

Zeitschrift: Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross
Herausgeber: International Committee of the Red Cross
Band: - (1961)

Rubrik: Europe

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 12.12.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

received from various quarters, all the representations which it made to the Havana authorities as well as to the Cuban Red Cross, have so far had no result. In other fields, however, it was able to co-operate usefully with that country's National Society.

* * *

In order to draw the bonds closer with the American continent, the ICRC charged one of its representatives with a mission to the Central American countries. This delegate, Mr. P. Jequier, successively visited Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Mexico. In each of these countries he had useful talks with the directors of the National Red Cross Societies, who welcomed him warmly, and also met members of some governments.

EUROPE

Compensation for victims of pseudo-medical experiments

At the end of 1960, the ICRC accepted to act as intermediary to hand over financial assistance offered by the Bonn authorities to the victims of pseudo-medical experiments in German concentration camps under the Nazi regime. Persons to whom this offer was made were the surviving victims resident in countries with which the German Federal Republic does not maintain diplomatic relations, namely Hungary and Poland in particular.

A mission of the International Committee, consisting of Dr. J. de Rougemont and Mr. J.-P. Maunoir, went to Poland in February in order to complete, in agreement with the Polish Red Cross, the files which had already been sent to the ICRC by the German Federal Republic, to examine the sick, study their clinical documents, and make contact with their general practitioners. A similar mission was carried out in Hungary in March by Dr. F. Züst, Mr. E. Fischer and Mr. J.-P. Maunoir.

The files were then handed to a neutral commission consisting of three experts appointed by the ICRC: Mr. Jean Graven, Professor at the Faculty of Law, Vice-Rector of the University of Geneva, Judge of the Supreme Court of Appeal and former Clerk of the Federal Tribunal of Insurance at Lucerne, Dr. R. S. Mach, Professor at the Faculty of Medicine of Geneva, head of the University Clinic of Therapy of the Cantonal Hospital, and Dr. S. Mutrux, medical assistant director of the Bel-Air Psychiatric Clinic, Geneva. Dr. E. Loizeau, head of the clinic at the Cantonal Hospital at Geneva was appointed as a deputy member.

The Commission held its first meeting from August 21 to 24 at the ICRC headquarters. Having had 73 Polish and 63 Hungarian cases referred to it, its first task was to pronounce on the merits of these claims. It had in particular to decide if the acts of which the victims complained corresponded to the definition of convictable medical experiments, as given on August 20, 1947, in its judgement by the 1st American Military Tribunal at Nuremberg in the "doctors' trial" (re : Karl Brandt and associates). It then had to assess the correlation between the experiment and the victims' present state of health. The Commission thus discarded one case, not being able to be convinced that the claimant had really been subjected to a pseudo-medical experiment.

In so far as a sum of money of whatever size can ever be regarded as adequate compensation for such suffering, the Commission had also to decide upon the amount of allocations to be made according to the extent of the consequences observed.

In agreement with proposals made by the ICRC's doctor-delegate in Poland and Hungary, as well as by the doctor-delegates of the two National Red Cross Societies, the Commission was of the opinion that, quite apart from the consequences, the experiments alone entitled victims to a first basic allocation. This amount, the same for all beneficiaries, had therefore to be allocated even if visible marks no longer showed, more than 20 years later, on the victims furnishing proof of acts against their health or physical integrity. If on the other hand the consequences of such acts were discovered by the doctor-reporters, the neutral Commission fixed a supplementary allocation, whose amount varied according to the gravity of the victim's state of health. It proceeded in a similar

manner when moral damage resulting from the experiment appeared to be particularly heavy and that, for example, it had permanently affected the whole of the victim's life.

As a general rule, the Commission only took the victim's state of health at the time of the most recent medical examinations into account. Only exceptionally did it consider, as an aggravating factor, the future development of the illness resulting from the pseudo-medical experiment.

On the other hand, it discarded acts which could not be adequately connected with a pseudo-medical experiment, even when torture or maltreatment unrelated to an experiment had also been inflicted in a concentration camp.

When the work of this first meeting was concluded, the ICRC informed the Government of the German Federal Republic of the decisions taken by the neutral Commission on behalf of the 135 victims whose claims had been accepted. That government then placed at the ICRC's disposal the sums destined for these persons resident in Poland and Hungary. In December they received the amounts which had been allocated to them.

Greece

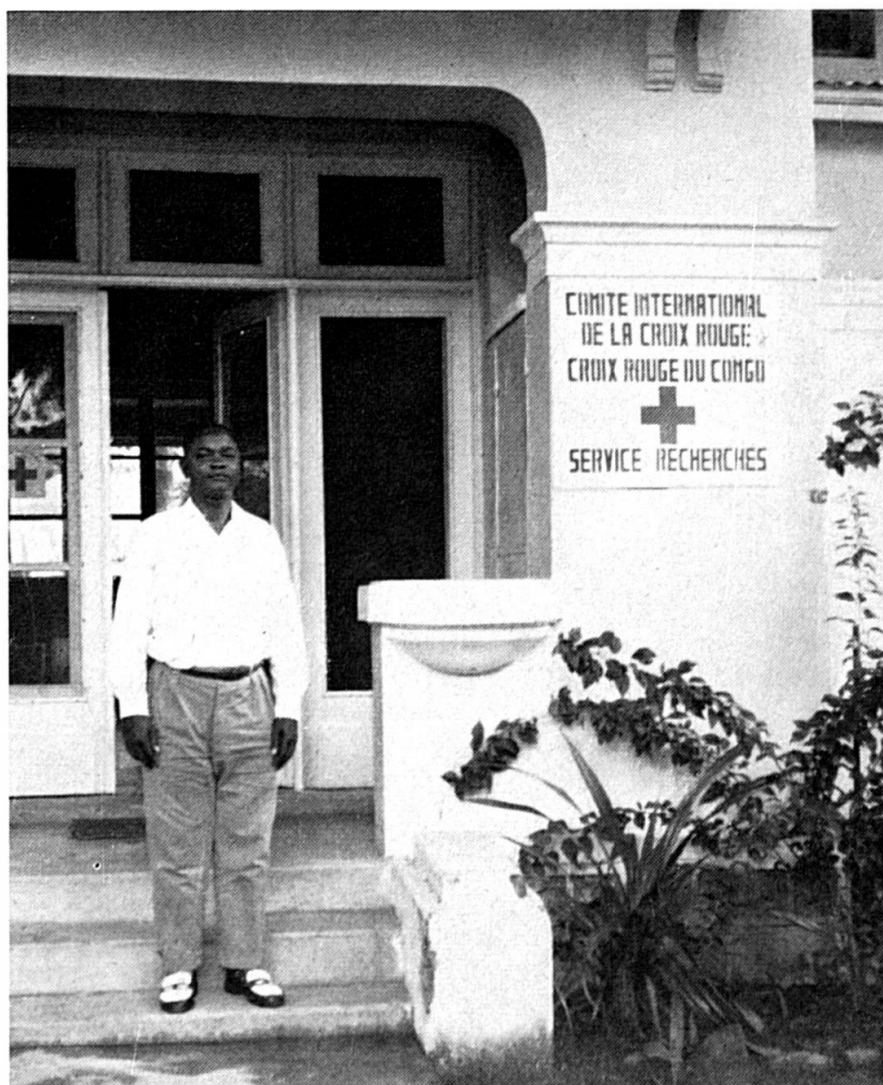
At the end of the summer the ICRC sent a further mission to Greece to visit places of detention and internment. It thus continued the series of visits which had been made periodically since 1947, at the time when the Greek Government had authorised the ICRC to concern itself with the fate of persons deprived of their liberty following on the events of 1945 and 1946.

The ICRC representatives (Mr. G. Colladon, delegate, and Dr. R. Bergoz, doctor-delegate) thus visited the camp on the island of Aghios Efstratos where there were about 200 political exiles, to whom they handed relief consisting of clothing, food and medicaments. With the doctor appointed by the Greek Red Cross to care for the exiles acting as guide, Dr. Bergoz was able to see the health conditions existing in the camp and examined several of the sick.

On the return of Dr. R. Bergoz to Geneva, Mr. G. Colladon visited seventeen penal establishments in which were detainees



YUGOSLAVIA *The artificial limb workshop in Sarajevo.*



CONGO *The tracing service in Leopoldville and its Congolese assistant.*



CONGO *Foodstuffs and medical supplies for the hospital at Gemena being unloaded from a United Nations aircraft placed at the disposal of the ICRC and accompanied by a delegate.*

ALGERIA *The screening and transit centre in Barika.*



sentenced to terms of imprisonment, the exiles on Aghios Efstratos being held under administrative decree. To detainees serving sentences the ICRC delegate also distributed relief supplied by certain National Red Cross Societies, by non-governmental organisations, as well as by the ICRC itself.

The mission lasted two months. It benefited from the full co-operation of the Greek Red Cross and of the local authorities, who facilitated the transport and storage of the relief supplies. These totalled an amount in excess of Sw. frs. 120,000.

Furthermore, Mr. G. Colladon, at the request of the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, also intervened with the Greek authorities on behalf of Greek nationals at present in North Viet Nam and who wished to be repatriated. This concerned former members of the Foreign Legion who had remained behind after the war of Indo-China.

VISITS TO POLITICAL DETAINEES

As stated in our previous Reports and as in the case of Greece, certain governments authorise the ICRC to visit civilian prisoners in their places of detention. These authorisations enable the delegates of the ICRC to proceed to various establishments and to assess their detention conditions, even if this is not a question of visiting persons arrested during a civil war or particular disturbances, or even if complaints have not been made about conditions of detention. The authorities granting these facilities thus help the ICRC to obtain documentation in this particular field of international law.

The ICRC draws up reports on these visits and hands them only to the detaining authorities which thus receive impartial observations and information useful to their administration. When delegates are able to make such visits, these are therefore not enquiries but rather neutral surveys destined for these governments.

German Federal Republic and West Berlin

In 1961 the ICRC delegate, Mr. H. G. Beckh, visited seven places of detention in the German Federal Republic where he was able

to study conditions in those prisons and to talk without witnesses with thirty detainees of his own choosing.

As in previous years the authorities granted the delegate every facility to carry out his mission. Senior officials of the Legal Division of the Federal Ministry and of the "Länder" as well as the Attorney-General of the Republic, accorded him useful interviews. They once again stated how favourably they viewed such visits, which give them impartial assessments of detention conditions, especially those applicable to persons accused or convicted of offences against the security of the State.

In West Berlin the delegate again visited two prisons where he spoke privately with nineteen persons in this category.

Mr. Beckh was also received by leading personalities of the Berlin Senate who set themselves out to facilitate his mission.

Yugoslavia

Thanks to the authorities' support and understanding and also to the co-operation of the Yugoslav Red Cross, the ICRC delegate was once more able to visit two places of detention (KPD) where he spoke without witnesses to twenty detainees of his own choosing.

The delegate also took this opportunity of noting the innovations brought about by the new law on the application of punishment. This new regulation for easing conditions in prisons as far as possible permits all detainees to have leave of absence which some can spend with their own families.

REUNITING OF FAMILIES

The action of reuniting families undertaken by the ICRC since the end of the last war was continued. It chiefly concerned families of German stock, "Volksdeutsche", but also persons of other origins.

In 1961 more than 15,000 persons thus rejoined their relatives who, as a result of the war and of events in the post-war period, had installed themselves in other countries. Attempts were also made to facilitate the reuniting of families in countries which had

been their own before the hostilities. The total number of persons who have thus been reunited now exceeds 400,000.

As in previous years, the ICRC has acted in co-operation with the National Red Cross Societies of the countries concerned. Often moreover these accomplish the greatest part of the work; the ICRC is then informed of the results and can restrict itself to intervening with the appropriate authorities to activate the reuniting of families still outstanding.

On the other hand, the ICRC is still dealing in some countries with individual cases of reuniting and itself initiates discussions with the Red Cross Societies of the country of departure.

CENTRAL TRACING AGENCY

Through its Central Tracing Agency (CTA), the ICRC maintains fruitful co-operation with the National Red Cross Societies, the official tracing Bureaux and various international institutions, which assist it in settling "individual cases" which are submitted to it daily.

During the course of 1961, the CTA dealt with 66,348 cases and opened 20,525 enquiries with all these different bodies. In its various sections, the proportion of enquiries leading to positive results has increased unceasingly. Thus, in 1961, about one third of these enquiries led to positive results. This is most encouraging and demonstrates how the National Societies and other institutions co-operate ever more effectively with the ICRC in its work.

The CTA made alterations in 1961 in its organisation with the definite creation of grouped sections.

Grouped Sections A

*(Western and Southern Europe, French-speaking countries of
Africa and Latin America)*

The number of enquiries addressed in 1961 to these grouped sections was 7,938. About one third of these were connected with tracing military and civilians missing during the Second World War.