

## RED CROSS RADIOCOMMUNICATIONS SET UP BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

*At the foot of the rocks, worn smooth by the desert winds and burning to the touch, the surgeons of the ICRC field hospital at Uqhd in the Yemen are consulting each other about a wounded case. The X-ray apparatus has just broken down and it will not be possible to operate. How many days will pass before the news reaches Geneva and how many weeks before spare parts are received?*

*One of the ICRC's short-wave transmitting and receiving posts installs its antenna above the camp<sup>1</sup>. At the headquarters of the International Committee in Geneva the main station is on watch and soon wireless engineers collect around the microphone. They ask questions, detect the fault and give instructions to the electrician who, 3000 miles away, then manages to make the necessary repairs. The surgeons can now continue to operate and save lives.*

*Many other examples could still be found on looking through the log-book of HBC 88, the ICRC's main station, where a series of rapidly transmitted abbreviations summarizes the lives of these teams which bring the Red Cross to all the corners of the world. Swift action has to be taken since the victims of conflicts and disasters cannot be kept waiting. Appeals and replies cross each other with lightning speed. Now delegations are no longer isolated and they can maintain direct contact with the International Committee, inform it of their needs and receive instructions, wherever they may be. To-morrow, a world network of emergency Red Cross radiocommunications will ensure the immediate transmission of messages and the effective organizing of relief.*

*The success of these radiotelegraph and radiotelephone links is the result of methodical preparation and close co-operation between men of the Red Cross, voluntary technicians and representatives of the telecommunications services. Since 1943 the ICRC had been interested in the possibility of developing broadcasting for the transmission of*

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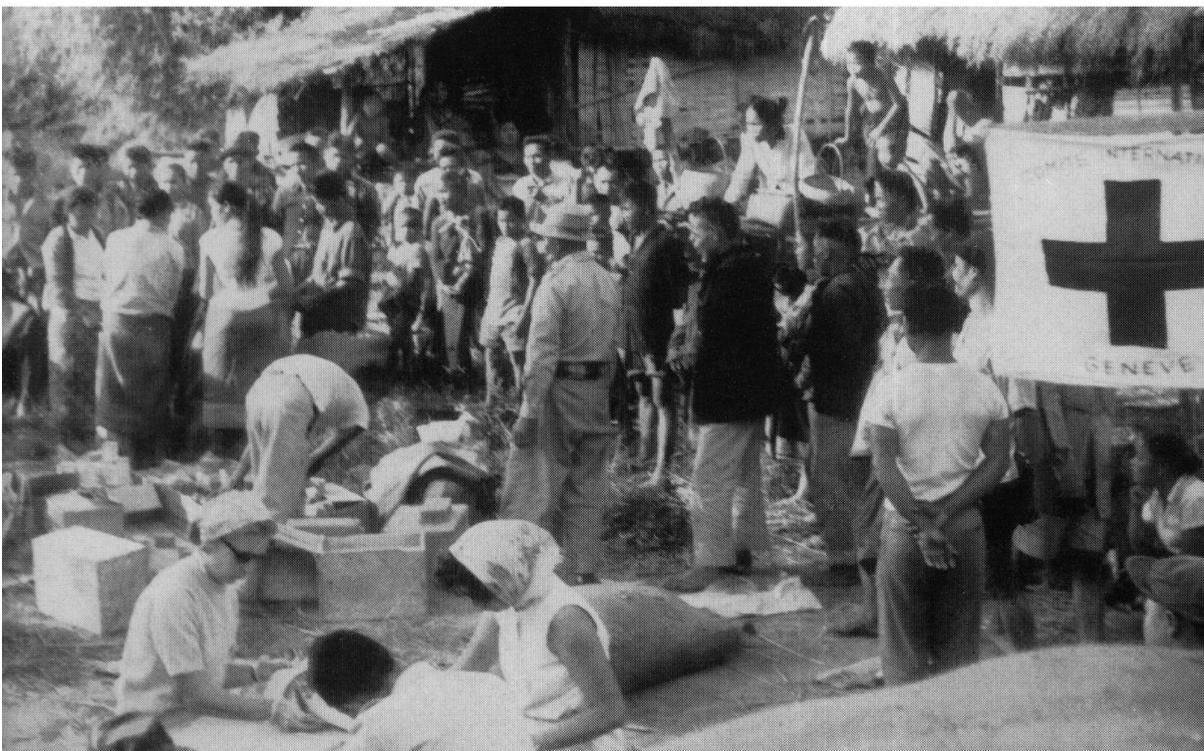
<sup>1</sup> Plate.



Dr. Jürg Baer, delegate of the ICRC, handing milk and soap to a refugee.

## LAOS

ICRC relief distributions organised with the help of the Laotian Red Cross (Left foreground, Mrs Oudom Souvannavong, wife of the National Society's President).

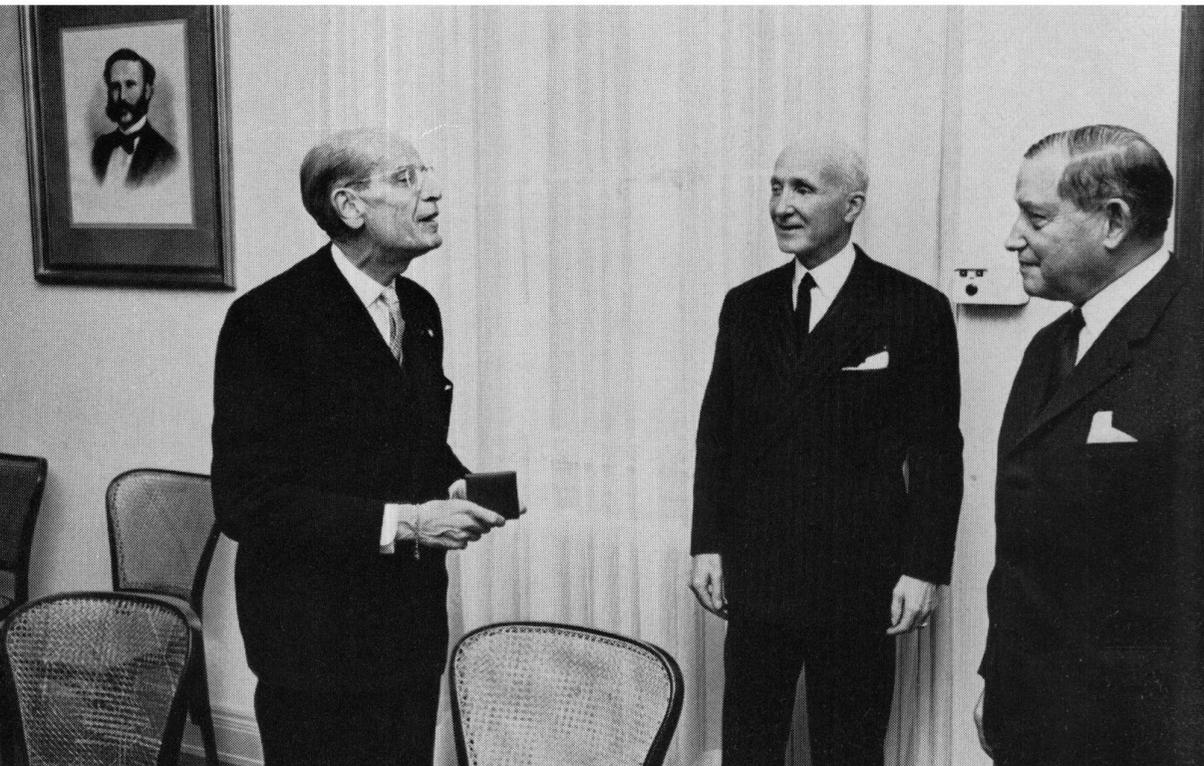




Meeting of experts on civil defence, convened by the ICRC.

## IN GENEVA

Mr. de Rueda receiving the ICRC silver medal (right and centre: Mr. Gonard and Mr. Boissier, President and Member of the ICRC respectively).





From the ICRC wireless station at Geneva...

Photos Jean Zbinden - Gen

...messages are sent across the air.





ICRC wireless station installed at Uqhd in the Yemeni desert.

*messages concerning prisoners of war and, in agreement with the Swiss authorities, obtained the use of a wave-length on the 41 metre band. Regular broadcasts which were made for several months from the autumn of 1944 enabled thousands of displaced persons to find their families again. The allocation of this special wave-length of 41.61 m or 7210 kc has since been confirmed by the International Telecommunication Union. In 1959, the ICRC in its capacity as observer at the Administrative Radio Conference meeting in Geneva, submitted a report motivating and supporting a suggestion of the German Red Cross providing for certain frequencies to be set aside for Red Cross use.*

*The Conference unanimously adopted Recommendation No. 34, recognizing in particular "that for international relief work it is necessary that the National Red Cross Societies involved be able to communicate with each other, as well as with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies", and recommended that the necessary frequencies be assigned for this purpose.*

*The equipment has indeed proved its worth. An emergency network exists in embryo. It is now time to associate National Societies to the organization of a world-wide Red Cross emergency radiocommunications network<sup>1</sup>.*

*In agreement with the League, the International Committee will send the National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies, before the end of the year, a circular giving all the necessary technical data to establish this radiocommunication network.*

P. E. B.

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<sup>1</sup> We would recall that the *Revue internationale* published in March 1960 (English Supplement) an article on "The Red Cross and the Administrative Radio Conference". This Conference was held in Geneva from August to December, 1959 and its agenda included several questions of direct interest to the Red Cross.

This article contained the text of *Recommendation No. 34 relating to the use of radiotelegraph and radiotelephone links by the Red Cross organizations*, which was unanimously adopted by the plenary Assembly of that Conference.