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therefore that these Societies should take part in a meeting in Geneva, in 1959, to examine this problem in the light of recent experience and prepare the way for a study by a Commission of Experts.

As the Red Cross Societies did not respond in sufficient numbers to the invitation the plan had to be given up. Nevertheless, the ICRC received interesting information from some of the Societies which could be used as a basis for the work of a Commission of Experts which might possibly be convened later on.

## **Europe**

### **Hungary**

The ICRC sent a further mission to Budapest in June for the discussion of various matters with the Hungarian Red Cross, including machine tools for the artificial limb workshop, the sending of medicaments of vital need and the reuniting of families.

### **Greece**

Following the mission which visited various places of detention in Greece <sup>1</sup> from December 1958 to January 1959, during the past year the ICRC sent several consignments of relief supplies to the Greek Red Cross. As formerly, the beneficiaries were political prisoners and members of their families.

## **VISITS TO POLITICAL DETAINEES**

We stated in the previous Annual Report <sup>2</sup>, the principles whereby the ICRC undertook to visit, in various countries, political prisoners who had been arrested although no state of civil war

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<sup>1</sup> See *Annual Report 1958*, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 29-30.

or internal disturbance existed at the time in the States concerned. With the co-operation of the Governments, which showed a particularly understanding attitude towards the International Committee's work in this field of international law, these visits to political prisoners were continued in 1959.

### **German Federal Republic**

The facilities accorded by the Government of the German Federal Republic enabled Mr. H. G. Beckh, delegate of the ICRC, to visit six prisons and a prison hospital in West Berlin and to speak without witnesses with 51 political detainees awaiting trial or serving sentences. He noted that two prisoners in a very bad state of health, on whose behalf the International Committee had intervened in 1958<sup>1</sup>, had been released since his previous visit.

In carrying out his task the delegate of the ICRC was accorded the full support of the authorities who gave careful consideration to his comments and suggestions. He met several eminent persons, in particular the Attorney General of the German Federal Republic with whom he discussed problems relating to political detainees, more especially those in ill-health.

In West Berlin the delegate was received by other judiciary authorities who took note of his comments on his visits to places of detention and again assured him that the representative of the ICRC would always be granted access to prison establishments under their control.

### **Jugoslavia**

In this country also the International Committee's work in behalf of political detainees was continued with the entire co-operation of the authorities concerned. Following a further interview with Mr. Andija Pejović, Under-Secretary of State, and Mr. Cuskar, Assistant-Secretary, the delegate of the ICRC (Mr. H. G.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Annual Report 1958*, p. 30.

Beckh) visited six places of detention of which one was a modern "open" prison. The delegate spoke without witnesses with 42 detainees of his choice. The authorities paid careful attention to the delegate's comments and stated their willingness to receive him on the occasion of further visits.

## **REUNITING OF FAMILIES**

The purpose of this work (to which reference has often been made in previous annual reports) which was started after the Second World War is to reunite members of families dispersed by the war or its after-effects. It was continued by the ICRC in 1959 ; the principal beneficiaries were persons of German origin or "Volksdeutsche".

During the past year some 20,500 adults and children were able to join near relatives in European and oversea countries. This figure brings the number of persons thus reunited under the auspices of the Red Cross, up to the end of 1959, to 373,000.

Various National Red Cross Societies lend their active support to this action, which is being continued ; some of them deal with the practical side of the work and keep the International Committee informed of the results ; in other countries the work is done with the direct participation of the ICRC.

## **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.