



REVUE INTERNATIONALE DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

SUPPLEMENT

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

NEW YEAR MESSAGE

As in previous years, the annual message by Mr. Leopold Boissier, President of the ICRC, has been recorded by the ICRC Broadcasting and Television Office and sent to sixty-four national broadcasting systems all over the world, in twenty-two different languages, for broadcasting at the close of 1960. The text is as follows:

The message broadcast each year by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross might seem disappointing for is not peace in security and confidence still far distant? But the Red Cross has neither fear nor doubt. It proceeds slowly but surely towards the conquest of a world which needs its aid. It cannot be frightened by obstacles in its path ; on the contrary, it meets them with new energy. Thus, for instance, it is working in the Congo, caring for the sick, seeking the missing, releasing hostages and giving assistance to the population in distress. The delegates of the International Committee and the doctors of the National Red Cross Societies are in remote areas, giving to their coloured brothers the care which inspires new hope. Elsewhere, in Africa and Asia, wherever men are in conflict, the Red Cross withstands unbridled passions with moral principles which have stood the test of time. Thus, human beings are saved by thousands from death, hunger or despair.

We shall never cease to repeat this, year after year, because it can in truth be said, without hesitation or exaggeration. May the world understand the Red Cross message and hope at last. This is our wish on the eve of 1961.

THE RED CROSS IN THE CONGO

VISITS BY THE ICRC TO DETAINEES

The International Committee of the Red Cross, which in early November 1960 had sent a delegate to examine the humanitarian problems which had arisen in Katanga, received permission from the authorities in Elisabethville to visit political detainees in that region. The delegate has already visited two prisons, at Buluo and at Kasapa, where respectively 439 and 636 persons are under detention.

The ICRC delegation in Leopoldville is making every effort to carry out the traditional duties of the International Committee, and on December 5 it was permitted to visit political detainees at Luzumu prison in the vicinity of Leopoldville. The delegation has continued its efforts to extend such visits to all places of detention. Thus, the representative of the ICRC went to Stanleyville where he obtained from the local authorities the necessary facilities for visiting political detainees in that region. As is customary, the reports on visits made by ICRC delegates were transmitted only to the detaining authorities.

MEDICAL TEAMS OF NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETIES

The articles already published in the *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge* on the subject have shown the admirable work undertaken in the Congo by the medical teams of National Red Cross Societies whose activities, in a liberal sense, pay

tribute to the efficiency and universality of our common emblem. At the close of 1960, the President of the ICRC, Mr. Leopold Boissier, sent them the following messages:

During the year which is now drawing to its end there has been an unique achievement in the history of the universal movement founded by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

It is in fact the first time that our institution—now approaching its centenary—has had to deal with medical aid on such a wide scale throughout a whole country. It is the first time also that, with the help of the League, it has had recourse to the co-operation of National Red Cross Societies for an action of this description.

By your devotion to your humanitarian task in particularly difficult circumstances, you honour the Red Cross to which the whole world turns with increasing admiration.

My colleagues join me in saying how proud we are to be able to rely upon all of you who, far from your homes and your mother countries, are pursuing your charitable work on the threshold of the New Year.

I am sending you my heart-felt wishes for you and your families' happiness and the successful issue of your mission, and my sincere thanks to you all.

**ASSISTANCE OF THE ICRC TO THE RESETTLED
POPULATION IN ALGERIA**

As stated in the December Supplement to the *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, a mission of the ICRC (Mr. Gaillard, Mr. R. Vust and Mr. J. Muralti) visited Algeria from November 28 to December 18 for the purpose of organising with the representatives of the French Red Cross the distribution of relief food supplies sent by the ICRC for women and children in the resettlement centres.

These supplies consisted of 100 tons of powdered milk and 2½ tons of soup powder and followed previous consignments of polyvitamins and eye-drops.

The delegates were received on their arrival in Algiers by Mr. de Vivie de Régie, Secretary-General of the French Red Cross in Algeria, Miss Lung, President of the Algiers Committee, and also two nurses, Miss Tanguy and Miss de Cadoudal, appointed by the Paris headquarters to co-ordinate the work of the mobile teams. The delegates also had talks with General Parlange, Inspector-General of the resettlement centres and General Partiot, Inspector-General of the Special Administrative Sections

The delegates discussed firstly with the French Red Cross representatives the programme for the allocation and distribution in all Algerian areas of the food stocks made available. The members of the mission then separated in order to visit the mobile teams working inland in the various resettlement centres, and also some of the local Committees of the French Red Cross.

Accompanied by a representative of the French Red Cross, the delegates thus visited about twenty resettled villages situated in the Vigerie, Tenès, Ouarsenis and Kabylia areas and the outskirts of Algiers.

The delegates also visited nine resettled villages in the departments of Sétif, Constantine, Batna and Bône.

The resettlement centres in Oran will be visited by the next mission of the ICRC which will be leaving for Algeria at the end of January to visit places of detention.

The delegates thus had a close view of the medico-social work undertaken by the nurses of the French Red Cross mobile teams and were present during several distributions of relief supplies to the resettled population. Each team is composed of two nurses who do their rounds in a 4 to 6 ton Red Cross lorry fitted up as a mobile dispensary. The nurses go from one centre to another and show great devotion to duty in caring for women and children in the true Red Cross spirit. These mobile teams, of which there were 16 at that time, will be increased to 21 at the end of January 1961.

In view of the fact that these nurses' work is essentially of a medico-social nature, they can only distribute part of the milk and soup supplies made available by the ICRC. The General-Delegation of the French Red Cross in Algiers has therefore arranged for several of the local Committees to take part in the work by organising canteens or milk distribution centres in some of the resettlement areas not already visited by the mobile teams.

During this mission the delegates were able to distribute some 5,000 packets of cigarettes to the wounded in various military hospitals.

On his return from Algiers, Mr. P. Gaillard, head of the mission, paid a visit in Paris to Mr. A. François-Poncet, President of the French Red Cross, whom he informed of the various points noted and suggestions put forward by the mission. He also took this opportunity of congratulating Mr. A. François-Poncet, on behalf of the ICRC, on the work accomplished in Algeria by the mobile teams of the French Red Cross.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

The International Committee was pleased to have the occasion of supporting the action of a National Red Cross Society. It intends to remain in contact with the French Red Cross and to give further material aid in so far as it receives the necessary assistance in this connection.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE IN LAOS

December 14, 1960. — *On the outbreak of the events in Laos, the International Committee of the Red Cross, whose mission is to assist war victims, approached the Laotian Red Cross in Vientiane. At the request of Dr. Oudom Souvannavong, President of the Society, in November it sent to Vientiane some special surgical kits for emergency cases. This material proved to be most useful in Laos where the transport of the wounded and sick is often very difficult on account of the state of roads and highways. The ICRC remains in contact with the Laotian Red Cross to assist it in dealing with other requirements due to the events.*

The International Committee of the Red Cross had already sent relief supplies to the Laotian Red Cross in 1959, in particular hospital beds, infants clothing and blankets, as well as rice and condensed milk.

In addition, at the request of the Philippine Red Cross, the delegate of the ICRC in Saigon made representations in behalf of Philippine doctors engaged in a relief mission in Laos in connection with "Operation Brotherhood" and the "Junior Chamber of Commerce" of Manila and Vientiane. Seventy doctors, dentists and nurses had been posted throughout the country at the time of the events of August 9, 1960. Two doctors and a dentist in the Sam Neua area thus became separated from the other teams. The International Committee's approach to the Laotian authorities enabled them to return to Vientiane prior to their departure for the Philippines.

December 28, 1960. — *The recent fighting in Vientiane having caused many casualties, the International Committee of the Red Cross gave instructions to its delegate, Mr. André Durand, to proceed to Laos in order to continue the relief action undertaken in November.*

The delegate of the ICRC arrived on December 21 in Vientiane and handed over emergency medicaments and blood plasma sent from Switzerland, valued at 2,000 dollars, to the town hospital. The Thai Red Cross Society has sent a team of six doctors and seven nurses, an ambulance and medicaments.

Several thousand people are now homeless, however, on account of the heavy destruction of the city during the hostilities. The delegate of the ICRC has therefore started an emergency relief programme with a view to alleviating the distress of the civilian population affected by the events. Milk, clothing, utensils, blankets and sleeping-mats are now being despatched in this connection. The distribution of these first relief supplies (valued at 5,000 dollars) has been made possible by drawing upon the International Committee's relief funds and a gift of 2,000 dollars received from the Japanese Red Cross.

A MISSION OF THE ICRC TO JUGOSLAVIA

Mr. H. Beckh, delegate of the ICRC, undertook a further mission to Yugoslavia in November last.

In Belgrade he discussed problems of common interest to the two institutions with the Yugoslav Red Cross.

One of the main objects of this mission was the pursuance of the International Committee's action in behalf of political detainees. The authorities concerned and the Yugoslav Red Cross—as mentioned on several occasions in the *Revue internationale*—are favourably disposed to this action. After an interview with Mr. A. Pejović, Under-Secretary of State, the representative of the ICRC was able to visit places of detention in Sremska Mitrovica, Titograd, Goli Otok-Rab, Ig/Ljubljana, Maribor and Lepoglava. He inspected various installations in these establishments and spoke without witnesses with fifty political detainees.

He obtained information also on the "family leave" system from which some of the prisoners with whom he had personal talks had already benefited.

During the discussions in Belgrade Mr. Beckh learned that the Yugoslav Government and the Yugoslav Red Cross Society would continue to support the International Committee's efforts in the field of humanitarian law.

It was agreed that the next visits to places of detention would take place in May 1961.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ICRC

The International Committee has just published its Annual Report for 1959 which shows numerous aspects of the institution's work during a year of special significance for the Red Cross movement. It marked, in fact, the centenary of the Battle of Solferino, of which the distressing scenes inspired Henry Dunant's generous impulse on which our movement was founded.

This report is divided into two parts: practical activities and general activities; the final chapter gives information concerning the financial situation of the ICRC and the special funds in its charge.

The practical activities are grouped by geographical areas from which it will be seen once more that the International Committee continues to follow its world-wide vocation—since mention is made of Africa and Asia, of America and Europe — and to place its services at the disposal of all who need them.

As regards general activities, the *Annual Report* describes first of all what has been done in the practical application and development of humanitarian law, the protection of the civilian population, the protection of civilian medical personnel, training courses for army doctors, legal assistance to aliens and the protection of hospital ships and rescue craft. The two following chapters, as customary, give an account of the International Committee's information services, its close relations with other Red Cross institutions throughout the world and its contribution towards the work of international organisations.

We are giving below a few pages relating to practical activities. They show the very important work being carried out in various fields, in particular by the Central Prisoners of War Agency — of which the new title is the Central Tracing Agency.

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CENTRAL PRISONERS OF WAR AGENCY

Although the general volume of mail (172,000 postal items received and despatched) was slightly lower than in the previous year and despite a notable drop in the number of enquiries opened, the work of the Central Agency was nevertheless considerable in 1959. Furthermore, the volume of work and the number of complicated cases increase as the years pass by since the Second World War.

However, the very nature of these tasks shows that the present title of the Agency no longer corresponds to the work actually performed and a new official title is therefore being considered.

Searches for military personnel

The Agency continues to make searches, in all parts of the world, for military personnel who disappeared during the Second World War¹ or subsequent conflicts. It issues certificates of captivity to former prisoners of war who are unable to give proof of their captivity.

The Algerian conflict has led the Agency to open enquiries, which have met with no great success so far, concerning missing

¹ e.g. the number of German military personnel missing on the East European front is estimated at 1,200,000, and the families of about 115,000 German prisoners are without news of them.

military personnel; it transmits numerous and urgent requests for information to the FLN and when, under the auspices of the ICRC, prisoners are released by this body, it informs the families concerned of their forthcoming repatriation.

Civilian enquiries

The Agency receives in addition thousands of requests for information concerning civilians who disappeared during or after conflicts. If no information is available in the Agency's vast card-indexes, enquiries are opened immediately.

The Central Agency also assists with the reuniting of dispersed families; it deals with the exchange of messages between "protected persons", civilian internees or political detainees when the ordinary postal channels cannot be used.

The Agency's work is not based solely on the Third Geneva Convention (relative to the treatment of prisoners of war) but also on the Fourth Geneva Convention (protection of civilian persons in time of war). In either case, it covers the post-war period and works in close co-operation with National Red Cross Societies and a great many public and private institutions. Thus, in 1959 the Agency dealt with 87,000 individual cases and opened over 18,000 enquiries on military personnel and civilians.

With regard to searches for foreign civilians who disappeared from 1935 to 1945 in Germany or territories occupied by the German forces, the Agency works in close contact with the International Tracing Service in Arolsen of which the administration has been entrusted to the ICRC since 1955.

German Section. — This section received about 2,000 enquiries monthly and the volume of work was practically the same as for the previous year. The military personnel section pursued (frequently by applying to the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR) its efforts to obtain information concerning combatants missing on the East European front during the Second World War. However, the

chances of achieving any positive results, fifteen years after the close of hostilities, are steadily decreasing. On the other hand it is nearly always possible to issue certificates of captivity at the request of former prisoners of war or their families even if captivity related to the 1914-1918 conflict.

The civilian section continued to forward family messages and to seek for missing persons. In 1959 it received more requests than in the previous year for certificates of internment or death concerning former detainees in national-socialist concentration camps.

Excellent results were obtained on numerous occasions, especially in establishing contacts between members of families dispersed for over twenty years all over the world. This section also contributed actively towards the reuniting of "Volksdeutsche" families.

As in previous years this section kept in close and useful contact with the German Red Cross and other national institutions.

British Section. — In 1959 this section issued a great many certificates of captivity in behalf of Palestinians and Israelites of various origins. The applicants, enrolled in the British armed forces during the Second World War had in most cases been captured in Greece and Crete and later interned in special camps in Germany. The certificates issued by the Central Agency enabled them to claim compensation made available by the authorities of the German Federal Republic to the victims of the national-socialist regime.

Certificates of captivity were also issued to former British prisoners of war, in some instances those of the 1914-1918 War.

Italian Section. — As in former years this Section's work was mainly concerned with the identification of combatants, prisoners of war and civilian internees who died during the Second World War. From October 1959 the work increased considerably, the Italian Government having requested the Central Agency to search for the medical records of a great

many military and civilian internees who were admitted to hospital during their captivity in Germany.

Greek Section. — Lists of combatants killed during the civil war in Greece were sent to the Greek Red Cross. These lists had been established and sent to Geneva by an association of Greek emigrants in East and Central Europe. The information contained in the lists was sent by the Greek Red Cross to the families concerned.

USSR Section. — The work of this section, in particular searches, continues to increase. The results of enquiries opened by means of " family message forms " were often most encouraging. The Soviet post offices gave valuable aid by forwarding correspondence when the recipient was no longer at the address indicated. An increase was noted in the exchange of news between persons who emigrated after the two world wars and their relatives in the USSR. It is only when no reply to a message form is forthcoming that the Agency asks the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR to open an enquiry.

The Alliance sent to the Central Agency several thousand enquiry forms concerning former prisoners of war in German hands or civilians forced to leave their homes during the German occupation. These enquiries were forwarded to the International Tracing Service in Arolsen and the results were notified regularly to the Alliance in Moscow.

In some other cases the Alliance lent its services to the Agency to obtain authority for aged persons to leave the USSR and to join near relatives, husbands, wives or children in other countries.

French Section. — Part of the work of this section is related to the Algerian conflict. Despite most urgent and repeated approaches the ICRC has not yet received a nominal list of French nationals captured by the ALN during the hostilities. The section nevertheless opened nearly 500 enquiries with the Red Crescent Societies of Algeria and Morocco but has only received about 100 replies, half of which were negative, i.e. it was stated that the information required was not available.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

As soon as the information had been recorded the enquirers were informed.

Polish Section. — The number of cases dealt with showed no decrease compared to the previous year; 14,000 postal items were received and 15,400 despatched concerning 5,550 individual enquiries. Requests for news of Jews resident in Poland were more numerous. In reply to enquiries concerning missing Poles in the USSR, the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Moscow sent a number of notifications of deaths without mention of dates or circumstances.

Since 1947 the Agency's card-indexes have enabled about 7,200 certificates of captivity to be issued concerning former Polish prisoners of war. In 1959, four out of five requests for these documents came from the United States.

Stateless Persons Section. — As in the previous year, this section mainly dealt with the emigration of stateless persons resident in Egypt. This work decreased during the summer but started up once more in December.

The emigrants were bound, in particular, for Brazil, France, the United Kingdom and the United States. Emigration to these last two countries showed a considerable decrease, the period for the special facilities granted to refugees from the Middle East having come to an end. Some emigrants who had been refused an entry visa to the United States while they were engaged in the necessary formalities in France were able to acquire official status with the assistance of Jewish organisations, especially the United HIAS Service in Paris.

The section also opened a few enquiries and transmitted about 80 family messages mainly concerning persons resident in Israel or the United Arab Republic; 285 new cases were dealt with in 1959 and departures of 396 stateless families were placed on record.

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The other sections of the Central Agency continued their work on a variable but, on the whole, useful scale.