

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

News Items

Sino-Indian Conflict

The Indian Red Cross has recently sent the ICRC Central Tracing Agency a further list of Indian prisoners in Chinese hands with the information that 1,131 prisoners had been captured by Chinese troops up to November 16, 1962. 2,188 Indian soldiers were captured subsequent to this date and the Chinese Red Cross has begun sending the relevant lists. To these figures must be added 716 wounded and sick handed over to the Indian Red Cross, with the bodies of 13 other Indians. More than 3,000 Indian troops would still appear to be detained by China.

On February 7, 1963, the President of the ICRC sent a telegram to Marshal Tchen-Yi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, asking him to authorize the ICRC delegate to visit Indian prisoners in conformity with the Third Geneva Convention, to which China is party. On this occasion the President pointed out that the ICRC delegate had been authorized to visit Chinese detained on Indian territory and that relief had been sent to them by the International Committee.

The Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs replied on February 19, giving the ICRC a various amount of information on the measures taken by China to ensure good treatment for Indian prisoners. While protesting against the internment of some Chinese nationals in India, the Chinese Government declares that all problems concerning Indian prisoners must be settled direct between the two countries.

It appears however that, although diplomatic relations have been maintained, representatives of the Indian Embassy in Peking have not yet been able to visit Indian prisoners of war. In the same way, Chinese diplomats accredited in India have not visited Chinese civilian internees.

The ICRC, while noting with satisfaction the information supplied by the Chinese authorities, has renewed its request for Indian prisoners to be visited.

The ICRC in Laos

From India, the delegate general of the ICRC in the Far East, Mr. André Durand, has travelled to Vientiane, capital of Laos, and

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then to South Viet Nam. Mr. Jacques Ruff, delegate in Laos, visited the Jarres Plain during January and distributed relief to children gathered in a mission. He also sought information on missing persons.

Repatriation of Koreans in Japan

On January 28, the 102nd boat load of Koreans wishing to leave Japan for their country of origin, sailed from Niigata. There were 228 people on board. 78,504 people have now been repatriated under the auspices of the ICRC.

Congo

Mr. Georges Hoffmann, ICRC Delegate General in Equatorial and Southern Africa, who is stationed in Salisbury (Southern Rhodesia), has been to Elisabethville and Leopoldville. He was received by the authorities and contacted the directors of the local Congolese Red Cross and was thus able to make a useful examination of Red Cross methods of action in the Congo.

Mrs. Jeanne Egger, ICRC representative in Leopoldville, has received permission to visit N'Dolo prison near the Congolese capital, where, amongst others, several former members of the South Kasai Government are being held.

The ICRC delegate in Katanga, Mr. Geoffroy C. Senn, has received permission to visit prisoners captured by the Katangan forces during their recent withdrawal. Amongst other places he visited the prison at Kolwezi at the end of January, where he obtained the release of 15 military and 9 civilians detained for political reasons. Mr. Senn has also visited the prison of Kasapa.

Compensation for the victims of pseudo-medical experiments

A further mission of the International Committee of the Red Cross, consisting of Mr. Jean-Pierre Maunoir, delegate, and Dr. Jacques de Rougemont, doctor-delegate, went to Poland in January, to examine a new group of victims of pseudo-medical experiments practised in German concentration camps under the Nazi regime. We would recall that the ICRC, at the request of the government of the German Federal Republic, accepted to act as intermediary in the transmission of financial assistance which that government wishes to have reach the victims of such experiments residing in countries with which it does not maintain diplomatic relations.

The new group of victims examined by the delegates had been previously selected by the Polish Red Cross. In close co-operation with that Society, Dr. de Rougemont examined each case in that group, namely about a hundred in all. He expressed his opinion upon the merits of the claims submitted and drew up a report for the neutral commission which will meet in Geneva in March to determine the amount of compensation in proportion to the extent of suffering caused by these experiments and of damage still being incurred as a result.

Mr. Maunoir then visited Prague, where he studied with the Czechoslovak Red Cross and the National Association of War Veterans the possibility of transmitting similar indemnities to Czech victims of pseudo-medical experiments.

The Centenary of the Red Cross in Switzerland

On the occasion of the Centenary of the Red Cross the Federal Authorities have decided to strike a coin which has just been put into circulation in Switzerland.

The Federal Mint in Berne has issued 400,000 five franc pieces and the Swiss Confederation has reserved part of the profits—1 million francs—for the Red Cross, to finance the celebrations scheduled for the Centenary of the institution. A second series of 200,000 coins is to be put into circulation.

Each coin bears a stylized allegory in effigy: the obverse of the coin represents a woman standing symbolizing the Red Cross, whilst a wounded man and a prisoner form the branches of a cross. Around this, can be read the dates 1863-1963. The Swiss sculptor, Max Weber is responsible for the conception and the creation of this coin, which is of unlimited duration and which is standard legal tender.
