

Syria

One of the ICRC delegates, Mr. Pierre Gaillard, recently returned from a trip to several countries in the Middle East. At Damascus he visited the Syrian Red Crescent and met its leading members; they acquainted him with the National Society's activities. We have pleasure in publishing below some details which he gave us on his return to Geneva.

The main tasks assumed by the Red Crescent in Syria are medical and medico-social in nature. They consist of :

1. **Dispensaries.** — In Damascus a dispensary gives treatment each day to twenty-five to thirty patients. This service which is exclusively for the poor is free of charge, on presentation of a card issued by the municipal authorities. A State laboratory carries out free analyses.

Similar Red Crescent dispensaries provide the same services at Aleppo and Homs.

2. **Milk distribution.** — The utility of this type of activity is well known. The distribution centre set up by the Red Crescent in Aleppo is attended regularly by many mothers.
3. **Ambulances.** — Day and night service is provided in Damascus, Aleppo and Homs. In the capital, ambulance transport is free. Two vehicles, purchased partly with a grant from the Shôken Fund, have been allocated to this ambulance service which is auxiliary to the official ambulance service.
4. **Emergency measures.** — In serious situations calling for immediate action the Iraqi Red Crescent intervenes. For example, when a cholera epidemic broke out last summer in Irak, the Red Crescent vaccinated part of the population.¹ In view of the

¹ Cf. *International Review*, December 1966.

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likelihood of the situation becoming alarming in Syria, as a result of the proximity of affected areas, the Syrian National Society immediately acted ; its nurses and first-aiders took part in the anti-cholera vaccination of more than ten thousand people in Damascus. ¹

5. **Home nursing.** — Mention must be made of the initiative taken by the Red Crescent in 1966, on the recommendation and with the assistance of the League, to start courses on this subject ; each course is attended by a dozen pupils and is given by instructresses recently trained in Switzerland.

In addition, and although an activity undertaken by the State, the dissemination of knowledge on the Geneva Conventions is given special attention in Syria. Courses on the Conventions are given in officers training schools and will soon be introduced also into nursing schools ; in medical schools the provisions of international humanitarian law are explained and included as an examination subject.

¹ *Plate.* Anti-cholera vaccinations in Damascus by the Syrian Red Crescent.