

# NEWS OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES

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## Germany

### FEDERAL REPUBLIC

*As announced in last month's issue of the International Review, the President of the ICRC recently paid a visit to Germany. In Bonn, he attended the ceremonies which marked the resignation of Dr. Weitz, President of the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic; he then proceeded to Arolsen, where he visited the International Tracing Service<sup>1</sup>.*

*On the occasion of the ceremony held in Dr. Weitz' honour, which followed the General Assembly of the German Red Cross, Mr. Léopold Boissier gave an address which we are pleased to publish below<sup>1</sup>.*

“ It gives me great pleasure to take part in this impressive ceremony, for it enables me to pay a twofold tribute: to a man, the President, Dr. Weitz, and to an institution, the German Red Cross.

It is often difficult to speak of someone who is your colleague and friend, for friendship cannot be analysed. It is the result of a multitude of affinities which develop in an atmosphere of mutual confidence and in the desire to fulfil to the best of our ability the task assigned to us. Is Dr. Weitz not one of the best friends of the International Committee of the Red Cross and of its President—one whom we have always welcomed to Geneva with affection and respect?

From the outset, Dr. Weitz impressed us by the double aspect of his rich personality: on the one hand, his keen sense of reality enabled him to lead the German Red Cross towards concrete and immediate action. There is no better training for a position which demands constant action than the administration of a large city, where manifold problems requiring instant decisions, common-sense and knowledge of one's fellowmen have to be solved each day.

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<sup>1</sup> *Plate.*



At the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic in Bonn. *Mr. Boissier, President of the ICRC, Mr. Lübke, President of the Federal Republic, Dr. Weitz, Mrs. Lübke.* (From left to right).

#### THE PRESIDENT OF THE ICRC IN GERMANY (FEDERAL REPUBLIC).

At the ITS in Arolsen. *Mr. Boissier with Mr. Burckhardt, Director of the ITS, on his left and Mr. de Cocatrix on his right.*



Dr. Weitz placed his knowledge of his fellowmen and their needs at the service of the German Red Cross, thus making it a living and efficient community, in which each member works with conviction and enthusiasm.

However, on the other hand, Dr. Weitz revealed the second aspect of his personality by putting into practice the words of the Swiss writer Alexandre Vinet : " One has to take man where he is, but not leave him there ". Thus, he reminded the members of your Society and the German people that the Red Cross is based on universal principles which give it its unique authority and meaning. These principles have enabled it to survive all the disasters which have befallen humanity during the past hundred years.

A perfect example of this is the remarkable revival of the German Red Cross after the last war, when it once again recovered the initial stimulus which it had received from Henry Dunant and which had led to the creation of the first National Societies in Württemberg and Oldenburg. Even before 1950 the Landesverbände contributed actively to the great task of reuniting families, which brought together 400,000 persons who had been lost or cut off from their relations. Since then, the German Red Cross has co-operated with the International Committee in all the different fields of its work.

As regards the principles of our movement, the German Red Cross has always made a study of its moral and legal foundations, and the Geneva Conventions have always occupied an important place in the Society's publication. It has also constantly aided and supported the work of the International Committee. This work is often difficult, particularly when it implies acting on behalf of the victims of civil wars, revolutions or internal disturbances which are still convulsing parts of the world. In such cases, the International Committee is obliged to penetrate the sovereignty of States in order to demand fair treatment for those who have taken arms against them.

On every occasion, the International Committee has been generously supported by the German Red Cross : in Hungary, during the revolution in the Lebanon, on the occasion of the Suez Crisis, in Algeria and at present in the Congo. I should like

to express my gratitude to the German doctors who, in answer to our appeal, have carried out such magnificent work in a country where insecurity and fear reign. We assigned these doctors to particularly dangerous posts because we knew that we could count on them. We were right in doing so. Everywhere in the world the German Red Cross is at work efficiently and generously.

A few weeks ago a Delegate of the International Committee in the Congo had to visit one of the most insecure regions of the country. He was accompanied by an escort of Ghanese soldiers. He got into the jeep of the commanding officer, which was followed by a lorry full of soldiers, all armed to the teeth. After a while the Ghanese officer turned to him and asked: "Don't you have any weapons?"—"No", he replied, "a representative of the Red Cross is never armed". The officer was silent for a while, then he turned to the man from Geneva again: "Then you are without protection?" "Of course", answered our Delegate, showing him the little cross on his jacket. The officer said nothing, then suddenly he took off his revolver, threw it to his orderly and commanded the escort to return.

Alone and unarmed, the Delegate and the officer continued towards the unknown and danger.

Thus the whole Red Cross movement continues to move forward, fulfilling its duty. It has confidence in the future, since it is in itself a hope. And hope is what we all need in these times."

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## Iceland

The Secretary-General of the Icelandic Red Cross made a broadcast early in the year of which a summary is given below:

Progress in technical methods has, to some extent, reduced the dimensions of our globe and the nations of the world may be compared to families of varying sizes which are becoming increasingly conscious of their joint responsibilities. No nation can remain