: In 1972, the person in charge of the photographic service spent several weeks in Bangladesh and Pakistan to cover ICRC activities. In addition, two photographers from large international news agencies went to the Middle East and the Far East. These two missions contributed several hundred photos to the ICRC's photo library and the material necessary for the multivision part of the exhibition mentioned above.

Fund collection: From 25 August to 25 September, as in previous years, the fund collection drive in Switzerland took place, with:

- 600 voluntary collectors from about as many local districts,
- 12,000 cash boxes displayed in shops,

- 800,000 giro-cheques distributed in towns,
- a direct appeal to 10,000 Swiss firms.

Receipts totalled 864,463 francs. The yield from this collection drive goes solely to ICRC relief operations, nothing being deducted for administrative costs.

Visitors: Nearly 4,200 people visited ICRC headquarters in 1972, including many members of National Societies and nurses. They came from all over the globe, individually or in groups, and generally followed a two or three-hour programme covering interviews with senior officials, a conducted tour of the Central Tracing Agency and the radio station, and one or more films of ICRC operations.

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF THE RED CROSS

The *International Review of the Red Cross* is published by the ICRC and appears monthly in two issues, one French and one English. Supplements in German and Spanish give a monthly round-up of the main articles and information about the work of the ICRC and about the Red Cross movement in general.

Accounts of ICRC external activities, news from the League of Red Cross Societies and from National Societies, articles on the spreading of knowledge of the Geneva Conventions in various countries, reports on important Red Cross meetings and on the work of international institutions, together with the illustrations contained in each issue, resulted in the Review continuing, in 1972, to be a lively periodical, constantly reflecting current affairs in matters humanitarian.

It contained articles on historical, social and legal subjects, just a few of the titles of which will suffice to show their importance and variety:

Red Cross Solidarity (H. Beer)—The Vienna Convention of 1969 on the Law of Treaties and Humanitarian Law (J. Daniel)—The Red Cross and the Problems of Environment (I. Domanska)—The International Red Cross and Peace (J. Freymond)—Henry Dunant and Rudolf Müller (M. Müller)—Red Cross and Youth Education (S. Hashimoto)—Mountain Rescue Operations and Life-Saving at

Sea in Bulgaria (K. Petrov and D. Venov)—Human Rights and Refugees (P. Weis).

Last year, two conferences of experts took place dealing with the reaffirmation and development of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts. The first, held in Vienna by Red Cross Experts, provided several lengthy articles for the Review as, in fact, did the second which was attended by government experts. The worldwide work of the ICRC itself was featured in a number of accounts giving figures for relief aid distributed to war victims and an insight into the activities so effectively carried out by the Central Tracing Agency in Geneva and in various countries, especially following the conflict on the Asian sub-continent.

A radio communication service being necessary for liaison between National Societies, the ICRC and its delegations and, on some occasions, the League, the Review devoted several articles to this, too.

Under the heading "Facts and Documents" articles are given on subjects not directly concerning the Red Cross but which direct attention to international efforts to protect man and to safeguard his basic rights. This is amply supplemented by analyses of publications and extracts from books. Under the heading "In the Red Cross World" the ICRC monthly continues to list the main events, both national and international, of the Red Cross movement.

As may be seen, the *International Review* continues to provide a forum for the exchange of news and views and, through the scope of the information that it contains, to be for National Societies and persons and institutions devoted to helping their neighbour a most useful source of documentation on humanitarian activities around the world today. We should add that the Review is now distributed to the main ministries of nearly all countries and that, in 1972, a considerable effort was made to similarly increase distribution among the main universities and libraries throughout the world of both the English and French versions.