

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

News Items

The ICRC and the Goa Conflict

As it made it known in a press release published on January 4, the International Committee of the Red Cross attempted, in accordance with the Geneva Conventions, to go to the aid of the victims of the conflict which had just broken out between India and Portugal. In the company of Major-General Lakshmanan, Secretary-General of the Indian Red Cross, Mr. C. Pilloud, Deputy Director for General Affairs of the ICRC, went to Goa on December 24, where he made contact with General Candeth, Commander of the Indian forces. The latter authorized him to go at will to the places in which the prisoners were located, to visit them and to bring them any humanitarian aid which he considered necessary.

The delegate of the International Committee thus visited Panjim, Marmagao and Margao, three camps for military prisoners and Portuguese interned civilians to whom the local Red Cross branch had distributed Christmas parcels. These temporary camps have since been abandoned and the prisoners transferred to the camp of Ponda (territory of Goa).

During his stay at Panjim, Mr. Pilloud visited the wounded collected in the military and civilian hospitals, in which notably the Captain of the frigate "Alfonso de Albuquerque" was receiving treatment.

Mr. Pilloud intervened with the Indian authorities for them to communicate the official list of prisoners and internees to the Central Tracing Agency, at the ICRC headquarters.

At the same time, the ICRC concerned itself in the fate of Indian nationals interned or regrouped in Mozambique, at Macao and Timor ; it hopes to obtain authorization from the Portuguese Government to visit them.

Furthermore, it intervened with the Portuguese Red Cross on behalf of several passengers of Indian nationality, arrested on landing at the airport at Lisbon.

On the other hand, Mr. J. P. Maunoir, ICRC delegate, accompanied by Colonel José Victor Mateus Cabral, Secretary-General of the Portuguese Red Cross, visited on January 16 the interned

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Indian civilians held by the Portuguese authorities at the Caxias prison, near Lisbon.

Mr. Maunoir had previously handed to the Portuguese Red Cross and Government the reports of visits made by a delegate of the ICRC on December 25 and 26 to Portuguese prisoners of war and interned civilians detained by the Indian armed forces.

Mission of the ICRC in Central Africa

The rapid political and social evolution which is taking place in most of the African countries sometimes causes serious trouble and there are often many victims in the armed forces as well as amongst the civilian population. This is a matter of concern to the ICRC, especially as the essential precepts of humanitarian law—and notably the Geneva Conventions of 1949—still appear to be but very imperfectly known in many of these countries. Furthermore, the action of the Red Cross on behalf of the victims of conflicts of every description often encounters many different obstacles.

In the light of this situation, the ICRC has entrusted its Vice-President, Mr. Samuel Gonard, a former Corps Commander in the Swiss Army, to undertake a study mission in certain countries and territories of Central Africa. Mr. Gonard will be accompanied by Mr. Georges Hoffmann, for a long time in the service of the ICRC, who has just completed one year in the Congo as a delegate.

The object of this mission is to examine the methods of ensuring, without any distinction especially of race, a certain protection to the victims, military and civilian, of international or internal conflicts which may break out in Africa, and to study the possibilities of Red Cross action on behalf of the victims of such conflicts. The observations and conclusions of this mission will be intended for the exclusive use of the ICRC, which will then decide upon the possible measures to be taken in future.

Mr. Gonard and Mr. Hoffmann will leave Geneva at the beginning of February 1962. They will stay in Africa for about two months. They will be visiting the following countries : Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Kenya, Uganda, Ruanda-Urundi, Congo (Leopoldville) and Congo (Brazzaville).

Aid to the resettled populations in Algeria

The International Committee of the Red Cross has taken further measures to intensify its aid to the resettled populations in Algeria. Over a period from 1959 to the end of 1961, it has handed over relief valued in excess of 1,187,000.—Sw. Fr., mostly for the women and children in the resettlement centres.

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The last of these consignments, made in December, comprised 20 tons of powdered milk. The ICRC hopes to succeed in sending 30 tons of powdered milk before the end of February, as well as various gifts from National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Most of these relief supplies sent by the ICRC are distributed on the spot by the mobile teams of the French Red Cross.

In order to help the latter to cope with the heavy tasks devolving upon it in this sphere, the ICRC proposes to intensify the search for relief in the coming months. It has also decided that an assistant-delegate should go and second the ICRC representative detailed to carry out this relief action in co-operation with the French Red Cross.

Following on the ICRC's mission

The International Committee of the Red Cross has handed to the French Government the report drawn up as a result of the IXth mission carried out by its delegates in Algeria in November and December 1961. Shortly after this document was presented, Mr. Pierre Gaillard, who had been head of the mission, and Mr. Pierre Boissier, delegate of the ICRC in Paris, had discussions with senior officials of the French Government, and in particular of the penal administration, bearing on the steps to be taken in connection with the suggestions contained in the report.

During the course of their mission, the delegates of the ICRC visited 51 places of detention. In 16 of these, activists of European stock were detained.

Closing of the ICRC Delegation in Cairo

The delegation maintained by the ICRC in Cairo since the beginning of the Second World War in 1939, with an interruption of 4 years from 1952 to 1956, closed down on December 31, 1961. The ICRC delegate in Cairo will remain several weeks longer on the spot in order to liquidate the delegation's work.

During the twenty years or so of its existence, the delegation has accomplished humanitarian work on an extensive scale, carrying out in time of war, and after the hostilities, the tasks deriving from the Geneva Conventions. It had been subsequently induced to offer its services to stateless persons wishing to emigrate, and to contribute, in co-operation with the heads of the various communities in Egypt, towards the solution of their humanitarian problems requiring an international action.

The ICRC continues its action in Laos

On returning from his mission to Saravane (see Information Notes No. 7, p. 4) Dr. Jürg Baer, ICRC doctor-delegate, welcomed Mr. L. G. Stubbings to Vientiane. Mr. Stubbings, who is Secretary-General of the Australian Red Cross and a delegate of the League of Red Cross Societies, was in Laos from November 18 to 22. Dr. Baer explained the International Committee's programme of action and the aid received from National Red Cross Societies on behalf of the victims of the conflict and particularly refugees. The ICRC delegate in Saigon, Mr. Werner Muller, also made very effort to facilitate Mr. Stubbings' mission on behalf of the flood victims in the Republic of Viet Nam.

On December 1, Dr. Baer left for Savannakhet with Mrs. Nouphath Chounramany, President of the Women's Committee of the Laotian Red Cross, where both visited the military prisoners being nursed in the civilian hospital and handed over parcels to them.

They then went to the camp for military and civilian prisoners and distributed relief supplies. The ICRC delegate was able to talk to several detainees freely and without witnesses.

Dr. Baer handed over to the Womens' Committee of Savannakhet clothing for Laotian and Thai refugees lodged in a camp. He also handed over six cases of blood plasma (a gift from the Netherlands Red Cross) to the civilian hospital and the military hospital, as well as to the medical post at Doughen.

Having returned to Vientiane, Dr. Baer left again on December 9 to make a tour in Attopeu province. During his flight he made short stops at Pakse and Saravane, where he left relief supplies for the hospitals and refugees.

At Muong May (capital of Attopeu province) Dr. Baer had clothing, condensed milk, tins of sardines, pepper and salt distributed to 854 Kha refugees living on the outskirts of the town. On the following day he handed various gifts to the sick and wounded in the civilian hospital, the military hospital and the Philippine Hospital (Operation Brotherhood), where he also left eight cases of blood plasma, a gift from the Netherlands Red Cross.

On December 12, Dr. Baer took part in a meeting organized by the Chief of the province (the Chaokhoueng) with a view to setting up a provincial Committee of the Laotian Red Cross at Muong May.

Dr. Baer then returned to Vientiane and left again, on December 22, for Luang Prabang, the royal capital, accompanied by Mr. André Durand, ICRC general delegate in the Far East, and Mrs. Nouphath Chounramany, President of the Women's Committee of

the Laotian Red Cross, with a consignment of more than two tons of relief supplies.

These supplies were distributed to the Meo refugees who now number almost 2,000 and who are in the town and on the outskirts.

Blood plasma was also handed over to the civilian and military hospitals, while members of the Women's Committee distributed parcels to the sick and wounded being nursed in these establishments.

It should also be mentioned that on December 18 the ICRC sent a memorandum to various National Red Cross Societies on the relief action carried out in Laos since August. This document states what remains to be done if the work undertaken on behalf of the refugees, the sick and wounded, and other victims of the events, is to be successfully concluded. Following this preliminary report, several Societies have already sent fresh contributions to the International Committee.

Despatch of artificial eyes.—The International Committee of the Red Cross has just despatched a consignment of twelve artificial eyes to the military hospital at Vientiane. The hospital's chief medical officer has confirmed the arrival of this consignment for which he has expressed his deep gratitude.

The ICRC visits interned activists

A delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross visited the Centre of assigned residence at St-Maurice l'Ardoise in the Gard Department (France) on January 16. This camp, which had previously contained interned Algerians, now holds about fifty activists.

The delegate spoke without witnesses with ten internees who were thus able freely to express their views on the conditions of their detention.

Following on this visit, the ICRC, in accordance with its custom, will communicate its observations and suggestions to the competent French authorities.

Repatriation of Korean Residents in Japan

In November and December, 1961, ICRC delegates accompanied by representatives of the Japanese Red Cross and the Japanese authorities went to a number of prefectures in order to verify the conditions on which the Koreans residing in Japan can register for departure to North Korea. It had, in fact, been anticipated in September 1959 that the members of the Korean colony in Japan (about 600,000) would have the choice of three possibilities : remaining in Japan, returning to North Korea or going back to

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South Korea. It is to guarantee the freedom of choice that a special ICRC mission has been operating in Japan for two years and that delegates of the International Committee have been present at registrations and at embarkation.

At each of these visits the ICRC delegates have been received by the Red Cross and the authorities responsible for the organization of those being repatriated. They have examined special cases submitted to them, have given their advice on the problems of family resettlement which departure for North Korea raises, and they have made the appropriate recommendations to the Japanese Red Cross and Japanese officials.

In all, 404 visits were made to 46 prefectures in 1961.

Nearly 75,000 people left Japan for North Korea between December 1959 and December 1961. The average number of departures in the first weekly convoys was about a thousand. That of the last 10 departures was about 250. From November 20, 1961, one boat instead of two has been making the crossing between Niigata and Chongjim.

The repatriation operations are due to be continued officially in this form until November, 1962.

Departures which were suspended on December 16, 1961, are due to restart on January 19, 1962.

Between Indonesia and the Netherlands

With the suspension of postal communications between Indonesia and the Netherlands, the ICRC offered its services to the National Red Cross Societies of these two countries for the purpose of transmitting family messages.

The International Committee's proposal having been accepted by both sides, the Central Tracing Agency has been entrusted to proceed with this exchange of news.

This consists of brief messages of a family character which those concerned write on forms of which the specimen has been drawn up by the ICRC, and which are made available to the public by the National Societies. Once the form has been completed, the National Red Cross forwards it to the Central Agency, which arranges for its transmission to the National Society of the country of destination. Replies use the same channel in the opposite direction.

Urgent communications are telegraphed by the Agency.

The Netherlands Red Cross has published notices in the press drawing the attention of those who have relatives in Indonesia to the ways in which this transmission of messages can be made.

Compensation to victims of pseudo-medical experiments

As we mentioned in our Information Notes Nos 1 and 5, the International Committee had accepted to act as intermediary for the handing over of financial assistance to Polish and Hungarian victims of pseudo-medical experiments carried out in concentration camps under the Nazi regime.

We would point out that payment was made on December 4, 1961, through the channel of the ICRC, of sums allocated to the victims in accordance with decisions taken by the neutral Commission which met last August to examine the substantiation of the claims and the amount of compensation.

Relief consignments

To Algeria : The ICRC presented 30,000 packets of cigarettes to a value of 15,000 Swiss francs to the General Delegation of the French Red Cross in Algeria. This gift was distributed amongst the hospital establishments on the occasion of the feast-days at the end of the year.

To Austria : Having received a consignment of clothing from a Swiss factory valued at 10,000 Swiss francs, the ICRC placed this gift at the disposal of the Austrian Red Cross on behalf of refugees and the needy.

To Hungary and Poland : The International Committee continues to despatch special pharmaceutical products to these two countries. As we have already stated¹, requests for medicaments from sick persons or their doctors are sent to our institution through the Hungarian or the Polish Red Cross.

Until December 31, 1961, these two National Societies received supplies of medicaments to a value of 32,700 (for the Hungarian Red Cross) and 102,900 Swiss francs (for the Polish Red Cross).

This action has been continuing over the past four years thanks to contributions from the British and the Swiss Red Cross, and also to the International Committee relief fund.

To Tunisia and Morocco : In December, the ICRC sent two consignments of medical samples, of a total weight of 1,000 kg., to the "Algerian Red Crescent" at Tunis and Rabat. This gift was earmarked for Algerian refugees.

¹ See English Supplement, June 1960, to the *Revue internationale*.

Artificial limb workshop at Sarajevo

Several years ago, the ICRC had supplied artificial limbs to the war disabled in various countries. Sometimes, these invalids had to be fitted up elsewhere than in their own countries and the different types of make have thus been distributed more or less everywhere. One of these models had been introduced into Yugoslavia where it was hoped it could be reproduced. Thanks to a scholarship offered by the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic, two Yugoslav artificial limb workers were able to learn this manufacture which had started at Sarajevo and for which the ICRC had made a donation to the Yugoslav Red Cross of machinery and tools.

This National Society invited the Head of the War Disabled Section of the ICRC to visit the artificial limb workshop at Sarajevo. During the course of this visit in the autumn of 1961, Miss Pfirter met the two Yugoslav workers who now manufacture the most up-to-date artificial limbs and obtain excellent results, thanks to their newly-acquired knowledge and to the machinery supplied by the ICRC. This workshop is engaged in setting up the disabled of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It produces about 3,000 orthopaedic appliances each year. This high figure can be explained by the fact that each war disabled has the right to one new artificial limb free of charge, supplied by the Government, every two years, whilst the civilian disabled obtain one every four years at the expense of the Social Welfare Service.

The workshop works in close co-operation with the orthopaedic centre for functional rehabilitation and social reintegration. The amputated are transported by cars between the orthopaedic hospital, the rehabilitation centre and the artificial limb workshop, thus enabling the disabled to continue their exercise throughout the period of their being set up.

The work which was started at Sarajevo under the aegis of the Yugoslav Red Cross is at present developing and the ICRC is pleased to have made its contribution towards the success of this enterprise.

Red Cross Centenary

In order to associate the public with the Centenary of the foundation of the Red Cross, the Centenary Commission has published its first press release. It mentions in broad outline the various events which will be organized for this occasion. It also draws attention to the fact that the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Red Cross will be commemorated in the 87 countries in which National Red Cross Societies exist. The work of the Exhibition

continues to progress in a satisfactory manner. The philatelic group has drawn up its regulations for participation in the philatelic section, regulations which will be sent to interested stamp-collectors.

As regards the Day of Commemoration, the procession has been the subject of special study. The reception and accommodation sub-committee has convened a combined meeting with the representatives of the Society of Hotel Proprietors of Geneva, since the organizers are paying special attention to this question. Finally, in order to keep the personnel of the International Red Cross institutions and the Swiss Red Cross fully informed, a further meeting was held at the League's headquarters.

Guests of the ICRC

From mid-December to the beginning of January, the International Committee had the honour of successively welcoming the following : Dr. Tazar, Director of the Blood Transfusion Service of the Indonesian Red Cross and Miss S. Abdoerachman, Director of the Administrative services of that Society; Father Robert Moons, former chaplain to the welfare services in the Leopoldville diocese ; Mr. E. C. Graham, Director of Publicity of the British Red Cross ; Mr. Efisio Nonis, Director of the External Affairs Department of the Italian Red Cross ; Mr. C. Rouard-Watine, Head of Publicity of the French Red Cross ; Mr. E. P. Vanni d'Archirafi, Ambassador and newly appointed Permanent Delegate of Italy to the European Office of the United Nations, accompanied by Mr. Marcello del Drago, former Ambassador and Italian representative to the ICRC ; Mr. Chao Sopsaisana, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Royal Laotian Government, accompanied by Mr. Ratanavong, Counsellor ; Miss Kazan, social worker of the Lebanese Red Cross ; Mr. Robert M. Pierpont, Deputy-Director of relief services in cases of disaster of the American Red Cross ; Miss Olive Johnson, chief nurse, attached to the Ministry of Health, Sierra Leone.

The ICRC also had the pleasure of receiving a group of students (scholars of the Carnegie Foundation) from the Graduate Institute of International Studies of Geneva, as well as Congolese students enrolled at the University of Geneva.
