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Chinese People's Republic who were in Brazil during the change of regime in that country in which they had been interned. The ICRC immediately instructed its honorary delegate in Rio de Janeiro, Mr. Eric Haegler, to request the Brazilian Government to authorize his visiting these nine persons in question. At the same time it sent him family message forms to enable them to send their news to their relatives.

On May 6, Mr. Haegler was able to visit the interned Chinese who seemed to him to be in good health. He gave them some funds to enable them to purchase personal items. The ICRC delegate visited them on subsequent occasions.

Again at the request of the Chinese Red Cross, Mr. Haegler made representations with the authorities for three of the wives of the interned Chinese to be given permission to visit their husbands. The Brazilian Government having given its agreement, the three women in question arrived in Rio de Janeiro on August 24, accompanied by a representative of the Chinese Red Cross. They were immediately able to go to see their husbands in prison and made repeated visits on subsequent days.

## 5. EUROPE

### Germany

As in previous years, representatives of the ICRC and in particular Mr. H. G. Beckh, delegate, on several occasions visited the headquarters of the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic, as well as the "Länder" Red Cross branches. Mr. Beckh was received by Mr. von Lex, President, and Mr. Schlägel, Secretary-General, and other leading members of that National Society.

In the course of the various contacts he made in Germany, the delegate broached the problem of family visits and pleaded the cause with both sides of the hundreds of thousands of persons prevented from meeting members of their families as a result of the division of Berlin. The ICRC delegate had a series of official, unofficial and even private talks with leading government personalities on the subject.

When in the autumn of 1964, more than half-a-million West Berliners were able to visit their relatives in East Berlin, the delegate noted that the system adopted functioned in a satisfactory manner.

As regards visits to detainees, Mr. Beckh was authorized to proceed, with the full agreement of the Ministry of Justice in Bonn and the regional authorities, to four prisons where he spoke privately with ten political detainees of his own choosing. Every facility was granted him to carry out these visits, which only concerned conditions of detention and in no way the motives for their being held. In the same year, the ICRC delegate benefited from the complete agreement of the West Berlin Senate and visited two prisons in the city where he talked without witnesses with eleven persons accused or convicted of offences against State security.

The ICRC also maintained continuous relations with leading members of the German Red Cross in the Democratic Republic.

**Reuniting of families.**—This action, which was initiated by the ICRC after the Second World War, is continuing in close co-operation with the National Red Cross Societies of the countries concerned. Thus, from 1950 until 1964, those benefiting exceeded a total of 500,000 persons. In 1964, some thirty thousand, supplied with all the necessary permits, were able to cross frontiers hitherto barred to them, thanks in part to the understanding of the governments concerned. These regroupings concerned Europe in the first place, although a certain number also took place on the other continents.

## **Bulgaria**

The Bulgarian Red Cross having invited a representative of the ICRC to its fifth Congress, Mr. F. Siordet, Vice-President, took part in this meeting which was held in Sofia in August. He took the opportunity of visiting several Red Cross establishments and services in various places and he was able to see the efficient organization and good work being undertaken by the Bulgarian Red Cross. Mr. H. G. Beckh, delegate, again visited Sofia in November and

December at the invitation of Dr. Kolarov, President of the Bulgarian Red Cross.

Mr. Beckh received permission to visit the Stara Zagora prison in which are held persons convicted of political offences. He was able to speak freely and in private with ten detainees of his own choosing. The authorities, represented by Mr. V. Trojev, and the National Red Cross offered him every facility to carry out this visit. He also discovered the arrangements existing for maintaining links between the prisoners and their families. On terminating his visit, Mr. Beckh was received by Mr. Atanas Voynov, Minister of Justice, who invited him to return in 1965.

## **Rumania**

In November, Mr. H. G. Beckh, delegate of the ICRC, visited Bucarest at the invitation of the Rumanian Red Cross, where he was received by Mrs. Nikolski and Dr. Berlogea, Vice-Presidents, and by other leading members of that National Society. During the course of numerous discussions, all questions of common interest were broached, in particular the application and dissemination of the Geneva Conventions and the reuniting of families.

## **Yugoslavia**

Mr. L. Boissier, then President of the ICRC, paid an official visit from May 11 to 19 to the Yugoslav Red Cross in Belgrade.

He was accompanied by Mr. R. J. Wilhelm, an adviser in the legal department of the ICRC. This visit enabled him to observe the development of that National Society and its multiple activities, especially in the field of public health. He, in his turn, explained to his hosts and to the heads of local branches the main tasks of the ICRC in the world today. The President went to Skoplje, where the Red Cross accomplished such an outstanding relief action during the recent disaster. Mr. Boissier also visited the Red Cross branches of the Federal Republics of Serbia, Slovenia and Macedonia. During his stay in Belgrade he had talks with members of the government and of the parliament as well as with

leading university personalities particularly interested in humanitarian law.

At the end of the year, Mr. H. G. Beckh, delegate, also stopped in Yugoslavia where he met the heads of the Yugoslav Red Cross. In Belgrade he also met Mr. Popović, head of the department for the execution of sentences at the Secretariat of Internal Affairs, who informed him that the ICRC would be authorised to make further visits to Yugoslav prisons in the summer of 1965.

**Vatican.**—A delegate of the ICRC, Mr. Beckh, was received in private audience by His Holiness the Pope, who demonstrated his interest in the question of family reunions and visits in Berlin.

## 6. SPECIAL SERVICES

### **Central Tracing Agency (Geneva)**

Even twenty years after the end of the Second World War, the activity of the Central Tracing Agency which was previously called the Central Prisoners of War Agency, continues unabated. This important branch of the ICRC in 1964 received 61,449 queries and communications of all sorts (as against 47,512 in 1963) whilst outgoing mail consisted of no less than 60,987 items as against 50,300 for the previous year.

This activity of the Central Tracing Agency in connection with all conflicts and their aftermath is of considerable importance by reason of its humanitarian effects, in view of the fact that many archives in countries stricken by war were destroyed, so that the records held in Geneva are in many cases the only source of information available to former prisoners of war or other victims of hostilities. The Agency has already been the means of bringing comfort to millions of human beings to judge from the following figures: for the period from 1939-1945 alone, the Agency compiled 36 million index cards representing some 15 million individual cases.

Far from becoming any less useful in 1964, this card index relating to the Second World War was put to even greater use than in previous years. In fact, there are many veterans who are now