

Far East

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parcels, between these persons and their families in the United Arab Republic. In June the General-Delegate of the ICRC for the Near East visited two detainees, Ahmed Ali Osman and Mustafa Farhat.

Searches, which unfortunately led to no result, were undertaken under the auspices of the ICRC for the purpose of tracing persons missing in the Israeli-Arabian frontier zones.

During a visit to Israel in June, the General-Delegate was received by the President of the Republic, Mr. Ben Zvi.

Cyprus

Early in April Mr. de Traz visited Cyprus, where he had an interview with the Governor, Sir Hugh Mackintosh Foot. He also saw Mgr. Makarios, President of the provisional Cabinet. This mission brought to a close the relief action undertaken since the end of 1955 in connection with the Cyprus conflict ¹.

FAR EAST

Japan and Korea

Early in 1959 the problem of the repatriation of Koreans resident in Japan came into prominence. The ICRC, having been approached by the Japanese authorities and asked to lend its assistance for the proposed repatriation operations, was faced with a task of a relatively new description which it accepted to undertake only after careful consideration of the matter.

It should be recalled, in order to have a clear view of the problem, that at the time of the capitulation in August 1945, two million Koreans were resident in Japan, 1,400,000 of whom returned to their country from 1945 to 1948. The remaining 600,000 stayed in Japan for various reasons but in many cases they lived in difficult conditions. The question of repatriating those who wished to leave was therefore becoming more and more urgent.

¹ See *Annual Report 1957*, p. 37, do. *1958*, pp. 17-18.

On January 20, 1959, the Central Committee of the Japanese Red Cross adopted a resolution in favour of the repatriation of the Koreans. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) had stated, a few months previously, that it was prepared to make ships available and to bear the cost of transport of persons wishing to be repatriated.

At a press conference on January 30, the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs stated his intention of asking the ICRC to verify the free choice of the Koreans who decided to proceed to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. On February 14, the Government in Tokyo entrusted the Japanese Red Cross with the transmission of the request to the International Committee which it asked, at the same time, to act as an intermediary for the carrying out of the repatriation operations ; the request was sent to Geneva on the same day and was made public in Tokyo a little later.

At the end of February a delegation of the Japanese Red Cross arrived in Geneva.

For its part the Red Cross of the Republic of Korea (South Korea) immediately approached the International Committee with a view to dissuading it from giving effect to the request of the Japanese Government. In March a mission composed of two representatives of the Government and a delegate of the Red Cross of the Republic of Korea came to Geneva to give the ICRC a clearer view of public opinion in their country on the subject of the proposed repatriations.

Other persons, the representatives of various groups in the Republic of Korea which were opposed to the Japanese project, also came to Geneva and were received by the ICRC, to which they made urgent representations for it to refrain from taking any part in the repatriations.

The Japanese Red Cross had, however, endeavoured to persuade the Red Cross of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to send a delegation to Geneva, to enable the two Societies to discuss the matter under the auspices of the ICRC. But the Red Cross of the DPRK ¹ then stated that it was opposed in principle to the

¹ For the sake of brevity the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will be designated by these initials.

screening of persons wishing to be repatriated and therefore refused to enter into discussions under the auspices of the ICRC, as suggested by the Japanese Red Cross.

On March 13, the ICRC issued a press release stating its position in the matter which appeared in the *Revue internationale de la Croix Rouge* and was given wide publicity by the press in general. The text set forth certain important points and stated in particular that : “ in conformity with humanitarian principles and the resolutions adopted by International Conferences of the Red Cross ” the ICRC considered “ that it should be possible for every individual to return to a place of his choice in his fatherland if he freely expresses his wish to do so ”.

Early in April, the Red Cross of the DPRK finally accepted the Japanese proposal for a meeting in Geneva to which it sent a delegation ; the discussions started on April 13, 1959.

The ICRC placed a conference room at the disposal of the two delegations but stated that it would abstain from taking part in the discussions. In addition, it informed both the parties that it would take no decision as to its possible participation in the proposed repatriations and the arrangements for these operations so long as the two parties had reached no agreement on the matter.

The discussions continued until June 24. On that date the delegations of the Red Cross Societies of Japan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea concluded an agreement on the basis of the free choice of residence and the principles of the Red Cross, in order to proceed with the repatriation of Koreans resident in Japan in conformity with the freely expressed wish of those concerned.

This agreement set forth the definition of the persons entitled to ask for repatriation (Art. 1), the general conditions for the deposit (Art. 2 (1)), or the withdrawal (Art. 2 (2)) of applications, as well as the role of observer and adviser to the Japanese Red Cross which both parties wished to entrust to the ICRC (Art. 3 (3)). Other provisions concerned embarkation formalities (Art. 4 and 5), free transport of persons and luggage, exemption from customs duties (Art. 6) and the conditions for the stay at the embarkation port of the representatives of the Red Cross of the DPRK (Art. 7). Finally it was stipulated that the text of the agreement should be

published (Art. 8) and that it should be valid for one year and three months from the date of signature (Art. 9).

The agreement, signed provisionally in Geneva, was formally ratified in Calcutta on August 13, 1959.

Shortly before the International Committee had informed the Japanese Red Cross that it was willing to lend its assistance for preparing the repatriation of those Koreans resident in Japan who expressed the wish to proceed to a place of their choice in their country of origin. It specified, however, that its decision implied no approval or disapproval of the agreement concluded on June 24 between the Red Cross Societies of Japan and the DPRK. The ICRC considered, in fact, that it had not to express any opinion on an agreement in which it had taken no part and by which it was bound by no clause whatsoever. It merely ascertained that the two parties concerned had formally based their agreement on the principle whereby every person should be free to choose his place of residence and to return to his country if he so desired.

In addition the ICRC recalled the assurances received from the Government and the Red Cross of Japan in regard to the conditions in which the free choice of the persons concerned would be guaranteed ; these assurances also related to the position of the Koreans who chose to remain in Japan.

The ICRC referred also to the assurances received from the Red Cross and the Government of the Republic of Korea concerning the repatriation of those who chose to proceed to the South of their country of origin. The authorities in Seoul had stated that they were prepared to receive them as soon as the necessary agreements had been concluded with the Government in Tokyo.

These various points were set forth in brief in a press release issued on August 11, 1959, by the ICRC which defined its position in the matter and also announced the forthcoming departure of a mission from Geneva to Japan.

This mission was undertaken by Dr. Marcel Junod, Vice-President of the ICRC, who arrived in Tokyo on August 23. He opened discussions immediately with the Japanese Red Cross and the Japanese authorities in regard to the International Committee's participation in the repatriation operations. Shortly before his

return to Europe he was joined by Dr. Otto Lehner, who assumed the direction of the special mission of the ICRC.

Early in September the Japanese Red Cross published a hand-book entitled "Guide-book for Mr. Returnee", which stated the measures taken for everyone to be fully informed of the choice open to him (to proceed to North or South Korea or to remain in Japan) and his freedom to express his will. It specified that each applicant for repatriation to the DPRK would be called upon to confirm his wish to leave, in the presence of a representative of the Japanese Red Cross and a delegate of the ICRC, in an interview without witnesses. This interview would take place at the assembly centre near the port of Niigata on the Japanese coast just before the applicant's embarkation. The Guide-book also specified that, in addition to this interview held in a room set apart for the purpose, every person was entitled to approach a delegate of the ICRC at any time and to speak with him without witnesses. After being approved by Dr. Junod, the Guide-book was very widely circulated throughout Japan.

In response to an invitation received before he left for the Far East, the Vice-President of the ICRC also went to the Republic of Korea. He met with a cordial welcome in Seoul, where he was received by Dr. Syngman Rhee, President of the Republic of Korea, Dr. Chang Whan Sohn, President of the National Red Cross Society, and several other eminent persons, to whom he gave copies of the Guide-book. On this occasion the leaders of the Republic of Korea stated once more their entire disapproval of any repatriation to the north of the country.

On September 21, 1959, the Japanese Red Cross started to open its 3,655 centres (situated in all parts of the Japanese archipelago) for the registration of Koreans wishing to go to North Korea. However, as a result of reservations made in various Korean circles in Japan on some points of the procedure for repatriation as provided by the Japanese Red Cross, applications for repatriation were few at first ; from September 21 to November 3 they amounted to 432 only.

In the interval the mission of the ICRC had been organised and Dr. Lehner, assisted by some twenty delegates of Swiss nationality sent from Europe or recruited locally, started visiting

the principal registration centres. Accompanied by representatives of the Japanese Red Cross they made sure that the poster informing the Koreans of the choice of residence open to them was duly displayed on the premises. They assured themselves that the organisation of the offices responded to the general directions issued by the Japanese Red Cross and the fundamental principles set forth by the International Committee.

Finally, following a few adjustments made by the Japanese Red Cross in the procedure for registration, the operations commenced in earnest ; 4,500 applications had been registered by November 5 and by December 15 had reached 6,200.

Early in November, Dr. Lehner had to return to his duties as head representative of UNICEF in Tehran ; he was replaced at the head of the delegation by Mr. André Durand who had on many occasions undertaken important missions in Asia.

The first special trains bringing Koreans registered for repatriation to North Korea (accompanied by delegates of the ICRC) arrived at Niigata early in December from various parts of Japan. After being received at the Japanese Red Cross Centre, the Koreans confirmed, in the presence of a representative of the Society and a delegate of the ICRC, their wish to proceed to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Each of them was given an emigration certificate, after which they complied with the customs and police formalities. Those who wished to do so still had the possibility of receiving visits in the camp from relatives, or of speaking privately with a delegate of the ICRC.

On December 14, under the protection of a large police escort, the Koreans on the point of departure were taken to the assembly centre at the embarkation port where many of their compatriots were allowed to accompany them for the last time ; 975 persons embarked on two Soviet vessels chartered by the Red Cross of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea ; the next day they arrived at Chongjin on the north-east coast of Korea.

On December 21 a further group of 976 Koreans embarked at Niigata in the same conditions. Two incidents proved the useful purpose of the final check before departure ; a young girl of sixteen informed the Red Cross representatives that she had been registered against her will and expressed the wish to remain in Japan ; she

was sent back to her home without further ado. On the other hand, the head of the ICRC mission postponed the departure of two girls under sixteen, unaccompanied, until they could be placed in the care of their parents or guardian.

A third departure took place on December 28 when 991 Koreans left Japan in the same manner. On that occasion the head of the ICRC mission kept back a Korean who had not registered in the required manner.

By the end of 1959, nearly 3,000 Koreans had thus been repatriated in conformity with the regulations laid down by the Japanese Red Cross which gave those who wished to do so the possibility of changing their mind until the last check was made at Niigata. In fact, about sixty of the persons registered did not present themselves for the three first embarkations.

With regard to the repatriation of Koreans wishing to go to the south of their country of origin, diplomatic negotiations have been pursued between the mission of the Republic of Korea in Tokyo and the Japanese Government in which the ICRC has taken no part.

Thailand

The question of the repatriation of Vietnamese refugees in the first phase of the war in Indochina led to an exchange of correspondence between the ICRC and the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam early in 1959. As this Society was unable to get in touch with the Thai Red Cross, owing to the absence of diplomatic relations between the two countries, it asked for the assistance of the ICRC, which sent a delegate (Mr. A. Durand) to Bangkok in February.

The delegate of the International Committee first visited the 272 Vietnamese nationals held in Bangkok Prison to whom he distributed a few comforts. When the Government of Thailand had agreed, in principle, to the repatriation of Vietnamese from Thailand to a place of their choice in their country of origin, Mr. Durand went twice to Hanoi to study with the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam questions relating to the

repatriation of those refugees who had expressed the wish to proceed to the North of their country of origin.

The principle of a meeting between the two National Societies concerned having been accepted on both sides, in June the Red Cross Societies of Thailand and the Democratic Republic of Thailand both sent a delegation to Rangoon to open discussions on the proposed repatriation operations.

These meetings, which took place in the presence of the delegate of the ICRC, finally led to the conclusion of an agreement whereby the organisation of repatriations was to be entrusted to a Central Committee set up in Bangkok by the Thai Red Cross, with the participation of delegates of the Red Cross of the DRVN¹ and representatives of the refugees. Other provisions of the agreement set forth the methods for the registration of Vietnamese wishing to be repatriated and the arrangements for the disposal of their property in Thailand and the transport of persons and luggage to North Viet Nam. The ICRC lent its assistance merely to facilitate negotiations between the two National Societies.

The registration operations, started in the early autumn, came to an end on November 20 ; altogether, 70,000 persons chose to proceed to the DRVN. They included not only refugees who arrived at the beginning of the conflict in Indochina but also a number of Vietnamese who had been established in Thailand for some time².

The repatriation of Vietnamese wishing to go to the south of their country of origin was the object of negotiations between the Governments of Saigon and Bangkok, in which the ICRC took no part.

Indonesia

The situation in Indonesia necessitated the sending of various relief supplies and the departure to that country of a delegate of the ICRC who, in 1959, was engaged in a mission of three months'

¹ Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

² The first departures took place in January 1960.

duration in the archipelago. Without doubt the disturbances which broke out in February 1958 had greatly decreased, especially in Sumatra, one of the principal centres of disorder, but the hostilities continued in some other areas, particularly in the north of the Island of Sulawesi (Celebes) and caused many victims among the population.

Towards the end of 1958, the ICRC sent relief supplies which arrived early in 1959 and were made available to the Indonesian Red Cross¹. At the request of the representatives in Geneva of one of the rebel groups, a further consignment of supplies was sent a few months later.

The supplies consisted of two tons of medicaments donated by the Red Cross Societies of the German Federal Republic, Australia, the Netherlands and the International Committee. A delegate of the ICRC (Mr. J.-P. Schoenholzer) went to Djakarta on September 1 to deal with the distribution.

Accompanied by Mr. A. Durand (delegate i/c of Asian affairs) for the purpose of presenting him to the authorities in the capital, Mr. Schoenholzer left later for Padang (Central Sumatra) with H.H. Prince Bintoro, member of the Central Committee and former President of the Indonesian Red Cross.

Difficulties of access made it impossible, as originally planned by the ICRC, to distribute the medicaments in the actual areas of disturbance, and the supplies were handed over on the outskirts of the insurgent areas designated by the representatives of the rebels. One half of the medicaments allotted to Sumatra were thus entrusted to the Padang Branch of the Indonesian Red Cross for use in the area, mainly in behalf of 1,500 civilian refugees in a camp at Bikittingi and many victims of the disturbances who had gone to Pajakumbuh Hospital for treatment.

The delegate of the ICRC and the representatives of the Indonesian Red Cross then went, on October 16, to visit Medan (North Sumatra), and places along Lake Toba and in the province of Tapanuli. The remainder of the supplies was handed over to local branches of the Indonesian Red Cross in Siantar, Balige and Tarutung.

¹ See *Annual Report 1958*, pp. 23-24.

On October 21, Mr. Schoenholzer and Prince Bintoro left for Menado, North Sulawesi, where they found that the combats had caused great damage in the province of Minahasa. They visited seven camps and assembly centres for refugees from the disturbance area. The medicaments made available by the ICRC were handed to the Hospital in Kotamobagu, a locality recently retaken by the rebel forces and which had suffered particularly heavy damage.

On October 22, at the request of the Indonesian Red Cross, the League of Red Cross Societies launched an appeal to all National Societies in behalf of the 600,000 refugees in the Island of Sulawesi who, as the delegate could see, were in extreme distress.

Tibet

Early in 1959 Tibet was again shaken by further internal disturbances following those which broke out in August and October in the previous year, which caused many victims among the population and resulted in a flow of about 12,000 refugees into the Himalayan States and the northern provinces of India.

In order to assist these refugees, in May the ICRC sent medicaments to the Indian Red Cross for a value of 12,500 Swiss francs. Other approaches made by the ICRC in connection with the events in Tibet had not led to any result by the end of the year.

Laos

When the fighting began in August in the Sam-Neua and Phongsaly provinces on the borders of Laos and the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, many people left the disturbed areas and took refuge in other localities.

The delegate of the ICRC in Saïgon (Mr. André Leuenberger) went to Vientiane, the capital of Laos, where he arrived on August 26. He had interviews with the Director of the Health Service and the President of the Laotian Red Cross, with a view to assisting victims of the events, mainly wounded military personnel and refugees. After receiving his report the ICRC made available the sum of

37,000 Swiss francs for sending blankets, condensed milk, hospital beds and layettes.

Compensation for former prisoners of war in Japanese hands

In accordance with Article 16 of the Peace Treaty with Japan, the funds for the payment of compensation to former prisoners of war in Japanese hands have been distributed to all the beneficiary Powers with one exception, the Philippines. In this country the establishment of a list of recipients or next-of-kin was continued in 1959. A check of names was undertaken by the delegates of the ICRC in Manila for the purpose of verifying, from military records, the validity of applications submitted (following a notice in the press) by former prisoners of war or their next-of-kin. Applications which did not respond to the conditions required were set aside. Those which were not supported by relevant documents were placed in a special category and searches were made in the archives of the Philippine armed forces to find proof of eligibility which applicants were unable to supply. In addition, many next-of-kin of prisoners of war were asked to produce proof of their relationship with the deceased.

However, as a great many Philippine ex-prisoners of war served in American units, their applications had to be sent for checking to the U.S. Department of Defense. Those who had taken up residence in the United States were instructed to register with the American Red Cross which transmitted the results of this registration to the Philippine Red Cross.

The individual files thus constituted enabled lists to be established by the IBM process which were sent in November to the Central Prisoners of War Agency at the ICRC headquarters in Geneva. On December 18 the Working Party of the beneficiary Powers met in London to discuss various problems relating to the distribution of individual shares in other countries (ex-prisoners whose present whereabouts could not be traced, ex-prisoners who did not register within the prescribed time-limit, etc.). The ICRC took advantage of the opportunity to inform the meeting of the actual stage of the work undertaken in application of Article 16 of the Peace Treaty with Japan.