

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

**News Items**

**Repatriation of Chinese Fishermen**

Twenty Chinese fishermen from Hainan in the Tonkin Golf, reported missing and later found in Da Nang (formerly named Tourane, in the centre of Vietnam), are now on their way to their own country. The Chinese Red Cross in Peking had asked the ICRC to try and find the men. The ICRC delegate was given permission to visit them by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. As their boat was no longer seaworthy when they reached the Vietnam coast, the ICRC delegate secured a junk for them. It is on board this craft that they are now going back to China.

**The ICRC in Laos**

Dr. Jürg Baer, doctor delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross has now returned to Vientiane from the Plaine des Jarres, where he had gone at the end of May. During his visit to Northern Laos, Dr. Baer discussed humanitarian questions, especially the exchange of family news between persons separated as a result of events, the regrouping of Laotian families and the conditions of American and Philippine prisoners, with the Khang Khay authorities. Dr. Baer also delivered some letters intended for American prisoners.

Later, accompanied by Princess Oun Kham, a member of the Women's Committee of the Laotian Red Cross, Dr. Jürg Baer went to Sayaboury, the chief town of Sayaboury province, on the right bank of the Mekong. There, he distributed relief supplies to refugees belonging to Meo tribes. These supplies were largely made up of clothing, rice, soya and rubber boots given by Switzerland, which are greatly appreciated on the muddy ground of this region. The provincial section of the Laotian Red Cross had already organised distributions of relief supplies forwarded by the ICRC.

It has not always been possible, however, to apply the system of supervision generally adopted during distributions of relief supplies. As the Meo refugees frequently lose their control cards, a new and more effective system is used: those who have received their share are marked, frequently with a cross, on the stomach.

Dr. Baer took the opportunity of his trip to Sayaboury to hand over condensed milk and rice for the sick and wounded in the hospital of "Operation Brotherhood" which is supported by the Junior Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines.

As Mr. Muralti, the new delegate to Laos, has had to delay his departure from Geneva, Dr. Baer, who left the country on July 2, will be temporarily replaced by Mr. Robert Gouy, a member of the ICRC delegation in Japan.

### **The ICRC in Leopoldville**

ICRC delegate G. C. Senn is now in Leopoldville to contact the authorities. He has taken numerous steps regarding internees and political detainees whom the ICRC might be able to help.

The ICRC delegate is also dealing with the regroupment of families dispersed by last year's disturbances in North Katanga. At the time, many women and children were evacuated to Elisabethville while the men remained in the bush.

### **The enquiry into the death of G. Olivet**

The following communiqué dated June 8, 1962, was published jointly by the United Nations Organization and the International Committee of the Red Cross :

The Commission of Investigation into the death of Georges Olivet, the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and his two companions, volunteers from the Elisabethville Red Cross, has concluded its work.

It will be remembered that last February the United Nations Acting Secretary General and the International Committee of the Red Cross agreed to the appointment of a Commission to carry out an impartial and entirely independent investigation into the circumstances of the tragic death of the Red Cross representatives who were killed on 13 December, 1961, during the fighting in Elisabethville.

The members of the Commission were :

Judge Björn Kjellin, President of the Malmö (Sweden) Court of Appeal,

Professor Leopold Breitenecker, Director of the Vienna Institute of Forensic Medicine, and

Colonel Hans Roost, of the Swiss Army.

## INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

The Commission met in Geneva on 9 February, 1962, to examine the available documentary material and receive its instructions and then went straight to Elisabethville where it started work the next day, 10 February.

The Commission had been given a prior assurance that it would receive every facility for carrying out the delicate task entrusted to it. It was thus able to settle down to work without delay and after acquainting itself with the results of the investigation carried out by the local authorities, it started its own enquiries, examinations and questioning. Since, however, the necessary facilities for a complete examination of the bodies were not available in Elisabethville, the Commission decided to have them removed to Vienna where the investigations were continued. The technical medical investigations, *ballistic studies and spectrochemical examinations* were carried out under Professor Breiteneker. Once these examinations were finished, the members of the Commission of Investigation met again in Geneva on 4 June to draw up their final report, which today, 8 June, 1962, has been formally submitted by the Commission to the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations where it will be carefully examined.

The United Nations Secretariat and the International Committee of the Red Cross thanked the members of the Commission for the thoroughness and conscientiousness with which they had carried out their task.

### **Repatriation of Vietnamese Refugees**

The repatriation of Vietnamese refugees in Thailand has been continuing regularly since the beginning of 1960, which marked the departure of the first boat. In June 1962, 55 vessels transported 34,209 people to the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. By virtue of an agreement concluded in August 1959 in Rangoon between the Red Cross Societies of Thailand and the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the two Societies assumed the practical organisation of these repatriation operations.

### **Prison visits in Rhodesia and Nyasaland**

The ICRC delegate in Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Mr. G. C. Senn, recently visited the prisons of Bwana Mkubwa in Northern Rhodesia. He also went to the central prisons at Zomba and Domasi in Nyasaland, where he had talks with the detainees.

He has also visited the Salisbury Remand Prison in Southern Rhodesia.

## Near East

Following the closing of its delegation in Egypt at the beginning of 1962, the ICRC has been active in the Near East, particularly on behalf of the victims of the Palestine conflict.

For many years the ICRC has been organizing the exchange of family messages between Arab refugees in the Gaza strip and their relatives in Israel. This exchange of news is effected via the Egyptian Red Crescent and Magen David Adom, the institution which in Israel assumes the duties of a National Red Cross Society. The messages are exchanged through the Central Tracing Agency of the ICRC in Geneva. During the first six months of 1962, 1101 messages were exchanged in this way.

The Red Crescent of the United Arab Republic is giving effective co-operation to the ICRC with regard to tracing of missing persons in Egypt as well as with regard to humanitarian assistance to certain categories of stateless persons, particularly those who are interned in Egypt.

## Compensation for the victims of pseudo-medical experiments

A new mission of the International Committee of the Red Cross went to Hungary at the beginning of June. Consisting of Mr. Ernest Fischer, former head of the ICRC delegation in Hungary in 1956 and 1957, of Dr. Oscar Caprez, doctor-delegate, and of Mr. Jean-Pierre Maunoir, delegate, it chiefly examined a new series of cases of victims of pseudo-medical experiments carried out in German concentration camps under the Nazi regime.

At the request of the Government of the German Federal Republic, the ICRC had accepted to act as intermediary for the transmission of financial assistance which that Government wishes to give to the victims of these experiments living in countries with which it does not maintain diplomatic relations. A first ICRC mission went to Hungary in March 1961 ; together with the doctor-delegate of the Hungarian Red Cross, it examined 63 cases and submitted its observations to a neutral expert commission consisting of doctors and lawyers. Meeting in Geneva in August 1961, that commission decided for each case upon an amount in proportion to the extent of suffering endured, it being however understood that no financial indemnity could fully compensate for such ordeals. The ICRC was then able to transmit the amounts placed at its disposal by the German Government to Hungary.

The mission which the ICRC has just sent to Hungary is dealing with 108 new cases which are undergoing a similar procedure : the delegates of the ICRC and of the Hungarian Red Cross will draw

up a statement in each case which will be submitted to the neutral expert commission. This body will subsequently meet in Geneva.

### **Building of an artificial limb factory**

Whilst passing through Budapest, the delegates visited the artificial limb factory recently built out of funds provided partly by the ICRC and also by various donors. They noted that major work is finished and that the building already has a roof. It is hoped that the factory will be ready to function at the beginning of 1963, so as to improve the equipping of Hungarian invalids. Several machines supplied by the ICRC have already been installed.

The establishment of this factory had been the subject of an agreement made in October 1957 between the Hungarian Minister of Health, the Hungarian Red Cross and the ICRC. This agreement also arranged for the exchange of technicians between Hungary and the German Democratic Republic. Thus specialists of the artificial limb factory of Eisenberg-Künigssee (Thuringia) attended courses in Budapest, after which Hungarian technicians in their turn went to that well equipped factory.

### **Reuniting of families**

The ICRC mission to Hungary during June also dealt with various other questions, in particular with the reuniting of families dispersed as a result of the events of 1956-57 in Hungary. Since the beginning of 1962, 33 children and 6 adults have been authorized to leave Hungary to rejoin their relatives in Western countries. The delegates also dealt with a number of Hungarians who had fled to the West and who expressed the wish to return to their own country.

### **Visits to penal establishments**

As reported elsewhere, Mr. Léopold Boissier, President of the ICRC, accompanied by Mr. Herbert G. Beckh, recently paid a visit to Rumania and Bulgaria at the invitation of the two countries' National Red Cross Societies. While passing through Belgrade, he was also the guest of the Yugoslav Red Cross.

Mr. Boissier then returned to Geneva, leaving Mr. Beckh to carry out a short mission in Yugoslavia. He first of all had talks with Dr. Milosevič, Secretary-General of the Yugoslav Red Cross, on questions of mutual interest to the two institutions. Accom-

panied by Professor Jekič, president of the Serbian Red Cross, the delegate also went to the Secretariat of State for Internal Affairs, where he met Mr. Lenart, Head of section, and Mr. Popovič, Head of the Department of Penal Administration.

Mr. Beckh handed over to them the ICRC reports drawn up on the basis of his visits at the end of 1961, and in return he received some interesting information on the application of the new law on penal administration from which it appears that Yugoslavia is endeavouring to liberalize detention conditions in every possible way. Following a big amnesty, most of the detainees, who can be considered as political prisoners, have been released.

The Secretariat of State agreed to the delegate visiting places of detention of his choice during his stay in Yugoslavia and Mr. Beckh went to the penal establishments of Pozarevač in Serbia and Valtura Pula in Croatia. He was accompanied by the president of the Serbian Red Cross, Professor Jekič and later by Mrs Zivanovič of the Croatian Red Cross. At Pozarevač, the delegate met Mr. Popovič and at Valtura Pula Mr. Sobotincič, Head of the Department for Penal Administration in Croatia.

The aim of these visits was in the first place to observe the effects of the amnesty and of the application of the new law, particularly with regard to the fifteen days holiday to which each detainee has the right and to the award of a supplementary holiday of eight days to be spent with his family. These latter provisions apply to certain of the detainees and amongst them to political detainees. The delegate noticed that at Valtura Pula, an establishment without bars, the detainees work like other agricultural workers and at the end of the day can leave the establishment freely.

During the course of these visits, Mr. Beckh had the opportunity of talking, without witnesses to six political prisoners at Pozarevač and four at Valtura Pula.

### **The I.T.S. on television**

During the course of a television transmission from Warsaw, a former detainee of the Auschwitz concentration camp warmly praised the activity of the International Tracing Service (I.T.S.). He explained how, thanks to the efforts made by it, he was able to find his family now living in the USSR and of whom he had not heard for 19 years.

The International Tracing Service at Arolsen (German Federal Republic) has been administered by the International Committee of the Red Cross since 1955. It works closely with the Central Tracing Agency of the ICRC in Geneva.

### **BBC film on the Red Cross**

The British Broadcasting Corporation is currently shooting a film in Geneva on the International Red Cross and its work. This documentary is intended for television services throughout the world on the occasion of the Red Cross Centenary in 1963.

The film lasts 60 minutes and will trace the history of the movement inspired by Henry Dunant and his book, *A Memory of Solferino*. The Red Cross will be shown through the conflicts and natural disasters as a symbol of unity in a world too frequently torn apart by violence and hatred.

Under the direction of Mr. Alan Sleath, a number of shots have been taken of the headquarters of the ICRC and of the League. The BBC will release the film in different language versions and anybody who wishes for further information should write to BBC Television Centre, Sales Manager, Television Promotions, Wood Lane, London W.12.

Distribution and sale of the BBC film on the Red Cross will be organized by Mr. Ralph Dudrow, of the League of Red Cross Societies, Geneva.

### **Stage-coach makes a come-back**

An old stage-coach, brought back into service by the Swiss Postal Authorities on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's birth, recently made the journey from Brussels to Switzerland. As it passed through Bastogne, the mail-coach, a symbol of good relations between peoples, was greeted by members of the National Union of Belgian Reservist Medical Officers, who handed over the following message, intended for the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross :

“ Belgian Reservist Medical Officers reiterate to the International Red Cross their feelings of unfailing attachment to the Geneva Conventions.

They will continue to do everything in their power to have the emblems of the Geneva humanitarian work respected and to serve its ideal.”

### **Gift to the ICRC**

The firm of AGFA A.G. Leverkusen in the Federal Republic of Germany recently informed the International Committee of the Red Cross that it was giving it a machine, costing more than

2,000 Swiss francs, which makes it possible to control automatically the exposure of sensitized paper, eliminating the trial and error frequently necessary before obtaining a good copy.

The ICRC photographic laboratory has to reproduce numbers of documents and photographs. As a result of this new equipment the work will be done much more quickly and there will be far less wastage of photographic paper.

### **Red Cross Centenary**

The Centenary Commission in Geneva has asked each National Society to designate someone whose job it will be to ensure liaison with the Commission and it has also asked for the co-operation of the Army medical services in the different celebrations scheduled.

With regard to the Exhibition, it should be mentioned that the designers are continuing their work on the models and sets and steps have been taken to associate art school students with this by asking them to be responsible for certain panels.

The participation of the Juniors in the Commemorative Day is being studied and, with regard to information, there has been widespread circulation of the first number of the Centenary News Letter in Geneva, published in French, English, Spanish, German and Italian.

Finally, the Finance Sub-Committee is presently studying the important problem of the financing of the celebrations.