

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

News Items

Congo

The search for missing persons in the Orientale and Kivu provinces. — *A member of the delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross in the Congo, Mr. Georges Olivet, has just carried out a mission lasting more than a month in the Orientale and Kivu Provinces with the object of continuing searches for persons missing as a result of the events which took place last year. This consisted of clearing up more than a hundred cases for which enquiries had been made and to which the ICRC delegation in Leopoldville had not yet been able to reply.*

The steps taken by Mr. Olivet proved themselves to be successful, especially in the Orientale province where, out of 82 enquiries, 57 led to positive results. In the Kivu province, 8 out of 23 cases have been settled, but the long distances and the scattered population made searches more difficult. These, however, are still continuing thanks notably to the co-operation of the administrators of that territory to whom Mr. Olivet has sent telegraphic enquiries.

The delegate had also to verify whether Katanga civilians and military personnel detained in the Orientale and Kivu provinces had been released in accordance with the orders of the Central Government in Leopoldville. Mr. Olivet has established that these persons had in fact been released or were on the point of being so.

Visits to persons detained at Leopoldville. — *Mr. Jean de Preux, delegate of the ICRC, visited 9 prisoners held by the United Nations in Martini camp at Leopoldville. These were European*

officers and NCO's in the Katanga service captured in September and who are shortly to be repatriated. The delegate arranged for them to be medically examined by a Swiss doctor.

The ICRC and the release of prisoners in Katanga. — *The International Committee of the Red Cross has recorded with satisfaction the news of the recent release of military prisoners by the United Nations and the Katanga authorities. Two of its delegates were present at these releases at Elisabethville and in North Katanga. At that particular moment one of them was carrying out a further round of visits to military prisoners of the Katanga forces held at Albertville, Manono, Nyunzu and Kolwezi. The delegates of the ICRC had previously twice visited prisoners of the two sides detained at Jadotville and Elisabethville. (This text was the subject of a Press Release on October 27).*

ICRC mission in Greece. — *As is known, a new mission of the International Committee of the Red Cross composed of one delegate, Mr. Germain Colladon, and of a doctor-delegate, René Bergoz, has been in Greece since August, where it is carrying out a tour of internment and detention camps. In particular, the delegates have visited the political exiles of Aghios Efstratios, to whom they handed over various relief supplies. They have also visited certain penal establishments and distributed some relief supplies to convicts in those places.*

This relief included provisions, medicaments and clothing supplied from gifts received by the ICRC as well as from its own resources.

This tour, which continued in September and October, follows on the ICRC missions which have visited Greece at regular intervals since 1947.

In search of missing persons in Laos. — *At the end of September the delegate of the ICRC in Vientiane, Mr. André Durand, received news concerning the American nationals missing in Laos, on which question he had taken certain steps during his visit to Xieng Khouang during the summer. The capture of 7 of the 16 people for whom searches were being made, including 4 military, has been confirmed through the intermediary of the international armistice Commission. The death of one of the missing persons has been announced, while seven military are presumed dead. There is still no news of one civilian. This informa-*

tion was immediately transmitted to the American Red Cross, by the Central Tracing Agency.

A new ICRC delegate, Dr Jürg Baer, arrived in Vientiane on the 13th October to assist Mr. Durand.

Visit to political detainees in the Philippines. — *The delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. John W. Mittner, accompanied by Dr. T. Calasanz, Director of the Philippine Red Cross, has visited political prisoners detained in Fort McKinley at Manila. This was the third visit made by the delegate to these detainees to whom he distributed relief.*

The Red Cross and the repatriation of vietnamese refugees in Thailand. — *An important repatriation operation¹ has been in progress since the beginning of 1960 under the auspices of the Thai Red Cross and the Red Cross of the People's Republic of Viet Nam. This concerns Vietnamese who fled to Thailand during the first phase of the war in Indochina.*

As Thailand and the People's Republic of Viet Nam do not maintain diplomatic relations, the International Committee of the Red Cross acted as intermediary between the Red Cross Societies of the two countries. In 1959, representatives of the two Societies held meetings in Rangoon in the presence of an ICRC delegate, which resulted in an agreement on the methods of repatriation.

The first departure of refugees took place on the 5th January 1960. By the end of September 1961 23,834 Vietnamese had been repatriated from Thailand in 39 convoys. ICRC delegates were present at several departures.

Termination of the mission at Bizerta. — *The International Committee of the Red Cross has terminated its activity connected with the conflict at Bizerta, after having obtained several positive results. Its delegate, Mr. Michel Martin, has now returned to Geneva from Tunis.*

During the first phase of the conflict, this activity consisted in intervening with the military authorities of the two sides for the purpose of concluding a cease-fire ensuring the evacuation of the wounded and killed. Later, the delegate made a number of varied representations on behalf of the prisoners and those who had been interned. He regularly

¹ See *Revue internationale*, November 1959 and March 1960.

visited the 780 Tunisian civilians and military held by the French forces, as well as the 220 French, of which 30 were military, interned at Sousse by the Tunisians. These visits were also made the occasion for making representations with a view to ameliorating conditions of detention. In co-operation with the Tunisian Red Crescent, the delegate initiated discussions which resulted in the exchange of prisoners which took place in September.

The transmission of messages to the Middle East. — *The tense situation in the Middle East continues to impose various tasks on the Central Tracing Agency. This applies chiefly to the transmission of family messages, an activity which the ICRC undertakes when circumstances do not allow of a direct exchange of news between private individuals.*

In this way, ever since the Partition of Palestine, the Central Tracing Agency transmits numerous messages sent by Arab families living in Israel, to their relations in one or other of the Arab countries. In this connection, we would point out that in the past few months the volume of this exchange of messages between the countries of the Arab world and Israel (and vice-versa) has shown a renewed increase. Thus, during 1960, 625 messages were transmitted and 369 in the first half of 1961.

According to established arrangements, these messages should be brief and of a strictly family character. Anyone wishing to send news to his family fills in a form placed at his disposal and which consists of the name and address of the sender and a space for the text of the message and for the reply. The model of these forms, which was drawn up by the ICRC at the beginning of the Second World War, has been adopted by the National Societies.

In principle, the Central Agency transmits messages in the original as these are received, which represents a considerable saving in time. On the other hand, in certain cases it is obliged to transcribe the messages received on ICRC forms.

Red Cross Centenary. — *The preparatory work for the Red Cross Centenary in 1963 has been continued throughout the summer. The Celebrations Committee has held a meeting during which it dealt in particular with questions of information and took note of the opinions*

expressed by editors of the Swiss press, which it has approved. Furthermore, the study has been continued of deciding upon a suitable emblem for the Centenary. A number of Swiss draughtsmen have accepted to participate in a free competition and other countries have also submitted some interesting designs. The winning entry will be chosen this autumn.

In connection with the Red Cross Centenary Celebrations, it should be mentioned that the Compagnie Générale de Navigation sur le Lac Léman has decided to launch a new vessel in 1963, which will bear the name, "Henry Dunant".

Finally, it should be noted that the General Commission (the Secretariat responsible for co-ordinating the preparatory work) is now autonomous. It is under the direct control of the Celebrations Committee, which is itself composed of representatives of the ICRC, the League and the Swiss Red Cross, as well as of the Federal, Cantonal and Municipal authorities.

Distinction. — The Ethiopian Red Cross has awarded Mr. Léopold Boissier, President of the ICRC, its highest distinction, the Gold Medal of His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor Hailé Sélassié.

This decoration was conferred upon him at the beginning of October in Prague by Mrs. Senedu Gabru, who was in charge of the delegation of the Ethiopian Red Cross at the meetings of the International Red Cross, and who has been appointed Vice-President of the Board of Governors of the League.

Course at the ICRC. — The International Review referred in its last number to the official recognition given by the ICRC to the Togolese Red Cross.

The Secretary-General of this new National Society, Mr. Boniface T. Dovi, undertook a course of study at the International Committee. The discussions which he had with various members of the staff of the ICRC were chiefly connected with the Geneva Conventions, humanitarian law and the tasks and problems facing the new National Societies. He made himself acquainted with the activities of the Red Cross during the past few years and studied the working of the Central Tracing Agency.

Mr. Dovi, who also undertook a course at the League, was able to appreciate the problems facing the international institutions of the

Red Cross and the important tasks which have to be undertaken today by newly formed National Societies.

Arabic-language competition. — *The large-scale competition which the ICRC, with the help of the League, organized for listeners in Arab countries met with great success. The jury has just ended its work and has decided to offer prizes to 130 participants living in most of the Arab countries from Irak to Morocco, including Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf area, the Sudan, Libya and Tunisia.*

As the Revue internationale pointed out in its issue of December 1960, the competition was carried out by the Arabic-language section of the ICRC Broadcasting Office and formed the subject of regular weekly broadcasts from October 1960 to March 1961. It received support and active co-operation from the National Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies, as well as from the official authorities and the press of the Arab countries.

The participants were given a choice of seven different subjects dealing with the Red Cross idea, principles and activities. The jury was composed of independent Arab personalities resident in Geneva and working in the field of teaching and in the international organizations.

The first prize consists in a fortnight's visit to Geneva by Swissair. Other prizes included two Philips radio sets, eight Ernest Borel watches, two Thorens razors, a number of Caran d'Ache ball-point pens and various books and publications.

After the best works had been translated into French, so that non-Arab Red Cross personalities could judge them, Mr. Numan Abdel Dayim, 28 years of age, a teacher in Jerusalem, Jordan, was chosen as the winner and will therefore be received in Geneva at the headquarters of the international institutions of the Red Cross. He wrote on the subject "The Red Cross as a factor for rapprochement between nations".

Mr. Abdel Dayim is himself a victim of war. After being wounded during the Palestinian conflict in 1948, he had a leg amputated. He was aided by the International Committee of the Red Cross, which provided him with an artificial limb and thus enabled him to resume a normal life. In a letter to the ICRC, Mr. Abdel Dayim wrote: "I owe my life to the Red Cross".

The second prize-winner is Mr. Abdel Jalil Hassan Nour, State official in the Sudan, and the third is Mr. Mustafa Obeid Farahat, a Palestinian refugee in Gaza. The other prize-winners live in various other Arab countries, in particular in Egypt and Syria.

Visitors to the ICRC. — *During the period extending from the end of August to the middle of October, the ICRC had the privilege of welcoming to its headquarters a number of personalities, including the following: Mr. François Silou, first Vice-President of the Congolese Red Cross; Mrs. Suad Al Radi, Chairman of the Women's Committee of the Iraqi Red Crescent together with Dr. Vincent Asfar, who directs the Medical Commission of that Committee; Mr. Jules Lefèvre-Paul, Delegate General of the French Red Cross in Algeria; General P. Glain, the new Head of the Department of Foreign Relations of the French Red Cross; the President of the Republic of Korea National Red Cross, Mr. Doo-Sun Choi; Dr. Chadli Zouiten, Vice-President of the Tunisian Red Crescent and Mr. Salah Boulakbèche, Secretary General of that National Society; Dr. Edward Hambro, Vice-President of the Norwegian Red Cross; Miss Maud Williamson, Vice-Chairman of the Northumberland Branch of the British Red Cross, and Miss Audrey Fletcher, of the Home Department of that Society; His Excellency Mr. Masauri Takata, Japanese Deputy-Minister of Health and National Insurance, accompanied by Mr. Kuchi Saito, Head of the Liaison Office of International Affairs; Miss H. MacArthur, National Director of the Nursing Services of the Canadian Red Cross; Mrs. J. T. Berryman, Director of the Office of Volunteers of the Eastern Area, American Red Cross; Mrs. Paola Menada, National Inspector of Voluntary Nurses of the Italian Red Cross; Miss Ellen Moller, Nursing Advisor of the Danish Red Cross; Miss M. E. Craven, Chief Nursing Officer of the British Red Cross; Miss Stavroula Papamicrouli, a member of the board of the Nursing Corps of the Greek Red Cross and Miss Hélène Spyropoulou, Nursing Advisor of that Society; Miss Egle Cisbani, National Superintendent of professional nurses and Health Assistants of the Italian Red Cross; Miss Ester Sannum, Director of the Norwegian Red Cross Nursing School at Drammen and Nursing Advisor to the consultative Committee of that Society; Mrs. Gladys Habil Abounada, of the Lebanese Red Cross; Mr. J. B. Mandilas, Financial Advisor to the Nigerian*

Red Cross; Dr. J. N. Vazifdar, Secretary of the Bombay Branch of the Indian Red Cross; the President of the Lourenço-Marques Committee of the Portuguese Red Cross, Dr. Afonso Paez; Mrs. Frank Fordyce, President of the Polk Section, of the American Red Cross; the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the European Office of the United Nations, Mr. Balfour Douglas Zohrab; Mr. Paul Magallanes, Vice-President and Secretary-General of the Chilean Red Cross; the President of the Rotary International, Mr. Joseph Abey; Mr. Romeo Marasigan, Advisor of the Philippines National Red Cross; Mr. B. Sokalich of the New Zealand Red Cross; Mr. Masutaro Inoue, Director of the Department of Foreign Relations of the Japanese Red Cross; Mr. Hussein M. Asfahany, Secretary-General of the Red Crescent Society of the United Arab Republic; the Vice-Chairman of the Nigerian Red Cross, Dr. O. Adeniyi-Jones; Dr. F. Calasanz, Director of the Philippines National Red Cross; the Secretary-General of the Republic of Korea National Red Cross, Mr. Kim Hak Mook; Mrs. Joe Hume Gardner, a member of the Board of Governors of the American Red Cross; Dr. Yon Chhin, Advisory member of the Cambodian Red Cross; Miss Irène Müller, a nurse of the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany in Lübeck; Miss Elisabeth Eckert, Social Assistant, attached to the General Secretariat of the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic, and Miss Kläre Leist, Director of the Department of Women's Work in the German Red Cross (Landesverband Nord-Rhein-Westfalen), in Münster.

The International Committee has also been pleased to welcome the secretaries of the regional sections of the Swiss Red Cross who came to Geneva to visit the ICRC Departments and who were accompanied by Mr. J. Pascalis, Deputy Secretary-General of that Society.

Amongst other groups who have visited the Headquarters of our organization, and more especially the Central Tracing Agency, mention should be made of a party of mayors from different Japanese towns on visit to Geneva, students of the Goetheschule in Düsseldorf, about thirty people attending the seminar on the study of international organizations in Geneva, under the auspices of the "Stiftung Mitbestimmung" in Düsseldorf, a party of Swiss-German journalists, as well as forty Japanese doctors undertaking their fourth study tour in Europe.