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Humanitarian Campaign on a Global Scale: The International Red Cross and the 1956 Hungarian Refugees

By Gusztáv D. Kecskés October 2024

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Humanitarian Campaign on a Global Scale: The International Red Cross and the 1956 Hungarian Refugees

Gusztáv D. Kecskés

Foreword

The wave of Hungarian refugees following the suppression of the 1956 revolution by the Soviets as well as the international aid campaign organized for their reception is an outstanding chapter in Hungarian and world migration history. The provisioning of the roughly 200,000 refugees, a significant number even by European standards, then their transport to and resettlement in the receiving countries, was an outstanding achievement of international refugee relief in which, alongside the institutions of the UN family, many NGO's played a significant part, including the international Red Cross movement. At that time the League of Red Cross Societies encompassed 74 red cross societies on five continents with more than 100 million members. Coordinating the work of many national societies and in collaboration with the Austrian government and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, it took responsibility for the housing and provisioning in refugee camps, then facilitation of further travel and resettlement of several ten thousand Hungarians. This organization boasts the largest humanitarian network in today's world; precisely during the second half of the 1950s it began to incorporate the lessons of the Hungarian refugee crisis to become in fact a global, international institution. At the same time the International Committee of the Red Cross, with its search service ("central card index") to facilitate communication between refugees and their families, supported underage refugees and negotiated with the Kádár government and organized the reuniting of families. Thereby it continued its traditional humanitarian activity.

This working paper is based on the archival collections of the two central Red Cross organizations in Geneva and the French Red Cross society, documents of the American, Belgian, and Hungarian foreign services and the Hungarian Red Cross, and the international scholarly

literature. It portrays the Red Cross movement's work on behalf of the Hungarian refugees and its decision making, participation in the international humanitarian campaign, and the lessons it drew for its institutions and their significance in the history of the organization. The rich and many sided international archival material makes possible a nuanced analysis of the changes in Red Cross refugee relief that developed out of humanitarian ideology as well as the cold war propaganda conflict between the western and Soviet bloc in 1956-1957. Hereby we are responding to the growing international scholarly interest in the international humanitarian movement and the history of migration. We also provide a glance at the everyday camp life of the refugees. The book is a contribution to scholarship about the international connections of the Hungarian revolution of 1956.

On the Sources

To facilitate an overview of the sources we divided the documentation about the international activity of the Red Cross into two groups.

The League of Red Cross Societies

The League of Red Cross Societies (today called the *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*) itself produced a well-documented, well-organized overview.[1] In light of the outstanding significance of Hungarian refugee matters for institutional history, the handbooks and monographs dealing with the Red Cross movement and the general history of the League always mention this issue.[2] A comprehensive work on these matters based on archival documentation has to this day not appeared.

Rich and varied archival material of the League about its role in the refugee crisis is available, and I used it in reconstructing its activity. The League's correspondence about its relief work in Austria and Yugoslavia, that of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the treaties concluded with the Austrian and Yugoslav governments may be found in the Archives of the Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.[3] The minutes of sessions of the League's Executive Committee and Board of Governors dealing with the Hungarian refugees are in this archives, and also these sessions' appendices (documents in support of their decisions) and the decisions themselves. The materials in the Archives of the International Committee of the Red Cross are a useful complement to these documents,

[1] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*. Report on the relief measures for Hungarian refugees undertaken by the League and member National Societies in Austria, Yugoslavia and countries of transit and resettlement, October 1956–September 1957. League of Red Cross Societies, Geneva, 1957.
[2] Hans Haug, in cooperation with Hans-Peter Gasser, Françoise Perret and Jean-Pierre Robert-Tissot, *Humanity for all. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement* (Bern, Stuttgart and Vienna: Haupt, 1993), 106-7, 356; Véronique Harouel, *Histoire de la Croix-Rouge* (Paris: Presse Universitaire de France, 1999), 115. On the history of the League: Henry W. Dunning, *Elements for the History of the League of Red Cross Societies* (Geneva: League of Red Cross Societies, 1969), 76-8; Damien Personnaz and Toril Utheim, *The League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies* (Genève: League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 1989), 13-4; Daphne A. Reid and Patrick F. Gilbo, *Beyond conflict. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 1919–1994* (Geneva: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 1997), 170-7.
[3] Geneva, Archives of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (hereafter IFRC Archives). See: https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/who-we-are/archives/, assessed 7 November 2018.

especially the monthly reports of the League's work in Austria.[4] I collected copies of the League's press releases and circulars as well as the correspondence of the League's Secretariat with the French Red Cross and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) in the Archives of the French Red Cross.[5] The accounts of the meeting of the national Red Cross societies, the League, and the International Committee in Geneva on April 16, 1957 and the seminar organized by the League's Secretariat on July 22-24, 1957 are especially important. Both programs sought to evaluate in detail the activity in support of the Hungarian refugees in Austria.

The foreign policy records of the chief sponsor of international refugee relief, the United States illuminate the international background of the League's measures in Austria and Yugoslavia, especially in light of its relations with Washington.[6] Prominent among these are the correspondence between Washington and the embassies in Vienna and Belgrade. The documents preserved in the Archives of the Belgian Foreign Ministry—the records of the state offices and of the Belgian Red Cross—provide a picture, in the form of a case study, of how the reception of the Hungarian refugees occurred in the West European countries.[7]

The International Committee of the Red Cross

The large volume of relevant documents preserved with professional care in the Archives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) make possible a detailed presentation of the organization's work concerning the Hungarian question.[8] Here we find the correspondence between the ICRC and its emissaries, for instance in Vienna, telex materials and records of

[4] Geneva, Archives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (hereafter ICRC Archives). See: https://www.icrc.org/en/archives, assessed 7 November 2018. Some relevant documents are in the Archives of the United Nations Office in Geneva.
[5] Paris, Service des archives de la Croix-Rouge française (hereafter SACRF). See: https://www.archivistes.org/Service-des-archives-de-la-Croix, assessed 7 November 2018. The reference for the box dealing with the Hungarian refugees of 1956: 3 O 64 – Hongrie, insurrection, octobre 1956, Octobre 1956 - août 1957.
[6] Washington, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA), „National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD."). See: https://www.archives.gov/college-park, assessed 8 November 2018.
[7] Brussels, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, du Commerce extérieur et de la Coopération au développement (henceforth AMACC). See: https://diplomatie.belgium.be/fr/documentation/archives/sections_et_collections/archives_diplomatiques, assessed 8 November 2018.
[8] ICRC Archives. See above.

telephone conversations; the reports of the emissaries about their travels and negotiations; records of communications (letters, telegrams, telephone conversations) with other organizations, like the League of Red Cross Societies, the national Red Cross societies, the UNHCR, the Swiss Foreign Ministry, etc.; internal summary notes ("note de dossier") about the development of various matters; the minutes of the sessions of the ICRC and the documents attached to it (for instance reports of various missions), as well as the ICRC's Presidential Council (Conseil de Présidence). The regularly published yearbooks of the organization provide detailed documentation of its far-reaching activities.[9]

Hungarian sources are also helpful in reconstructing the ICRC's activities in Hungarian matters. In the Hungarian Red Cross material of the Hungarian National Archives we find the minutes of the National Leadership of the Hungarian Red Cross and the meetings of its party (Hungarian Socialist Workers Party) organization as well as the minutes of the Presidium of the Hungarian Red Cross.[10] Here also are the correspondence between the ICRC and the Hungarian Red Cross, and notes about negotiations. The documents of the Ministry of Interior in the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security (Budapest) provide additional information about its attitude toward the activities of the ICRC and the presence of secret agents within the Hungarian Red Cross.

The foreign policy documents in Washington's National Archives—chiefly the correspondence of the State Department with the American Embassy in Vienna and Legation in Budapest and the emissaries in Geneva— provide excellent documentation about the intensive

[9] The International Committee was a central institution of the organization, which customarily convenes its plenary sessions on every month's first Thursday. Every member of the Committee was expected to attend these meetings. These meetings determine the organization's general policies, accept the budget and accounting statement, and supervise the rest of the organization and its administration. See Catherine Rey-Schyrr, *De Yalta à Dien Bien Phu: histoire du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, 1945-1955* (Genève: CICR, 2007) (Histoire du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, 3), 36; The Presidential Council in principle meets once a week, and directs the ongoing matters of the organization. It consists of the chairman, two deputy chairmen, and three additional elected members of the Committee. Rey-Schyrr, *De Yalta à Dien Bien Phu*, 36; Annual report of the ICRC, 1956, 1957, 1958 (Geneva, 1957, 1958, 1959).

[10] National Archives of Hungary (Budapest, henceforth NAH), P.2130, Magyar Vöröskereszt [Hungarian Red Cross], Országos Központ [National Center], 1922–1999.

and confidential connection between the ICRC and American foreign policy, which up to now was little known and opens new perspectives for the history of the Cold War.[11]

[11] NARA. See above.

Introduction

The Prehistory of the International Red Cross—The League of the Red Cross Societies

In 1957 the Red Cross was preparing for the celebration of the centenary of its founding. The institutions and expertise that enabled the organization to deal actively and effectively with the Hungarian refugee crisis of 1956 were the product of organizational development over a course of many decades.

The founding conference convened in 1863 on the initiative of the Swiss businessman Jean Henri Dunant. Thereafter the International Committee with its seat in Geneva operated as central connecting body. It provided information to the growing number of national Red Cross societies, approved their founding, and convened international conferences from time to time. These consultations dealt with defense and assistance of the victims of war, the peacetime work of the Red Cross, relief in times of natural catastrophes and epidemics, and the training of health care personnel that might be mobilized as needed. Many countries accepted the ICRC as neutral connecting body, and in time of war as a neutral mediator that would extend protection and assistance to the victims of war.[12] The First World War brought the spectacular increase in the activity of the Red Cross, especially in assistance to prisoners of war.[13]

After the end of the long struggle and in the hope of a lasting peace the League of Red Cross Societies was created in Paris in 1919. Its announced goal was the closer cooperation of the national Red Cross societies and the strengthening of humanitarian activity during peacetime. The new institution was independent of political, racial, and religious ties; from the outset a conflict arose between it and the International Committee. The International Committee perceived the striving of the founders of the League, on the model of the League of Nations, to draw the national Red Cross societies together, as an existential threat to itself. The chairman of

[12] Haug, *Humanity for all*, 421-2. See also: Harouel, *Histoire de la Croix-Rouge*, 5-35. On the earlier history of the ICRC: Pierre Boissier, *From Solferino to Tsushima: History of the International Committee of the Red Cross* (Geneva: Henry Dunant Institute, 1985). (History of the International Committee of the Red Cross, 1)
[13] Harouel, *Histoire de la Croix-Rouge*, 36-50.

the War Council of the American Red Cross, Henry Pomeroy Davison, on his own initiative, convened a consultation of the national Red Cross societies of the victorious powers of the First World War, the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan. The first constitution violated two basic principles of the Red Cross, namely its worldwide character and the fact every national society has equal status: they wanted to create an exceptional status for the five founding societies and exclude the societies of the defeated countries. The differences between the Committee and the League arose chiefly from the fact that it was important for the founding societies that there be an international organization in which they were represented and able to participate in its operation. The American initiators furthermore presumed that the League of Nations proposed by Woodrow Wilson would eliminate the danger of war forever. The members of the ICRC, on the other hand, were convinced that the International Committee must survive as a neutral mediator in wartime. The two organizations both saw pressure for their merger as an assault on their own existence. Exhausting negotiations lasting more than eight years finally led to an agreement whose agreement was that both institutions preserve their composition and complementary character and be connected as parts of a broader organization.[14] Afterwards the International Conference of the Red Cross of 1928 accepted the new constitution of the movement. This document determines up to today the role and relationship toward each other of the three basic elements of the movement known as the "international Red Cross": the national Red Cross societies, the International Committee, and the League. Accordingly the International Committee continues to carry out its traditional role: it protects the humanitarian principles of the Red Cross, recognizes the national Red Cross societies, supports them with the training of health care personnel and publications. In addition, it provides neutral assistance in the case of international wars and civil wars. Swiss citizenship is required for election to this body. The League, as the federation of Red Cross societies, furthers the societies' work especially in peacetime and represents their work on the international level. The constitution prescribes the two organizations' close cooperation, chiefly in the case of significant catastrophes. The

[14] François Bugnion, "The Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent: Its Origins, Role and Prospects for the Future," in *Making the Voice of Humanity Heard. Essays on Humanitarian Assistance and International Humanitarian Law in Honour of HRH Princess Margriet of the Netherlands*, eds. Liesbeth Lijnzaad, Johanna van Sambeek and Bahia Tahzib-Lie (Leiden and Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004), 43-4.

comprehensive agreement signed in 1951 further strengthened the relationship between the organizations, emphasizing the coordinating role of the League, which has operated since 1939 in Geneva.[15]

New features of international politics in the years after World War II strongly influenced the operating conditions of the League of Red Cross Societies. The Cold War confrontation of the Soviet and Western bloc countries appeared also in the organization's coordinating bodies, the Executive Committee and Board of Governors.[16] New Red Cross societies organized in the large number of African and Asian countries emerging after the collapse of the colonial system; the federation devoted a lot of attention to their support and integration.[17] The United Nations and its organizations operating after 1945, for instance the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) became a partner of key importance for the League.[18]

In its decision of May 1954, the Board of Governors of the League formulated the eight fundamental principles of assistance to be provided in case of natural catastrophes, which we will also observe in the course of the Hungarian refugee crisis. Assistance in the case of crisis situations is among the most important roles of the national Red Cross societies, for which they must prepare in advance (1). They must be capable of the centralized collection and transportation along Red Cross channels of donations for the purpose of an international aid campaign (2). A country suffering a catastrophe must extend its request for aid to the League (3). The primary goal of the Red Cross is urgent assistance (4). Red Cross shipments should not suffer from deductions. Any remaining surplus may be devoted to other purposes only with the agreement of the donating Red Cross society (5). Assistance shipped under the Red Cross emblem that originates from other organizations should be distributed according to the principles of the Red Cross (6). The assistance activity of the Junior Red Cross should be carried out by way of the national Red Cross societies (7). In the case of a catastrophe on an international

[15] Haug, *Humanity for all*, 423-6. On the Red Cross movement in the interwar period, see Harouel, *Histoire de la Croix-Rouge*, 51-73. On the history of the International Committee of the Red Cross between 1914 and 1945 see Durand, 1984.
[16] Reid and Gilbo, *Beyond conflict*, 159, 161-2.
[17] Ibid. 179-81, 192, 194.
[18] Ibid. 147, 155, 160; Dunning, *Elements for the History of the League of Red Cross Societies*, 58-9, 67.

scale, the emissary of the League travels to the scene to study it, and as representative of the Secretariat initiates contact with the responsible authorities. The Secretariat of the League plays the role of intermediate and central organizer (8).[19]

Aside from assistance to the victims of natural catastrophes—earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods—a defining area of the League's activity for more than a decade after 1945 was assistance in refugee crises. The international conflicts associated with both the Cold War confrontation and the dismantling of the colonial system have resulted in huge masses of stateless persons and refugees. It was helpful for their resolution that the League, as an explicitly impartial institution, did not distinguish among the refugees on the basis of nationality, race, religion, or political views. And it considered it important to emphasize that its campaigns were of limited duration: it did not consider it its role to seek final solutions to political or economic problems. The League of Red Cross Societies undertook an active role in the solution of urgent assistance situations. At the request of the UN, it undertook the provisioning of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq.[20] This was the first campaign of the organization in which it appeared at the scene of assistance as an operating agency.[21] Later, the League took part in the partition of India and Pakistan in 1948, in the refugee crises at the conclusion of the Chinese civil war in 1949 and the conclusion of France's war in Indochina in 1954, and in alleviating the consequences of the Korean War of 1950-1953.[22] It also made its appearance during the provisioning of the refugees fleeing Eastern Germany to the Federal Republic of Germany beginning in 1953.[23] All the same, the most visible role of the League of Red Cross Societies in support of refugees began November 4, 1956…[24]

[19] IFRC Archives, League of Red Cross Societies, Resolutions adopted by the XXIII Session of the Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies, Oslo, May 24–29, 1954. Resolution No. 10. Red Cross Disaster Relief, 24-29 May 1954.
[20] Reid and Gilbo, *Beyond conflict*, 155-8.
[21] Dunning, *Elements for the History of the League of Red Cross Societies*, 67-8.
[22] Reid and Gilbo, *Beyond conflict*, 158-9, 162; Personnaz and Utheim, *The League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*, 13; Reid and Gilbo, *Beyond conflict*, 162.
[23] Reid and Gilbo, *Beyond conflict*, 163.
[24] For the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross before 1956, see chapter entitled The Intervention of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The Challenge of the Hungarian Refugee Crisis of 1956

After the bloody suppression of the Hungarian revolution, roughly 200,000 people left the territory of the country, of which more than 11,000 returned home in response to the amnesty announced by the Kádár government—in this the contemporaneous western publications and the Hungarian statistics that were kept secret until 1989 are in agreement.[25] A study of Julianna Puskás published in 1985 characterizes the refugee wave of 1956-1957 as "for Hungary a unique example of a sudden and en masse emigration."[26] The demographic impact of the emigration, 1.5%-1.7% of the country's population is demonstrated by the fact that the resulting loss in population exceeded the natural growth in 1956 by 70%. The composition of the population by sex was changed: two thirds of those who left were men, and the surplus of women reached the level of 1949. The proportion of the younger generation fell perceptibly, because they were the majority of those who left.[27] The statistics published by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on March 11, 1957 tell us that about 173,000 found their first country of refuge in Austria and 18,600 in Yugoslavia.[28] The further transport of refugees crowded into these two countries began already in November 1956, because a large majority of refugees considered these countries to be only their first stop, and wanted to travel further. Up to April 1, 1957 the

[25] KSH-jelentés az 1956-os disszidálásokról, 1991. According to a report of the Austrian Interior Ministry, up to April 6, 1957 174,704 Hungarian refugees arrived in Austria; according to the Yugoslav Interior Ministry's information 19,181 Hungarian refugees crossed the Yugoslav border up to May 26, 1957. The Hungarian authorities estimate the number of returnees to Hungary up to 1961 at 40,000. ("The precise number cannot be determines, because for a few months after the counterrevolution no records were kept.") NAH, M–KS 288. f. 5/232. ő. e. Presentation of the Interior Ministry and Foreign Ministry to the Politburo of the HSWP Central Committee, Report on the chief characteristics of the life of the emigration and proposals for the improvement of propaganda among the emigration, 6 June 1961.

[26] Julianna Puskás: "Elvándorlások Magyarországról 1945 óta és a magyar diaszpóra néhány jellegzetessége az 1970-es években [Emigration from Hungary since 1945 and some characteristics of the Hungarian diaspora in the 1970s]," in *Tanulmányok a magyar népi demokrácia negyven évéről* [Studies on forty years of Hungarian people's democracy], eds. János Molnár, Sándor Orbán and Károly Urbán (Budapest: MSZMP KB Párttörténeti Intézete–MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 1985), 247; Puskás: "Magyar menekülők, emigránsok – 'DP-k' és '56-osok', 1944–1957" [Hungarian refugees, emigrants - 'DPs' and '56s', 1944–1957], *Aetas*, 12, no. 2-3 (1996): 67–102.

[27] Tibor Valuch, *Magyarország társadalomtörténete a XX. század második felében* [The social history of Hungary in the in the second half of the 20th century] (Budapest: Osiris, 2001), 49. See also: Ibolya Murber: "A menekültek statisztikai jellemzői" [Statistical characteristics of the refugees] in *Egy világraszóló történet. Az 1956-os magyar menekültválság kézikönyve* [A world-famous story. Handbook of the 1956 Hungarian refugee crisis], eds. Gusztáv D. Kecskés and Tamás Scheibner (Budapest: BTK Történettudományi Intézet, 2022).

[28] Brussels, NATO Archives, Report on Hungarian refugees, note by the Chairman of the Committee of Political Advisors, signed A. Casardi, C–M (57)65, 17 April 1957. This study is based on the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' statistics published on March 11, 1957.

UN refugee agency recorded that of 193,805 refugees 135,417 (70%) had already resettled to 29 countries, 14 of them outside Europe. 78,574 (40.5%) went to European countries and 56,843 (29.3%) to countries outside Europe.[29] Up to the end of December 1957 about 90% of the refugees recorded as arriving in Austria had arrived in a new homeland. The largest number settled in the United States (35,026), then Canada (24,525), Great Britain (20,590), the FRG (14,270), Switzerland (11,962), France (10,232), and Australia (9,423).[30] According to statistics published by the UNHCR in June 1960, the number of refugees in some host countries was as follows: United States (44,070), Canada (39,650), the United Kingdom (13,670), the FRG (14,400), Switzerland (10,480), France (8,110) and Australia (15,090).[31]

The solution of the Hungarian refugee crisis was an outstanding project of international humanitarian assistance. The new refugees enjoyed much better treatment than the earlier Hungarian refugees or the other earlier European refugees.[32] With the exception of a few isolated cases, the integration of the mass of 1956-1957 Hungarian refugees into western societies was very effective. The estimated total cost of this integration was more than 100 million dollars of that time, or more than 1 billion dollars of today, which far exceeds the amount paid into the UN's Refugee Fund (UNREF) created in 1954 for the solution of the refugee problem after World War II.[33] Yet in the middle of the 1950s there were more than 70,000 "hard core" refu gees in Austria, the FRG, Italy, and Greece in more than 200 refugee camps.[34]

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[29] Nations Unies, Comité de l'UNREF, A/AC. 79/73, 8 May 1957.
[30] Report of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration on the Hungarian Refugee Situation (Austria, 31 December 1957.). USA Senate Report, n° 1815.1958, cited by Puskás, "Elvándorlások Magyarországról 1945 óta", 249. Statistical data on the emigration, resettlement, and return home of the Hungarian refugees of 1956 based on the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' summary tables of January 31, 1958; The Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) played a decisive role in the transportation of the refugees.
[31] Ottawa, National Archives, Canada, Report of the Statistical Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, RG 25, 86-87/336, Volume 160, File 5475-EA-4-40. Quoted by Peter Hidas, "Arrival and Reception: Hungarian Refugees, 1956-1957," in *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: Hungarian and Canadian Perspectives*, eds. Christopher Adam, Tibor Egervari, Leslie Laczko and Judy Young (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010), 233.
[32] Gyula Borbándi, *A magyar emigráció életrajza, 1945-1985* [Biography of the Hungarian emigration, 1945-1985] (Budapest: Európa, 1989), 1: 408-9.
[33] Gil Loescher: *The UNHCR and the World Politics. A Perilous Path* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 87.
[34] Ibid. 89. For the detailed survey of the refugee situation in individual European countries since the second world war see Louise W. Holborn (with the assistance of Philip and Rita Chartrand), *Refugees: A Problem of Our Time. The Work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1951-1972* (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press,

Many factors together explain the extraordinary success of the reception of the Hungarian refugees of 1956.[35] The humanitarian sentiment of world public opinion, remembering the horrors of the Second World War, and the increasingly precise and definite formulation of the rights of the refugees was just as important a factor as the supportive attitude of the population of Western countries who sympathized with the suppressed revolution. The exceptionally favourable composition of the 1956 emigration with regard to the labour market coincided with western economic prosperity, producing economic 'miracles'. But all the same we consider the political will of the NATO to be the decisive element. In light of the ideological battle with the Soviets, even after the waning of public opinion's emotional sympathy, NATO forcefully supported the liquidation of the Hungarian refugee problem. The financial means for resolving the refugee crisis largely originated in governments' resources and primarily in those of the North Atlantic Alliance states.[36] The significance of government contributions is well demonstrated that the support of the Hungarian refugees in Austria was decisively covered by the payments of individual governments to the UN and other organizations. While the pledges of private organizations were significant, in comparison to the whole they were just supplementary.[37] As authorized in international law (by the decisions of the UN General Assembly), the UN's system of organizations significantly contributed to the formulation of the

Inc., 1975), 1: 331–346. The International Refugee Organization (IRO) operating since 1946 organized the resettlement of the refugees in the western occupational zones of Germany that had not been repatriated. The West European and transoceanic receiving countries were interested mainly in those people who could be employed immediately, but every country wanted to avoid receiving unemployable refugees: the sick, elderly, and disabled. The "hard core cases" placed in this category – whose number the IRO estimated at 400,000 when it ended its operation in 1950—mostly continued to live in refugee camps in several European countries. Their scandalously poor living conditions were the subject of sharp criticism in the West up to the beginning of the 1960s. See Loescher, *The UNHCR and the World Politics*, 40.

[35] Concerning various factors in the successful reception of the Hungarian refugees see Gusztáv D. Kecskés, "Les composantes d'une action humanitaire hors du commun: l'accueil en Occident des réfugiés hongrois de 1956," *Relations internationales*, no. 4 (172) (2017), 127–142. DOI: 10.3917/ri.172.0127.; Kecskés, "A Cold War Humanitarian Action: The Western Admission of 1956 Hungarian Refugees", *Hungarian Historical Review* 11, no. 4 (2022). (forthcoming)

[36] On the role of NATO in the reception of the Hungarian refugees of 1956 see: Gusztáv D. Kecskés: "A NATO és az 1956-os magyar menekültek [NATO and the 1956 Hungarian refugees]", *Világtörténet* 38, no. 3 (2016), 357–372.

[37] Geneva, Archives of the United Nations Office in Geneva (hereafter UNOG Archives), G. I. 30/2 (Situation in Hungary, Relief measures, Refugees), Jacket n° 2 (11 January – 11 November 1957). United Nations General Assembly, UNREF Executive Committee, Fourth Session, Standing Programme Sub-Committee, Fourth Session, Report on the Fourth Session of the Standing Programme Sub-Committee, Geneva, 23–28 January 1957, general, A/AC.79/53, A/AC.79/PSC/5, 28 January 1957.

governments' stated policies and their successful realization: they supplied coordination, documented humanitarian needs and activities in a professional and reliable manner, and mounted a supported the fundraising with a professionally organized and prosecuted media campaign.[38]

How did the International Red Cross play its part in this exemplary international cooperation? We will first present the role of the League of Red Cross Societies.

[38] On the support of the Hungarian refugees by the fundraising campaign of the UN, see: Gusztáv D. Kecskés, "Collecting money at a global level. The UN fundraising campaign for the 1956 Hungarian refugees," *Eastern Journal of European Studies*, 5, no. 2 (December 2014): 33-60.

The Role of the League of Red Cross Societies

The League of Red Cross Societies was actively present with its member organizations in every phase and nearly every site of the international humanitarian campaign organized on behalf of the Hungarian refugees. It contributed decisively to the provisioning of the refugees in their initial countries of refuge, Austria and Yugoslavia, took care of their needs in the course of their further transportation, and also supported their settlement in the countries that provided their final reception.

Austria[39]

After the outbreak of the revolution, during the last week of October the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Léopold Boissier, and the president of the Board of Governors of the League, Emil Sandström, made an agreement: the International Committee, as a neutral intermediary, will lead the support of the international Red Cross for Hungary, while the League and the national Red Cross societies support this. They decided that the two organizations would establish a joint headquarters in Vienna, and a warehouse where donations for Hungary would be stored. The League would manage this warehouse, with the goal of sending them to the Committee's warehouse in Budapest. The Committee issued its first call for donations on October 27, making reference to the request for aid of the Hungarian Red Cross and in cooperation with the League.

As we noted above, after the suppression of the revolution starting November 4th masses of refugees appeared in Austria. The Committee and the League in the course of their

[39] On the attitude of Austria: Andreas Gémes, *Austria and the 1956 Hungarian Revolution: Between Solidarity and Neutrality* (Pisa: Edizioni Plus – Pisa University Press, 2008); Johanna Granville, "Of Spies, Refugees and Hostile Propaganda: How Austria delt with the Hungarian Crisis of 1956", *History*, 91, no. 1 (301) (January 2006), 62-90; Ibolya Murber, *Flucht in den Westen 1956. Ungarnflüchtlinge in Österreich (Vorarlberg) und Liechtenstein. Magyar menekültek Ausztriában (Vorarlberg) és Liechtensteinben 1956* (Feldkirch: Schriftenreihe der Rheticus-Gesellschaft, 2002); Murber, "Magyar menekültek Ausztriában 1956 után" [Hungarian refugees in Austria after 1956], in *Ausztria a 20. században. Az „életképtelen" államtól a „boldogok szigetéig". Tanulmányok* [Austria in the 20th century. From the "unviable" state to the "island of happy." Studies], eds. István Németh and Róbert Fiziker (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2011), 453-66; Murber: "Österreich und die Ungarnflüchtlinge 1956," in *Jahrbuch für Mitteleuropäische Studien 2015/2016* (Wien: Mitteleuropazentrum an der Andrassy Universität Budapest, 2017), 19-43.

negotiations agreed that, for the sake of efficient assistance, they divide their roles: the Committee was responsible for aid within Hungary, and the League for aid to the Hungarian refugees in Austria. But the two organizations' joint headquarters and warehouse in Vienna remained.[40]

At the beginning of November 1956 the Red Cross societies of fourteen countries had representation in Vienna: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, the FRG, Great Britain, Liechtenstein, Italy, Holland, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and Switzerland. For the purpose of coordinating the activity of these emissaries the League named Henrik Beer, the general secretary of the Swedish Red Cross Society, as its chief representative.[41] By the middle of November 1956 already donations worth about five million dollars had accumulated in the Vienna warehouse of the Red Cross. Because the aid activity in Hungary had not yet begun, they directed part of this material to the supply of the Hungarian refugees.[42]

In light of the rapid growth in the number of Hungarian refugees in Austria, on November 27 the agreement on the division of roles was reexamined and it was decided that, in addition to the transportation and distribution of aid for Hungary the Committee would also manage the materials accumulated in Vienna for this purpose. The League, on the other hand, would keep track of the donations intended for the Hungarian refugees in Austria. They further agreed that the materials whose destination was not stipulated would be divided among their respective areas of activity by mutual agreement.[43] But the League was not satisfied with the activity of the colleague designated by the Committee for this purpose, judging that many shipments explicitly designated for the League had been allocated to the Committee. Therefore, new negotiations took place between the two organizations at the beginning of January 1957. Consequently on

[40] For the aid work of the International Committee of the Red Cross within Hungary see Isabelle Vonèche Cardia, *Hungarian October: Between Red Cross and Red Flag. The 1956 Action of the International Committee of the Red Cross* (Geneva, The International Committee of the Red Cross, 1999).
[41] IFRC Archives, A 0789, 3 Ex Comm – 15–17 April 1957 (Hung. ref.) – 1957. League of Red Cross Societies [LRCS], 76th Session of the Executive Committee, Geneva, 15–17 April 1957. Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda. League operation in behalf of Hungarian refugees, P. 7025, 6 April 1957.
[42] Ibid.
[43] SACRF, 3 O 64 – Hongrie, insurrection, octobre 1956, Octobre 1956 - août 1957. Action de secours en faveur des Hongrois, Réunion des sociétiés nationales de la Croix-Rouge, du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge et de la Ligue des société de la Croix-Rouge, Genève, Compte rendu des séances, 16 April 1957.

January 9 they established a coordinating office consisting of one colleague each from the League and the Committee that made rulings on the destination of those shipments that were not precisely addressed, taking into account the needs of the two organizations.[44]

The aid activity of the League of Red Cross Societies on behalf of Hungarian refugees in Austria was closely dependent on the movement of the masses of refugees, that is the development of the number of those who were arriving and those who were travelling onward. This activity can be divided into three periods: handling the crisis, settling down to a longer term, and shutting the operation down. We can trace the acceptance of responsibility by the League on the basis of its agreements with the Austrian government and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

The massive influx of refugees characterizes the period from November 1956 to January 1957. The process of resettlement was only partially able to keep pace with this influx. On November 5 the Austrian Red Cross agreed that it would create first aid stations along the Austrian-Hungarian border in the Burgenland and establish a search service together with the Austrian Interior Ministry.[45] Already at the border the arriving Hungarian refugees encountered the local representatives of the Austrian Red Cross. After a short registration procedure, the Austrian police directed the refugees to the care of the Red Cross. Helpers offered them warm drinks and sandwiches and performed medical examinations.[46] At the request of the Austrian government, the League undertook responsibility for providing the basic necessities of ten thousand newly arrived Hungarian refugees for thirty days. During this time the Austrian government established three large camps (in Traiskirchen, Judenau, and Graz) and assigned them to foreign Red Cross personnel.[47] On November 15 the Austrian government approached the League with an urgent request that it double its undertaking to care for twenty thousand refugees for sixty days. The organization agreed to provide these refugees with food, clothing,

[44] SACRF, 3 O 64 – Hongrie, insurrection, octobre 1956, Octobre 1956 - août 1957. Note of P. J. Brouwer of the Coordination Office, on the work of the office, 20 July 1957.
[45] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 16.
[46] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche au 31 décembre 1956, P.6885/mle/31.1.57. See also Murber, "Magyar menekültek Ausztriában 1956 után", 460.
[47] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 16.

and medical needs, and to improve the camps with bedding, blankets, camp kitchens, and tableware. At this time there were roughly 25,000 Hungarian refugees in Austria, which constituted four fifths of the number of Hungarian refugees at that time.[48] In the light of the arrival of several ten thousand additional refugees the responsibility of the League was further expanded on November 29. Under the terms of the new agreement the Red Cross undertook to supply needed assistance to ten camps and twenty thousand refugees and to supply the requisite personnel from December 15 onwards, and for the reception of 5000 refugees and four more camps from January 1 onwards. A few days later the High Commissioner for Refugees requested that the League take on another 10,000 refugees and ten more camps, also from January 1 onwards, at UN expense.[49] In general these camps consisted of buildings that had previously served other purposes, like barracks, weapons warehouses, schools, and hospitals.[50] On December 12, 1956 the Austrian government, the League, and the UNHCR signed an agreement about the new broadening (for 35,000 refugees in 24 camps altogether) that would be valid until February, 1957. The Austrian Interior Ministry also took responsibility for the selection of the camp buildings, equipment, maintenance and hygiene, attachment to public utilities, police and security service, and provision of hospital treatment for those refugees who needed it. The League undertook the provision of food (2400 calories daily), clothing, and medical and nursing care.[51] The High Commissioner for Refugees made a donation of $413,000, which made possible the support of 10,000 refugees for two months at a rate of 70 cents per day.[52]

The second period of the League's activity in Austria was from February to June 30, 1957, when it settled down for the longer term. The number of Hungarian refugees crossing into Austria due to the tight closure of the Austro-Hungarian border and, as the League reported, the

[48] Ibid; IFRC Archives, A 0789, 3 Ex Comm – 15 - 17 April 1957 (Hung. ref.) – 1957. League of Red Cross Societies [LRCS], 76th Session of the Executive Committee, Geneva, 15 - 17 April 1957. Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda. League operation in behalf of Hungarian refugees, P. 7025, 6 April 1957.
[49] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 16.
[50] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche au 31 décembre 1956, P.6885/mle/31.1.57.
[51] UNOG Archives, Agreement on assistance to Hungarian refugees in Austria [between the Federal Ministry for the Interior on the one hand, and the UNHCR and the Ligue of Red Cross Societies on the other hand], 12 December 1956. G. I. 30/2 (Situation in Hungary, Relief measures, Refugees), Jacket n° 1 (29 October – 14 December 1956).
[52] IFRC Archives, Agreement between the League of Red Cross Societies and the UNHCR to aid for Hungarian refugees, Geneva, 10 December 1956.

slowing of transportation of refugees out of Austria because many countries had reached their announce capacity—all these factors contributed to the stabilization of the number of refugees.[53] The League, UNHCR, and the Austrian government concluded a new agreement on February 28, 1957 pertaining to the period from March 1 to June 30. According to this agreement the League took over nine more camps, so that the number of camps it operated rose to 44 (of which 41 had a capacity of 500 or more refugees), which were able to accommodate 50,000 refugees in all. At the beginning of February 1957 the number of refugees under the League's care at one time reached its high point: 35,000 in 34 camps.[54] In light of the experiences to date, the new agreement made several clarifications: that the Austrian government is responsible for the heating of every camp, that is not just for the kitchens and sleeping places, but also the storage rooms, offices, and free time spaces, including all professional medical care including dental and opthalmalogical treatment.[55] "Welfare services" were also treated in greater detail. The League took on the organization of free time activities as well. The earlier agreements did not regulate them because it was the priority of the Austrian government that the refugees should move on as soon as possible.[56]

The third period, from July 1 to September 30, 1957 was chiefly characterized by the conclusion of the League's assistance activity in Austria. On the basis of the agreement concluded at the end of June, the League transferred its status as responsible organization ("operating agency") to the Austrian Red Cross Society, which it continued to supply with money, supplies, and in case of need personnel supplied by the national Red Cross societies at the request of the

[53] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, janvier 1957, 31 January 1957.
[54] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 19–20.
[55] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, février 1957, 28 February 1957.
[56] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, février 1957, 28 February 1957. The planned overcrowding of the camps in the first months also served this goal. Accordingly 2.5 square meters were allocated for each person's bed and 1.3 square meters for upper beds, one toilet served thirty people… On this see: ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, janvier 1957, 31 January 1957. In her study, Ibolya Murber cites Defense Minister Ferdinand Graf's words in the November 13, 1956 session of the Austrian government: "We should not allow the residents to feel at home, because then the people don't want to go further and we aren't able to free ourselves of "some of them." See Murber, "Magyar menekültek Ausztriában 1956 után", 460.

League.[57] The representatives of the Austrian organization indeed insistently requested the latter in the course of the negotiations, emphasizing that they don't have enough personnel for the management of the camps.[58] In the fall of 1959 the Austrian Red Cross made a last effort, with the financial and personnel support of several national Red Cross societies, for final arrangements concerning the Hungarian refugees, small in number, who were still living in camps: their resettlement or integration into the Austrian economy. They sought to prepare them to meet the employment opportunities that existed in local communities.[59]

The decisions of the League of Red Cross Societies about the extent of its role in Austria arose from strong external influences and the validation of its own perspective. Perceptible pressure was exercised on the bodies directing the activities of the League, its central Secretariat and Executive Committee, to increase and increase the responsibility it was assuming. This pressure came chiefly from the Austrian and American government, as well as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

On the basis of its positive experiences during the first months of the crisis, the Austrian government great valued the work of the League and the individual Red Cross societies, and for this reason sought to place additional camps under the management of the League.[60] In order to ease its burden, the Austrian Red Cross Society turned in March 1957 to the 76th session of the League's Executive Committee. It requested that, since the Austrian society would take over for the League as responsible organization ("operating agency") from June 30 on, the League should call on the national Red Cross societies to provide the Austrian society the material and financial assistance, as well as personnel, that it would need to carry out this role. It also requested that

[57] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 22.
[58] SACRF, 3 O 64 – Hongrie, insurrection, octobre 1956, Octobre 1956 - août 1957. Action de secours en faveur des Hongrois, Réunion des sociétiés nationales de la Croix-Rouge, du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge et de la Ligue des société de la Croix-Rouge, Genève, Compte rendu des séances, 16 April 16 1957.
[59] IFCR Archives, A0801/3 Board of Governors, September 25 to October 1, 1959, Athens, 25th meeting. XXVth Session of the Board of Governors, Athens, 21 September – 1 October 1959. Report of the Executive Committee to the Board of Governors on the League's activities since the previous session of the Board, 21 September-1 October 1959.
[60] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, janvier 1957, 31 January 1957.

the experienced leadership group in the League's Vienna headquarters remain there.[61] On April 16, 1957 the Austrian mission to the UN in Geneva sent a letter to the Executive Committee of the League in order to call upon the national Red Cross societies to continue their "valuable activity" in the refugee camps in Austria.[62] The government in Washington also desired the leadership and collaboration of the League, and determined to supply whatever material support was needed.[63] In March 1957 the State Department conducted negotiations with Alfred Gruenther, the president of the American Red Cross Society, about the possible extension of the League's activity in Austria beyond June 30, 1957. They agreed that June 30 would remain the cutoff date, but in mid-April they would again examine the question.[64] The American parties raised as an argument for extension that a chaotic situation would result if the role of the League, with its characteristic high level, were to be reduced.[65]

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, August Rudolph Lindt, was elected to this office in December 1956. On January 18, 1957 he wrote a letter to Bonabès de Rougé, the general secretary of the League. Therein he expressed the full commitment of his office to extend the Austrian mission of his organization at least until June 30, 1957 "with every possible instrument." For this purpose he requested that the Executive Committee of the UN Refugee Fund (UNREF)

[61] IFRC Archives, A 0789/3. Letter from Dr. Hans Lauda, president of the Austrian Red Cross to the 76th Session of the League of Red Cross Societies Executive Committee, Request by the Austrian Red Cross Society, P.7064/glo, March 1957.
[62] IFRC Archives, A 0789/3. Communication from the Permanent Delegation of Austria accredited to the European Office of the United Nations to B. de Rougé, Secretary General, League of Red Cross Societies, P.7072/glo, 16 April 1957.
[63] NARA, RG 469 Records of the US Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948–1961, Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956–1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose-Unfiled Papers, box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P 216. International Cooperation Administration, Incoming cablegram from Llewellyn E. Thompson, US ambassador in Vienna, subject: Hungarian refugees in Austria, n° TOICA 189, confidential, 27 December 1956.
[64] NARA, RG 469 Records of the US Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948–1961, Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956–1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose-Unfiled Papers, box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P 216. Department of State, Outgoing telegram to US Embassy in Vienna, n° 4077, official use only, 8 March 1957.
[65] NARA, RG 469 Records of the US Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948–1961, Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956–1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose-Unfiled Papers, box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P 216. Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, official use only, March? 1957 [the date is illegible].

approved its proposal that it dedicated every contribution made to the UNHCR to this goal.[66] The Executive Committee of UNREF was empowered by the entire Western world by virtue of the countries it represented. At its session of January 31, 1957 in Geneva it unanimous requested that the League continue its work on behalf of the Hungarian refugees in Austrian also after June 30.[67] In his letter of April 12 to the Executive Committee of the League, High Commissioner Lindt repeated the unanimous request of UNREF.[68]

However, the League of Red Cross Societies stated decisively in its January 25, 1957 report to the Executive Committee of UNREF that it desired to end its aid activity in Austria, effective June 30, 1957: "As an organization called to urgent assistance, it cannot be a responsible ["operational"] organization in Austria also after June 30, 1957, in view of its many other responsibilities worldwide." It promised, however, that as long as the problem of Hungarian refugees in Austria exists, the League would help with food, clothing, and medical supplies, in case of need, as far as possible.[69] The leaders of the League confirmed this attention in the April 16, 1957 joint meeting with the Red Cross societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross.[70] In the case of the assistance in Yugoslavia, to be discussed later, they stated already at the time of planning discussion for this campaign, that the activity of the League would not be extended after June 30.[71] We read in the summary of the March 1957 discussion of the American Red Cross in the Washington State Department, that the 1949-1950 Middle Eastern humanitarian campaign remained a bad memory for the League's leaders, because they were not able to bring

[66] IFRC Archives, A 1023, box 3, dossier 22-1-2 Hongrie, UNHCR, 1956–1960. Letter from A. R. Lindt, UNHCR to Count B. de Rougé, secrétaire-général, Ligue of Red Cross Societies, 18 January 1957.
[67] IFRC Archives, A 0789, 3 Ex Comm – 15 - 17 April 1957 (Hung. ref.) – 1957. League of Red Cross Societies [LRCS], 76th Session of the Executive Committee, Geneva, 15 - 17 April 1957. Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda. League operation in behalf of Hungarian refugees, P. 7025, 6 April 1957.
[68] IFRC Archives, A 0789/3. Letter from A. R. Lindt, UNHCR to Emil Sandström, League of Red Cross Society, P.7065/glo, 12 April 1957.
[69] IFRC Archives, A 1023, box 3, dossier 22/1/2, Report on action by the League of Red Cross Societies in favour of Hungarian refugees in Austria to UNREF Executive Committee, Fourth Session, United Nations General Assembly, distribution general, A/AC.79/52, 25 January 1957.
[70] SACRF, 3 O 64 – Hongrie, insurrection, octobre 1956, Octobre 1956 - août 1957. Action de secours en faveur des Hongrois, Réunion des sociétiés nationales de la Croix-Rouge, du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge et de la Ligue des société de la Croix-Rouge, Genève, Compte rendu des séances, 16 April 1957.
[71] IFRC Archives, A 091712, Mission en Yougoslavie, 6, Reports 1957. Action de socours en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Yougoslavie, Rapport de Dr. Z. S. Hantchef, délégué spécial de la Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Geneva, 1 March 1957.

their activity to an end at an appropriate time. They wanted to avoid the repetition of this in any case.[72] The session of the League's Executive Committee in Geneva on April 15-17, 1957 finally decided, consistent with the concept of the League's Secretariat, that in assistance to the Austrian society the League would continue it activity in support of the Hungarian refugees in Austria for three months after June 30, 1957.[73] But no longer.

In the activity of the League of Red Cross Societies in Austria we can observe not only the careful, professional, accountable approach that often characterized its work, but also the realization of the basic principles of the Red Cross movement that were then still in course of being founded: especially benevolence, non-partisanship, neutrality, voluntarism, and universality.[74]

As far as the League's Austrian mission is concerned, Henrik Beer, the general secretary of the Swedish Red Cross Society, arrived in Vienna already before the beginning of the Hungarian refugee crisis. His role was the coordination of the warehousing and distribution of the assistance destined for Hungary. As we noted above, the League's more significant role began after November 4, with the arrival of the Hungarian refugees en masse. Since Beer's responsibilities in Sweden did not permit him to undertake the role of League representative for a longer period, Raymond T. Schaeffer, an expert on catastrophe prevention of the American Red Cross, took his place. Together they formulated a long term plan of operation for the assistance. The headquarter leadership consisted of assistance experts sent by the thirteen Red Cross societies participating in the campaign.[75]

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[72] NARA, RG 469 Records of the US Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948–1961, Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956–1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose-Unfiled Papers, box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P 216. Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, official use only, March? 1957 [the date is illegible].
[73] IFRC Archives, A 0789, 3 Ex Comm, 15-17 April 1957, Geneva, Proceedings. League of Red Cross Societies, 76th Session of the Executive Committee, Geneva, 15-17 April 1957, Proceedings, 15-17 April 1957.
[74] Jean Pictet, *Les principes de la Croix-Rouge*. Thèse présentée à la Faculté de Droit de l'Université de Genève pour obtenir le garde de docteur en droit, Genève, 1955. Pictet, 1955. The conception formulated in this work became source of the basic principles that were adopted in Twentieth International Conference of the Red Cross held in Vienna in October 1965 and still valid today. See Daniel Palmieri, Les principes fondamentaux de la Croix-Rouge: une histoire politique, published: 6 July 2015: Available at https://www.icrc.org/fr/document/les-principes-fondamentaux-de-la-croix-rouge-une-histoire-politique, assessed January 2020; Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011), 136-7.
[75] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 24.

Teams sent by a given Red Cross society worked in the individual camps, consisting of a group leader, administrative assistant, nurse, social worker, and a provisioning, transportation, and clothing expert. The personnel on average consisted of seven members. The role of the League was the provision of aid.[76] The camp leaders appointed by the Austrian government were responsible for the general administration of the camps. They were the first to receive orientation about the refugees' arrival and departure, and they planned their housing. In individual camps they were entrusted with the employment of supplementary personnel and also the coordination of the voluntary organizations working in the camps.[77] The distribution of the camps according to the nationality of the Red Cross teams working in them was the following: the Austrians maintained 7 camps, the Americans 5, the Britons and Canadians 3 each, the Finns and French 2 each. The foreign societies sent about 650 works to Austria under the leadership of the League. Their largest number was on March 1: 350. After June 30, 1957 112 assistance workers remained under the direction of the Austrian Red Cross. On average, one person served more than three months. Expressed financially, the service of the persons sent by the Red Cross societies as estimated at $700,000, or ca. $7 million in today's money.[78]

Under the direction of the League's chief emissary, other leaders of the Austrian campaign were the operational director, that person's deputy, and a deputy director from the Austrian Red Cross, who was entrusted with liaison with the Austrian economy and with the representatives of the economy. The chief medical officer on duty and the chief nurse reported to the director, and also the press representative. The field supervisor reported to the deputy director, and was responsible for the execution of the League's program in the camps, as did the provisioning and transportation officials, who oversaw the storage and distribution of shipments.[79] Responsible individuals in the Vienna headquarters regularly visited the camps. The monthly conferences of the camp leaders provided an opportunity for the review of the League's program for a given period of time as well as the discussion of problems that had arisen

[76] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche au 31 décembre 1956, P.6885/mle/31.1.57.
[77] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 28.
[78] Ibid., 25.
[79] Ibid., 26.

in the camps. The maintenance of all contacts took place in the office of the field supervisor. Orientation materials were sent in German and in English, the two official languages of operations. The maintenance of contacts was facilitated by the establishment in each camp of a telex system.[80]

The personnel of the camps sought to maintain good relations with the refugees. They sought to provide employment for the refugees who were professionally trained, like doctors, nurses, and teachers. The professionally trained refugees received a daily stipend, while the laborers received a daily stipend or a higher food ration and cigarettes.[81] In the majority of camps the representatives of the refugees were also present at the regular meetings of the Red Cross teams and the camp leaders. The refugees also held regular meetings with their representatives. It was an additional possibility for contact that many Red Cross groups were housed in the camps and ate the same food as the refugees.[82]

The shipments needed for the feeding of the refugees came from several sources. The aid in kind for the League's aid activity in Austria is estimated at $12 million and about 19,000 tons. In value about three fourths, and in weight about half of this came from the national Red Cross societies. The European Coal and Steel Community sent the League one thousand tons of briquettes for the heating of the Austrian camps.[83] At the request of the League, the basic articles of food (flour, milk, rice, cheese, lentils) came directly from the International Cooperation Administration (ICA), a US governmental agency for external aid programs.[84] In light of the decisive importance of American government participation, the American embassy in Vienna closely monitored the need for supplies.[85] The ambassador recommended that donations in kind

[80] Ibid., 26, 28.
[81] Ibid., 29.
[82] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, janvier 1957, 31 January 1957.
[83] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 29.
[84] NARA, RG 469 Records of the US Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948–1961, Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956–1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose-Unfiled Papers, box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P 216. International Cooperation Administration, Airgram, subject: Refugee Food Requirements, n° TOICA/Washington A-168, unclassified, 18 January 1957.
[85] For example, on the results of negotiations between the food experts of the Austrian government and the League: NARA, RG 469 Records of the US Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948–1961, Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956–1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to

be supplied from the food and military surplus.[86] These basic food items supplemented the shipments of the national Red Cross societies. In response to the special appeal of the League Relief Bureau in Geneva large quantities of meat, fish, sugar, and fat were sent to Vienna, and such supplementary food items as baby food, jam, coffee, tea, chocolate, vegetables, and fruit.[87] Thanks to the donations of the national Red Cross societies, a fleet of 30 trucks was organized for the shipment of aid, later supplemented by the purchase of additional vehicles. The shipment of supplies by rail within the transit countries and Austria was free of charge until April 1957, then afterwards the Austrian government paid the cost from the Austrian border.[88]

The leaders of the League of Red Cross Societies considered the dissemination of information to be of key importance for the successful connection with governments, governmental and intergovernmental organizations, and NGOs as well as the mobilization of international public opinion. The League supplied reports in the circulars about the situation to the national Red Cross societies on the state of the Hungarian refugee situation in Austria and, in connection with this, the up to date assistance needs, so that those organizations to pass on information to their countries about how their aid was being used.[89] The leading heads of state, ministers, and diplomats continuously visited the organization's camps and the Vienna headquarters, for instance the Vice President of the United States, the Governor of North Ireland, and the High Commissioner for Refugees. The leaders of the Red Cross societies serving in Austria and the leaders of the Red Cross of Japan, South Africa, Venezuela, and the Turkish Red Crescent also came. Many journalists also arrived at the scene, mostly from Western Europe and North America, film makers from Canada and the United States, and also television groups from the

Loose-Unfiled Papers, box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P 216. International Cooperation Administration, Incoming cablegram from Llewellyn E. Thompson, US ambassador in Vienna, n° TOICA 163, official use only, 14 December 1956.

[86] NARA, RG 469 Records of the US Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948–1961, Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956–1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose-Unfiled Papers, box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P 216. International Cooperation Administration, Incoming cablegram from Llewellyn E. Thompson, US ambassador in Vienna, subject: Hungarian refugees in Austria, n° TOICA 189, confidential, 27 December 27, 1956.

[87] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 29, 31.

[88] Ibid., 31-2.

[89] SACRF, 3 O 64 – Hongrie, insurrection, octobre 1956, Octobre 1956 - Août 1957. Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Bureau des secours, Circulaire No 56, Genève, Assistance aux réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, 16 November 1956; *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 47.

USA and Italy. The UNHCR organized an international group of journalists.[90] In February and March 1957 cameramen visited the camp, as the result of which a 13.5 minute film was prepared about the campaign of the League in Austria.[91] They regularly sent press releases to the international press agencies, held press conferences from time to time (for instance on the arrival of the first organized Hungarian refugee group from Austria in Switzerland and a report on the new agreement of the League and the Austrian government signed on November 29, 1956).[92]

The aid activity on behalf of the Hungarian refugees in Austria was a significant financial item for the League. In one month it spent as much money in Vienna as had been its entire annual budget in Geneva. The High Commissioner for Refugees solved the financial difficulties of the initial period by a donation of $413 thousand. Later, the national Red Cross societies sent so much money, that in March-September 1957 it was possible to get by solely on the money of the Red Cross, indeed – as we will see – a respectable financial surplus arose.[93] The League spent nearly $2,650,000 in the course of its aid activity in Austria. The greatest expenditure was dedicated to operational expenses. A third of this went to fresh food. Ten per cent of expenses went to new clothes and medical supplies. Transportation expenses, including the purchase of 80 vehicles took 15%, and storage 7%. Administrative expenses—thanks to the fact that the key personnel were provided by the national Red Cross societies—only made up 10%.[94] The League's

[90] Ibid., 46.
[91] Ibid., 47. The title of the short documentary film: *Humanity's Crusade* (1957). It may be viewed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ydN43QQdU-4, assessed 12 October 2018.
[92] SACRF, 3 O 64 – Hongrie, insurrection, octobre 1956, Octobre 1956 - Août 1957. Nouvelles Press Internationales, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Genève – Suisse, Communiqué de presse No 1956-55, Le premier convoi de réfugiés hongrois organisé par la Croix-Rouge arrive aujourd'hui d'Autriche – De nouveaux secours de la Croix-Rouge destinés à la population hongroise sont en route pour Vienne, 9 November 1956. ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-001, Nouvelles Presse Internationales, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Genève. Communiqué de presse n° 1956-67, Selon un accord conclu avec le gouvernement autrichien la Croix Rouge assume la responsabilité de dix camps de réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, 29 November 1956.
[93] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 32. For example, the President of the French Red Cross Society November 19, 1956 informed the League's general secretary, that the French Red Cross Society sent 10 million French francs for the aid of the Hungarian refugees in Austria. See SACRF, 3 O 64 – Hongrie, insurrection, octobre 1956, Octobre 1956 - Août 1957. Lettre du Président de la Croix-Rouge Française au Secrétaire Général de la Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Paris, 19 November 1956.
[94] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 32–3.

report about February 1957 indicates that the supervision of expenditures was introduced in every camp in to make the aid for the refugees more uniform.[95]

The aid activity of the League of Red Cross Societies extended to every element of care in the camps: housing, food, clothing service, health care, and social assistance.

The 44 camps operated by the League consisted of 16 wooden houses, 15 stone barracks, there were in addition three castles, three hospitals, three resort hotels, two orphanages, one restaurant and one civil servants' settlement.[96] The housing conditions showed great variation according to the previous use of the buildings; thus, in one sleeping room there might be six or sixty persons. They sought to room families separately, in smaller rooms.[97] Originally the refugees slept on straw mattress, later in every sleeping room there were two-level bunk beds. Beginning in January 1957 the sleeping halls were subdivided with pressed cardboard partitions. The walls were often painted with the help of the refugees.[98] Tables and chairs created by the refugees made camp life more comfortable.[99]

The organizers of the Red Cross aid action sought to express their warm welcome and care to the refugees through the food service. There was a striving both for appropriate quality nutrition and attention to distinctive Hungarian taste. From the beginning the refugees received meals equivalent to 2658 calories per day, which exceeded what was stipulated in the agreements by 258 calories.[100] Significant progress in the preparation of food according to Hungarian taste can be observed at the beginning of January 1957. The nutritional expert of the Canadian Red Cross Society, as travelling emissary of the League provided practical advise in the camps, assisting also in menu planning.[101] Children below the age of 14 received more milk, and

[95] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, février 1957, 28 February 1957.
[96] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 34.
[97] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche au 31 décembre 1956, P.6885/mle/31.1.57.
[98] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 34–5.
[99] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, janvier 1957, 31 January 1957.
[100] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 35. Ibolya Murber reports on the care of refugees based on Austrian sources: Murber, "Magyar menekültek Ausztriában 1956 után", 461–2.
[101] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, janvier 1957, 31 January 1957.

those younger than four fresh milk.[102] Every Hungarian refugee received three meals a week prepared with fresh meat, and seasonally appropriate generous salad and vegetables. They received cake and cookies twice a week. According to a report by the League: "There is little doubt that the refugee ate better than the average Austrian." In planning the three-week uniform menu they sought to take into account the Hungarians' taste. Five days a week there were warm meals twice a day, on Sundays there was beef or pork. They took into account that Hungarians like hot and spicy food. In every camp kitchen there was a "taster" from among the Hungarians, and in many camps there was a special dining committee. There was an effort to cook for the Hungarian taste: lemon was put in the tea, carraway seed was often used. On special occasions characteristic Hungarian dishes were served: on Christmas Eve baked fish, on Easter Sunday and Monday cooked and smoked ham. There was a special menu on March 15 for the anniversary of the 1848 revolution. Fish was provided where possible on Fridays, and in 18 camps near Vienna fresh fish by local arrangement of the Norwegian Red Cross.[103] To make kosher dining possible the Austrian government grouped the Orthodox Jewish refugees in Bad Kreuzen.[104] The Austrian government provided six cigarettes to every man, with a supplement from the stock of the Red Cross.[105]

The provision of clothing proved to be a more difficult task than dining. During the later evaluative sessions the participants in the Red Cross campaigns emphasized that it was necessary to select from among the donated clothes: one third of them were unusable, one third required repairs, and only one third were new or in good condition. There was a shortage of underwear, shoes, and men's trousers. The shipments from some national Red Cross societies alleviated the problem: for instance from the Canadian Red Cross new children's clothes, from the West German Red Cross new women's underwear, from the British Red Cross new shoes. A card system was used for the distribution of clothes: on each refugee's clothes hard was written what

[102] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche au 31 décembre 1956, P.6885/mle/31.1.57.
[103] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 35–7.
[104] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, janvier 1957, 31 January 1957.
[105] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche au 31 décembre 1956, P.6885/mle/31.1.57.

kind of clothes they received.[106] The February 1957 report of the League notes that the Hungarian refugees received significant quantities of new under- and outer wear and also shoes from the surplus of the American army.[107]

The doctors of the Red Cross and the responsible experts of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) and the World Health Organization (WHO) found the general health condition of the Hungarian refugees to be outstanding. Therefore the doctors delegated by the League were occupied more with prevention than with healing. They spent a significant part of their time monitoring the cleanliness and disinfection of the washrooms, toilets, and kitchens.[108] It was a significant difficulty that the validity of many donated medicines had expired or they had no date stamp. In many cases there were no directions about dosage, or it was in a language the doctor couldn't read. At the beginning of the campaign it was chiefly the most needed medicines (for example against headache, chest-, or stomach pain) were lacking. Later, a well selected minimal medicine cabinet and health care equipment were established in every camp. In every camp there was an infirmary and dietetic kitchen. Depression causes the most frequent problem, and toward the end of the operational period the care for pregnant and nursing mothers. The Norwegian Red Cross travelled among the camps in a vehicle with a staff of three providing dental assistance. Indeed, the teeth of the Hungarian refugees was generally in poor condition.[109] In its report of February 1957 the League mentions for the first time some signs of camp psychosis, the growth of nervousness, which they explain by disappointment arising from the narrowing of emigration possibilities or by the fact that some persons are not finding appropriate employment. For its treatment the Austrian Red Cross

[106] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 37–8.
[107] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, février 1957, 28 February 1957.
[108] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche au 31 décembre 1956, P.6885/mle/31.1.57.
[109] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 38–9.

organized several psychiatric groups that toured the camps.[110] Austrian and Hungarian refugee doctors and nurses engaged intensively in the health services.[111]

The League of Red Cross Societies from the beginning considered social work to be an integral part of refugee assistance, and it actively incorporated the organizations of the Junior Red Cross into this work. On December 7, 1956 it issued an appeal for financial support of twenty dollars worth of clothing for each of 5000 Hungarian refugee children. Within five days of the publication of the appeal they were able to extend the donation to 6000 children, demonstrating the generosity and enthusiasm of the response.[112] Junior Red Cross organizations responded from 22 countries to the Christmas 1956 and 1957 New Years appeals: they collected $135,000 in cash, and nearly 200,000 West German marks in donations in kind. In December 1956 the Junior Red Cross already collected enough money, that every Hungarian refugee child in an Austrian camp (there were more than 6000) could receive a new set of clothes (a pair of shoes, stockings, gloves, scarf, wool cap, winter coat) for Christmas. They were given donation coupons with which they could select the clothes in stores. As the result of new donations, from April 1957 onward, washing and sewing machines came into every camp through the American Junior Red Cross, art materials from Belgium, toys from India, musical instruments from Sweden, and football and sport costumes from Great Britain.[113]

Projects related to education served the maintenance of the refugees' morale and preparation for resettlement. In this spirit kindergartens were established inside the camps.[114] In the case of camps where the children were unable to attend local schools, elementary and middle school classes were established. Language classes were established for the adults, often with the assistance of the World Alliance of the YMCA.[115] Many Red Cross societies provided

[110] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, février 1957, 28 February 1957.
[111] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, janvier 1957, 31 January 1957.
[112] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche au 31 décembre 1956, P.6885/mle/31.1.57.
[113] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 40–1.
[114] Ibid., 41.
[115] The World Alliance of YMCA: federation of the national organizations of the worldwide youth movement of Christian origin. Its headquarters are in Geneva since 1878.

multilingual glossaries. Since two thirds of the Hungarian refugees were preparing for English speaking countries, the greatest emphasis was placed on English language instruction. When it became clear in January-February 1957 that many refugees would remain in the camps for a longer time, technical courses were also organized. For example the driving, engineering, sewing, and typing were taught for refugees in the camps operated by the French Red Cross in Ried and Kaiser-Ebersdorf.[116]

Activities connected to work also served to maintain the morale of the refugees. During the operating period of the League roughly 3000 Hungarian refugees found regular employment outside the camps, and many others undertook temporary work (snow shoveling, seasonal work in agriculture, etc.). Inside the camps they assisted in the operation of the camps as health care assistants, nurses, interpreters, cooks, warehouse workers, and teachers. Individual trained works received tools so that they could practice their trade, for example barbers, tailors, shoe repairmen. The greatest emphasis was placed on work in groups. Thus for the women sewing, embroidery, knitting, and crochet classes were established.[117]

The organization of free time activities also served to preserve the refugees' mental balance and self-respect. Sports were especially important for this. Soccer and other ball sports were the most popular, and also athletics. In some camps the opportunity arose for skiing, sledding, and shot put. Competitions were held within camps and between them. The Red Cross societies provides cigarettes as a prize. Record players, some Hungarian language books, and in some places televisions were placed in the recreation rooms. There were many actors among the refugees, variety performers, and Gypsy musicians, who organized performances. One or two weekly dance evenings were also part of the program. In the summer, taking advantage of the Alpine environment, excursions were organized.[118] In many camps folk- and classical dance courses were held.[119]

[116] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 42.
[117] Ibid., 42-4.
[118] Ibid., 44-5.
[119] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, janvier 1957, 31 January 1957.

The refugees could go to neighboring settlements for Catholic mass, while Protestant services took place in the camps.[120] In the larger camps there were also Catholic masses. Clergy among the refugees received every opportunity to provide services.[121] The careful preparation of holidays, especially Christmas and Bethlehem plays with children also served to protect the refugees' dignity and self-care. In Schloss Liechtenstein, the only camp where families were housed in large numbers, Christmas gifts were given to the parents so that they could give them to the children.[122]

The provision of postal service also contributed to the preservation of spiritual strength and the maintenance of ties with those remaining at home in Hungary. Every refugee family had the possibility of sending one normal letter a week and one air mail letter a month at the expense of the League.[123]

Yugoslavia[124]

The League already offered its assistance to Yugoslavia on November 5 for the reception of Hungarian refugees, but Belgrade only accepted a renewed offer after the arrival of a larger wave of refugees in January 1957.[125] At this time the Yugoslav Red Cross requested by telegram that clothes, bedding, soap, and disinfectant be sent. Subsequently, on January 21, 1957 40 tons of clothes and 5000 blankets were sent to Belgrade from the Vienna warehouse.[126] The League's representatives asked the Vienna ambassador of the United States if surplus supplies of the

[120] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche au 31 décembre 1956, P.6885/mle/31.1.57.
[121] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, janvier 1957, 31 January 1957.
[122] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche au 31 décembre 1956, P.6885/mle/31.1.57.
[123] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, janvier 1957, 31 January 1957.
[124] On the reception of the Hungarian refugees of 1956 in Yugoslavia see Katarina Kovačević, "Mađarske izbeglice u Jugoslaviji 1956–57. godine," in *Tokovi istorije* no. 1-2 (2003), 91–124; Kovačević, "The Refugee Problem in Yugoslavia", in *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the Soviet Bloc Countries: Reactions and Repercussions*, eds. János M. Rainer and Katalin Somlai (Budapest: The Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security, 2007), 111-28.
[125] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 8.
[126] Ibid., 52.

American army could be sent also to Yugoslavia.[127] On February 5, 1957 the general secretary of the Yugoslav Red Cross Society, Olga Milošević, participated in a conference in the headquarters of the League in Geneva. It was recommended that the Yugoslav Red Cross take responsibility for the care of a specific number of refugees, for example ten thousand. In the second half of February 1957 Z.S. Hantchef, the director of the League's Medical-Social Office, visited Yugoslavia as the representative of the League. Representatives of the Yugoslav government received him on February 16. He visited many refugee camps and centers, where he was able to freely converse with the refugees. He concluded that the refugees were in a variety of conditions, from seaside hotels to camps where the conditions were primitive. The refugees were only permitted to leave the territory of the camps with an accompaniment designated by the government-appointed camp director.[128]

The Yugoslav government requested that the Yugoslav Red Cross undertake the care of 17,000 Hungarian refugees with respect to their food, clothing, medical and health.[129] In order to carry out this request the Yugoslav Red Cross Society turned to the League for support. In the course of negotiations the three parties, that is the Yugoslav government, the Yugoslav Red Cross, and the representatives of the League, that that the Yugoslav Red Cross would feed every Hungarian refugee with the support of the League, participate in their medical and health care in the camps, and organize the search service beginning on March 1, 1957.[130] In support of this, on March 14, 1957 the League's Assistance Office (Bureau des secours) sent a circular to the national Red Cross societies in which it requested that they support the aid campaign in Yugoslavia with

[127] NARA, RG 469 Records of the US Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948–1961, Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956–1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose-Unfiled Papers, box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P 216. International Cooperation Administration, Incoming cablegram from Llewellyn E. Thompson, US ambassador in Vienna, n° TOICA 237, confidential, 21 January 1957.
[128] IFRC, A 091712, Mission en Yougoslavie, 6, Reports 1957. Action de socours en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Yougoslavie, Rapport de Dr. Z. S. Hantchef, délégué spécial de la Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Genève, 1 March 1957.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid; SACRF, 3 O 64 – Hongrie, insurrection, octobre 1956, Octobre 1956 - août 1957. Action de secours en faveur des Hongrois, Réunion des sociétiés nationales de la Croix-Rouge, du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge et de la Ligue des société de la Croix-Rouge, Genève, Compte rendu des séances, 16 April 1957.

remittances in kind and money.[131] Colonel Louis Williman of the Swedish Red Cross Society was named as the emissary of the League, and on February 28, 1957 he began his activity in Belgrade. Along with his deputy he established contact between the Yugoslav authorities and the headquarters of the League. The delegates of the League also served as technical advisors. On February 21 the Coordinating Committee for Refugee Assistance (Comité de Coordination de l'aide aux réfugiés) met for the first time. Representatives of the Yugoslav government, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and the Red Cross (the Yugoslav Red Cross and the League) were also present.[132]

Thanks to the support of the American International Cooperation Administration (ICA) and the national Red Cross societies the League was able to supply the Yugoslav Red Cross with all the basic elements of food (flour, rice, fat, lentils, cheese, and milk powder) for the Hungarian refugees.[133] The League agreed to supply additional food, clothing, and bedding, medical equipment, camp furniture, means of transportation, and the operational and administrative expenses of the Yugoslav Red Cross. Unlike for the campaign in Austria, teams of helpers from other Red Cross societies did not come. Only the emissary of the League was present for the coordination of the reception and distribution of the supplies.[134] In all 2900 tons of food, 300 tons of clothing, 100 tons of medical equipment and 33 vehicles arrived. The value of the Red Cross supplies was approximately $2 million. An additional $300,000 was spent on operations, chiefly the purchase of fresh food.[135]

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[131] IFRC, A 091712, Mission en Yougoslavie, 6, Reports 1957. Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, lettre-circulaire du Bureau des secours, Action de secours de la Croix-Rouge en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Yougoslavie, n° 67, 14 March 1957.
[132] IFRC Archives, A 0789, 3 Ex Comm – 15 - 17 April 1957 (Hung. ref.) – 1957. League of Red Cross Societies [LRCS], 76th Session of the Executive Committee, Geneva, 15 - 17 April 1957. Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda. League operation in behalf of Hungarian refugees, P. 7025, 6 April 1957.
[133] In this matter the League signed an agreement with the ICA, that is would supply certain basic food items. See NARA, RG 469 Records of the US Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948–1961, Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956–1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose-Unfiled Papers, box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P 216. Instructions for Colonel Louis Willimann concerning his mission to Yugoslavia, signed by Henry W. Dunning, Under Secretary General of the League of Red Cross Societies, Geneva, 6 March 1957, annex to Foreign Service Despatch from Oliver M. Marcy, First Secretary of Embassy in Belgrade, subject: LICROSS Mission to Yugoslavia: Hungarian Refugees, n° 494, official use only, 14 March 1957.
[134] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 51-2.
[135] Ibid., 52, 54.

Thanks to the shipments of individual Red Cross societies they were able to equip entire camps. For example the British Red Cross supplied beds and kitchen equipment for the Ecka camp to accommodate 1500 refugees. The Junior Red Cross organizations of Australia, Ecuador, the FRG, Norway, Sweden, and Great Britain sent special assistance: new underwear, sport clothing, shirts, suits, and shoes went to the children's home organized for unaccompanied young people in Bela Crkva.[136] The Yugoslav Red Cross registered every refugee on forms modeled on those of the International Committee of the Red Cross. These were produced in three copies: the refugee took one with him on his travels, one went to the headquarters of the Yugoslav Red Cross in Belgrade, and one went to the International Committee in Geneva.[137]

At the request of the Yugoslav Red Cross, on April 16, 1957 at the session of the Executive Committee of the League the period of the assistance campaign in Yugoslavia was extended by three month, to September 30. General Secretary Olga Milošević was present at the meeting and requested that the practices adopted by the decisions in Austria be followed.[138] In September 1957 the Yugoslav government requested that Washington assist in the supply of Hungarian refugees in Yugoslavia.[139]

If we compare the aid activity of the of the League of Red Cross Societies for the Hungarian refugees in Austria and Yugoslavia, we can observe similarities and differences. A similar trait in both is the close cooperation of the USA with the League. It was stipulated to Colonel Willimann, the emissary of the League in Yugoslavia, that he work closely with the American ambassador and the mission of the ICA.[140] In both cases the assistance of the League, and through it the ICA

[136] Ibid.
[137] IFRC, A 091712, Mission en Yougoslavie, 6, Reports 1957. Action de socours en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Yougoslavie, Rapport de Dr. Z. S. Hantchef, délégué spécial de la Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Genève, 1 March 1957.
[138] IFRC Archives, A 0789, 3 Ex Comm, 15-17 April 1957, Geneva, Proceedings. League of Red Cross Societies, 76th Session of the Executive Committee, Geneva, 15-17 April 1957, Proceedings, 15-17 April 1957.
[139] NARA, RG 469 Records of the US Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948–1961, Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956–1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose-Unfiled Papers, box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P 216. International Cooperation Administration, cablegram from John Hollister, director of ICA to US Embassy in Belgrade, n° 88, confidential, 9 September 1957.
[140] NARA, RG 469 Records of the US Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948–1961, Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956–1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose-Unfiled Papers, box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P 216. Department of State, Incoming telegram from Gowen, US consul in Geneva, n° 858, official use only, 8 March 1957.

and the Red Cross societies, was of fundamental importance in the humanitarian campaign. Similar problems arose with the shipments of clothing. And they also found the general health condition of the refugees to be excellent.

At the same time, it was characteristic of the assistance in Yugoslavia that the workers of the foreign Red Cross societies were not present: medical care was provided by Yugoslav and Hungarian refugee doctors. The staff of the Yugoslav Red Cross was not able to be present in every camp. There were no professionals providing social services to the refugees in Yugoslavia. For the solution of this problem a three-member group was sent to Austria on a study trip in July-September 1957 at the expense of the League and the British Red Cross. Committees of refugees were set up in the longer-operating camps to organize hygiene, food preparation, games, and social activities. The children's home in Bela Crkva became a true showplace. The residents practically managed themselves according to the directions of the camp leader and the Yugoslav Red Cross.[141]

Care During Transport

Both the national Red Cross societies and the League played their part in supplying the refugees during the course of their transport to their country of resettlement, making clear the truly global character of the organization. In terms of the degree of organization we can distinguish two stages.

During the first phase, in November and December 1956 the relevant Red Cross societies extended assistance spontaneously along the route of transportation. Thus, between November 7 and December 12, 1956 the personnel sent by the Swiss Red Cross Society took part in the transportation of 10,000 Hungarian refugees in 19 trainloads.[142] Beginning November 17, 7500 Hungarian refugees travelled to Great Britain in the course of four weeks on planes rented by the British Red Cross. From the beginning of December, the United States raised the number of

[141] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 55-6.
[142] Gusztáv D. Kecskés, "Die Aufnahme der 1956er Flüchtlinge aus Ungarn in der Schweiz in internationaler Perspektive", Zuflucht suchen. Phasen des Exils aus Osteuropa im Kalten Krieg – Chercher refuge. Les phases d'exil d'Europe centrale pendant la Guerre froide, herausgegeben von Matthieu Gillabert, Tiphaine Robert, *Itinera* 42/2017, 79.

refugees it would receive to 21,500. Of these about 7000 came to the USA on large ocean vessels, accompanied by groups from the American Red Cross.[143] The South African Red Cross outfitted 3000 Hungarian refugees travelling to Australia by ship with summer clothing.[144] The Hungarians travelling to Australia by air received assistance from British Red Cross personnel at the Cyprus and Singapore airports for the care of their sick. The British Red Cross in Northern Borneo distributed newspapers and magazines to the Hungarians and mailed their letters. The volunteer workers of the Australian Red Cross Society awaited these refugees in Melbourne and accompanied them of the seven hour trip to their housing in Bonegilla.[145]

The second period began at the end of December 1956. On December 22 the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) turned to the Secretariat of the League. It requested that there always be Red Cross personnel supplying fresh water and milk on the trains transporting the Hungarian refugees. Two trains leaving Vienna on December 29 and 31 implemented this service on an experimental basis. In view of favorable results the League agreed on January 5, 1957 that it would supply accompanying personnel for these transports, which were chiefly by rail.[146] It agreed to provide toiletries and first aid supplies, and immediately before departure supply fresh water and warm milk on the trains. They also stated that they would inform all transit countries' Red Cross societies about the trains' routes, stops, and the number of refugees, among them the number of infants. The telex system proved very useful in completing this task. Thus beginning in January 1957 nearly every refugee transport enjoyed Red Cross assistance.[147]

[143] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 59.
[144] Reid and Gilbo, *Beyond conflict*, 176.
[145] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 60.
[146] SACRF, 3 O 64 – Hongrie, insurrection, octobre 1956, Octobre 1956 - Août 1957. Lettre du Dr. Z.S. Hantchef, Directeur du Bureau Médico-Social du Secrétariat de la Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge à André François-Poncet, Président de la Croix-Rouge Française, Genève, 11 January 1957.
[147] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, janvier 1957, 31 January 1957.

Assistance in the Countries of Final Settlement

The national Red Cross societies also played a significant role in the reception of the Hungarian refugees in the countries of their final settlement.[148] Here are a few examples. At the time of the reception in Switzerland of the first four thousand refugees, the Swiss Red Cross provided their housing and money from which to live for a month until they had earned their first wages. Four hundred volunteers distributed eighty tons of clothing and toiletries worth $150,000. In the United States roughly $1,350,000 was spent by the American Red Cross in the course of receiving 35,750 Hungarian refugees. About 1600 American Red Cross volunteers travelled to Camp Kilmer in New Jersey, where the great majority of the Hungarian refugees were received.[149] In Chile the president of the national Red Cross society led the committee that was responsible for the reception and settlement of the Hungarian refugees. In Denmark 250, in Luxembourg 100 Hungarian refugees were housed in Red Cross centers for several months. The Icelandic Red Cross transported the roughly 50 refugees received by Iceland, and they lived at Red Cross expense until they found work.[150]

The national Red Cross societies also took an active part in the settlement of the refugees in many countries. Classes teaching the Icelandic language were organized in Iceland, and a special dictionary was published. The refugees arriving in South Africa received bedclothes, and a line of credit for the purchase of household items. In the Rhineland, Pfalz state in the FRG Red Cross nurses provided day care for unaccompanied young people and children. The national Red Cross societies took part in the data collection required for the search service organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross and also in family reunification.[151]

[148] For example: detailed report of the Hungarian refugees' arrival and settlement in Spa, Belgium with the coordination and cooperation of the local organization of the Belgian Red Cross: AMACC, 18.746/III, C2/250/6/9. Croix-Rouge de Belgique, Rapport – Accueil des réfugiés hongrois en Belgique, n° 2, Organisation du Centre d'accueil de Spa, 25 November 1956.
[149] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 64.
[150] Ibid., 63.
[151] Ibid., 64-5. On the search service organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the negotiations on family reunification, see the next chapter.

The Campaign's Final Result

In order to assess the result of aid activity of the League of Red Cross Societies we should first consider the elements of the organization that were observed already previously, and then those that were new and arose in the course of participating in the resolution of the Hungarian refugee crisis. Then we will consider the degree to which the campaign should be considered successful for the institution based in Geneva, and why. Finally, we'll seek to determine the significance of this matter for the history of the League.

As we noted above, planning, careful professionalism, accountability, and humanitarian attitude were already previously characteristic of the League's work. Furthermore, as an emergency organization it emphasized that its campaigns were limited in time and apolitical. The presence of Cold War confrontation at the coordinating and decision making fora concerning the Hungarian refugees also cannot be considered something new. Nor was it new that the Red Cross delegations arriving from either side of the Iron Curtain exercised moderation in the course of negotiations for the purpose of maintaining contacts, emphasizing common values and avoiding those conflicts that might have caused a rupture. Thus in the April 1957 session of the Executive Committee in Geneva Boris Fái, the representative of the Hungarian Red Cross Society raised the question of the family reunification of underage Hungarian refugees. In support of the Hungarian position, the representative of the Polish Red Cross proposed that the Red Cross should take an active part in the repatriation of Hungarian refugees, informing them of the possibilities for returning home. The representative of the Hungarian Red Cross - using the usual reasoning of the Hungarian government - drew attention to the fact that neither morally nor legally can the issue of the return of minor refugees and the release of family members from Hungary be parallelized. The Hungarian delegation presented a draft resolution on the topic of repatriation and family reunification, according to which the national Red Cross societies should assist the Hungarian refugees, and especially the children, on their territory to return home and provide financial support for their travel home. The delegates of the Soviet bloc, making reference to the humanitarian principles of the Red Cross, all lined up in support of the Hungarian resolution, but always spoke moderately, avoiding provocative argumentation. The Czechoslovak delegation

went the furthest, but it refrained from naming Radio Free Europe, which had been accused of enticing refugees to the West. The Turkish representative expressed the Western position first, presenting a draft resolution that directed the Hungarian Red Cross to the International Committee of the Red Cross, which was already dealing with this matter. The Canadian and Swedish speakers also supported this position, and this was the decision of the Executive Committee in the end.[152] At the session of the Board of Governors of the League in New Delhi in fall 1957, the general secretary of the Hungarian Red Cross, József Kárpáti, raised the matter of repatriation even more sharply, and accusingly called the League to account for its alleged failings. But the Soviet speaker expressed himself much more moderately. He expressed the opinion that "the League has done a lot, and its work merits respect." Making reference to "the ideals of the Red Cross," all the same, he asked that the body support the new Hungarian draft resolution presented to this forum.[153]

But there were also new developments. During the relief of Hungarian refugees in Austria, for the first time in the history of the League, on the occasion of an international aid campaign groups of individual national Red Cross societies served in specific camps.[154] The advantages of their being used in this way made it possible for the national societies to provide ample support through the selection of their own personnel.[155] It was also a novelty that in February 1957 a system was introduced for budgetary operations that placed this area under the supervision of the leadership, and also served as valuable experience for most of the camp personnel.[156] The relief of Hungarian refugees in Austria was probably the first relief campaign during which telex machines were widely used, which proved to be ideal in terms of rapidity and record keeping.[157]

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[152] IFRC Archives, A 0789, 3 Ex Comm, 15-17 April 1957, Geneva, Proceedings. League of Red Cross Societies, 76th Session of the Executive Committee, Geneva, 15-17 April 1957, Proceedings, 15-17 April 1957.
[153] IFCR Archives, A0801/3 Board of Governors – October and November 1957, New Delhi Proceedings, 24th meeting. League of Red Cross Societies, Board of Governors, XXIVth Session (New Delhi, 26 October, 4, 5 and 7 November, 1957). Proceedings, P.7602/mlo, 26 October-4, 5, and 7 November 1957.
[154] During the assistance to Palestinian refugees in 1949-1950 the aid workers sent by the national Red Cross societies were assigned to multinational teams. See Reid and Gilbo, *Beyond conflict*, 174.
[155] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 25.
[156] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche, février 1957, 28 February 1957.
[157] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 28.

The abundance of donations in money and kind, which has rarely occurred in humanitarian campaigns, must also be considered a new phenomenon. At the beginning of April 1957 the League had a reserve of $1.5 million for the Hungarian refugee relief in Austria. It was thought that this would make it possible to continue activity up to June 30 without appealing for aid once more to the national Red Cross societies.[158] After the September 30, 1957 conclusion of the League's assistance in Austria such a large quantity of supplies remained that a special committee was created to handle it. Most of the remaining food was turned over to the Austrian government, and a smaller emergency reserve left for the Austrian Red Cross Society.[159] The session of the League's Board of Governors in New Delhi in fall 1957 debated the matter of the monetary surplus remaining from Hungarian refugee relief. General Secretary De Rougé proposed that the remaining funds be assigned to the Secretariat of the League in order to strengthen its activity. But the decision on this was delayed so that there first be a consultation with the donating Red Cross societies.[160] At the September 1958 session of the League's Executive Committee in Geneva it decided on the use of $900,000 remaining from the amount raised for the assistance of the Hungarian refugees in Austria.[161] It determined that, in accord with the original proposal of the League's Secretariat, it finance the preparations of operational plans and handbooks and they be kept up to date, a limited amount be set aside to be used at the beginning of unusual emergency operations, and in the case of "extreme hardship" travel expenses set aside for the support of the reunification of Hungarian families.[162] We learn from

[158] IFRC Archives, A 0789, 3 Ex Comm – 15 - 17 April 1957 (Hung. ref.) – 1957. League of Red Cross Societies [LRCS], 76th Session of the Executive Committee, Geneva, 15 - 17 April 1957. Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda. League operation in behalf of Hungarian refugees, P. 7025, 6 April 1957.
[159] IFCR Archives, A0801/3 Board of Governors – October and November 1957, New Delhi Proceedings, 24th meeting. League of Red Cross Societies, Seminar on the Red Cross Relief Operation in Aid of Hungarian Refugees in Austria, Vienna, pages 19-21: Report on the Special Liquidation Committee on Surplus Supplies and Equipment Remaining from the Operation on behalf of Hungarian Refugees in Austria, on September 30, 1957, 22-23 July1957.
[160] IFCR Archives, A0801/3 Board of Governors – October and November 1957, New Delhi Proceedings, 24th meeting. League of Red Cross Societies, Board of Governors, XXIVth Session (New Delhi, 26 October, 4, 5 and 7 November, 1957). Proceedings, P.7602/mlo, 26 October-4, 5, and 7 November 1957.
[161] IFCR Archives, A0801/3 Board of Governors – September-October 1959, Report Ex Comm. League of Red Cross Societies, Board of Governors, 25th Session, Athens, 25th September–1st October 1959. Complement to the report of the Executive Committee to the Board of Governors, 25 September-1 October 1959.
[162] IFCR Archives, A0801/3 Board of Governors – September-October 1959, Report Ex Comm. League of Red Cross Societies, Board of Governors, 25th Session, Athens, 25th September – 1st October 1959, 25 September-1 October 1959.

the records of the fall 1959 session of the League's Board of Governors that in the preceding months 40 requests for the support of travel expenses in a repatriation or family reunification case were received by the League Secretariat. Six requests were acted upon.[163]

Although there were some antecedents, still it must be considered a novelty that evaluation of the aid for Hungarian refugees was subjected to a detailed analysis in order that the methods and means of the organization be further developed. In 1952-1954 the League took part in the relief nine large natural catastrophes in thirteen countries, and also in assistance to the victims of the Dutch, Belgian, and English floods. A Special Study Group appointed by the Executive Committee examined the lessons of these campaigns in May 1953 and proposed to the Board of Governors eight basic principles.[164] At its May 1954 session in Oslo, which discussed the standardization of international aid – as we noted above –, the Board of Governors did indeed accept the basic principles to be followed in the extending of emergency aid during a natural catastrophe.[165] The joint conference of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League, and individual national Red Cross societies on April 16, 1957 formulated the need for examine the technical, personnel, and psychological lessons of the aid campaign for the Hungarian refugees. At this time they brought up as a problem the mass of unrequested aid shipments, especially medicine and clothing that are in unusable condition, and the desire that the Red Cross, as the sole possessor of the necessary special knowledge, experiences, and level of organization, review the entire aid campaign from beginning to end.[166] The general secretary of the Swedish Red Cross Society, Henrik Beer, proposed at this forum that the campaign be subject to a detailed analysis, and that a seminar be convened after the conclusion of the campaign on June 30, 1957.[167] The analytical discussions took place in Vienna on July 22-24, 1957: the Seminar on the Red Cross Relief Operation in Aid of Hungarian Refugees in Austria. In

[163] IFCR Archives, A0801/3 Board of Governors – September-October 1959, Report Ex Comm. League of Red Cross Societies, Board of Governors, 25th Session, Athens, 25th September–1st October 1959. Complement to the report of the Executive Committee to the Board of Governors, 25 September-1 October 1959.
[164] Dunning, *Elements for the History of the League of Red Cross Societies*, 73.
[165] SACRF, 3 O 64 – Hongrie, insurrection, octobre 1956, Octobre 1956 - août 1957. Action de secours en faveur des Hongrois, Réunion des sociétiés nationales de la Croix-Rouge, du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge et de la Ligue des société de la Croix-Rouge, Genève, Compte rendu des séances, 16 April 1957.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid.

the course of the seminar, outside of the plenary sessions there were meetings of four working groups: organization and administration, aid in kind, financial matters, health care and social work.[168] The results of the examination were presented at the session of the League's Board of Governors in fall 1957 in New Delhi, which summarized its most important lessons in resolutions. The proposal was accepted that the eight basic principles adopted in 1954 for the case of natural catastrophes also be extended to situations similar to that of the Hungarian refugee aid. It was furthermore stated "under certain circumstances, and with agreement of the affected national society, the League's Secretariat operates as both an operating agency and a coordinating agency." And "in order that it appropriately fill this role, the League's Secretariat should prepare in advance for the catastrophic situation, and create a working group in the League's headquarters that would devise a plan for a broad international aid campaign, that would incorporate a list of the most important staff and supplies that must be identified, as well as the preparation of a handbook with immediately employable, operational forms."[169] This handbook was in fact prepared in 1958-1959.[170] This development fits well into the trend described by Michael Barnett, according to which in the "new humanitarian system" (neo-humanitarianism) evolving after the second world war the humanitarian organizations come into increasingly dependent relationship with their states, become increasingly bureaucratic and permanent institutions, in which growing emphasis is placed on long term planning.[171]

The League of Red Cross Society's activity on behalf of the Hungarian refugeesr enjoyed broad international recognition. It was the uniform opinion of the most important participants in this campaign—the Austrian, Yugoslav, and American governments, and the UN's High Commissioner for Refugees—that the League and the Red Cross societies performed outstanding

[168] IFCR Archives, A0801/3 Board of Governors – October and November 1957, New Delhi Proceedings, 24th meeting. League of Red Cross Societies, Seminar on the Red Cross Relief Operation in Aid of Hungarian Refugees in Austria, Vienna, 22-23 July 1957.
[169] IFCR Archives: A0801/3 Board of Governors – October and November 1957, New Delhi Proceedings, 24th meeting. League of Red Cross Societies, Board of Governors, XXIVth Session (New Delhi, 26 October, 4, 5 and 7 November, 1957). Proceedings, P.7602/mlo, 26 October-4, 5, and 7 November 1957.
[170] Dunning, *Elements for the History of the League of Red Cross Societies*, 78.
[171] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 107–108.

work.[172] As a sign of this, the general secretary of the League received decorations from the Austrian and Yugoslav governments, and in September 13, 1957 the Nansen Medal, which the UNHCR awarded for the first time to an organization.[173] Hereby the High Commissioner desired to recognize that "rapid, effective, and humanitarian way, in which the League's societies responded to the strong need, which so suddenly affected the refugees after their flow across borders, by which they demonstrated the power of international solidarity."[174]

What were the reasons for this success? Many factors facilitated the quick reaction and effective work of the League. From the beginning of the undertaking the national Red Cross societies extended "rapid and generous" support. In the course of the complex aid campaign the Austrian government preferred to be in direct contact with one organization. In this situation many national Red Cross societies quickly recognized the leading role of the League.[175] It was the opinion of many governments that the League was the best prepared organization for resolving the situation that had arisen. The European Coal and Steel Community, which was operating as an institution above the nations, also recognized this.[176] The American government also expressed its confidence by entrusting enormous material and financial means to the League.

The effectiveness of the campaign was increased by the fact that the League that the experts delegated to the League's headquarters in Vienna by the national Red Cross societies already boasted significant international aid experience. Several had already participated in the League's campaigns in the Near East and Korea. The American Schaeffer, named the organization's Vienna representative, had been the deputy leader of the Palestinian aid mission.

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[172] NARA, RG 469 Records of the US Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948–1961, Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956–1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose-Unfiled Papers, box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P 216. Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, official use only (March? 1957 [the date is illegible]), as well as Department of State, Incoming telegram from Llewellyn E. Thompson, US ambassador in Vienna, n° 3616, official use only, 10 April 1957.
[173] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 68.
[174] IFCR Archives, A0801/3 Board of Governors – October and November 1957, New Delhi Proceedings, 24th meeting. League of Red Cross Societies, Board of Governors, XXIVth Session (New Delhi, 26 October, 4, 5 and 7 November, 1957). Proceedings, P.7602/mlo, 26 October-4, 5, and 7 November 1957.
[175] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 24.
[176] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche au 31 décembre 1956, P.6885/mle/31.1.57.

The assistant serving alongside him in 1956, C.F. Page, had already worked as his assistant during the Palestinian mission. The chief nurse, Miss Barry of the French Red Cross, has also served in Palestine.[177] The outstanding previous training of the personnel delegated to Austria by the League and the national Red Cross societies paired with huge zeal and enthusiasm. According to reports, several of them were scarcely able to leave their offices when their worktime ended.[178]

An excellent working relationship developed between the participants in the international campaign. High Commissioner for Refugees Lindt in his letter of January 18, 1957 expressed his recognition for the "wonderful spirit of cooperation" that arose between the two organizations.[179] The evolving trust also expressed itself in acts: it is evident from the correspondence between the two humanitarian organizations, that in response to a request from the League the High Commissioner was ready to set aside a million dollars for the possibility that the League would run out of money before the end of the campaign.[180] Lindt participated in the conference of the national Red Cross societies, the International Committee, and the League in Geneva on April 16, 1957, where he was greeting with great respect and also gave a speech.[181] There was also a fruitful relationship with the Austrian government, notably with its interior ministry, and the Vienna American embassy.[182] The aid activity of the individual national Red Cross societies that they carried out in their own countries was assisted by the broad social and government support that they enjoyed.

[177] Ibid.
[178] SACRF, 3 O 64 – Hongrie, insurrection, octobre 1956, Octobre 1956 - août 1957. Action de secours en faveur des Hongrois, Réunion des sociétiés nationales de la Croix-Rouge, du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge et de la Ligue des société de la Croix-Rouge, Genève, Compte rendu des séances, 16 April 1957.
[179] IFRC Archives, A 1023, box 3, dossier 22-1-2 Hongrie, Office du Haut commissaire pour les réfugiés, 1956-1960. Letter from A. R. Lindt, UNHCR to Count B. de Rougé, secrétaire-général, League of Red Cross Societies, 18 January 1957.
[180] IFRC Archives, A 1023, box 3, dossier 22-1-2 Hongrie, Office du Haut commissaire pour les réfugiés, 1956-1960. Letter from A. R. Lindt, UNHCR to B. de Rougé, secrétaire-général, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, 5 March 1957.
[181] SACRF, 3 O 64 – Hongrie, insurrection, octobre 1956, Octobre 1956 - août 1957. Action de secours en faveur des Hongrois, Réunion des sociétiés nationales de la Croix-Rouge, du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge et de la Ligue des société de la Croix-Rouge, Genève, Compte rendu des séances, 16 April 1957.
[182] Ibid.

The League's role in the solution of the Hungarian refugee crisis went down in the history of the League as a very significant matter, leaving a strong impact on institutional memory.[183] As we indicated above, the organization played a decisive role in the aid for the Hungarian refugees in Austria and Yugoslavia. Of every four Hungarian refugee who passed through Austria, three were in a camp operated by the Red Cross.[184] The Red Cross societies and the League were present at every phase of the reception of the refugees, from providing food and rest after the crossing to the border, to the shorter or longer stay in the camps, further transportation, and reception in the country of final settlement.[185] Expressed monetarily, the League's aid work in Austria and Yugoslavia can be estimated at $19,200,000: 22,200 tons in aid shipments, in a value of $14,20,000, and $4,300,000 in cash. It is likely that about half of the final amount was spent in the countries of final settlement.[186] According to the summary report prepared by the League, this was the largest aid operation in the organization's history up to that point, during which the resources of the Red Cross were also used.[187] The summary of this important contemporary document comes to the conclusion that "this was the most universal expression of the Red Cross toward an unfortunate people, and certainly the greatest operation prosecuted by the League [up to 1957]." Donations came from 52 countries and five continents, and from many colonial territories as well, where the British Red Cross was present (Jamaica, Swaziland, Solomon Islands, etc.).[188] It was the opinion of the chairman of the League's Board of Governors that, as the result of the service on behalf of the Hungarian refugees, "the League was strengthened, and the authority of the Red Cross grew in the entire world."[189]

[183] Personnaz and Utheim, *The League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*, 13–4. For the League's 70th anniversary the institution published a 24-page booklet. The book's authors dedicate three paragraphs to the participation in the Hungarian refugee matter and call it the League's greatest operation in the 1950s.
[184] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 20.
[185] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, Ligue des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge, Exposé des opérations entreprises par la Ligue en faveur des réfugiés hongrois en Autriche au 31 décembre 1956, P.6885/mle/31.1.57.
[186] *Hungarian Refugee Relief*, 67.
[187] Ibid., 1-2.
[188] Ibid., 67.
[189] Ibid., 3.

The Intervention of the International Committee of the Red Cross

What were considered to be the traditional roles of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which it also intensively practiced in the case of the Hungarian refugees? By 1956 the organization already had several decades' experience in the establishment of card files and services for the searching of and messaging to persons in crisis, the organization of the repatriation of prisoners of war and refugees, and in assisting the return home of underage refugees and family reunification.

Card File and Search Service

Already in the first international conferences of the Red Cross in Paris in 1867 and 1869 in Berlin it called upon the International Committee, for the lessening of victim's mental suffering, to establish connections of correspondence and a central office that would collect data. This role broadened significantly after the outbreak of the 1870-1871 Franco-Prussian War.[190] The Belgrade agency [Agence de Belgrade] established at the time of the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), making use of this experience, dealt not only with the wounded and sick prisoners of war, but also the healthy ones, indeed it also extended help to individual categories of the civilian population.[191] Its card file contained 87,778 names.[192] The International Agency of Prisoners of War [Agence international des prisonniers de guerre] that operated during World War I (1914-1918) cooperated with the Red Cross societies of the countries waging war in seeking to centralize the information about prisoners of war. Relying upon the card file consisting of roughly seven million items, it provided more than one million responses to the families that contacted it. Letters, packages, and remittances were also forwarded.[193] Transcending the existing international legal framework, it also intervened decisively on behalf of civilian victims.

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[190] François Bugnion, "The International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent: challenges, key issues and achievements," *International Review of the Red Cross* 91, no. 876 (December 2009), 691. Also: Gradimir Djurović, *L'Agence centrale de recherches du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge: activités du CICR en vue du soulagement des souffrances morales des victimes de guerre* (Genève: Institut Henry Dunant, 1981), 243; Harouel, *Histoire de la Croix-Rouge*, 18.
[191] Djurović, *L'Agence centrale de recherches du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge*, 279; Harouel, *Histoire de la Croix-Rouge*, 35.
[192] Harouel, *Histoire de la Croix-Rouge*, 35.
[193] Ibid., 39-40, 47.

The search service operated by the International Committee at the time of the Abyssinian War in 1935-1936 also proved very useful.[194] The Agency of the ICRC helped both sides in the Spanish Civil War that broke out in 1936, creating a card file with 120,000 names.[195] At the time of the Second World War the Central Agency of Prisoners of War [Agence centrale des prisonniers de guerre] created a gigantic card file with 39 million items based on the lists of prisoners of war shared by the capturing countries and search requests arriving from families. Roughly a million personal requests were processed, and 13 million messages forwarded between prisoners of war and their families, as well as 24 million messages among civilians.[196] The unit of the Committee dealing with scattered families [service des familles dispersées] created a card file in order to collect the requests and data of persons looking for each other. The Agency also created a telegraphic and rapid messaging service.[197]

In the course of the war the Agency's valuable help to civilians received legal confirmation by Article 140 of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention. The third article shared by all four Geneva Conventions adopted at this time stated that the International Committee of the Red Cross and its Agency may also take action in the case of conflicts that are not international.[198] The Conventions provided for the creation of "ad hoc" agencies in the case of every new conflict. Thus, a card file was created in Geneva for the recording of Greek children who went abroad during the Greek civil war that began in 1946.[199] But the International Committee was not able to create new information agencies for later conflicts, therefore these tasks were managed by the Central Agency of Prisoners of War, which therefore developed into a permanent department of the International Committee.[200] The conventions of 1949 explicitly recognized the special situation of the ICRC as an institution not only for aid, but also information.[201]

[194] Ibid., 71.
[195] Djurović, *L'Agence centrale de recherches du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge*, 279-80; Harouel, *Histoire de la Croix-Rouge*, 73.
[196] Rey-Schyrr, *De Yalta à Dien Bien Phu*, 42.
[197] Harouel, *Histoire de la Croix-Rouge*, 90.
[198] Djurović, *L'Agence centrale de recherches du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge*, 280.
[199] Rey-Schyrr, *De Yalta à Dien Bien Phu*, 626.
[200] Djurović, *L'Agence centrale de recherches du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge*, 235–6.
[201] Harouel, *Histoire de la Croix-Rouge*, 106.

Aid for Returning POWs and Refugees

Following the First World War, in 1919 the International Committee of the Red Cross on several occasions requested that the Supreme Council of the Allies [Conseil supreme interallié] repatriate the prisoners of war of the Central Powers. The organization assisted in the repatriation of 425,550 persons in all.[202] The International Conference of the Red Cross of 1921 passed a resolution calling upon governments to make an agreement concerning not only prisoners of war, deportees, and expellees but also refugees.[203] After the Second World War the International Committee sought to cooperate with the Polish, Hungarian, Yugoslav, and Romanian Red Cross societies in the repatriation of Greek soldiers, civilians, underage children—with very little success.[204] The Committee also made several attempts to identify and repatriate prisoners of war who were in the Soviet Union, requesting the help of the Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the Soviet Union. This also proved to be in vain.[205]

Refugees and Family Reunification

From November 1948 on, the UN General Assembly demanded the repatriation of Greek children to Greece who had settled far from their homeland. In support of this not just the affected Red Cross societies and the League, but the International Committee would also play a decisive role. The Central European countries, who had mostly come under Soviet influence, for political reasons showed little readiness to cooperate in repatriation to Greece, which had come under Western influence. Of then they questioned the credibility of parental petitions submitted in Greece. The repatriation of children did begin from Yugoslavia in 1950 and the other communist countries in 1953, as the result of which by 1957 more than 9280 Greek citizen who rejoin their

[202] Ibid., 48.
[203] Ibid., 58.
[204] ICRC Archives, Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de la séance plénière du 1er mai 1958 à 14 heures 30, MBB/GH, no. 7/1958 (May 1, 1958.), annexe: Bilan sommaire des principales activités du CICR en Europe orientale et en URSS, 1945–1958, JPM, 29 April 1958. 365–6.
[205] In 1950, the ICRC received only three responses to requests for information from the Soviet organization, followed by a few more from 1955. ICRC Archives: Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de la séance plénière du 1er mai 1958 à 14 heures 30, MBB/GH, no. 7/1958, 1 May 1958, annexe: Bilan sommaire des principales activités du CICR en Europe orientale et en URSS, 1945–1958, JPM, 29 April 1958. 361.

family members in Greece or Australia.[206] The ICRC also sought to cooperate in the family reunification of adults who had gone abroad because of the Greek civil war. Thus it took steps to make it possible for children of Greek citizenship in Yugoslavia to rejoin their parents in other East Central European countries.[207] Article 26 of the 4th Geneva Convention stated that warring parties must assist the restoration of contact among separated family members, and if possible their reunion. They should support the work of organizations engaged in this matter, and this measure provided a basis in international law for the Agency of the ICRC to act in matters of family reunification. An important precedent for this was the fact that several million people found their family members through the Central Agency for Prisoners of War.[208] Between 1948 and 1958 about 200,000 ethnic minorities of German origin (*Volksdeutsche*) were able to emigrate from every country of Eastern Europe (with the exception of Bulgaria), as well as East Germans, and unite with their families in various Western countries with the help of the ICRC.[209]

Development Factors: Internal Values and External Challenges

The four Geneva conventions adopted in 1949 and their common third paragraph reinforced the ICRC in international law, and gave the organization a real right to reach out to prisoners of war and interned civilians, and also for it to seek its right of initiation also in internal armed conflict by the further development of humanitarian law.[210] The International Conference of the Red Cross in Toronto in 1952 adopted a new sixth article in its constitution that defined the ICRC as an independent and neutral institution that "keeps watch over the basic and perpetual principles of the Red Cross, which are the following: non partisanship, intervention independent of any kind of racial, political, religious, or economic considerations, the universality of the Red Cross, and the equality of the national Red Cross societies."[211] The ICRC sought to enforce two basic ethical

[206] Rey-Schyrr, *De Yalta à Dien Bien Phu*, 619-25.
[207] Ibid., 622.
[208] Harouel, *Histoire de la Croix-Rouge*, 108.
[209] ICRC Archives, Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de la séance plénière du 1er mai 1958 à 14 heures 30, MBB/GH, no. 7/1958, 1 May 1958, annexe: Bilan sommaire des principales activités du CICR en Europe orientale et en URSS, 1945–1958, JPM, 29 April 1958. 362.
[210] Rey-Schyrr, *De Yalta à Dien Bien Phu*, 31.
[211] Françoise Perret and François Bugnion, *De Budapest à Saigon. Histoire du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, 1956–1965* (Genève, CICR, 2009). See in the Appendix: Document 1: Statutes adopted at the International Conference of the Red Cross held in Toronto in 1952, Article VI, Section 2.

principles: "active assistance" [*secours agissant*] and "absolute non partisanship" [*impartialité absolue*].[212]

The Second World War and the new international system developing in the second half of the 1940s both exercised a strong impact on the operating conditions of the International Committee. After the capitulation of Nazi Germany and Japan there was strong criticism of the ICRC, chiefly from the Soviets and their allies. They blamed it for the fate of the Soviet prisoners of war in German captivity, of whom about three million lost their lives. It was said that the organization did nothing for the partisans and freedom fighters captured by the Axis powers, and that they did not protest against the concentration camps and genocide. Based on this, they requested the revision of the organization's constitution and the abolition of the International Committee for the purpose of transferring its responsibilities to the League. In order to neutralize these attacks, the Committee wanted to concentrate on the Geneva conventions, all the more because its members feared that a third world war was imminent. This effort was successful, and the International Conference held in Stockholm in August 1948 indeed dealt with the ICRC's new plans for the application of the Geneva conventions; the reexamination of the constitution was postponed until the next international conference. By the time of the International Conference held in Toronto in 1952 international relations had completely changed: the Geneva Conventions that had been adopted in 1949 strengthened the situation for the Committee. The usefulness of the ICRC's neutral mediating role was again demonstrated by its role in local conflicts, chiefly in the course of the 1948-1949 Arab-Israeli war. Finally, with the hardening of the Cold War front lines it was not in the interest of the Western powers that they yield to the attacks against the International Committee for the sake of cooperation with the Soviet Union.[213]

Among the Western powers, the International Committee of the Red Cross cultivated a long time, close relationship with France and Great Britain, and it counted on this relationship

[212] Rey-Schyrr, *De Yalta à Dien Bien Phu*, 32.
[213] Bugnion, "The International Conference of the Red Cross", 699-700. On the crisis of the ICRC after the Second World War and its emergence from it see Rey-Schyrr, *De Yalta à Dien Bien Phu*, 37-48, 711-6. On the successful humanitarian intervention of the ICRC at the time of the first Arab-Israeli war see David P. Forsythe: *The Humanitarians: The International Committee of the Red Cross* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 55-7.

also in the 1950s. Although after the Second World War, the United States resented the International Committee's too close relationship with the Swiss state, which it also blamed for economic cooperation with Nazi Germany, tensions eased with the emergence of the Cold War.[214] In June 1948 President Harry S. Truman received the chairman of the ICRC, Paul Rueggert, during the latter's visit to Washington.[215] After the outbreak of the Korean War of 1950-1953, the USA requested that the International Committee help the prisoners of war who were in Chinese captivity. As previous commander of the allied expeditionary force, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, elected in 1952, was grateful to the International Committee for its defense of allied and especially American prisoners of war. In the 1955 it was the view of the ICRC leaders that their relationship with the Americans had recovered.[216]

The International Committee also made strenuous efforts to improve its relations with the Soviet Union and its allies. At the time of the Second World War the Committee was unable to send a delegate to the Soviet Union, nor could it carry out its traditional activities. Moscow felt a deep distrust toward the Committee in Geneva.[217] On the basis of its members' Swiss citizenship and middle class origins it assumed that it belonged to the Western camp. The concept of neutrality emphasized by the International Committee was alien to their Marxist way of thinking.[218] In order to improve the relationship, the ICRC already in 1946 invited a delegation of the Federation of the Soviet Union's Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to Geneva via several channels, but these invitations were not answered. In response to a telegram to Stalin in 1948, the Soviet ambassador in Bern replied that "they do not see the time as yet arrived" for negotiations. In December 1949, in the face of the problem of many disappeared people and the possibility of a third world war breaking out, the Committee tried once again. As the result of another telegram to Stalin, in November 1950 the President of the Committee visited Moscow, but even now the relations were still not settled.[219]

[214] Rey-Schyrr, *De Yalta à Dien Bien Phu*, 44.
[215] Perret and Bugnion, *De Budapest à Saigon*, 29.
[216] Ibid., 29-30.
[217] Rey-Schyrr, *De Yalta à Dien Bien Phu*, 29.
[218] Ibid., 48.
[219] Ibid., 46-7.

The question of China's relationship at the International Conferences of the Red Cross was a recurring problem. After the end of the civil war in 1949 the Chinese People's Republic was formed on the mainland, and on the island of Taiwan the Chinese Republic. Since both countries considered themselves China's representative, supported by the Soviet Union or the United States. Thus at the conferences of the Red Cross at Toronto in 1952 and New Delhi in 1957 open confrontation ensued between the opposing sides. Due to the continuing tension the new International Conference only took place in 1965.[220]

Stalin's death in 1953 did not bring a rapid improvement in relations between the ICRC and the Soviet Union despite the thaw in the east-west relations.[221] The Cold War atmosphere influenced every activity of the Committee in this period, whether in war torn zones, in relations of governments and Red Cross societies, or in the official fora of the Red Cross.[222] But positive developments could be observed: between 1950 and 1957 every country in the Soviet bloc as well as Yugoslavia ratified the Geneva Conventions, they made fairly regular financial contributions to the activity of the Committee, and (admittedly at irregular intervals), a delegation of the ICRC travelled in the region.[223] With the collapse of the colonial system, Red Cross societies in the new states established contacts. Support leading to their official recognition and integration into the Red Cross movement was a significant challenge for the International Committee in the mid-1950s.[224] The development of relations with the UN was sensitive because the world organization expected to cooperate with the ICRC in areas of conflict where the UN was introducing peace keeping forces. In the same way, the Committee was anxious not to violate its neutrality and independence by a too close relationship with an institution whose authority was fundamentally political.[225]

[220] Bugnion, "The International Conference of the Red Cross", 677, 681-3.
[221] Perret and Bugnion, *De Budapest à Saigon*, 31.
[222] Ibid., 588.
[223] ICRC Archives, Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de la séance plénière du 1er mai 1958 à 14 heures 30, MBB/GH, no. 7/1958, 1 May 1958, annexe: Bilan sommaire des principales activités du CICR en Europe orientale et en URSS, 1945–1958, JPM, 29 April 1958. 366–8.
[224] Perret and Bugnion, *De Budapest à Saigon*, 34.
[225] Ibid., 35.

Between 1945 and 1955 the International Committee of the Red Cross, beyond the assistance to victims of the Second World War, played a role in the lessening the impact of many international conflicts, thus the Indonesian (1945) and Indochinese (1947) wars of independence, the first Kashmir war (end of 1947, beginning of 1948), the first Arab-Israeli war (from the beginning of 1948), and the Korean war (beginning in 1950). According to the fundamental book of Catherine Rey-Schyrr, the ICRC was able to play a neutral, mediating role in those conflicts where the influence of the Cold War was negligible or small, that is in Indonesia, Palestine, and Kashmir. In Indochina and especially Korea, because of the communist side's opposition it was only able to intervene on the western side. The Committee had the means to take steps lin the Greek (1946), Paraguay (1947), Chinese (end of 1948), Burmese (1949), Guatemala (1954) and Costa Rica (1955) civil wars.[226] After the suppression of the Hungarian revolution of 1956 it was able to employ its own measures as a contribution to the solution of the Hungarian refugee crisis.

The Launch of Aid Activities

Already in the days after the Soviet invasion the General Assembly of the UN called for "humanitarian aid to the Hungarian people," which meant both the population of Hungary and aid to the Hungarian refugees. As we shoed in the previous chapter, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies' agreement of November 27 stipulated that the former would be responsible for aid within Hungary, and the latter for aid to the Hungarian refugees in Austria. Once again with the intention of distinguishing areas of responsibility, the Committee's delegate in Austria Roger Gallopin, the managing director of the ICRC, informed the representatives of the League in November 1956 that, while the ICRC would not be responsible for aid to the refugees, it still considered itself responsible for the collection of personal data on the refugees and the transmission of family messages.[227]

[226] Rey-Schyrr, *De Yalta à Dien Bien Phu*, 714. See also François Bugnion, "De la fin de la Seconde Guerre mondiale à l'aube du troisième millénaire: L'action du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge sous l'empire de la guerre froide et de ses suites: 1945–1995," *International Review of the Red Cross* 77, no. 812 (April 1995), 232-50. On the difficulties of humanitarian intervention in the Korean war, see Forsythe: *The Humanitarians*, 58-9.
[227] ICRC Archives, Conseil de la Présidence du CICR, procès-verbal de la séance du 22 novembre 1956 (matin), JW/RB, no. 227, 22 November 1956. 390.

In answer to the resolutions of the UN General Assembly condemning the Soviet Union's intervention in Hungary, the Kádár government forbade any kind of UN presence on its territory. Therefore the world organization was forced to entrust the shipment and distribution of aid in kind to Hungary that was collected under its aegis to another organization, namely the International Committee of the Red Cross. The latter had been in Hungary since October 29 and was the only international organization with permission to operate in Hungary. The Kádár government was itself in need of humanitarian for the population because of the destruction caused by the fighting in fall 1956 and the extended general strike afterwards; it too could turn only to the ICRC as a neutral intermediary so that the aid not be associated with political undertones. By the agreement of December 4, 1956 between the President of the Committee and the General Secretary of the UN, the ICRC agreed to distribute the aid that had been collected for the Hungarian people. The agreement recognized the complete independence of the Swiss-based organization and stipulated that the distribution would take place solely by the ICRC as aid organization and according to the principles of the Red Cross.[228] It is characteristic of the following aid campaign, that lasted until October 1957, that according to the summary report of the Committee's activity in 1957 its monetary value was about 80 million Swiss francs (which would correspond in 2009 terms to 350 million Swiss francs or US dollars), which was 28 times the total budget of the International Committee for 1956. The shipments chiefly contained food, clothing, medicine, and hospital equipment.[229] According to Perret and Bugnion this aid operation was one of the most important humanitarian campaigns of the Committee since the Second World War, and the largest one in scale that it carried out in the Soviet bloc.[230]

In making its aid decisions, the International Committee of the Red Cross could rely upon a well functioning information system. The humanitarian organizations based in Geneva were an important component. In November 1956 the ICRC received an invitation to join the Geneva

[228] Perret and Bugnion, *De Budapest à Saigon*, 66-7. See also François Bugnion, "Le Comité international de la Croix-Rouge et les Nations Unies de 1945 à nos jours: oppositions, complémentarités et partenariats," *Relations internationales* (no. 152) no. 4 (2012), 7-8. See the text of the agreement in Annual Report, 1956. International Committee of the Red Cross. Geneva, 1957. 21-2. It appeared in English: Vonèche Cardia, *Hungarian October: Between Red Cross and Red Flag*, 114-5.
[229] Perret and Bugnion, *De Budapest à Saigon*, 70-1, 78.
[230] Ibid., 78.

coordinating committee convened by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, whose mission was to coordinate the aid for Hungarian refugees in Austria. This body was an information forum without power to make decisions.[231] The representatives of the ICRC regularly participated in the forum and made its own notes of its findings. It was considered a privileged partner of the UNHCR and exchanged many confidential notes with it. On November 8, 1956 an official of the High Commissioner inquired by telephone of the Committee about the intentions of the Red Cross in the matter of the Hungarian refugees.[232] On November 12 the High Commissioner's official expressed his thoughts concerning the reception of the Hungarian refugees in Austria and Yugoslavia in another telephone call.[233] In March 1957 the Office of the High Commissioner of Refugees communicated confidential concerns about the troubling fate of refugees who had returned to Hungary.[234] It is evidence of the close working relationship of the two institutions, that in May 1957 an official of the UNHCR handed over to the representative of the ICRC a draft of notes that the High Commissioner intended to share with his representative in Vienna about the principles to be followed concerning the repatriation of children.[235] In the matter of the underage refugees the Committee requested information about Hungarian family law from another Geneva based international organization, the Library of the UN's European Office.[236] Correspondence with national Red Cross societies was also an important source of information for the organization. Thus, in November 1956 the Belgian Red Cross reported that it was receiving many requests from Belgian families that were ready to receive Hungarian refugee

[231] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-001, Jean-Pierre Maunoir, Division exécutive du CICR à Charles Ammann, envoyé du CICR à Vienne, note no. 1, Genève, 14 November 1956.
[232] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 065, procès-verbal de téléphone de Raymond Gastambide du Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les Réfugiés à Jean-Pierre Maunoir de la Division exécutive du CICR, JPM/HWr, 234(00-65), Genève, 8 November 1956.
[233] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-001, procès-verbal de téléphone entre Raymond Gastambide du Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les Réfugiés et Jean-Pierre Maunoir de la Division exécutive du CICR, JPM/HWr, 234(00-65), Genève, 12 November 1956.
[234] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-001, lettre de Jean-Pierre Maunoir, chef de section, Division exécutive du CICR au Département politique fédéral, JPM/HWr, 234(00-65), Genève, 19 March 1957.
[235] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-008, note de Carmen Totsy Mathez, Division exécutive du CICR à Monsieur le Président, Branch office instruction, Unattached youth and adolescents among Hungarian refugees (UNHCR document), Genève, 22 May 1957.
[236] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-001, Note de J. Wilhelm pour Monsieur Pictet, Demande de Madame Mathez au sujet des enfants hongrois, Genève, 2 March 1957.

children.[237] Finally, we may mention that the ICRC developed a confidential relationship with the Swiss foreign ministry [Département politique fédéral]. In December 1956 the Committee learned from this source about the difficult situation of Hungarian refugees who had settled in Ireland.[238]

The International Committee of the Red Cross energetically began its traditional aid activity for the Hungarian refugees after November 4: that is, the creation of a central card file and search service, the assistance in the repatriation of underage refugees, and negotiations about the reunification of families.

Central Card File and Search Service

At its November 22, 1956 session, the Presidential Council of the ICRC Roger Gallopin, the organization's former Austrian emissary, expressed the opinion that there was great disorder in the collection of personal data in Austria: there was no kind of effective record keeping, although the refugees were widely distributed throughout the country. He proposed that the Central Agency of Prisoners of War should be the central office for every measure related to personal data about the refugees. On his recommendation the president of the Austrian Red Cross Society, Hans Lauda, convened a conference on November 28, 1956 with the participation of the organizations that were interested in the collection of data.[239] Those in attendance supported the plans of the International Committee's representative for the creation of a central card file in Geneva.[240] On the proposal of the ICRC's executive division (Division executive) and with the approval of the Presidential Council and taking the model prescribed by the Geneva Conventions, the Central Agency of Prisoners of War indeed created the central card file (*central card index*)

[237] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-001, Lettre de Dronsart, directeur général de la Croix-Rouge de Belgique à Roger Gallopin, directeur exécutif du CICR, SI/ED/MLG, no. 8308, Bruxelles, 24 November 1956.
[238] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-001, lettre de Roger Gallopin, directeur exécutif du CICR à Jean Guy de Rham, chef de la Division des Organisations internationales, Département politique fédéral, TM/JWt, 234 (72-65), Genève, 22 December 1956.
[239] ICRC Archives, Conseil de la Présidence du CICR, procès-verbal de la séance du 22 novembre 1956 (matin), JW/RB, no. 227, 22 November 1956. 391–2.
[240] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, Aide-Mémoire for the United Nations High Commissariat [Sic!] for Refugees, Registration of Hungarian refugees, by the International Committee of the Red Cross, Executive Division, TM/GRo 234(00-65), Genève, 4 December 1956.

of Hungarian refugees, in which by completion of the P.10.055 form were recorded the individual refugees.[241] It was planned that the refugees themselves would complete the forms with the cooperation of aid workers or institutions.[242]

The active support of many partners was needed for the realization of the project. There were consultations with the High Commissioner for Refugees and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration. Both organizations expressed great satisfaction about the initiative and offered their assistance. The negotiator of the UNHCR charged with Austrian matters mentioned that the High Commissioner's office itself was maintaining a register of refugees, and collecting the data in Salzburg.[243] The colleague from the ICEM reported that, while in the beginning they were recording the refugees' data, later with the growth in the masses waiting for transportation they were forced to limit their data collection to lists of names.[244] The director of the ICEM's Vienna office, Gregory Esgate, offered on November 28, 1956 that his organization turn over the 30,000 registration forms it had completed (not using the ICRC standard) up to that time. He furthermore promised that henceforth he would have every refugee to be transported by the ICEM fill out the registration card of the International Committee.[245] The ICRC requested the cooperation of the Austrian government as well.[246]

The Austrian Interior Ministry was an unavoidably important participant in data recording, since according to international agreements the Austrian government was obligated to register refugees arriving on its territory. According to its information it recorded data on 99%

[241] ICRC Archives, Conseil de la Présidence du CICR, procès-verbal de la séance du 29 novembre 1956, RJW, no. 228, 29 November 1956. 404 ; ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, note de Carmen Totsy Mathez, Division exécutive du CICR à Nicolas R. Burckhardt, directeur du Service International de Recherches, note no. 324, TM/BT 234(00-65), Genève, 26 March 1957.
[242] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, lettre de Carmen Totsy Mathez, Division exécutive du CICR à Dr. Hans Haug, secrétaire gánéral de la Croix-Rouge suisse, TM/GRo, 234(00-65), Genève, 3 December 1956.
[243] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, procès-verbal d'entretien avec Kelly, Carmen Totsy Mathez et Edouard Jaquet, établi par Mathez, TM/mjv/GRo, 234(00-65), Genève, 23 November 1956.
[244] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, procès-verbal d'entretien avec Miss Wilson du CIME, Carmen Totsy Mathez, Edouard Jaquet et Pierre Jequier, établi par Mathez, TM/GRo, 234(00-65), Genève, 24 November 1956, 9 o'clock.
[245] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, Message du CICR à la Délégation à Vienne pour M. Pfenninger, TM/GRo 234(00-65), Genève, 12 December 1956.
[246] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, note de Carmen Totsy Mathez, Division exécutive du CICR à Nicolas R. Burckhardt, directeur du Service International de Recherches, note no. 324, TM/BT 234(00-65), Genève, 26 March 1957.

of the refugees. In his negotiations with the ICRC representatives Interior Minister Oskar Helmer did not agree to the Swiss-based organization carry out registration in the reception centers of camps, citing security concerns. The Austrian Interior Ministry after long negotiations agreed all the same that the International Committee would be permitted to transfer the ministry's data onto its own forms. The ministry agreed to set up a group of ten ministry employees, which would be completed with colleagues hired in Vienna. The expenses of the operation (wages, social benefits, the rental of work space) would be borne completely by the ICRC.[247] It was expected that the work would take 3-4 months.[248] Because the Committee's representatives considered the rate of data input to be too slow—by the middle of January 1957 only 20,000 refugees were in the file—it was decided to speed up the work by increasing the size of the group in Vienna.[249] The ICRC office working on the registration of Hungarian refugees operated until the middle of March.[250] The Central Agency of the Committee in Geneva transferred the lists of refugees compiled by the other organizations onto personal cards. Signs calling for the completion of the forms were posted in the Austrian reception centers, ICEM offices, city halls, and parish churches.[251]

Not only the Austrian Red Cross, but the national Red Cross societies of the other receiving countries played their part in data collection.[252] On November 27, 1956 the International Committee wired them its request, then after the positive response sent a letter detailing what needed to be done.[253] Up to the end of March 1957 26 of the 27 petitioned

[247] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, Note de dossier, signé par Carmen Totsy Mathez, TM/Ro, 234(00-65), 272(65), Genève, 12 December 1956.
[248] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, Note de dossier, signé par Carmen Totsy Mathez, TM/GRo, 234(00-65), Genève, 13 December 1956.
[249] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-001, Note de dossier, Rapatriement des réfugiés hongrois y compris les enfants non accompagnés, TM/BT, 234(00-65), Genève, 16 January 1957.
[250] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, note de Pierre Jequier, Direction de l'Agence du CICR à la Délégation du CICR à Vienne, à l'attention de Mme Neukomm, PJ/br, 4530, 234(00-65), 252(055), Genève, 12 March 1957.
[251] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, Aide-Mémoire for the United Nations High Commissariat for Refugees, Registration of Hungarian refugees, by the International Committee of the Red Cross, Executive Division, TM/GRo 234(00-65), Genève, 4 December 1956.
[252] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, note de Carmen Totsy Mathez, Division exécutive du CICR à Nicolas R. Burckhardt, directeur du Service International de Recherches, note no. 324, TM/BT 234(00-65), Genève, 26 March 1957.
[253] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, télégramme, TM/GRo, intercroixrouge A989, 234 (00-65) Genève, 27 November 1956; See for example the rapid and positive response of the French Red Cross: ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, lettre du Président de la Croix-Rouge française au Président du CICR, Relations Extérieures, RM/YP-2153,

societies attained commitments from their countries: only the UK organization has not obtained the consent of its national authorities.[254] In the course of his negotiations in Great Britain, the representative of the International Committee achieved an agreement that the ICRC forms would be distributed to the Hungarian refugees for completion, to the extent that were willing to do it voluntarily.[255] In connection with the Hungarian refugees in Yugoslavia we know from the January 19, 1957 letter of the general secretary of the Yugoslav Red Cross, Olga Milošević, that her organization promised to register every Hungarian refugee arriving in her country and also operate a search service on their behalf. For this purpose it was agreed that a central registry be maintained in the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Red Cross. For the prosecution of this work the forms to be used were requested from the ICRC, four forms per refugee, of which one would be sent back to Geneva.[256]

The International Committee of the Red Cross had already earlier demonstrated its discretion and consistent consideration of the safety of those concerned, and this was indispensable for the creation of the card file and search service. In the interest of the safety of the refugees and their family the ICRC only responded to search requests coming from countries outside Hungary. Search requests coming from Hungary were forwarded to the requests being sought and the decision left to them if they cared to respond via the normal postal service.[257] In December 1956 a representative of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry emphatically requested that the Vienna delegate of the Committee hand over documents containing data of the Hungarian

234(00-65), Paris, 28 November 1956 ; ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, note de Carmen Totsy Mathez, Division exécutive du CICR à Nicolas R. Burckhardt, directeur du Service International de Recherches, note no. 324, TM/BT 234(00-65), Genève, 26 March 1957.

[254] At the beginning of March 1957 Melchior Borsinger travelled to Great Britain as representative of the ICRC in order to seek data on the Hungarian refugees who had gone there. He was not successful, but the British authorities finally agreed to distribute the forms to those Hungarian refugees who would accept them. ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, note de Carmen Totsy Mathez, Division exécutive du CICR à Nicolas R. Burckhardt, directeur du Service International de Recherches, note no. 324, TM/BT 234(00-65), Genève, 26 March 1957.

[255] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, note de Carmen Totsy Mathez, Division exécutive du CICR à Nicolas R. Burckhardt, directeur du Service International de Recherches, note no. 324, TM/BT 234(00-65), Genève, 26 March 1957.

[256] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, lettre de Dr. Olga Milosevic, secrétaire général de la Croix-Rouge yougoslave à Herbert G. Beckh, Division exécutive du CICR, copie avec annexe, no. 3598/56-bj/vs, Belgrade, 19 January 1957.

[257] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, note de Carmen Totsy Mathez, Division exécutive du CICR à Nicolas R. Burckhardt, directeur du Service International de Recherches, note no. 324, TM/BT 234(00-65), Genève, 26 March 1957.

refugees. But the ICRC informed him that it would not satisfy this request and would not hand over lists of either children or adults, but would accept individual search requests from Hungary that the ICRC would forward to the children being sought. The Committee informed the Hungarian authorities that it would support every correspondence of this sort, but only being families and with the mediation of the ICRC.[258] The International Committee also informed the national Red Cross societies and governments that it would not hand over the addresses of the refugees being sought without the prior agreement of those refugees.[259] They had also followed this procedure earlier.[260] The negative view of the Kádár government in the West since the suppression of the revolution made it necessary to publicize the fact that this was also an earlier practice. The mass reprisals and arrests in Hungary also came up in the sessions of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva.[261] For the protection of the card file of Hungarian refugees, security measures were also introduced in the Geneva headquarters.[262] It was also in the interest of security that the ICRC issued no press releases about the creation of the card file and search service. Only the journal of the organization wrote about relevant decisions, and the national Red Cross societies and voluntary and governmental organizations dealing with the refugees were informed directly.[263]

Registration in Austria effectively ended at the end of March 1957. Up to that time about 110,000 forms had been completed, and about 5000 more awaited processing. The Austrian authorities kept a record of these data. During the first, confused period of the exodus it was not possible to register those who returned to Hungary or immediately travelled to other countries

[258] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-001, extrait du procès-verbal de téléphone de William H. Michel et Jean-Pierre Maunoir avec Melchior Borsinger à Vienne, Genève, 13 December 1956, 17 o'clock.
[259] For example: ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, lettre de Carmen Totsy Mathez, Division exécutive du CICR à [Gertrude] Dupuis, Service social international, Croix-Rouge italienne, TM/GRo, 234(00-65), Genève, 3 December 1956.
[260] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, note de Carmen Totsy Mathez, Division exécutive du CICR à Nicolas R. Burckhardt, directeur du Service International de Recherches, note no. 324, TM/BT 234(00-65), Genève, 26 March 1957.
[261] ICRC Archives, Conseil de la Présidence du CICR, procès-verbal de la séance du 1er août 1957 à 9 heures 15, JdP/RRB, no. 258, 1 August 1957. 785.
[262] ICRC Archives, Conseil de la Présidence du CICR, procès-verbal de la séance du 28 mars 1957, JPS/JMM, no. 243, 28 March 1957. 536.
[263] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, note de Carmen Totsy Mathez, Division exécutive du CICR à Nicolas R. Burckhardt, directeur du Service International de Recherches, note no. 324, TM/BT 234(00-65), Genève, 26 March 1957.

from the Austro-Hungarian border. The International Committee did not receive information either about those who returned to Hungarian without the knowledge of the Austrian government.[264] At the end of March 1957 the Geneva card file consisted of about 120,000 entries, which made it possible to answer a growing number of search requests: at this time substantive information could be supplied to a daily average of 100-120 requests.[265] By 1958 the search matters of the refugees had largely been resolved, thus the activity of the Hungarian Section of the Central Agency of Prisoners of War had greatly decreased. Even so, an average of 500-600 search requests came in per month.[266]

The International Committee of the Red Cross also had several decades' experience in the transmission of family messages. On November 13, 1956 the ICRC instituted a radio message service, having requests from many refugees who had received no news about their family members remaining in Hungary. In order to bridge the interrupted postal connections, the names of those who sought news about their family members in Hungary were read out on Radio Intercroix-Rouge 41.61 meter short wave. It was recommended to the family members in Hungary that they connect with their loved ones now living abroad by completing the message forms of the International Red Cross. It was requested of the Hungarian society that it send the completed forms to the International Committee of the Red Cross, so that the Geneva organization could then inform the petitioners.[267] Experience showed that this method of radio transmission was not effective.[268] Up to the suspension of the service at the end of January 1957, the Broadcasting Section of the ICRC broadcast about 27,000 messages to Hungary during the period when postal connections were suspended. This was the first occasion that the International Committee used the wave length designated for it.[269]

[264] Ibid.
[265] Ibid.
[266] Annual Report, 1958, International Committee of the Red Cross. Geneva, 1959. 35.
[267] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, note sur l'action du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge et de l'Agence centrale des prisonniers de guerre en relations avec les événements de Hongrie, RB/HD, 272(65), 234(00-65), Genève, 5 December 1956.
[268] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, Note de dossier, signé par Carmen Totsy Mathez, TM/Ro, 234(00-65), 272(65), Genève, 12 December 1956.
[269] Annual Report, 1957, International Committee of the Red Cross. Geneva, 1958. 51, 71-2.

As the number of requests continued to grow and as a supplement to radio transmission, the Hungarian Section of the Central Agency of Prisoners of War transcribed the petitions to civilian message (*message civil*) forms. The ICRC sent copies of these forms to the relevant national Red Cross societies in order to accelerate the process so that the petitioners could fill them out directly.[270] According to an internal note of the Committee, up to January 16, 1957 the ICRC received 4,446 letters for forwarding to Hungary and received 22,256 civilian messages. Since individual letters were transcribed to the "message civil" forms, 22,539 messages were sent to Hungary from December 14, 1956 on via normal post, 690 answering messages were received, and 168 messages came back marked "moved," "unknown," "died," "inaccurate address," etc. It is an indication of the International Committee's carefulness that they planned to return these messages to their senders, recommending that, in case they had not in the meantime received news of their addressees, they complete a search form.[271] The ICRC considered it necessary that the entire correspondence with Hungarian refugees be centralized in Geneva.[272] The Vienna delegation of the International Committee (in Hotel Wandl) received many (up to December 13, 1956 more than 1000) letters that arrived by roundabout or illegal routes from persons in Hungary for their refugee relatives. The possibility of delivering them was also raised.[273]

Participation in the Repatriation of Hungarian Refugees

As we saw above, the repatriation of prisoners of war and refugees is part of the transitional activity of the International Committee of the Red Cross. We know from the minutes of the Presidential Council of the ICRC that the Hungarian government already in November 1956 by way of its Vienna legation requested the International Committee's help in the repatriation of those Hungarian refugees who desired to return home. Roger Gallopin, the representative of the

[270] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, note sur l'action du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge et de l'Agence centrale des prisonniers de guerre en relations avec les événements de Hongrie, RB/HD, 272(65), 234(00-65), Genève, 5 December 1956.
[271] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-001, Note de dossier, Rapatriement des réfugiés hongrois y compris les enfants non accompagnés, TM/BT, 234(00-65), Genève, 16 January 1957.
[272] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, Note de dossier, signé par Carmen Totsy Mathez, TM/Ro, 234(00-65), 272(65), Genève, 12 December 1956.
[273] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, Note de dossier, signé par Carmen Totsy Mathez, TM/RGo, 234(00-65), Genève, 13 December 1956.

ICRC, responded cautiously that he would be willing if the refugees in question freely expressed their desire to return home.[274] In response to the Hungarian side's repeated request in January 1957, the delegate of the Committee recommended direct discussions in Vienna between the representatives of the Austrian and Hungarian Red Cross societies in order that they formulate recommendations for their governments. But this plan was in vain.[275] All the same, as the result of a detailed agreement of the Austrian and Hungarian authorities a Hungarian repatriation committee began its activity in Austria.[276] Later too, it was characteristic of the attitude of the ICRC that, while expressing its willingness to cooperate, it sought to remain in the background in view of the sensitivity of this matter and let the Hungarian government take the initiative.[277] Troubling reports about refugees returning to Hungary that were received from the Swiss Foreign Ministry and the UNHCR increased the Committee's caution even more.[278]

The repatriation of unaccompanied underage Hungarian refugees promised to be an even more complicated matter. In their case not only the determination of their intention caused difficulty, these being children, but the location of their parents and what their true intentions were. In order to more fully document these cases, the Committee requested that separate forms be completed about the unaccompanied minors. It was further proposed that, in the case of unidentified minors, they be photographed at the time of their arrival and these photos be sent to the headquarters in Geneva so that, in case of need, their parents might recognize them.[279] At the request of the Austrian government, on December 13, 1956 representatives of

[274] ICRC Archives, Conseil de la Présidence du CICR, procès-verbal de la séance du 22 novembre 1956 (matin), JW/RB, no. 227, 22 November 1956. 390.
[275] ICRC Archives, Conseil de la Présidence du CICR, procès-verbal de la séance du 17 janvier 1957 à 9 h. 15, JdP/, no. 233, 17 January 1957. 436.
[276] Ibid., 438-9.
[277] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-001, lettre de Carmen Totsy Mathez à Ernst Fischer, chef de la délégation du CICR à Budapest, Rapatriement de ressortissants hongrois, TM/AMi, 234 r. (00-65), no. 24, Genève, 4 February 1957.
[278] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-001, lettre de Jean-Pierre Maunoir, chef de section, Division exécutive du CICR au Département politique fédéral, JPM/HWr, 234 r. (00-65), Genève, 19 March 1957.
[279] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, lettre de Carmen Totsy Mathez, Division exécutive du CICR à [Gertrude] Dupuis, Service social international, Croix-Rouge italienne, MT/RRB, 234(00-65), Genève, 30 November 1956. And: ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-004, lettre de Carmen Totsy Mathez, Division exécutive du CICR à Dr. Hans Haug, secrétaire gánéral de la Croix-Rouge suisse, TM/GRo, 234(00-65), Genève, 3 December 1956. On underage Hungarian refugees who arrived in Austria without their families, see: Murber Ibolya, "Egyedül idegenben. Az 1956-os forradalmat követően szülő nélkül menekülő kiskorúak története Ausztriában és Jugoszláviában" [Alone in a foreign country. The story of minors fleeing without their parents after the 1956 (Hungarian) revolution in Austria and Yugoslavia], *Múltunk*, 67, no. 2 (2022), 170-204. DOI: https://doi.org/10.56944/multunk.2022.2.7.

the International Committee and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees negotiated and formulated their principles for the repatriation of minors. They stipulated that the ICRC desired to participate in the repatriation of those minors who spontaneously expressed their desire to go home and for whom the International Committee was convinced that their parents were alive, live in Hungary, and freely expressed their desire for their children to return home. They established as a precondition that the parents submit to the ICRC's Budapest or Vienna delegation or to the Hungarian Red Cross an official petition with all verifying documents. On the basis of this petition, the International Committee would seek to find the children and inform them that their parents want to have them brought home. The ICRC did not care to deal with the repatriation of children who did not wish to return. It was an additional basic principle, that the Committee only considered a petition for repatriation to be valid, if it originated with those persons who exercised parental authority (under both Swiss and Hungarian law this referred to both parents together). Finally, the International Committee declared that it would not provide the Hungarian authorities with lists containing the refugees' names and addresses and personal information originating from the refugees.[280] It was a serious problem that, while the ICRC would rely upon the Austrian authorities in determining the free expression of persons desiring to return home, the Committee had only a limited opportunity to participate directly in determining the wishes of the parents—due to the difficult situation within Hungary.[281] It was an important question how the "freely expressed" wishes of the parents might be determined without endangering them.[282] At the end of January 1957 the Austrian authorities requested that the ICRC find out the parents of about eighty unaccompanied Hungarian refugee children really lived in Hungary. The Austrian authorities planned that, if they found the parents, they would turn the children over to the Hungarian authorities.[283] It is an interesting detail that, in the speech of the Hungarian representative at the January 30, 1957 session of the UN Refugee Fund, he too

[280] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-001, Note de dossier, Rapatriement des enfants hongrois réfugiés en Auriche, signé par Carmen Totsy Mathez, TM/GRo, 234(00-65), Genève, 14 December 1956.
[281] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-001, procès-verbal de téléphone entre Roger Gallopin à Vienne et Jean-Pierre Maunoir, Genève, JPM)RRB, 234(00-65), 11 January 1957. 17.45.
[282] ICRC Archives, Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de la séance plénière du 7 février 1957 à 14 heures 30, JPS/JMM, no. 2/1957, 7 February 1957. 15–6.
[283] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-001, Extrait du rapport du sous-comité de la 4eme session du Comité exécutif de l'UNREF. Art. 92 – Déclaration autrichienne, 23-28 January 1957.

requested that the "International Red Cross" determine the whereabouts and desires of children's parents.[284]

Repatriation and/or Family Reunification?

A detailed study has appeared about the policies of the Hungarian authorities concerning the repatriation of underage refugees and permission for the emigration of family members remaining in Hungary, chiefly wives and children, ie. family reunification.[285] In what follows, we will focus in detail on the role played by the International Committee of the Red Cross in this matter. The connection of the Hungarian government, the ICRC, and the Hungarian Red Cross Society during this period may be divided into two stages: during the first period from February to December 1957 direct negotiations, then during the second period from January to November 1958 correspondence between the two sides was the decisive form of communication. But the basic question that needed to be decided remained unchanged: were repatriation and family reunification negotiation on the same level and in connection with each other? Let us consider first the beginning standpoint of the Hungarian government.

On February 15, 1957 the representatives of the Hungarian Foreign, Interior, and Justice ministries held a conference in order to develop the Hungarian position on the repatriation of minors. They decided that they would not permit the ICRC to conduct investigations in Hungary regarding the parents and the statements of the Hungarian authorities. According to their position, in principle they would not exclude the possibility that underage Hungarian citizens might follow their parents abroad. But they would not recognize the appropriateness of the Austrian authorities acting on behalf of Hungarian citizens and, as they stated countless times, "only the Hungarian authorities have the authority to approve emigration, and they must take account of the minors' interest." They also sought to establish a legal basis for their position: "the claim of a parent who has remained in Hungary to his child is not the same as the support

[284] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-001, Note à Monsieur Gallopin, signé par Carmen Totsy Mathez [Division exécutive], Genève, January 30 1957.
[285] Gusztáv D. Kecskés, "Az ENSZ Menekültügyi Főbiztossága és a Kádár-kormány közti kapcsolat az 1956-os magyar menekültválság idején" [The relationship between the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Kádár government during the 1956 Hungarian refugee crisis], *Történelmi Szemle* 59, no. 3 (2017), 463–90.

of a parent who has gone abroad while abandoning its child. According to paragraph 92 of Hungarian family law the parental control of the parent ends if the parent's whereabouts are unknown or if the parent is in fact impeded in exercising it. The court can also put an end to it for a parent who is neglecting to provide parental supervision. If the child abandons the parents, parental supervision does not thereby end. Therefore the claim of a parent who has remained in Hungary to the child is lawful, whereas that of a parent who has left the country has no lawful basis—but this does not exclude the possibility that the Hungarian authorities might facilitate the emigration of a child who has remained here"—stated the summary of the discussion among ministerial representatives.[286]

Many refugees sought the assistance of the International Committee of the Red Cross in cases of family reunification.[287] In the course of chairman Léopold Boissier's visits to Vienna and Budapest in February 1957 one of the main topics of his talks was family reunification or repatriation. At the March 7, 1957 session of the Committee, he stressed that in this international question all the involved parties—the Hungarian and Austrian government, the UNHCR and the Yugoslav Red Cross—expected a solution from the ICRC.[288] In the leading bodies of the Committee they repeatedly emphasize the importance of caution. In the February 28 session of the Presidential Council, then in the plenary session of the Committee (March 7, 1957) the extensive discussion reflected the organization's hesitation on this matter.[289] All the same, the ICRC attempted the seemingly impossible mission, seeking the formulation of solutions again and again, and urging the Hungarian interlocutors to soften their increasingly rigid position. For this purpose, on the proposal of Boissier an emissary with a broad mandate was sent to Austria, Yugoslavia, and finally Hungary, to discuss the unresolved questions on location and propose solutions acceptable to everyone. Arthur Guillermet, a former minister of justice and police was

[286] NAH: XIX-J-1-j, TÜK Vegyes, 1945–1964, box: 314, unit: 2. Feljegyzés a disszidált kiskorúak hazatelepítésének kérdésében tartott értekezletről [Note on the meeting held on the issue of the repatriation of defected minors], 00200/2, Budapest, 15 February 1957.
[287] ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-001, Note de dossier, Rapatriement des réfugiés hongrois y compris les enfants non accompagnés, TM/BT, 234(00-65), Genève, 16 January 1957.
[288] ICRC Archives, Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de la séance plénière du 7 mars 1957 à 14 heures 30, JPS/JMM, no. 3/1957, 7 March 1957. 22.
[289] ICRC Archives, Conseil de la Présidence du CICR, procès-verbal de la séance du 28 février 1957 à 9 h. 15, no. 239, 28 February 1957. 492–3.

charged with this task.[290] But the negotiating trip lasting almost a month remained fruitless as reported in the Committee's April 4 session.[291] Although the Austrian authorities seemed less categorical, and the Yugoslavs, on the basis of the legal aid agreement concluded with Hungary, considered the Hungarian laws to be the guiding principle regarding the emigration of the family members of the refugees who remained in Hungary, and also accepted the authenticity of the parental requests for the repatriation of the minors, the Hungarian negotiators still proved to be inflexible. It was expected of the International Committee that it convince the governments of the receiving countries about the correctness of the official Hungarian viewpoint and also turn over lists containing the personal data of the refugees. While Guillermet urged the exceptional and accelerated procedures for the emigration of family members remaining in Hungary as soon as possible, in line with his instructions received in Geneva he did not make family reunification dependent on repatriation, he did not speak of reciprocity, and instead placed the emphasis on the humanitarian aspect of both questions. The Hungarian side continued to insist that repatriation was more important. The negotiating trip only reinforced the doubts of the ICRC leaders, who clearly saw that the Hungarian Red Cross was losing its relative autonomy and coming under the influence of the government.[292] But the International Committee continued to take the initiative.

Guillermet was sent again to Hungary in April 1957. In his instructions before departure, the chairman recommended that he not commit the ICRC in the matter of family reunification and thereby risk the relative toleration enjoyed by the organization in the Soviet bloc.[293] The Committee's proposal to the Hungarian government on the matter of repatriation vs. family reunification was based on two basic principles: they emphasized on the one hand the reciprocity

[290] ICRC Archives, Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de la séance plénière du 7 mars 1957 à 14 heures 30, JPS/JMM, no. 3/1957, 7 March 1957. 22.
[291] ICRC Archives, Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de la séance plénière du 4 avril 1957 à 14 heures 30, JRW/HD, no. 4/1957, 4 April 1957. 44.
[292] ICRC Archives, Conseil de la Présidence du CICR, procès-verbal de la séance du 18 avril 1957 à 9 h. 15, JRW/HD, no. 245, 18 April 1957, the following document: Rapport de Monsieur A. Guillermet, délégué spécial du CICR, Action en vue du regroupement des familles hongroises dispersées, SP 118, Genève, 17 April 1957. 567–77; ICRC Archives, Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de la séance plénière du 4 avril 1957 à 14 heures 30, JRW/HD, no. 4/1957, 4 April 1957. 44.
[293] ICRC Archives, Conseil de la Présidence du CICR, procès-verbal de la séance du 25 avril 1957, JRW/MH, no. 246, 25 April 1957. 596.

of operations (according to the place of residence of the family head), on the other hand its individual and voluntary nature and that the ICRC have the possibility of monitoring these conditions.[294] But in its May 8, 1957 response the Hungarian government completely rejected the principles proposed by the Committee. It continued to assign primacy to repatriation over family reunification, nor did it concede that the International Committee be able to examine the parental petitions.[295] Thereupon the ICRC decided to inform the Hungarian government in a polite letter that it would remove itself from the discussions about repatriation and leave it to the diplomats of the affected countries to continue to seek solutions. Boissier considered what had happened to be a failure, but emphasized at the same time that the hope of success was extraordinarily small. He only considered it positive that the connection with the Hungarian government continued to remain "very polite."[296] For sure, it contributed to the suspension of these efforts that in the matter of repatriation-family reunification the Committee's options were very limited. Melchior Borsinger, a member of the ICRC delegation Vienna, openly stated this in characterizing the talks in Budapest and Vienna. While Deputy Foreign Minister Károly Szarka found incomprehensible the International Committee's insistence on the equal importance of children's repatriation and family reunification, Austrian emissary Hans Reichmann stated that the Austrians "strongly hope" that the ICRC would not drop the matter without achieving the reciprocity of the principles of repatriation and family reunification.[297]

At the urging of the Hungarian government, the Hungarian Red Cross took the initiative in the summer of 1957. It proposed that the ICRC use its reserve funds to finance travel expenses of repatriating children, including travel within Hungary. The International Committee did not exclude this possibility if the Hungarian government would accept that these funds might be used also for the travel expenses of children who were emigrating for purposes of family

[294] ICRC Archives, Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de la séance plénière du 2 mai 1957 à 15 heures, JdP/RB, no. 5/1957, 2 May 1957. 54–5.
[295] ICRC Archives, Conseil de la Présidence du CICR, procès-verbal de la séance du 16 mai 1957 à 9 h. 15, JW/ no. 248, 16 May 1957. 627–8.
[296] ICRC Archives, Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de l'assemblée plénière du 6 juin 1957 à 14 heures 30, JW/RRB, no. 6/1957, 6 June 1957. 73.
[297] ICRC Archives, Conseil de la Présidence du CICR, procès-verbal de la séance du 23 mai 1957 à 9 h. 15, JdP/RRB no. 249, 23 May 1957. 648–9.

reunification.[298] The ICRC proposed the holding of a conference in Geneva with the participation of the Hungarian Red Cross and the Red Cross societies of the receiving countries for the discussion of the seemingly insoluble questions of repatriation and family reunification.[299] This however did not take place despite initial openness of the Hungarian negotiators because the Red Cross organizations of the receiving countries, consistent with Resolution 20 of the 19th International Conference of the Red Cross, were unwilling to treat repatriation and family reunification separately. Finally, in its letter at the end of January 1958 the ICRC proposed, instead of a conference seeking a general solution, that bilateral agreements between interested governments and Red Cross societies be sought in individual cases.[300] To assist in this, the Committee again offered to media between the parties in conflict.[301] Although the Hungarian side began an extensive correspondence with the representatives of the receiving countries, the ICRC was unable to further the repatriation of Hungarian refugee children and the emigration of the children of parents living in emigration.[302]

The family reunification, repatriation, and search service were a focus of the Foreign Affairs Department of the Hungarian Red Cross in which the Hungarian government wanted the latter to take an active role.[303] According to a report of the Department, about 2000 petitions of

[298] ICRC Archives, Conseil de la Présidence du CICR, procès-verbal de la séance du 18 juillet 1957 à 9 h. 15, JW/GH, no. 256, 18 July 1957. 761.
[299] ICRC Archives, Conseil de la Présidence du CICR, procès-verbal de la séance du 1er août 1957 à 9 heures 15, JdP/RRB, no. 258, 1 August 1957. 785–6.
[300] NAH, P.2130, Magyar Vöröskereszt, Országos Központ, 1922–1999, box: 23, unit: 8, Külügyi Osztály [Foreign Affairs Department], Vöröskereszt Nemzetközi Bizottsága, CICR, 1958, 101/042. Lettre de Roger Gallopin, directeur exécutif du CICR à József Kárpáti, secrétaire général de la Croix-Rouge hongroise, Genève, 27 January 1958. See also: Nineteenth International Conference of the Red Cross, 1958. 155. Resolution XX. Reunion of dispersed families. Cited by: Bugnion, "The International Conference of the Red Cross", 704.
[301] NAH, P.2130, Magyar Vöröskereszt, Országos Központ, 1922–1999, box: 23, unit: 8, Külügyi Osztály, Vöröskereszt Nemzetközi Bizottsága, CICR, 1958, 101/042. Feljegyzés a Nemzetközi Vöröskereszt Bizottság küldötteivel Fischer és Redli urakkal folytatott megbeszélésről [Minutes of the meeting with the International Committee of the Red Cross delegates Mr Fischer and Mr Redli], 4/101/10-1/958, 31 January 31 1958.
[302] NAH, P.2130, Magyar Vöröskereszt, Országos Központ, 1922–1999, box: 23, unit: 8, Külügyi Osztály, Vöröskereszt Nemzetközi Bizottsága, CICR, 1958, 101/042. Interim director Roger Gallopin's letter to André François-Poncet, the president of the French Red Cross (copy, in Hungarian translation), Geneva, 1 September 1958.
[303] NAH, P.2130, Magyar Vöröskereszt, Országos Központ, 1922–1999, box: 7, unit: 5, Országos Vezetőség, Ülésjegyzőkönyvek, 1957–1967 [National Board, Minutes of meetings, 1957-1967]. Jegyzőkönyv felvéve az 1957. augusztus 23-án tartott Országos Vezetőségi értekezletről [Minutes of the National Board Meeting held on 23 August 1957].

"escaped young people" were prepared, of whom 220 came home. 2068 petitions for emigration came to the Hungarian Red Cross, including petitions of the Red Cross societies of receiving countries and personal petitions. The role of the Hungarian Red Cross in the decision making of the Kádár regime is well charatcterized by the fact that "after careful study" the Hungarian organization requested the cooperation of the Interior Ministry's Passport Department in only 49 cases, of which emigration was permitted in 15 cases…[304]

Evaluating Success: Changing the International Environment and Lasting Principles

Both the Cold War confrontation of the Western and Soviet blocs, then the international thaw beginning in 1953 on the one hand both and the declared principles of the Red Cross movement had an impact on the activity of the International Committee of the Red Cross concerning the Hungarian refugees of 1956. We must evaluate its success in the light of both these factors.

According to the evidence of the minutes of the leading bodies of the ICRC, they clearly understood the influence of the Cold War on their relations with the Hungarian Red Cross. President Boissier's remark at the plenary session of the Committee on October 3, 1957 about the children's city construction program proposed by the Hungarian authorities is characteristic of the negative image of Kádár Hungary: "in the present Hungarian atmosphere it is difficult to image Pestalozzi villages that are not centers of political propaganda; according to our information they sent the repatriated children to reeducation camps."[305] On the other hand, an excellent working relationship developed with the leader of the Hungarian Red Cross, György Killner, and his board of five professors. According to Boissier this was "the only remaining non-Communist organization in the country."[306] But later the Hungarian authorities replaced this

[304] NAH, P.2130, Magyar Vöröskereszt, Országos Központ, 1922–1999, box: 17, unit: 2, Jelentések külföldi kapcsolatokról, 1958–1990 [Reports on foreign relations, 1958-1990]. Jelentés a Külügyi Osztály 1958-ban végzett munkájáról [Report on the work of the Foreign Affairs Department in 1958].
[305] ICRC Archives, Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de la séance plénière du 3 octobre 1957, JW/, no. 10/1957, 3 October 1957. 178.
[306] NARA, RG 469 Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961. Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956-1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose - Unfiled Papers, Box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P216. Dossier: Hungarian Refugee Relief ICRC (Hungary). Telegram

management and transformed the humanitarian organization into a "mass organization" that must follow the instructions of the Party.[307] General Secretary József Kárpáti stated in his speech to the session of the National Board on June 25, 1957: "The efforts of the Communists working in the Red Cross during the past months have sought, among other things, to unmask sabotage disguised as so-called "apolitical" activity, to recover the mass organization character of the Red Cross, so that it may fulfill its traditional mission in the service of our people's democratic system."[308] With the spectacles of the Cold War, the representatives of the Hungarian government viewed the work of the International Committee in Hungary very suspiciously. In internal documents they accused it of having transported weapons during the revolution.[309] and that they were an instrument of western propaganda.[310] The Hungarian secret services opened an investigatory file "for the purpose of collecting materials arising from the monitoring of the capitalist citizens International Red Cross (IKRK) sent to Hungary."[311] At the time of the emissaries of the ICRC to Hungary they considered it necessary prepare an "operative plan" "for monitoring the persons entering the country," "The readiness to help that Ernst Fischer [the ICRC emissary] expresses is not an expression of selfless humanity. Through him […] the Western

from the US Representation for International Organization, Geneva to Secretary of State, Washington, Hungarian relief, n° 915, 22 March 1957.

[307] István Péteri, the deputy head of the HSWP's Administrative Department, reviewed the Party's resolution concerning the Hungarian Red Cross for the benefit of the party members among its leadership: "The resolution of the Central Committee Secretariat [of the HSWP] states that the Hungarian Red Cross is a mass organization led by the Party." This "means that the Red Cross became a political organization, not a charitable institution, not charitable society, but a political organization that educates its members by its own means in proletarian internationalism, socialist humanism, mobilizes its members for the defense of peace, the struggle for the health culture of socialist society." NAH, P.2130, Magyar Vöröskereszt, Országos Központ, 1922–1999, box 7, unit 5, Országos Vezetőség, Ülésjegyzőkönyvek, 1957–1967. Jegyzőkönyv 1958. április 8-án az Országos Vezetőségi tagok kommunistái részére megtartott értekezletről, szigorúan bizalmas [Minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 1958 for the communists of the National Board members, strictly confidential], 8 April 1958.

[308] NAH, P.2130, Magyar Vöröskereszt, Országos Központ, 1922–1999, box 7, unit 5, Országos Vezetőség, Ülésjegyzőkönyvek, 1957–1967. Jegyzőkönyv felvéve az 1957. június 25-én megtartott Országos Vezetőségválasztó értekezletről, 4. sz. melléklet, Kárpáti elvtárs hozzászólása [Minutes of the National Board Election Meeting held on June 25, 1957, Annex 4, Comrade Kárpáti's contribution], 25 June 1957.

[309] NAH, P.2130, Magyar Vöröskereszt, Országos Központ, 1922–1999, box 7, unit 5, Országos Vezetőség, Ülésjegyzőkönyvek, 1957–1967. Jegyzőkönyv felvéve az 1957. június 25-én megtartott Országos Vezetőségválasztó értekezletről [Minutes of the National Board Election Meeting held on June 25, 1957], 25 June 1957.

[310] NAH, P.2130, Magyar Vöröskereszt, Országos Központ, 1922–1999, box 7, unit 5, Országos Vezetőség, Ülésjegyzőkönyvek, 1957–1967. Jegyzőkönyv felvéve az 1957. augusztus 23-án tartott Országos Vezetőségi értekezletről [Minutes of the National Board Meeting held on 23 August 1957].

[311] Budapest, English, Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security [Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára, ÁBTL] (henceforth HAHSS), 3.1.5. O-13400. Nemzetközi Vöröskereszt [International Red Cross].

intelligence services want to penetrate our country. Thereby they would have the opportunity to directly control their people, or to recruit the desired people for their intelligence work."[312]

At the same time, we know from American foreign policy documents that the International Committee of the Red Cross, despite its repeatedly declared neutrality and impartiality, maintained excellent, regular and confidential relations with the American foreign service - which has great international influence and enormous economic resources - mainly through the US Embassy in Vienna, the US Legation in Budapest and the US Permanent Mission in Geneva. The emissaries of the ICRC from time to time also visited the State Department in Washington.[313] On December 28, 1956 the American embassy in Vienna sent Washington an 11 page report that it received from the leading Vienna delegate of the ICRC "as a private person" with the knowledge of his headquarters in Geneva "so that it serve as background information for the representatives of the United States." The document was originally composed for the orientation of the International Committee.[314] On January 5, 1957 interim director Roger Gallopin, also as "private person" presented the American ambassador in Vienna the ICRC's note to the UN on the needs for emergency assistance to Hungary.[315] On January 5, 1957 Georg Rutishauser, the chief delegate of the Committee in Vienna, informed the American embassy confidentially that Philippe de Seynes, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social

[312] HAHSS, 3.1.5. O-13399 Magyar Vöröskereszt. Belügyminisztérium, II/2.f. alosztály, szigorúan titkos jelentés [Hungarian Red Cross. Ministry of the Interior, II/2.f. subdivision, top secret report], signature: Kajtár László rny. fhdgy, 27 February 1958.
[313] NARA, RG 469 Records of the U. S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961. Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956-1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose - Unfiled Papers, Box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P216. Dossier: Hungarian Refugee Relief ICRC (Hungary). Telegram from Franklin C. Gowen, consul general and U. S. representative to international organizations, Geneva to Secretary of State, Washington, n° 721, official use only, priority, 23 January 1957.
[314] NARA, RG 469 Records of the U. S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961. Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956-1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose - Unfiled Papers, Box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P216. Dossier: Hungarian Refugee Relief ICRC (Hungary). Airgram from Llewellyn E. Thompson, US ambassador in Vienna to Department of State (International Cooperation Administration), Washington, subject: Internal Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross, TOICA A-154, official use only, 28 December 1956.
[315] NARA, RG 469 Records of the U. S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961. Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956-1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose - Unfiled Papers, Box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P216. Dossier: Hungarian Refugee Relief ICRC (Hungary). Telegram from Edward T. Wailes, US minister in Budapest to Secretary of State, Washington, n° 575, official use only, 21 January 1957.

Affairs, Under-Secretary for Relief to the Hungarian People entrusted with the matter of aid to Hungary, was negotiating with representatives of the Hungarian government in Budapest.[316] Then two days later the American diplomats in Vienna were informed that the FAO was considering its seed loan to Hungary for 1957.[317] The representatives of the ICRC also reported to the American diplomats on their negotiations, indeed later "on an informal and completely confidential basis" sent the minutes of the talks with the representatives of the Hungarian government.[318] Ernst Fischer, the representative of the ICRC's mission to Hungary, discussed the matter of the assistance to Hungary in detail with the American Legation in Budapest, and also reported on the situation of the Hungarian Red Cross.[319] The American Department of State regularly requested the opinion of the International Committee about assistance to Hungary and gave this opinion great attention.[320]

[316] NARA, RG 469 Records of the U. S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961. Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956-1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose - Unfiled Papers, Box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P216. Dossier: Hungarian Refugee Relief ICRC (Hungary). Cablegram from Llewellyn E. Thompson, US ambassador in Vienna to Department of State (International Cooperation Administration), Washington, subject: Hungarian relief: ICRC, UN Representatives in Budapest, TOICA 208, confidential, priority, 5 January 1957.
[317] NARA, RG 469 Records of the U. S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961. Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956-1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose - Unfiled Papers, Box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P216. Dossier: Hungarian Refugee Relief ICRC (Hungary). Cablegram from Llewellyn E. Thompson, US ambassador in Vienna to Department of State (International Cooperation Administration), Washington, subject: Hungarian Peoples' Relief, TOICA 216, official use only, 7 January 1957.
[318] NARA, RG 469 Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961. Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956-1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose - Unfiled Papers, Box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P216. Dossier: Hungarian Refugee Relief ICRC (Hungary). Cablegram from Llewellyn E. Thompson, US ambassador in Vienna to Department of State (International Cooperation Administration), Washington, TOICA 227, confidential, 14 January 1957; NARA, RG 469 Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961. Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956-1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose - Unfiled Papers, Box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P216. Dossier: Hungarian Refugee Relief ICRC (Hungary). Airgram from Llewellyn E. Thompson, US ambassador in Vienna to Department of State (International Cooperation Administration), Washington, subject: Hungarian Peoples Relief: ICRC, TOICA A-216, confidential, 22 March 1957.
[319] NARA, RG 469 Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961. Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956-1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose - Unfiled Papers, Box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P216. Dossier: Hungarian Refugee Relief ICRC (Hungary). Cablegram from Llewellyn E. Thompson, US ambassador in Vienna to Department of State (International Cooperation Administration), Washington, subject: Hungarian peoples relief, TOICA 209, confidential, priority, 5 January 1957.
[320] NARA, RG 469 Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961. Office of the Director. Subject Files Relating Primarily to Hungarian Refugees, 1956-1961. Hungarian Refugee Relief Program Excess Property to Loose - Unfiled Papers, Box 2, ARC ID 3000028, Entry P216. Dossier: Hungarian Refugee Relief ICRC (Hungary). Telegram from the Department of State (jointly with International Cooperation Administration), Washington to General

But it is important to emphasize that the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Hungarian government, and the latter's subordinated Hungarian Red Cross also sought to maintain regular dialogue and the maintenance of bilateral connections. In the course of sessions of the leading bodies of the ICRC, in order to preserve a working relationship with the Hungarian organizations the sharpening of conflicts was consciously avoided. For instance, in the December 17, 1956 session of the International Committee, President Boissier suggested that one of its members be sent to Austria for the occasion of the approaching visit of American Vice President Richard Nixon related to the Hungarian refugees. Paul Ruegger, the Committee's former president, suggested caution: "…it is recommended that caution be observed because of the recent criticism by Pravda." The other speakers shared this viewpoint.[321] Caution was also the chief perspective, when at the February 21, 1957 session of the Presidential Council in connection with the mass trials going on in Hungary at that time that the Geneva organization could not provide legal assistance to those affected, and its activity must be limited to the distribution of packages and the submission of search requests. For the same reason the organization did not wish to participate in the discussion about the assistance of Hungarian defendants at The International Commission of Jurists (Commission international de Juristes).[322] In the negotiations on the matter of family reunification it was constantly mentioned that one must proceed with the utmost caution.[323] It is very characteristic what said Boissier in this connection about the attitude the ICRC should have: "It is often less important to the Committee that the public or even the Red Cross societies prove it right than that it can continue to save lives and maintain good relations with the eastern countries which it has managed to restore."[324] At the July 4, 1957 session of the International Committee, Boissier recommended great patience to the participants in the negotiations about the conclusion of its assistance activities in Hungary. In his opinion "the

Consulate in Geneva (778), Embassy in Vienna (3453) and Legation in Budapest (566), official use only, 25? January 1957.

[321] ICRC Archives, Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de la séance plénière du 17 décembre 1956 à 14 heures 30, no. 13/1956, 17 December 1956. 400.

[322] ICRC Archives, Conseil de la Présidence du CICR, procès-verbal de la séance du 21 février 1957 à 9 h. 15, JdP, no. 238, 21 February 1957. 486.

[323] ICRC Archives, Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de la séance plénière du 7 mars 1957 à 14 heures 30, JPS/JMM, no. 3/1957, 7 March 1957. 22.

[324] ICRC Archives, Conseil de la Présidence du CICR, procès-verbal de la séance du 16 mai 1957 à 9 h. 15, JW/, no. 248, 16 May 1957. 629.

maintenance of contact with these countries is even greater in importance than the questions under discussion."[325] When the question arose at the August 1, 1957 session of the Presidential Council whether the organization should speak out on behalf of some of those who had been arrested in Hungary, Boissier stated: "the use of force is a customary method in some systems, against which the ICRC has never protested. […] the ICRC is not the public prosecutor of humanity."[326]

The Hungarian authorities and the leaders of the Hungarian Red Cross, who considered, at that time, the demand for the repatriation of minor Hungarian refugees to be an excellent international propaganda topic, tried to maintain "normal" ties with the International Committee of the Red Cross, despite all their pronounced criticism. According to a report presented at the August 23, 1957 conference of the National Board of the Hungarian Red Cross, "Our connection, our relationship with the International Committee can be said to be normal, and we also seek to maintain this."[327] This may be explained in part by the quest to develop a positive image for the country. In the Interior Ministry's confidential internal journal for August 1957, an article about surveillance of the ICRC in Hungary stated "We must put an end to the adversarial activity that has been uncovered. But at the same time attention must be paid to the IKRK [ICRC]'s international character. Thus we should undertake only such measures as do not harm the international interests of our people's republic." [328] This pragmatic approach is also observable in general secretary József Kárpáti's speech at the November 25, 1957 session of the Presidium of the Hungarian Red Cross: "there are a number of countries with refugees in them; in any case it is in our interest that we maintain a regular connection with the Committee so that we may have the possibility of relations with those countries with whom we do not have diplomatic

[325] ICRC Archives, Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de l'assemblée plénière du 4 juillet 1957 à 14 heures 30, no. 7/1957, 4 July 1957. 91.
[326] ICRC Archives, Conseil de la Présidence du CICR, procès-verbal de la séance du 1er août 1957 à 9 heures 15, JdP/RRB, no. 258, 1 August 1957. 786.
[327] NAH, P.2130, Magyar Vöröskereszt, Országos Központ, 1922–1999, box: 7, unit : 5, Országos Vezetőség, Ülésjegyzőkönyvek, 1957–1967. Jegyzőkönyv felvéve az 1957. augusztus 23-án tartott Országos Vezetőségi értekezletről [Minutes of the National Board Meeting held on 23 August 1957].
[328] HAHSS, 2.1. – A – 3015/1, Philipp, 1957.

relations."[329] In light of the assistance provided by the International Committee and "other political reasons", in March 1958 Kárpáti proposed that, in contrast to earlier practice, the Hungarian government and the Hungarian Red Cross provide financial support (3000 Swiss francs) toward the expenses of the ICRC.[330] The Foreign Ministry agreed with this proposal.[331] Indeed, First Deputy Foreign Minister János Péter expressed his appreciation for the work of the International Committee in his May 20, 1958 letter to Boissier about financial support.[332] The Hungarian Red Cross also sought to demonstrate its good faith in August 1958 by sending Geneva a list of the family reunification cases that had received a positive judgement: it stated that 182 persons received an emigration passport in order to travel to a close family member. The document stresses that the Hungarian Red Cross mediated in several cases of this sort.[333] The International Committee and the Hungarian society cooperated to bring home former Hungarian refugees who had fought in the French Foreign Legion and been captured by the Algerian insurgents, and also in the matter of the payment obligations for children in Hungary of Hungarian refugees.[334]

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[329] NAH, P.2130, Magyar Vöröskereszt, Országos Központ, 1922–1999, box: 2, unit: 2, Vezető testületek, Elnökség ülésjegyzőkönyvei, 1957–1962 [Executive bodies, Presidium meeting minutes, 1957–1962]. Jegyzőkönyv 1957. november 25-én megtartott elnökségi ülésről [Minutes of the November 25, 1957 session of the Presidium], 25 November 1957.

[330] NAH, P.2130, Magyar Vöröskereszt, Országos Központ, 1922–1999, box: 23, unit: 8, Külügyi Osztály, Vöröskereszt Nemzetközi Bizottsága, CICR, 1958, 101/042. Kárpáti József a Magyar Vöröskereszt főtitkára levele Péter Jánoshoz, a külügyminiszter első helyetteséhez, A Komiténak nyújtandó anyagi hozzájárulás [Letter of József Kárpáti, Secretary General of the Hungarian Red Cross, to János Péter, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Financial contribution to be provided to the Committee], 29 March 1958.

[331] NAH, P.2130, Magyar Vöröskereszt, Országos Központ, 1922–1999, box: 23, unit: 8, Külügyi Osztály, Vöröskereszt Nemzetközi Bizottsága, CICR, 1958, 101/042. Gyulai Ida, a Nemzetközi Szervezetek Főosztálya helyettes vezetője levele Kárpáti Józsefhez, a Magyar Vöröskereszt főtitkárához, Anyagi hozzájárulás a Nemzetközi Vöröskereszt Bizottságának [Letter from Ida Gyulai, Deputy Head of the Department of International Organizations, to József Kárpáti, Secretary General of the Hungarian Red Cross, Financial contribution to the Committee of the International Red Cross], 003141/1958, 16 May 1958.

[332] NAH, P.2130, Magyar Vöröskereszt, Országos Központ, 1922–1999, box: 23, unit: 8, Külügyi Osztály, Vöröskereszt Nemzetközi Bizottsága, CICR, 1958, 101/042. Lettre de János Péter, premier vice-ministre des Affaires étrangères à Léopold Boissier, président du CICR, 3141/1958, 20 May 1958.

[333] NAH, P.2130, Magyar Vöröskereszt, Országos Központ, 1922–1999, box: 23, unit : 8, Külügyi Osztály, Vöröskereszt Nemzetközi Bizottsága, CICR, 1958, 101/042. Liste des personnes ayant reçu un passport d'émigration pour rejoindre leurs proches qui ont quitté, pandant et après la contre-révolution, la Hongrie en destination de pays étrangers, K/101/10/58, 5 August 1958.

[334] NAH, P.2130, Magyar Vöröskereszt, Országos Központ, 1922–1999, box: 23, unit: 8, Külügyi Osztály, Vöröskereszt Nemzetközi Bizottsága, CICR, 1958, 101/042. Lettre de Roger Gallopin, directeur exécutif du CICR à József Kárpáti, secrétaire général de la Croix-Rouge hongroise, Genève, 30 April 1958; ICRC Archives, B AG 234 094-

The International Committee of the Red Cross played a significant role in the solution of the two chief humanitarian needs of the 1956 Hungarian crisis: assistance to the population of Hungary and to the Hungarian refugees. Its activity earned unanimous international recognition, which was of decisive importance for securing needed resources for the continued operation of the humanitarian organization. The most important actors in Hungarian refugee affairs, the international organizations (the UNHCR, ICEM, and League of Red Cross Societies) and governmental participants (the Austrian, Yugoslav, Hungarian, and American government) all required the collaboration of the ICRC.[335] It is characteristic of the great confidence of the "international community" in the International Committee, that governments and international organizations dared entrust to it their personal data on the refugees for the creation of its Geneva card file. In the course of his travels in Austria and Hungary in February 1957, President Léopold Boissier learned that "the moral authority of the Committee is very great in both Hungary and Austria."[336] On July 10, 1957 UN General Secretary Dag Hammarskjöld made an official visit to the International Committee in Geneva. In the course of the visit he reaffirmed the great appreciation for the organization that he had expressed in his message sent May 8, 1957 on the occasion of World Red Cross Day, chiefly for the successful delivery of the UN aid for Hungary.[337] What factors explain the success of the ICRC?

The International Committee made good use of the "right of humanitarian initiative" (*droit d'intiative humanitaire*) of point 6 of paragraph 6 of the Red Cross Statutes that had been adopted in 1952.[338] It acted on it to create the card file and search service for the Hungarian refugees and to offer its suggestions in the matter of family reunification. The consistent implementation of simple but very practical administrative methods perfected over the course of decades (for example uniform card system, "civilian messages") significantly increased the

002, procès-verbal d'entretien avec Mme Werber et Mlle Rivier du Service Social International, établi par J. P. Maunoir, JPM/HWr, 234(00-65), Genève, 21 October 1958.

[335] ICRC Archives, Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de la séance plénière du 7 mars 1957 à 14 heures 30, JPS/JMM, no. 3/1957, 7 March 1957. 22.

[336] ICRC Archives, Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de la séance plénière du 7 mars 1957 à 14 heures 30, JPS/JMM, no. 3/1957, 7 March 1957. 29.

[337] Annual Report, 1957, International Committee of the Red Cross. Geneva, 1958. 97-9.

[338] Perret and Bugnion, *De Budapest à Saigon*, 19-20. See the first document in the Appendix: Section 6, paragraph 6 of the Statutes adopted at the International Conference of the Red Cross held in Toronto in 1952.

effectiveness of the Central Agency of Prisoners of War. The discretion that had characterized the activity of the organization since its beginning did this, too: the ICRC always handled confidentially the personal data in its possession in order to protect the victims and their family members.[339] As we observed above, the International Committee developed a close and fruitful collaboration with responsible governments and organizations. It served the building of trust that the ICRC, as an institution with great authority, discretely informed various organizations and governments, and especially the Swiss cabinet about matters belonging to their area of activity.[340]

It was also helpful for the success of the International Committee of the Red Cross that cooperation was the dominant trait of its collection with the League of Red Cross Societies, which played the decisive role in the solution of the Hungarian refugee crisis—although the reflexes from preceding decades' conflict over their respective spheres of responsibility were still observable.[341] The international position of the ICRC had consolidated by the middle of the 1950s, and it was open to joint work with the League. In the view of Perret and Bugnion, this increased the value of the two institutions' complementary character. The process of rapprochement and reconciliation was crowned by the Nobel Prize awarded in 1963 on the occasion of the centenary of the founding Red Cross.[342] The ICRC and the League worked closely together in the case of later refugee crises as well. On the basis of the division of labor that had evolved, the former operated chiefly in war regions, in territories under military occupation, and in zones from which the population had needed to flee due to political disturbances and violence. Thus, at the time of the Algerian War the International Committee extended assistance to the refugees on the territory of Algeria, while the League supported the refugees of this war in

[339] Djurović, *L'Agence centrale de recherches du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge*, 282.
[340] For example, in connection with family reunification, on the failure of negotiations with the Hungarian government. ICRC Archives, Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de l'assemblée plénière du 6 juin 1957 à 14 heures 30, JW/RRB, no. 6/1957 June 6. 73.
[341] For example: in the case of the conference called by the League Secretariat for Vienna on July 22-24 to evaluate the work assisting the Hungarian refugees in Austria. The invited representative of the ICRC was prepared to remain in the background since the program would be "characterized by the League," "but naturally he would intervene if needed to fix matters." ICRC Archives, Conseil de la Présidence du CICR, procès-verbal de la séance du 18 juillet 1957 à 9 h. 15, JW/GH, no. 256, 18 July 1957. 761.
[342] Perret and Bugnion, *De Budapest à Saigon*, 598-9.

Morocco and Tunisia. Later, we can observe the same joint role delineation among people who had become stateless in Cambodia and South Vietnam in 1975, in 1979 during the assistance of Vietnamese refugee group called "boat people," 1994-1995 after the Ruanda crisis, and 1995 during the support of the refugees of the Chechen War.[343]

It was also an aid to success that the International Committee recognized the possibilities for broadening its activities in the Soviet bloc that were provided by the easing of international relations. At its May 1, 1958 session the ICRC debated an account of its activity with respect to the Soviet bloc since 1945. Boissier remarked: "it appears that, as far as the ICRC is concerned, the iron curtain has been lowered." He named three examples: assistance in Hungary after the suppression of the revolution of 1956; three missions sent to East Germany, in which they were able to visit prisons housing political prisoners; and the International Conference of the Red Cross held in New Delhi in 1957, in the course of which the Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the Soviet Union withdrew its invitation to hold the next International Conference in Moscow in favor of Geneva, so that the organization's centennial could be "appropriately celebrated" in 1963. It was the general opinion at the session that the Committee should make use of the "new atmosphere" to intensify and develop its connections with the Soviet bloc's Red Cross societies and governments and do everything to increase the observable confidence in the ICRC. In order to create and strengthen personal relationships, efforts were made to invite the representatives of these Red Cross societies to lengthier visits in Geneva.[344] In the second half of the 1950s many countries of the Soviet bloc made a financial contribution to the International Committee.[345] At the International Conference in October-November 1957 the earlier attacks of the countries of the Soviet bloc against the ICRC did not continue. Under the influence of the moderation shown in examining the matter of political prisoners the Committee's connection with socialist countries improved and it was accepted to some degree in their circle. They

[343] Harouel, *Histoire de la Croix-Rouge*, 115.
[344] ICRC Archives, Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, procès-verbal de la séance plénière du 1er mai 1958 à 14 heures 30, MBB/GH, no. 7/1958, 1 May 1958. 353, 355-6, 363.
[345] Annual Report, 1957, International Committee of the Red Cross. Geneva, 1958. 112-3.

recognized its nonpartisanship, accepted its good services in the most decisive moment of the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.[346]

In the course of its decision making, the International Committee of the Red Cross had to take into account many, often mutually contradictory perspectives and interests in order to act successfully. It continuously considered the impact of its decisions in the Cold War force field. It was necessary to show flexibility and understanding toward the Hungarian government, at the same time it was necessary to discretely inform the Western government and build a trusted connection with the American diplomatic administration. For the sake of effective action and for the sake of universalism if represented, it had to maintain a negotiating relationship with both sides of the Cold War confrontation.

[346] Perret and Bugnion, *De Budapest à Saigon*, 597-8. On the role played by the ICRC in the Cuban Missile Crisis see Fischer, 2001.

Summary Conclusions

The League of Red Cross Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross, acting in accord with their respective, historically developed areas of responsibility, participated significantly in the solution of the Hungarian refugee crisis of 1956. The League played an active role in direct assistance to the refugees in their countries of first asylum, that is in Austria and Yugoslavia, then in the course of their further transport, and then finally through the national Red Cross societies in their reception in the countries of final settlement. In the course of these phases the League was at the center of care for the Hungarian refugees.

The ICRC practiced its traditional functions in organizing the refugees' card file, the search and message sending service, repatriation, especially the sensitive matters of support for underage refugees returning home and family reunification. These were areas of decisive importance for fleeing individuals, which as the result of these questions' confidential nature were little known by international public opinion. All the same, they made up only a small part of the Committee's activity on behalf of Hungary. The preponderant majority of the organization's energy was occupied in the interest of the population, in assistance within the territory of Hungary on behalf of the UN.

All three elements of the Red Cross—the League, the national Red Cross societies, and the International Committee—were decisively present in the assistance to the "Hungarian people" initiated by the resolutions of the UN General Assembly.[347] The effectiveness demonstrated in the course of this activity and the resulting success increased the authority of both Red Cross organizations, strengthening the further deepening of their collaboration.

There were many contributing factors to the observable, successful intervention of the League and the ICRC in the Hungarian affair. The Red Cross adjusted sensitively to the Cold War international environment and power relations, and in the course of its negotiations it showed flexibility in applying the humanitarian principles of the Red Cross. The two organizations built

[347] See the UN General Assembly's Second Extraordinary Emergency Session of November 4-10 and resolution 1006 (ES-II), accepted at plenary session 571, 9 November 1956. United Nations Digital Library: https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/208410, assessed 25 November 2022.

relations of trust with decisive state actors, with the Austrian, Yugoslav, and especially the American government. Building cooperation with intergovernmental international organizations was indispensable, especially with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM).

It reflects the significance of the work of the League of Red Cross Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross in the Hungarian humanitarian crisis of 1956 that it has left a deep impact on the institutional memory of both organizations.

Document Appendix

Document No. 1
Statuses Adopted at the International Conference of the Red Cross at Toronto in 1952

XVIIIth International Red Cross Conference, Toronto, July–August 1952. Proceedings. Part V: Statutes of the International Red Cross and Rules of Procedure of the International Conference of the Red Cross. (English text as approved by the Drafting Sub-Committee of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross). 161–164.

Statutes

of the International Red Cross

(Adopted by the XVIIIth International Red Cross Conference)

Article I

1. The International Red Cross shall comprise all National Red Cross Societies recognized in accordance with Article VI of the present Statutes, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies.

2. The supreme deliberative body of the International Red Cross shall be the International Conference. The International Conference of the Red Cross shall be composed of delegations of duly recognized National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies, delegations of the States parties to the Geneva Conventions and delegations of the International Committee of the Red Cross and of the League of Red Cross Societies.[348]

3. The International Conference, subject to the provisions of the present Statutes, shall be governed by its Rules of Procedure.

Article II

1. The International Conference shall have power to take decisions within the limits of the present Statutes, make recommendations and express wishes.

2. The Conference shall be responsible for ensuring unity in the work of the National Societies, the International Committee and the League.

[348] As an abbreviation, the titles “International Conference of the Red Cross”, “National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies”, “International Committee of the Red Cross” and “League of Red Cross Societies” will be replaced by the expressions “International Conference” (or “Conference”), “National Societies”, “International Committee” and “League”. [Footnote in the document.]

3. It may assign mandates to the International Committee and to the League and make proposals concerning the humanitarian Conventions and other international Conventions relating to the Red Cross.

4. It alone shall be competent to revise and interpret the present Statutes and Rules of Procedure and to take the final decision on the differences of opinion referred to in Article X.

5. It may not deal with political matters nor serve as a forum for political debate.

6. It may not modify either the Statutes of the International Committee or those of the League. Similarly, the International Committee and the League shall take no decision contrary to the Statutes of the International Red Cross or to the resolutions of the Conference, nor any decision contrary to the agreements concluded between them and confirmed by the Conference.

7. The Conference shall elect its Chairman.

Article III

1. The International Conference shall normally meet every four years. It shall be convened by the Central Committee of a National Society, or by the International Committee, or by the League, under a mandate conferred for the purpose by the previous Conference or by the Standing Commission provided for in Article IX. As a general rule, favourable consideration shall be given as far as possible to any offer made during a Conference by a National Society, the International Committee or the League to act as host to the Conference for its next session.

2. As an exceptional measure the date of the Conference may be advanced at the request of the Standing Commission or of the International Committee or of the League or of at least one third of the duly recognized National Societies.

Article IV

1. During each International Conference there shall be meetings of the Council of Delegates and Board of Governors of the League.

2. The Council of Delegates shall be composed of delegates of duly recognized National Societies, delegates of the International Committee and delegates of the League. The Council shall elect its Chairman.

3. The functions of the Council of Delegates shall be:

(a) to meet, prior to the opening of the Conference, in order to propose the names of persons to fill the posts of Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, Secretary General and Assistant Secretaries General; these proposals shall be submitted to the Conference,

(b) to determine the order in which questions and proposals submitted to the Conference are to be brought up for discussion,

(c) to give an opinion upon, and, where necessary, take decisions in respect of such questions and proposals as may be referred to it by the Conference or by the Standing Commission.

4. The Constitution and the powers of the Board of Governors are laid down in the Constitution of the League. The Board of Governors shall furthermore give an opinion upon, and, where necessary, take decisions in respect of such questions and proposals as may be referred to it by the Conference or by the Standing Commission.

5. The Chairman of the Conference, the Chairman of the Council of Delegates and the Chairman of the Board of Governors shall, as a rule, be three different persons.

Article V

1. When the Board of Governors meets in the interval between two International Conferences, the Council of Delegates shall meet at the same time and in the same place if one third of the duly recognized National Societies or the International Committee or the League or the Standing Commission so request.

2. The Council of Delegates at any such meeting may give an opinion upon, and, where necessary, take decisions in respect of such questions and proposals as may be referred to it by the National Societies, the Standing Commission, the International Committee or the League.

3. When the Council of Delegates or the Board of Governors meet outside the sessions of the International Conference they shall take no final decision on any question which, according to the present Statutes, is within the exclusive competence of the Conference, nor any decision contrary to the resolutions of the latter, or concerning questions already settled by the Conference or reserved by it for the agenda of a forthcoming Conference.

Article VI

1. The International Committee of the Red Cross is an independent institution, governed by its own Statutes and recruited by co-optation from among Swiss citizens.

2. It maintains the fundamental and permanent principles of the Red Cross, namely: impartiality, action independent of any racial, political, religious or economic considerations, the universality of the Red Cross and the equality of the National Red Cross Societies.

3. After having assembled all pertinent data, it announces the recognition of any newly established or reconstituted National Red Cross Society which fulfils the conditions for recognition in force.

4. It undertakes the tasks incumbent on it under the Geneva Conventions, works for the faithful application of these Conventions and takes cognizance of complaints regarding alleged breaches of the humanitarian Conventions.

5. As a neutral institution whose humanitarian work is carried out particularly in time of war, civil war, or internal strife, it endeavours at all times to ensure the protection of and assistance to military and civilian victims of such conflicts and of their direct results. It contributes to the preparation and development of medical personnel and medical equipment, in co-operation with the Red Cross organizations, the medical services of the armed forces, and other competent authorities.

6. It takes any humanitarian initiative which comes within its role as a specifically neutral and independent institution and intermediary and considers any question requiring examination by such an institution.

7. It works for the continual improvement and diffusion of the Geneva Conventions.

8. It accepts the mandates entrusted to it by the International Conference of the Red Cross.

9. Within the framework of the present Statutes and subject to the provisions of Article VII, it maintains close contact with National Red Cross Societies. It also maintains relations with Governmental authorities and any national or international institutions whose assistance it considers useful.

Article VII

1. The League of Red Cross Societies is the international federation of the National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies. It is governed by its own Constitution.

2. The object of the League is, within the framework of the present Statutes and subject to the provisions of Article VI, to encourage and facilitate at all times the humanitarian action of the National Societies and to assume the responsibilities incumbent upon it as the federation of those Societies.

3. For this purpose, the functions of the League are:

(a) to act as the permanent organ of liaison, co-ordination and study between the National Red Cross

Societies and to co-operate with them,

(b) to encourage and promote in every country the establishment and development of an independent and duly recognized National Red Cross Society,

(c) to be the official representative of the member Societies in the international field on any matters in connection with Resolutions adopted by the Board of Governors, and to be the guardian of their integrity and the protector of their interests,

(d) to accept the mandates entrusted to it by the International Conference of the Red Cross.

Article VIII

1. The International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies shall maintain contact with one another in order to co-ordinate their activities as far as possible and avoid overlapping.

2. There shall be a meeting at least once a month of representatives of the International Committee and of the League to ensure such contact which may furthermore be assured by a representative of the International Committee accredited to the League and a representative of the League accredited to the International Committee in accordance with their respective Statutes.

Article IX

1. The Standing Commission of the International Red Cross shall comprise nine members, namely:

(a) five members elected in a personal capacity by the International Conference of the Red Cross and holding office until the close of the following Conference; the Standing Commission itself shall fill any vacancy which may occur by appointing a new member, also in a personal capacity,

(b) two representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross, one of whom shall, in principle, be the President,

(c) two representatives of the League of Red Cross Societies, one of whom shall, in principle, be the Chairman of the Board of Governors.

2. The Commission shall invite to its meetings, in an advisory capacity and at least one year before the International Conference is to meet, a representative of the National Society which is to be host to that Conference.

3. Should an elected member be unable to attend a session of the Standing Commission, he may appoint a substitute.

Article X

1. The Standing Commission, in co-operation with the organization acting as host to the Conference, shall establish the provisional programme and agenda and make the arrangements for the next International Conference. It shall fix the date of the Conference or select its place of meeting should this not have been already decided by the preceding Conference or should exceptional circumstances so require.

2. During the interval between sessions of the Conference and subject to any final decision the Conference may take, the Standing Commission shall settle any difference of opinion which may arise as to the interpretation and application of the present Statutes as well as any questions which may be submitted to it by the International Committee or the League in connection with differences that may arise between them.

3. It shall also be the duty of the Standing Commission between sessions of the Conference to ensure the co-ordination and harmony of the efforts of the International Committee and of the League. With this object in view it shall examine, at its meetings, all questions which are of general interest to the Red Cross and concern the activities of both institutions.

4. In this connection and subject, where necessary, to final decision by the Conference, the Standing Commission shall take any measures which circumstances demand. The independence and initiative of the various bodies of the International Red Cross in their respective spheres shall, however, continue to be strictly safeguarded.

Article XI

1. The Standing Commission shall have its headquarters in Geneva.

2. As a general rule it shall meet at its headquarters in ordinary session twice yearly. If exceptional circumstances so require, it may meet in another place selected by its Chairman and approved by a majority of its members.

3. It shall meet in extraordinary session when convened by its Chairman or at the request of three of its members.

4. A quorum of five members shall be necessary. All decisions shall be taken by a majority vote of the members present.

5. The Standing Commission shall elect from among its members for the period between one Conference and the next a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman. The Chairman may appoint one of the elected members to assist him and to act as Secretary of the Commission.

Article XII

1. The Chairman of the Standing Commission, the President of the International Committee and the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the League, or, failing them, deputies appointed beforehand by each of them, may freely consult one another or meet in cases of emergency to take whatever measures may be required.

2. As a general rule the Three Presidents shall meet once between the half-yearly sessions of the Standing Commission and in addition whenever one of them shall so request, in order to examine any matters which have been brought to their knowledge or discussed at the periodic meetings between the International Committee and the League.

3. The Presidents shall, at the following session of the Standing Commission, submit a report on such measures as they may have taken.

Article XIII

1. The Rules of Procedure of the International Conference shall be adopted, in conformity with the present Statutes, by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Conference present and voting and after the views of the International Committee and the League have been ascertained.

2. The Conference, following the same procedure, may amend the present Statutes. Any proposal to revise the Statutes must, however, be placed on the agenda and its text sent to the National Societies, to the International Committee and to the League at least six months in advance.

Article XIV

1. The Present Statutes shall come into force on September 1st, 1952.

2. They shall replace the Statutes adopted by the XIIIth International Conference. Any earlier provisions which conflict with the present Statutes are hereby repealed.

Document No. 2
Document prepared by the Hungarian Red Cross for the Foreign Ministry on the difficulties for the repatriation of minors.

NAH: XIX-J-l-j, TÜK Vegyes, 1945-1964, box: 314, unit: 2 (May 30, 1960).

Difficulties Arising for the Return Home of Young People Who Fled from Hungary

There is a very great number of countries where serious problems arose from the obstruction of the return home of Hungarian young people who fled from Hungary. We are able to show through selected examples that, besides the universal adversarial propaganda and its intimidating influence, individual official bodies in the most varied countries are taking measures to obstruct their return home.

N.S.[349] is a young man in Argentina born in 1944. His parents want him to return to Hungary. The family with whom the boy is staying are also ready to return home, and all steps have been taken to help the young boy return home. But the decision of the Argentine government about the granting of permission to emigrate has been delayed for more than six months. The parents also requested the intervention of the Argentine Legation in Budapest, but they are delaying the granting of permission under various pretexts.

In the case of R.M. the perverted conception presents itself whereby the label "political refugee" is forced even upon young people who are still children. Her father took the girl, born in December 1946, to Sweden without the knowledge of her mother. The father landed in jail because of his immoral behavior and the mother naturally demands that the 13-year-old girl be sent home. Rather than send her home, various Swedish authorities reply to our requests by saying that the father requested asylum for himself and his daughter, therefore they consider it appropriate to place the child with a Swedish foster family. We should note that the father himself expressed the desire that the girl return home to her mother where she would enjoy an appropriate environment and upbringing.

V.I. was born in 1950. Her father took her with him to the United States. Then the father committed suicide. Already before this the girl had been placed with various families because the father was unable to take care of her. The girl's mother lives under very orderly conditions in Hungary and rightly demands that the American authorities send the girl home, whose father took her out of the country without the mother's knowledge and against her will. The people around her make her afraid of returning home, an initiative begun with the American Red Cross has not yet achieved results because the American authorities are preoccupied with determining the legal status of the 10-year-old girl rather than returning her without delay to her mother. The Hungarian Red Cross was forced to request the intervention of the High Commissioner for Refugees.

It ought to have been the task of the Austrian authorities to send young fugitives, but especially those who are practically children back home. But it's well known they permitted

[349] We provide only the initials of the names mentioned in the document.

thousands of children to travel around the world, often against the written intention of the parents, rather than assisting their way home.

Sz. M, a girl born in 1943, already in Austria rethought her childish thoughtlessness and wanted to go home. This is clear from the letters in the possession of the Hungarian Red Cross. But her efforts had no result, and when her uncle in New Zealand learned of it he had the girl brought out after she had languished in various camps. The girl since then still longs for home, to the extent that she is suffering from neurosis. Now her relatives in New Zealand are taking measures to send her home. The uncle in New Zealand clearly writes in his letter to the Hungarian Red Cross: "After they did not permit the child to go home from Austria, as her uncle I had her brought to me." This tendency appears to dominate in Austria. The Hungarian authorities have still not managed to achieve results in the case of the 11-year-old girl S.M. because, as the father writes, the Austrian authorities don't take the wishes of the child into account in the case of repatriation. The relatives of the girl in Austria keep her under their influence and scare her, but the father protests against permitting the misled wishes of a child of this age to be decisive because at this age a child is not capable of independent judgement. Under no circumstances does legal practice take the wishes of a child to be authentic.

Children's protecting organizations and institutions jealously seek to prevent the return home of young people who were under their supervision or placed by them. Connections of relatives in Hungary with these young people are conspicuously difficult and practically the only way to reach them is through the protective organization. A flagrant example for this is the case of Sz.F., a boy born in 1943, whom the children's protective service placed with a farming family. For a long time even the Canadian Red Cross, like in other similar cases, was only able to contact her through the children's protective services. Despite the boy's repeatedly expressed desired to return home, the family holds him back and the so-called "children's protective" organizations do everything possible to deter the child from returning home. The High Commissioner for Refugees writes in his letter of April 14, 1960: "The Canadian authorities offered to remain contact with him, to guarantee his social welfare and especially to be of assistance if he leaves the farm to look for a job."

L.I., a boy born in 1942, is in a Salesian boarding school in Australia. We see from a letter he wrote his mother that he would like to come home. He writes that for this reason he contacted "the Swiss Red Cross" (he is thinking of the International Red Cross). We called his situation to the attention of the League of Red Cross Societies and requested their support. The Australian Red Cross informed the League that the boy never desired to return home, which does not correspond with the facts. The matter is not yet closed. The Hungarian Red Cross continues to work toward the resolution of the child's fate but it must be mentioned that the return home of young people from institutions is difficult. In the above case a further difficulty is the complete indifference of the Australian organizations.

H.L., a boy born in 1943, is preparing to come home. His repatriation papers have been in order for a long time, and his mother sent the necessary ship and train tickets for him from Hungary. Yet it is astonishing that according to the information of the Australian Red Cross that the shipping company or official organizations were incapable of finding someone who would take responsibility for the boy on the ship. H.L. had to postpone his departure several times and

somebody is still being sought who will take responsibility for him. After a year and a half "it occurred to them" that the mother can make a declaration that she doesn't require somebody take responsibility, and this case the boy may depart. Naturally the mother has no special anxiety about the travel of the boy, who is now 17. She gave the permission immediately and now the only question is what new problem will arise.

Difficulties arise for young people finding themselves abroad not only concerning the return home. Often they are in situations and circumstances where the parents lose track of them and aren't able to maintain contact. Out of necessity they often change their place of residence. Cases arose where the young people simply disappeared from Austria. For instance B.Z., who was born September 20, 1945 and for whom the last fixed trace was in Austria; allegedly the boy went to France from there. The Hungarian Red Cross had him sought there, but without result. Now the High Commissioner for Refugees is seeking him on the basis of a personal description.

Sz.A. was born October 12, 1942. He disappeared in Austria, the Hungarian Red Cross sought traces of him in about ten countries, Belgium among others. A negative answer arrived from everywhere. This year the boy gave a sign of life from Canada and wrote that he had just now arrived there, had been in Belgium since 1957. What can be the reason that the Belgian authorities were unable to give information about the boy and that allegedly there was no trace of the fact that he was living in Belgium for years?

For young people with unsettled lives the only proper solution is that they return to their country, their family, their work, their studies. A decisive majority of the young people who have returned home adapt easily to the home environment, Hungarian society facilitates their path, finding work, the continuation of studies. Only an insignificant number of young people require any kind of support from the Hungarian Red Cross. For those who nevertheless need some help, most the time it's because an illness acquired abroad that they visit. The Hungarian Red Cross cared for V.E. for this reason, who had a nervous breakdown and came home from France with her small child born abroad. But many are similar to them. Much larger is the number of those who have no need of support, but just come to the Hungarian Red Cross to express their thanks and affection.

V.J. and L., boys born in 1941 and 1945, came home from Austria. The older one is training to be a carpenter, the younger one is still in school. M.T. is a girl born in 1945, who was with her parents in Australia. She now no longer has to spin clothes in a laundromat, as she did at the age of 12 in Australia, but is living her happy childhood and is a diligent school student.

S.P. is a boy born in 1940 who came home from Argentina; he works as a mechanic's apprentice as his old workplace. K.P. was in Austria, and is now a university student at home. K.J. is a boy born in 1940, returned home from Sweden, and now an auto mechanic trainee. S.L., boy born 1940, returned home from Holland where he worked in a brewery and suffered a serious eye injury. In Hungary he became a postal employee and pursued technical studies. K.S. is a clever and quick-witted salesman in a large store that everyone likes. B.L. is a boy born in 1944 arrived home not long ago from West Germany but is already planning his future: he will be a car and motor repairman in a state farm where his father drives a tractor. It is not

uncommon to read in the foreign press of the crimes of which Hungarian young people are the victims or perpetrators, and perhaps there is no foreign receiving country whose courts were not forced to deal with Hungarian youths committing small or large crimes. Rootless young people living far from home and homeland easily become the prey of an immoral or criminal environment. It is indisputable that most of the young people who are now sitting out their sentences in various countries' jails would not have come to this if they were home or came home. For the Year of the Refugee the legal and social assistance of refugees was announced. The receiving countries call the defected young people refugees without distinction. This definition may not be considered correct, because Hungary even today considers those young people to be its sons and daughters who truly consider their homeland to be their homeland and want to come home. The various foreign offices and organizations will provide the greatest assistance to these young people if they seek to promote their return home. Young people living now their fourth year abroad in an environment unfriendly to their homeland are deterred from returning home with alarming tales, manipulated, intentionally malicious press reports, and other media techniques. At least in many cases this shoots beyond the target and the young people themselves don't believe it and return home. Naturally the scare stories roll off the backs of only the more sober, intelligent, clearer observers. Many young people have been scared away from the road home by the wretched heroes of the pen who became instruments of propaganda and now bear on their consciences the odium of those misfortunes and crimes that could have been avoided and may still be avoided if the young people return to their family circles.

This is not about refugees, but deceived young people, whom every organization and office should help to fund the way home.

As part of the family reunification activity of the Red Cross Organizations, the Hungarian Red Cross is working on the matter of the emigration of the family members and first of all underage children whom the defectors left in Hungary.

We have sad experiences in these matters. Those parents who now request their children be let out often, irresponsibly, left them to their fate four years ago. Back then many crying, freezing children were found in forests along the border whose parents abandoned them in order to flee more easily. The parents locked many children in their homes and they were taken in by compassionate neighbors, sometimes only after days, and taken to relatives or orphanages. Others, whom we might call more conscientious, entrusted their sons or daughters to relatives or more often elderly, sick grandparents with modest incomes. These parents were only thinking of themselves when they left their homes; they were not thinking of what would happen to their children who were dependent on their love and support.

Despite these circumstances, the Hungarian Red Cross supports the cause of the reunification of separated families, paying attention to the interests of the minors.

When a foreign Red Cross organization, parents living abroad, or relatives in Hungary ask us to provide assistance in some matter, we always readily respond to the request. We examine the child's circumstances: the Red Cross takes the steps it considers most productive in a given case while taking into account social, health, housing, and other perspectives. The guardianship

authorities know the situation of children well, their family circumstances, the departed parents' material circumstances. They are the appropriate people to appoint the children's guardians and decide about the children's fate.

Cases also arise where the guardian authorities, even the relatives in Hungary find the parents unsuited for raising the children whom they had abandoned. Many of them didn't bother caring for their children after an early age and left them to the grandparents or other relatives. It happens before and now that they may provide no material for the child's upbringing. Others entrusted their children to the care of the state although it was within their means to care for them themselves. Among others, this was the case of N.E., a defector in England. His two sons were cared for by the state and now live under the best conditions with a family that is devoted to the children and provides the best conditions for their upbringing. Naturally neither the foster parents nor the guardianship authorities consent to the departure of the children to follow their irresponsible mother. The situation is similar, among other cases, with K.K., 9, and M.S., 5-year-old children, whose grandparents did not permit them to join their parents because they do not consider the children's future to be assured with their parents.

On the other hand, there are also parents who were similarly careless when they left their children here, but various problems were behind their actions: illness, lack of housing, or family conflict. They thought they could solves these problems by leaving. These people in many case have since regretted their thoughtless actions, yet started a new life abroad that they do not want to overturn. Their only desire is to have their thoughtlessly abandoned child with them and to provide it with a good upbringing and living conditions. Naturally these children may be judged differently.

Starting from these considerations, the Hungarian Red Cross examines these cases as carefully as possible and sees as fundamental not only the child's early home conditions, but together with the guardianship authorities also the family life of the parents.

In this manner the Hungarian Red Cross has assisted in the reunification of many families. Thus, the 5-year-old little B.Gy. was able to travel to the parents in Sweden, 7-year-old Sz.J. to Norway, 14-year-old P.E. to Switzerland, the P. siblings to Austria, 7-year-old T.G. to West Germany, 7-year-old M.E. or 6-year-old K.J. to Canada, the B. siblings to Argentina; but we could mention many more. The Hungarian Red Cross informs the receiving countries' Red Cross societies of the children's travel and has presented the International Committee of the Red Cross [sic!] a list with the names of not one but indeed many hundred names of those who may travel to their relatives who have fled from Hungary.

Budapest, May 30, 1960

Document No. 3
The family reunification case of R.A.350—two related documents

[350] We provide only the initials of the names mentioned in the document.

NAH: P.2130, Magyar Vöröskereszt, Országos Központ, 1922–1999, box: 233, unit: 118, iktatott iratok 1959–1960 [filed documents 1959-1960]

A)

B. F.né levele a „Nemzetközi Vöröskereszt Vezetőségéhez" [Mrs. B. F.'s letter to the " Leadership of the International Red Cross"], 850/110/41/59, akta szám [file number]: IV.2358 (Budapest, February 3, 1959)

To the leadership of the International Red Cross

A worried mother and grandmother turns to you for help.

I am the caregiver and provider of R.A., my 5-year-old grandchild. I have several times submitted a passport petition for the above named grandchild, unfortunately without result as each time I received a negative response.

Now too there is a new petition from me with an 850-forint document stamp on it, to which even today I have not received a response.

The first marriage of my daughter, who lives in Switzerland, was not successful. Her husband left her, and after living separately for two years they divorced. After their divorce she made the acquaintance of a driver who is a Swiss citizen, and married her.

My daughter is devoted to her child and did not discard her because she loves her child, only back then did not take her into the unknown. Now she has a proper home and she is able to give her child a proper [illegible word].

As the grandmother who daily cares for the child I see that the child suffers from the absence of maternal love.

I am the mother of four children and grandmother of five grandchildren. One son works as a miner in Oroszlány, is the father of 3 children and the mother is sick with TB. One of my grandchildren is even today in treatment at the Farkasgyep school sanatorium since 4 months ago. My grandchild's mother is periodically referred to the sanatorium for 5-6 months because of her illness. My two smaller grandchildren are institutionalized while their mother is in the sanatorium.

As their nearest relative, I'm not even able to visit my grandchildren because their sanatorium is in a rural district.

In such circumstances I'm unable to help either my son or his family. With consideration of health perspectives I need to consider my own family.

A despairing mother and grandmother asks you to help my grandchild mentioned above and permit the child to go out to Switzerland.

The happiness and peace of four families depends on your decision.

Please help me by giving consideration to my letter and supporting my request.

Budapest, February 3, 1959

Respectfully,

Mrs. B.F.

B)

Study of Living Conditions in the case of R.A., 72/959
Foreign Department of the Hungarian Red Cross
[…]
Subject: Living Conditions of R.A.

With reference to your letter 850/110/41/1959/BM, in which you request a study of the living environment for the 5-year-old girl R.A., we report the following:

The child lives with its grandmother, Mrs. B.F. […]. It is a two room, full equipped, well furnished, pleasant apartment.

B.F. is an employee of the Interior Ministry with a salary of 1800 forints. He lives with his wife, son, and 5-year-old granddaughter R.A. in the apartment.

B.F.'s daughter, Mrs. R.R., neé B.E., after divorcing her husband, departed abroad in 1956 and within a short time married. She left her daughter in the care of her mother.

Her husband is a foreign citizen and therefore cannot come, nor does she desire to do so. She is willing to support the expense of care, upbringing, and emigration of R.A. and has already certified this in an official document.

The child's father, R.R. (cartographic draftsman) […] is providing for his daughter.

It is the observation of Mrs. V.M., who undertook the above study of living conditions as district inspector housing and health, that R.R. does not approve of his daughter being sent abroad. It is her recommendation that we should listen to the father in this matter.

With comradely greetings,

Mrs. F.S, district secretary