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ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/
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REPATRIATION OF GREEK CHILDREN

Note by the Secretary-General: The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Members of the General Assembly a communication dated 29 May 1953 which he has received from the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies. This communication relates to the repatriation on 28 April 1953 of a number of Greek children from Yugoslavia to Greece, which was carried out by the international Red Cross organizations in pursuance of paragraph 7 of resolution 618 (VII) of 17 December 1952.

COMMUNICATION DATED 29 MAY 1953 FROM THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS
AND THE LEAGUE OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES

Geneva, 29 May 1953

(1) Arrival of the children

The group consisted of forty children, accompanied by the delegation of the Yugoslav Red Cross. It was met at the frontier station of Idomeni by Colonel de Meyer, our representative, who was accompanied by the Secretary-General of the Greek Red Cross of Northern Macedonia and by five nurses who were to look after the children on their arrival and in transit. The train, which was greatly delayed, arrived at Salonika on 27 April 1953 at 6.30 a.m. The repatriated children were immediately taken by omnibus to the usual premises, which had been specially arranged to receive them.

(2) Composition of the delegations

Yugoslav Red Cross:

Mrs. M. Dedijer, Member of the Executive
Committee of the Yugoslav Red Cross

Dr. V. Cupic

Greek Red Cross:

Mr. C. Anghelakis, Vice-Chairman of the
Red Cross of Northern Macedonia

Dr. T. Demitriades

Mr. C. Georgacopoulos, Chairman of the Greek Red Cross, and Mr. G. Mindler, Secretary-General, attended a meeting held at Athens on 2 May 1953.

(3) Repatriation operations

These operations were carried out in accordance with the usual procedure on 28 April. The official documents were drawn up by two commissions, one for health control and the other for verifying the particulars relating to birth, descent etc. of the children; the documents were then countersigned by members of the delegations of the Yugoslav, Greek and International Red Cross. These preliminary operations were completed on the same day by the signature of a procès-verbal to which were annexed duplicates of the certificates concerning the handing over and receipt of each child individually.

(4) Arrival of relatives

With the exception of several relatives who arrived independently on 28 April, the majority were brought to Salonika on 29 April by the Greek Red Cross.

(5) Handing over of children to relatives

This took place on 29 April in accordance with the procedure previously followed. Each relative signed a document certifying that he had received his child through the agency of the International Red Cross. They signed in the presence of the representative of the Governor of Salonika, who certified the authenticity of the signatures on the spot.

One child, Douketis Milka, whose repatriation had not been announced, was handed over to a relative who had come to Salonika to fetch her own child. The certificate of receipt for this child, signed by the father, Douketis Stoghiannis of Tyrnovo-Florena, reached us subsequently through the Greek Red Cross of Northern Macedonia, which had made itself responsible for obtaining it. The father's signature was authenticated by the president of the communal authority of his place of residence.

It was not considered necessary to carry out any further medical examinations, since the state of health and nutrition of the children examined was found to be generally satisfactory.

The Yugoslav delegation was present at some stages of the arrival of the relatives and the handing over of the children. Having been invited by the

Greek Red Cross to go to Athens, it had the opportunity of conferring with the Chairman, Mr. Georgacopoulos, at a meeting held on 2 May, when they considered in particular the cases of the seventeen children whose repatriation had originally been announced, but who were not among the children repatriated. According to the explanations given by the Yugoslav Red Cross, some of these children had failed to report at the time of departure and had given no explanation of their absence. Others, influenced by relatives living in Yugoslavia, had at the last moment refused to return. Some wished to join relatives in other eastern countries or in Australia. The Yugoslav Red Cross could not use force but could only try to persuade the children to return to the relatives who claimed them. The Greek Red Cross will inform the relatives of the children's decisions and will suggest that they should write to them in order to persuade them to return to Greece.

According to the lists provided by the Yugoslav Red Cross, the group was to have consisted of fifty-five repatriated children; two children were added at the last moment and seventeen failed to arrive, so that in all forty children, twenty-one boys and nineteen girls, were repatriated on 27 April.

Some of the children were met by parents, others by relatives, as shown below:

- 19 children were handed over to their fathers
 - 11 children were handed over to their mothers
 - 10 children were handed over to their closest relatives.
- The ages of the repatriated children are given below:
- Over 17 years: 20 children
 - 13 to 16 years: 12 children
 - 6 to 12 years: 8 children

(6) Departure of relatives and children

Some of the relatives and children returned to their home villages independently on the evening of 29 April. The others used the transport organized by the Greek Red Cross and left on 30 April.

(7) General remarks

The number of Greek children repatriated from Yugoslavia to Greece now stands at 578. Further repatriations are contemplated but their organization

depends in certain cases on the transmittal of documents which are still lacking. In other cases, the children themselves wish to postpone their return to Greece for various reasons, such as the completion of studies or apprenticeship. Several of the older children live with relatives resident in Yugoslavia whom they are reluctant to leave for the sake of returning to Greece.

Our representative referred in particular, as he did in the case of the sixth repatriation, to the excellent atmosphere in which the various operations were conducted and to the perfect arrangements made by the Greek Red Cross. The repatriated children were given affectionate and efficient care. The visit of the delegation of the Yugoslav Red Cross to Athens, where the members were the guests of the Greek Red Cross, has led to the establishment of contacts which cannot fail to produce favourable results.

For the League of Red Cross Societies,

(Signed) G. MILSOM
Under Secretary-General

For the International Committee,
of the Red Cross,

(Signed) Paul KUHN
Assistant Director of the
Executive Division
