

# Training of medical personnel and assistance to war-disabled

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By the end of the year the ITS Child Research Branch had finished sorting the files of unaccompanied children and had classified those concerning German Children, which were forwarded to the "Kindersuchdienst" (Child Research Service) of the German Red Cross in Hamburg.

The ITS continued to analyse new documents, containing about 44,000 names, made available in 1958, relating to victims of the national socialist regime.

Mention should be made of the very useful card-index received from the General Sikorski Historical Institute in London. It is a numerical card-index used in the Mauthausen concentration camp, which gives precise personal particulars and numerous details concerning the inmates. This card-index made it possible to classify 27,000 names of which about 12% were quite unknown to the ITS.

An ITS mission working in autumn 1958 at the Auschwitz Museum took microfilms of concentration camp documents which, at a first estimate, referred to about 400,000 names. The microfilms will be copied and the documents analysed in order to draw up new lists.

The ITS is now the most important and complete centre of information on persons deported, displaced or missing in Germany and the countries occupied by the German forces during the Second World War.

## **TRAINING OF MEDICAL PERSONNEL AND ASSISTANCE TO WAR-DISABLED**

The Medical Personnel Section continued in 1958 its widespread and useful activities, which correspond to the primary duties of the Red Cross. The first purpose of this great institution, of which the ICRC is the founder body, was to train in peace time the medical personnel required to care for the wounded and sick in time of war.

The work of this Section therefore consists in carrying out missions and studying questions relating to the preparation of medical personnel. It also maintains relations with international bodies engaged in activities similar to its own and with national nursing associations; a summary of its work is given below:

Following her previous missions in India, Iraq and Iran, Miss A. Pfirter, Head of the Medical Personnel Section, visited Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Turkey in 1958. She studied with the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of those countries various problems connected with the recruiting and training of medical personnel to enable these Societies to be better prepared to fulfil their duties under the Geneva Conventions.

Following a request of the Jordan Red Crescent, Miss Pfirter handed over to this Society a gift of a complete set of surgical instruments, six medical kits for doctors and one hundred first-aid kits for ambulance workers. The gift was handed over in the presence of Mr. D. de Traz, General-Delegate of the ICRC for the Middle East.

In Europe, Miss Pfirter took part in an important meeting of the German Red Cross in Wiesbaden, attended by over a thousand nurses. On the invitation of the French Red Cross, she was present during the "Journées d'études" at Evian in June. She gave a lecture on the role of nurses and social workers within the Red Cross, at which 120 departmental heads of the Red Cross, matrons in charge of nursing schools and social workers were present.

The members of the Congress in Evian were received at the headquarters of the ICRC in Geneva, and by the League of Red Cross Societies. Miss L. Odier, Member of the International Committee, spoke of the Red Cross Societies' need to prepare in peace time for their duties in time of war. A lecture was also given by Mr. J. Pictet, Director for General Affairs of the ICRC, on Red Cross principles and the work of the ICRC.

The Medical Personnel Section remains in close contact with the International Council of Nurses and various nursing associations. With these bodies it discusses general problems, exchanges documentary material and transmits requests for information.

In 1958 the Medical Personnel Section received a number of visits from nurses, first aid and social workers from various countries. It also organised information meetings in behalf of groups of nurses and students visiting the ICRC headquarters. In September student nurses taking part in home nursing courses organised by the League of Red Cross Societies visited the ICRC headquarters.

Reference may be made to the publication of a German translation of the booklet "Nurses and the Geneva Conventions of 1949" by Mr.

J.-P. Schoenholzer, member of the Legal Department of the ICRC. Numerous ICRC publications on the subject of medical personnel were sent, on request, to various Red Cross Societies, nursing associations, army medical services and private individuals.

**War Disablement Section.** — The work of this section covered various fields in the world in 1958. It continued the relief action in behalf of about 100 Austrian children and young people injured by the explosion of war material, after a choice of the most needy cases. For some of them the ICRC contributed towards their apprenticeship or purchased text books required for their professional training. Some were given a period of convalescence and others were supplied with orthopaedic foot-wear, linen and clothing. This assistance is dealt with by the ICRC Delegation in Vienna in conjunction with the district offices of the Austrian social welfare administration.

In the German Federal Republic the ICRC made gifts of about a hundred invalid chairs to "Volksdeutsche" and other German refugees. This action, which has now come to an end, was carried out in conjunction with the German Red Cross in Bonn. The ICRC made a choice of the beneficiaries from the lists sent to it by this Society which dealt with the purchase and distribution of the invalid chairs.

The ICRC distributed to Algerian war disabled in Morocco 72 artificial eyes, 20 pairs of crutches and 2 invalid chairs. These supplies were sent to the Lousteau Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre in Oujda. Further, some 15 persons who had suffered amputation were provided with artificial legs manufactured by an orthopaedic firm in Casablanca.

In connection with the relief action in behalf of some forty Italian children and youths whose eyesight is lost or seriously impaired, about 20 were given treatment at the Geneva eye hospital in 1958. Professor A. Franceschetti, Member of the ICRC, gives his personal attention to this action which is being continued. The beneficiaries who all belong to poor families come from various parts of Italy.

The ICRC continues to receive numerous individual appeals sent by persons in war stricken countries. It notifies the most urgent cases to the National Societies of the applicants' countries to which correspondents are advised to apply. If no assistance can be given the ICRC reconsiders the case in conjunction with the Society concerned. It has thus made available a few medicaments, Braille watches, special lenses and

a hearing aid for the use of war-disabled persons unable to purchase these essential articles, on the recommendation of the Red Cross Societies of the countries concerned.

In January 1958, Miss Pfirter discussed the question of assistance to war disabled with the directors of the Yugoslav Red Cross. She represented the ICRC at the International Conference on Legislation concerning Veterans and War Victims organised at The Hague in November by the World Veterans Federation (WVF).