

ICRC Relief Activities

In our March issue, we gave details of relief consignments sent by the ICRC to those countries where ICRC delegates are working. Over 15 million Swiss francs worth of foodstuffs, pharmaceutical supplies and medical equipment were forwarded in 1972 to various countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East.

In addition the ICRC delegations throughout the world purchased supplies locally. Goods worth 800,000 Swiss francs were bought in this fashion and distributed by delegates in the course of their mission. Figures for the different operational areas are as follows:

Africa: purchases for a total value of Sw.Fr. 7,800 were made in various countries for detainees visited by the ICRC.

Latin America: medicaments and blankets were purchased for detainees visited by the ICRC in Bolivia, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru. Total cost amounted to Sw.Fr. 19,330.

Asia: the ICRC spent Sw.Fr. 153,500 on locally purchased relief supplies. The breakdown of this figure gives the following: Sw.Fr. 27,000 for foodstuffs, medicaments and clothing for refugees in the Khmer Republic; Sw.Fr. 100,300 for sundry relief supplies for displaced persons in Laos; Sw.Fr. 26,200 for goods purchased in the Republic of Vietnam and distributed to prisoners of war and civilian detainees (Sw.Fr. 13,500), hospitals and orphanages (Sw.Fr. 12,700). In addition, the ICRC delegation handed Sw.Fr. 50,000 to the Red Cross of the Republic of Vietnam.

Middle East: a sum totalling Sw.Fr. 561,330 was spent on locally purchased relief supplies, distributed in the following countries: Israel and occupied territories—POW aid, Sw.Fr. 73,100, aid to local branches of the Jordan Red Crescent Sw.Fr. 66,700, and aid to civilian detainees and the population Sw.Fr. 266,300; Jordan—assistance to detainees Sw.Fr. 17,850; Lebanon—sundry relief supplies Sw.Fr. 2,800; Arab Republic of Egypt—POW aid,

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Sw.Fr. 59,200; Yemen Arab Republic—Sana'a artificial limb workshop Sw.Fr. 50,200, and sundry relief supplies Sw.Fr. 6,600; People's Democratic Republic of Yemen—aid to detainees and to their families Sw.Fr. 11,180, and aid to Dhofar refugees Sw.Fr. 5,500; Syria—POW aid and sundry relief supplies Sw.Fr. 1,900.

Ten million messages in one year

The ICRC Central Tracing Agency (CTA) is doing a big job in the Asian sub-continent.

In one year, that is from March 1972 to March 1973, the Geneva office dealt with 24,000 inquiries (in round figures) divided into three categories: inquiries from the families of missing civilians or army men (8,000), inquiries about prisoners of war and their families (10,000), and inquiries received mainly from civilians in Pakistan and India (6,000). Moreover, the CTA has computerized 270,000 index cards.

In the autumn of 1971, the CTA opened offices in Islamabad, New Delhi and Dacca, in close co-operation with the National Red Cross Societies. The most important is the Dacca office, which has four branches in the interior and some forty local employees. The New Delhi office has seven local employees, and the Islamabad office four. Each of the three offices is supervised by a CTA expert from Geneva.

From March 1972 to March 1973, the three offices transmitted to and from Pakistan and Bangladesh 10 million letters, namely 8.5 million between prisoners of war and their families and 1.5 million civilian family messages.
