

## SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

### News Items

#### News of a ship's crew in Algeria

At the request of shipowners whose headquarters are at Monaco, the ICRC approached the Algerian Red Crescent, in order to obtain news of the cargo "Hassibal", flying the Moroccan flag, which had been seized during the night of October 30-31, 1963, in the port of Nemours in Algeria.

That National Society in reply informed it that the persons concerned, who had in the meantime been visited by their respective consuls, had been handed over in custody for the purposes of enquiry.

The International Committee has offered its services to that National Society, should the need be felt, to organize an exchange of family messages.

#### Compensation to victims of pseudo-medical experiments

The neutral Commission appointed by the ICRC to pronounce upon the claims of the victims of pseudo-medical experiments inflicted upon them in German concentration camps, to whom the German Federal Republic had decided to make financial payments, met again at the end of November and the beginning of December.

The Commission consisted of Mr. Jean Graven, President of the Supreme Court of Appeal, Professor at the Faculty of Law and Rector of the University of Geneva, assisted by Dr. Alex. F. Müller, Professor of Physiopathology at Geneva University and Dr. Sylvain Mutrux, Assistant Medical Director of the University Psychiatric Clinic of Bel-Air. The Polish Red Cross was represented by two observers: Miss Danuta Zys, Head of the Foreign Relations Department and Dr. Jerzy Howkumski, medical delegate. The rapporteur was the doctor-delegate of the ICRC, Dr. Jacques de Rougemont. In addition, a German doctor, Dr. Götz, an expert in matters of compensation, attended the debates in the capacity of observer.

The Commission had at this fourth session to pronounce upon a further lot of some hundred claims submitted by Polish victims. The files had been prepared by the Polish Red Cross and examined by Dr. Jacques de Rougemont. The latter had previously gone to Poland to meet the victims and discuss with the Polish doctors who had cared for them.

The Commission discarded only one case and requested additional information for certain others. For all cases which were accepted, it is now for the ICRC to approach the Government of the German Federal Republic with a view to asking for the payment of amounts due to these beneficiaries.

In Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia, the National Red Cross Societies have had an appreciable number of claims for compensation placed before them. These are at present under examination.

### **Centenary of the first national Red Cross**

Mr. C. J. Burckhardt, member of the ICRC, was present at Stuttgart on November 30, 1963, at the commemorative ceremonies of the Centenary of the first National Red Cross Society, that of Württemberg.

He delivered a speech there in which he recalled the importance of the humanitarian action undertaken throughout the world by the ICRC over the past hundred years, and stressed the moral significance of that action. Mr. Burckhardt was accompanied by Mr. Ammann, Head of the Relief Section of the ICRC.

### **The ICRC and family gatherings in Berlin**

Mr. Beckh, delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, has just completed another mission in the two parts of Berlin.

The object of that mission was to continue the efforts, which the International Committee of the Red Cross had started in the autumn of 1961, to enable members of the same family to meet again, having been unable to do so because of the division of the city into two parts.

It having been understood that it would not take part in the negotiations, the ICRC had pleaded for this humanitarian cause with both sides.

The International Committee, which takes pleasure in such a solution found during this holiday period, is pursuing its efforts with a view to obtaining a definite settlement of this humanitarian problem.

### **After twenty years of separation**

Day after day the Central Tracing Agency at ICRC headquarters in Geneva receives urgent appeals from people who have lost all contact with their families for the past 15 to 20 years.

They had become gradually resigned never to discover the fate of those near to them, when all of a sudden, on reading some article concerning the activities of the International Committee of the Red

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Cross, or on hearing from a neighbour the satisfactory results obtained from an enquiry made by the Central Agency, they are filled with great hope. They then decide to appeal to the ICRC. Such a step at once causes them much painful impatience. They had for many years bravely borne silence and doubt, but the few weeks which are necessary for the Central Agency to make its enquiries seem like an eternity to them.

And yet the task is arduous, when it is a question of tracing persons missing after many decades, and then based on information which is often imprecise. It is not unusual for the enquirer himself to be unable to give definite information concerning his own identity. Let us judge this in the light of an individual case, by examining the request presented by Mrs. Eugenia Muller writing from Paris, where she is living with her husband. She believed that she was born on 25.5.1936 in a small village in the Crimea where her family of German origin was living, consisting of her father, Adam Bauer, her mother called Rosa and five children, Rosa, Lina, Adam, Eugenia and Anna. During the course of the war, the village was evacuated and the Bauer family had to take to flight. During these painful travels, the little Eugenia, having been infected with typhus, had to be sent to hospital. On the following night, the military hospital to which the child had been admitted was obliged to move to the rear with all its patients. In the chaos of war, Eugenia was from then on completely separated from her family concerning whose fate she knew nothing. After having been moved from one place after another she was, at the time of the armistice, taken in and looked after by a French officer who brought her to his own country. In the years which followed, he did everything possible to help her find her parents, but without success.

What did the Central Agency do ? It first of all communicated with the appropriate office in Germany, entrusted with the task of tracing persons of German origin, missing in eastern Europe. After checking its files that office informed the ICRC that it possessed no information on a Bauer family having lived in the Crimean village indicated by Mrs. Muller. On the other hand, it took a census of persons with the name of Bauer originating from a locality with an almost similar name, but situated in the Ukraine. Among these, there is a certain Adam Bauer, living in Westphalia, who had made an enquiry of the German Red Cross concerning the fate of his wife and children.

The Central Agency immediately made contact with the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic. The latter soon confirmed that it did indeed possess a file on the Bauer family, whose composition has many similarities with the facts as supplied by Mrs. Muller. It was then possible to put Mr. Adam Bauer in touch

with his wife and three of his children who had returned to the Ukraine. The youngest, Anna, had died during the exodus. As for the young Eugenia for whom her father had been searching for so many years, her date of birth was completely different from that given by Mrs. Muller.

The German Red Cross therefore requested the Central Agency to make contact once more with Mrs. Muller in order to obtain from her, if possible, a photograph of her and children to send to Mr. Adam Bauer to enable him to make a more certain identification.

The photograph in question arrived from Geneva, together with a letter written by Mrs. Muller's husband. The latter pointed out that his young wife was expecting a child and she should be spared any emotion since she was anxiously waiting the result of the enquiries which are on foot. He would not like her to have to be subjected, in her condition, to the shock of cruel disappointment in the event of a confusion between two homonyms occurring.

The photograph upon which all hopes rested was sent to Germany. Mr. Adam Bauer studied it. He seemed to recognize his daughter Eugenia, but did not want to trust to his own impressions. In order to remove all doubt which could still exist, he asked that a photograph of the Bauer family be sent to the young woman.

In the archives of the Central Agency, the file closed with a letter full of happiness from the Muller couple on their return from Westphalia where they have just met Mr. Adam Bauer. In him, they have found a father again.