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and resettlement of the refugees. The gift was used for the purchase of foodstuffs, soap and clothing material.

## EUROPE

### Hungary

During the events in 1956, a large delegation was set up in Budapest, which was withdrawn in 1957. Since then, contacts with the Hungarian Red Cross and the Hungarian authorities have been maintained by temporary missions sent to that country. The three missions sent by the ICRC to Hungary in 1958 dealt with the following matters:

#### **a) Winding up of the relief action (1956-1957)**

The International Committee's representatives have continued to visit the hospitals to which equipment was made available under the medico-social programme started early in 1957. They noted that the gifts had arrived safely and that the setting up of the last equipment delivered would soon be finished. The Hungarian doctors expressed great appreciation of the apparatus already in use. The checking of the supplies delivered was carried out in the same manner as for the previous year: the doctors in charge of the hospitals signed vouchers which were sent through the Hungarian Red Cross to the ICRC which transmitted them to the donors. The delegates of the ICRC also examined the use made by the Hungarian Red Cross of various relief funds which served for making hospital mattresses and equipping auxiliary medical teams.

#### **b) Manufacture of artificial limbs**

Following the programme established in 1957, the International Committee supplied two machines which will enable immediate improvement to be made in the output of artificial limbs by the old workshop until the new workshop is opened<sup>1</sup>. These machines were purchased with the balance of the funds donated for Hungary by National Red Cross Societies.

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<sup>1</sup> See Annual Report for 1957, pp. 13-18.

### **c) New relief actions**

As the gift funds received in 1956 and 1957 were exhausted, the ICRC made the sum of 15,000 Swiss francs available for the purchase of medicaments to meet urgent and vital needs. The purpose of this action was to comply with numerous individual requests arising from the lack of certain medicaments and the temporary stoppage of the manufacture of national products following the events in 1956. The sending of medicaments still goes on with the help of contributions made available by the Red Cross Societies of Great Britain and Switzerland. Requests for medicaments are sent to the ICRC by the Hungarian Red Cross, which also deals with the distribution of the medical parcels. This Society also received 500 gift parcels, of which the contents (clothing, soap and tonics) were distributed to political detainees in a prison hospital and a prison.

### **d) Reuniting of Hungarian families**

In accordance with Resolution XX adopted by the International Conference of the Red Cross at New Delhi in October-November 1957, some Hungarian refugees who wished to return to their country were repatriated with the help of the Red Cross Societies of the countries of asylum, and in some cases the cost of the journey was borne by the authorities of those countries.

The Hungarian Red Cross and the Hungarian authorities have made repeated approaches, however, to the ICRC and the Red Cross Societies concerned with a view to the repatriation of Hungarian refugee children in western countries, whose parents in Hungary have asked for their return. For its part, the International Committee has confined its action to the transmission of requests received in this connection to the National Societies involved and has left it to them to take the measures required in each case. It has merely stressed the absolutely voluntary nature of these operations and the need to abstain from any coercion, to enable the persons concerned to make a free choice without being influenced in any way. In some cases, the International Committee took part in the repatriation operations.

The Hungarian Red Cross informed the ICRC at its request, that between October 1956 and September 1958, two hundred emigration

passports had been issued to Hungarian nationals to enable them to join refugee parents in other countries. At the same time, it supplied various particulars concerning departures from Hungary and the procedure to be followed to obtain emigration passports, which were duly transmitted to the Red Cross Societies concerned. These Societies have applied on fairly numerous occasions to the Hungarian Red Cross in behalf of refugees who asked for members of their families to be authorised to join them in other countries. The ICRC gave its support to these applications and expressed the hope that the reuniting of Hungarian families, wherever they might be, would be continued.

### **Greece**

A further mission of the ICRC visited places of detention in Greece from December 5, 1958 to January 4, 1959. The delegates from Geneva, Mr. C. Ammann, and Mr. J. Muralti, visited the camp for exiles at Aghios Efstratios and various prisons on the Greek mainland and in the islands, where political prisoners are detained. They distributed clothing and medicaments valued at 150,000 Swiss francs. They also gave a donation in behalf of the families of political detainees in reduced circumstances. During this mission the representatives of the ICRC were afforded the full support of the Greek Red Cross.

As customary, the delegates informed the authorities concerned of the points noted during their visits and their suggestions, particularly in the case of sick persons in exile. They afterwards made a report on their visits which was sent by the ICRC to the Greek Government.

### **Poland**

In order to reply to requests received in 1958 from sick persons for patent medicines, the ICRC sent a consignment of medicaments to the Polish Red Cross valued at 16,312 Swiss francs. This assistance, the beneficiaries of which were mostly persons repatriated from the USSR, was financed by the Committee's own funds and a donation of the British Red Cross.

## **Ireland**

On February 20, 1958, a delegate of the ICRC, Mr. M. Borsinger, accompanied by the Chairman of the Irish Red Cross, visited the camp for political internees at Curragh near Dublin. All facilities were accorded to the delegate of the International Committee, who was able to speak without witnesses with the internees' representative. A report on the visit was sent later to the Irish Government.

## **Spain**

As in previous years, the delegate of the ICRC in Spain, Mr. E. Arbenz, gave assistance to refugees. The International Committee opened negotiations with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees with a view to handing over to this organisation the activities (of an exceptional and temporary nature) pursued by the International Committee in behalf of refugees in Spain for the past few years.

Mr. Arbenz continued to assist some persons under detention and their families; he was authorised by the Director of Prisons to visit a prison near Madrid and to enquire into detention conditions.

The International Committee also lent its services to the Spanish Red Cross and the Alliance of Red Cross and Crescent Societies of the USSR for the establishment of nominal lists of Spanish nationals wishing to be repatriated from the Soviet Union. With the Spanish authorities and the Spanish Red Cross, it also examined the possibility of facilitating the return of some Spanish nationals and their wives (of Russian origin) who wished to go back to the USSR. On several occasions, the ICRC took up with the Spanish Red Cross and the Spanish authorities, the matter of missing Spanish nationals in Southern Morocco. The International Committee applied to the Government in Madrid — it had made a similar application to the Moroccan authorities in behalf of missing Spanish nationals — for a nominal list of Moroccan prisoners captured by the Spanish forces. Its efforts were successful and the list, received in February, enabled the ICRC to reply to requests for information from prisoners' families <sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 12.

## Visits to political detainees

Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions, authorises in principle the ICRC to offer its services in conflicts other than those between States, i.e. “in the case of armed conflict not of an international character”. With a view to promoting the development of international law, some Governments have gone far beyond these provisions by affording to the International Committee the possibility of examining the conditions of detention of political prisoners, even if no state of civil war or internal disturbance exists at the time. In most cases the persons concerned had not taken up arms against the Government but were opposed to it for ideological reasons and were guilty of breaking the law. These were the circumstances which enabled the ICRC to visit political detainees of this description in three European countries.

The delegates' visits were confined solely to the inspection of material conditions of detention without regard to the reasons of such detention. After conversing freely with the detained persons, without witnesses, they drew up reports on the visits intended exclusively for the detaining authorities. The ICRC thus followed the rule, always applicable in such case, that the findings of these reports cannot be used for other than humanitarian purposes.

The States which gave access to prison establishments to delegates of the ICRC did not do so because the problem of political detainees in their territory had reached a particularly acute stage; they merely wished to show them that detention conditions were satisfactory and based on modern systems. This attitude of the authorities greatly facilitated the mission undertaken by the International Committee's representative, Mr. H. Beckh, in the three following countries:

*German Democratic Republic.* — Mr. Beckh's visits to two prisons, two hospitals and a prison working camp (where he spoke freely with detainees of his choice), enabled him to see the material conditions of detention and to form an idea of the prisoners' mental health. After receiving his report, the authorities stated that full consideration would be given to his comments and suggestions.

*German Federal Republic.* — Mr. Beckh continued his series of visits in this State<sup>1</sup>. Visits were made to eleven prisons and a prison hospital

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<sup>1</sup> See Annual Report 1957, p. 38.

in 1958. The delegate was given all facilities for carrying out his task and his suggestions were favourably received.

During his mission, Mr. Beckh was received by various leading figures, in particular the Attorney General of the German Federal Republic, with whom he discussed the question of political detainees in ill-health and two very serious cases in particular. This matter was taken up later by the ICRC with the Federal Ministry of Justice.

*Jugoslavia.* — During a visit to this country, Mr. Beckh saw the Under-Secretary of State for Internal Affairs, with whom he had a long discussion on the Yugoslav penitentiary system. The Under-Secretary outlined the plans of his Government for running prisons on more modern lines and invited Mr. Beckh to see the progress already made by visits to prisons of his choice. The delegate visited two prisons and spoke to the detainees without witnesses; as customary, he informed the authorities of the points noted by him and his suggestions.

### **Reuniting of families**

The ICRC continued to deal with the reuniting of families dispersed by the war and its after-effects. Its action was mainly in behalf of persons of German origin (Volksdeutsche).

The ICRC worked in close co-operation with the National Red Cross Societies of the various countries concerned. Some of these Societies undertook the greater part of the work of which the International Committee was kept regularly informed. On several occasions it sent a delegate to discuss the technical details of this humanitarian undertaking.

By the end of 1958, over 360,000 persons, mainly of German origin, had thus been united with their families; over 260,000 came from Poland, about 55,000 from Jugoslavia, more than 20,000 from Czechoslovakia and over 3,000 from Rumania.

Since this action first started in 1949, seven countries of departure and sixteen countries of asylum have lent their support to this humanitarian work of international importance.