

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

News Items

Katanga

In view of the fighting which broke out again in Katanga, the International Committee undertook as a matter of urgency the necessary measures of protection and assistance.

As soon as he arrived on the spot on December 21, 1962, Mr. G. C. Senn, delegate of the ICRC, made arrangements with the armed forces of the United Nations to enable the Katanga Red Cross and ambulance men to carry out their action, especially by the issuing of passes to its personnel and by registering ambulances at road-blocks.

On December 27, the ICRC delegate organized, with UNO and the Katanga ambulance men, the partial evacuation of the Golf district in Elisabethville. On January 3, he intervened with the authorities so that they would maintain order and prevent disturbances breaking out between tribes. These measures should encourage refugees, who find themselves on roads leading to Rhodesia, to return to their homes. According to the ICRC delegate, the supplying of the civilian population seems assured and refugees on the Rhodesian frontier are receiving the necessary assistance, thanks to the help given by the Rhodesian Red Cross.

Finally, we would point out that Mr. G. C. Senn has in particular endeavoured to maintain contact, as far as possible, with the authorities in office, UNO forces, the Katanga Red Cross and with the Southern Rhodesian Branch of the British Red Cross. He visited the various places where refugees were concentrated, especially near the Rhodesian frontier and intervened for their assistance and supplying. He has organized convoys under the auspices of the ICRC for these refugees to return to their homes.

A general delegation in sub-equatorial Africa

The ICRC has recently appointed Mr. Georges Hoffmann to the post of Delegate General in Sub-Equatorial Africa, where he will reside permanently. His mandate will extend to the following countries: Congo (Leopoldville including Katanga), Ruanda, Burundi, Uganda, Kenya, Zanzibar, Tanganyika, Angola, Mozambique, Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Madagascar,

Republic of South Africa, with the territory of South West Africa, Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland, Reunion Island, Mauritius, the Comoro Islands and the Seychelles—these latter with the country whose dependencies they are.

In view of the general position of certain of these countries and their development, the ICRC considers that an important action could usefully be put into operation there for the future of the Red Cross.

Generally speaking, the aim of the mission entrusted to Mr. G. Hoffmann by the ICRC is to establish and maintain direct and close contact with the Authorities and the Red Cross Societies of these countries, to help in the dissemination of the Geneva Conventions and to watch over their application, and to facilitate the creation and development of National Red Cross Societies in these States.

Mr. G. Hoffmann will also carry out, on behalf of the ICRC and with the co-operation of regional delegates, any humanitarian action in conformity with the traditional principles of the Red Cross and of the Geneva Conventions. In the event of conflicts, he will take any measures which he judges appropriate to help and protect military and civilian victims.

Mr. Hoffmann took up his new post at the beginning of the year and arrived in Salisbury (Southern Rhodesia) on January 11, where he has established his residence for reasons of a practical nature.

ICRC mission in the Yemen

Following on representations made by the previous mission of its delegate in the Near East and an appeal by the representative of the Imam of the Yemen in New York, the ICRC has sent a mission to the Command of the Royalist forces in the Yemen. Consisting of Dr. Rubli and Dr. Pidermann, its immediate task was to obtain all available information on the extent and the nature of medical requirements.

After talks with the delegates, the Imam El Badr declared that he was prepared to have the essential provisions of the Geneva Conventions relative to the treatment of the wounded and military prisoners in the case of conflict applied by his troops.

Passing through Riyadh, Dr. Rubli and Dr. Pidermann were received by Prince Feisal, Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, with whom they examined various questions relative to the accession of that country to the Geneva Conventions and to the creation of a National Red Crescent Society.

On the other hand, in answer to an invitation by the Republican Government of the Yemen, a second ICRC mission is at present

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

on its way to Sanaa. Its task will also be to inform itself of the eventual need for the ICRC to assist the victims of the conflict.

The aftermath of the Sino-Indian conflict

At the end of last December, Mr. André Durand, ICRC Delegate General for Asia, visited camps for Indian refugees in Assam, in North-East India. He was able to talk with representatives of several groups and he estimated that there are about 15,000 victims to be resettled. There are numerous mountain people from the North-East Frontier Agency among them, and even Tibetans who have been displaced once again.

The donations which the Indian Red Cross has received from National Red Cross Societies, particularly following the appeal launched on December 4 by the League, in co-operation with the ICRC, will enable part of the refugees' needs to be met.

On December 31, 1962, a further 108 wounded and sick Indian prisoners of war were released and handed over to the Indian Red Cross in the North-East Frontier Agency; this brings the total of repatriations effected to date to 715. The Indian Red Cross has also received lists of names for 1,131 of the 2,000 or so Indian prisoners of war remaining in Chinese hands. On December 19, the Indian Red Cross handed over to the Chinese Red Cross 2,000 parcels of foodstuffs and 2,000 parcels of clothing intended for these prisoners.

The ICRC is continuing its attempts to obtain permission to visit these prisoners of war.

Laos

On December 27, the ICRC delegate, Mr. Jacques Ruff, made a further visit to the camp of Dong-Dam-Douane in the Savannakhet region where about 300 Laotian civilian and military prisoners are detained.

The ICRC delegate obtained permission for the prisoners to correspond with their families on forms drawn up by the Central Tracing Agency of the International Committee. The Laotian Red Cross is looking after the forwarding of these messages and the replies of the families concerned. At the end of his visit, Mr. Ruff passed on his observations to the Laotian Authorities and requested the improvements in the internment conditions which appeared to him to be necessary.

The International Committee's delegate was received on December 30 by Prince Souvanna Phouma, Prime Minister, to whom he explained that the ICRC had decided to terminate its relief action set up at the request of the Vientiane Government, in

favour of Laotian refugees. The ICRC will continue its other activities on behalf of the victims of the conflict in Laos by means of temporary missions.

On December 31 and January 1, Mr. Ruff went to Paksé and Saravane where he distributed some relief supplies to refugees and among them members of the Kha tribe.

Indonesia

Continuing the action which the Netherlands Government requested it to undertake from the end of 1961, the ICRC recently paid a sum of 525,000 Swiss francs to the Indonesian Red Cross. These Netherlands funds are destined to pay pensions and allowances to Dutch nationals resident in Indonesia.

The ICRC thus carries out, in the humanitarian field, the activity of neutral intermediary in the absence of diplomatic and consular relations between the Netherlands and Indonesia.

Philippines

The ICRC delegate in Manila, Mr. J. W. Mittner, visited the internment camp for political detainees in September and December last. Accompanied by Dr. T. Calasanz, he handed over relief to the detainees.

Geneva Conventions

By December 31, 1962, 91 States had expressly bound themselves (by ratification or accession) to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949. To this number should be added 18 States, recently independent, which, although not having deposited any instrument of ratification or accession, are nevertheless bound to the 1949 Conventions, by virtue of their ratification by the State which had held sovereignty over their territory. There is therefore now a total of 109 States bound by the Conventions of 1949.

Amongst the States not yet parties to these texts, six remain however bound by the 1929 version of these Conventions, three by their version of 1906 and one by the original Convention, the first, that of 1864.

Three States are still not bound by any treaty of international humanitarian law : Nepal, Saudi Arabia and the Yemen.

The Geneva Conventions in pictures

In continuation of one of its principal tasks, the development of humanitarian law and the dissemination of the Geneva Con-

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

ventions, the International Committee has just published its third edition of the Geneva Conventions in pictures.

It will be remembered that these booklets, already well known in Red Cross circles, include thirty illustrated pages, pocket size, each one giving commentaries in nine languages. The choice of these languages is made, in the four groups, according to geographical criteria and following an arrangement dictated by typographical considerations. In alphabetical order, these languages, divided into groups of nine in the four editions, are as follows: Arabic, Cambodian, Chinese, English, French, German, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Kikongo, Lingala, Luba, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swahili and Urdu.

Out of 89,500 copies printed, 71,500 have already been ordered from the ICRC.

Guests of the ICRC

During the first fortnight in January, the ICRC had the honour of welcoming the following, amongst others, at its headquarters: Mrs. Regina Savi de Tové, President of the Togolese Red Cross; Dr. F. Janouch, President of the Czechoslovak Red Cross; Mrs. Lidia Costin, Brazilian Red Cross at Sao Paulo; Mr. B. de Loriol, head of the first-aid section of the departmental committee of the French Red Cross in the Gold Coast, and Mr. C. K. Peng, UNESCO scholar.

VISIT TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

President Léopold Boissier, together with his colleagues and staff, yesterday received the Head of the Military Department and Mrs Paul Chaudet, and the Head of the Political Department and Mrs F. T. Wahlen, at the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva.¹

The two Swiss federal counsellors and their wives showed great interest in the talks which were given on the recent activities of the ICRC, and they also visited the Central Tracing Agency's card-index.

¹ *Plate.*