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## **IV. Relief for Prisoners of War, Civilian Internees, and Prisoners of War become Civilian Workers**

### **RELEASE AND REPATRIATION**

The release and repatriation of prisoners was a matter which took up less of the Committee's time in 1950 than in previous years. All countries bound by the 1929 Prisoners of War Convention had ended war captivity, except for prisoners serving sentences.<sup>1</sup>

After negotiations in Madrid and Berlin, the Committee succeeded in August in arranging for the repatriation of some hundreds of Germans who had escaped from France and were held in Spain. Similarly, démarches in Berlin and Shanghai led to the return of 800 Germans from China.

### **PRISONERS OF WAR BECOME CIVILIAN WORKERS**

The German Federal Republic opened a Consulate-General in Paris on October 1, 1950. As the Consulate, however, could not immediately take over the functions exercised by the Committee in behalf of former German prisoners of war who had become civilian workers, the ICRC, in agreement with the German and French authorities, continued more or less as before. This work was outlined in some detail in the 1949 Report.

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<sup>1</sup> In June, the Albanian Red Cross confirmed that all German prisoners of war—some 250—had left Albania for home. A similar communication was made by the Polish Red Cross in regard to the last German prisoners held in Poland.

Relief to a total of some 800,000 French francs was issued by the Committee to these workers from its own funds, or from balances left on other gifts. Some of these men, because of unemployment or sickness, were in difficult circumstances. In certain cases, the Paris Delegation arranged accommodation for them with the Salvation Army ; it assisted them by advice, approaches to the Authorities and by paying medical fees, chemists' bills and travelling expenses.

#### PRISONERS UNDER INDICTMENT OR SENTENCE

Clothing and toilet articles were issued to the 850 German prisoners still held in France. Distribution of this relief and of small amounts for the purchase of minor personal necessities was arranged through welfare assistants, who were acquainted with the men and their needs.

Delegates continued, as in 1949, to attend courts-martial, and make arrangements with defence counsel.

In June, 1949, the Berlin Delegation was not given permission to visit Werl Prison, where Germans condemned for war crimes by the British Occupation authorities were held. The Delegation renewed its request in May 1950, following a reorganization in the British High Commissioner's office. A Delegate was allowed a visit in June, and conversed freely with the men.

Landsberg Prison, in the American Zone, was visited a first time in October, 1949. A request made in May, 1950, to allow a second visit led to results only in December, after repeated negotiations and a personal intervention of the head of the Delegation. He himself visited the prison at the beginning of January, 1951.

Representations were made on behalf of Germans detained in Jugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.

In February, 700 Japanese prisoners—including 40 tuberculous—mostly serving sentences of imprisonment, were transferred from Indonesia to Japan and handed over there to the Occupation Authorities. A Delegate accompanied them on this journey. The ICRC was also interested in the transfer to Japan,

to serve the balance of sentence there, of Japanese military personnel held in Manus Island, the Philippines, at Hong Kong, and in Malaya, Burma and Indo-China.

At the end of May, M. Bieri, who was then Delegate at Hong Kong, visited the ship bringing back 80 Japanese prisoners from Indo-China.

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