The death of three Red Cross representatives in the Congo

When, in the summer of 1960, the International Committee of the Red Cross had to intervene in the troubles which had just broken out in the Congo, the first delegates which it sent out to the spot were as yet unaccustomed to the country and to its inhabitants. In the complex situation which was to be found in that former Belgian colony, a man spontaneously presented himself to them, offering his services. Of strong build and with a thick moustache, he was from Geneva, as had been the founders of the Red Cross, and was the same age as Henry Dunant when he wrote "A memory of Solferino"; that man was Georges Olivet, who knew the Congo well where he had lived for several years and had been engaged in business.

Very attached to the Africans and to their culture and perfectly at ease with the dialects of the country, Mr. Olivet had other qualities which were greatly appreciated by the delegates of the ICRC who had been so violently precipitated into the Congo crisis. When everyone was overcome with nervousness in all this agitation, he always remained calm and cheerful. Ready for any task, even the humblest, which he was asked to perform, he also knew, when necessary, how to lessen tension by his good humour. During the rare moments of leisure which the delegates could allow themselves, his companionship was also most appreciated, since he was naturally of a joyful disposition and boredom vanished wherever he was present.
But above all, Georges Olivet was at that time a counsellor whose valuable advice enabled the representatives of the ICRC the better to orientate themselves in Congolese affairs. Having a multiplicity of contacts in the most varied circles, he had access to all the leading politicians in Leopoldville, a circumstance of which the delegates from Geneva did not fail to take advantage in furthering their humanitarian activity.

However, during this first phase of the events in the Congo, Georges Olivet was still only, in short, a friend of the ICRC delegation, to which he was only bound by a similar ideal and by personal affinity. He continued to give a little of his time to his commercial affairs but, as economic life, in such a troubled situation, was practically at a stand-still, he was free to give more and more rein to his attraction for the Red Cross and to his own feelings of fellowship. And as the ICRC delegation, greatly needed strengthening, it seemed to be the most natural thing formally to enroll this young enthusiastic and experienced Swiss who, as soon as the troubles in Leopoldville broke out, had already given an example of devotion by spending himself regardlessly on behalf of civilians who were in danger. Thanks to him many of these were able to extricate themselves alive.

The enrolment took place in October 1960, during a visit which Georges Olivet made to Geneva. At the ICRC headquarters he received instructions which he still lacked to make him a fully-fledged delegate. This gifted and alert man seemed to be particularly well equipped for his new task, since he had always liked serving others and had, ever since childhood, shown a remarkable capacity for deep affection.

Several days later, Georges Olivet, now wearing the badges of the ICRC, returned to Leopoldville. This was to be the beginning of intense activity which was to take him to all parts of the Congo.

During this period, the ICRC was responsible for the medical action in which some twenty National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies were taking part. The medical teams freshly disembarked had to be conducted to the most widely separated hospitals in the bush where they were to set to work, to be supplied, visited and evacuated in case of trouble. Georges Olivet set himself to this often harassing work and was then to cover thousands of miles, at times under most precarious conditions. He also carried out, in vast regions of the Congo, visits to military and political detainees, bringing them the protection of the ICRC. Elsewhere, he took part in relief actions on behalf of refugee or starving populations.

It was then that an episode took place which was, for the first time, to cause considerable alarm to his colleagues
of the delegation: Georges Olivet had disappeared. Fortunately it was not long before he was found. Entrusted with a mission to Baluba refugees in South Kasai, he had heard talk of truckloads of dried fish which could have provided a much appreciated contribution to the feeding of these unfortunate people. He accordingly went in search of these trucks and never stopped until he had found them. But in doing so he must have taken considerable risks.

Georges Olivet certainly often took risks, but these were never uncalculated. Humanitarian interest however had only to be at stake, for him to feel an urgent necessity to come to the aid of victims. And once he had placed himself in danger, he took care never to show fear, thus giving new courage to his companions and impressing the Africans.

The last mission entrusted by the ICRC to Georges Olivet seemed from the very outset to be more difficult and dangerous than any of the others had been. The struggle which had broken out in Katanga took on aspects which were often full of treachery, thus rendering the Red Cross task of helping particularly delicate and often counteracted it. In order to see it through to the end nerves of steel were needed, and these Georges Olivet possessed. His action in fact had numerous positive results. He himself lifted up victims who were lying on the ground, ensured the hospitalisation of the wounded, evacuated civilians who had been trapped in the battle areas and, on several occasions, negotiated truces enabling the Red Cross to bring its charitable protection.

It is certain that Georges Olivet perfectly well knew the dangers which he was running in carrying out such activities in the battle of Elisabethville. It was this which marked his end with real heroism.

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THE PRESS COMMENTS UPON THIS TRAGIC EVENT

The death of Georges Olivet, delegate of the ICRC, and of two voluntary workers of the Katanga Red Cross, killed in circumstances which remain obscure whilst attempting to go to the aid of the victims of the fighting at Elisabethville, has aroused considerable feeling throughout the world. This tragic event has been given wide publicity and has been freely commented upon by the press and some newspapers have published notices on the subject paying tribute to the missing ones and to the cause of the Red Cross for which they had given their lives.
In an editorial entitled "The field of honour and the charity of the International Red Cross", the French daily LE MONDE asks this important question: "Will the Red Cross now come under attack?", and it continues:

"At a time when the United Nations Organization is itself progressively discarding all the aspirations to which it could have given substance, the International Committee of the Red Cross is perhaps the only remaining example in the world of an institution whose designs are not questionable and which is not subjected to the balance of opposing blocs. Its twenty-five members are exclusively Swiss, inspired in their rôle as guardians by the ideas of Henry Dunant".

After having recalled the extraordinarily wide range of the ICRC's work during the Second World War the MONDE draws attention to its most recent interventions:

"Civil war and concentration camps are today the domains of the mediators of human fraternity. And since the signing by a majority of nations of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the ICRC has "offered its services" to all the countries which have been torn apart: Korea, Indochina, Indonesia, Kenya, the Congo, independently of any legal or diplomatic recognition. For five months, its lorries supplied relief to the children of Budapest with two million parcels. From February 1959 to October 1960 the ICRC furnished 34 million Swiss francs worth of supplies to Algerian refugees in Tunisia and Morocco. Its delegates made eight tours of inspection in places in which Algerians were detained in France and in Algeria. They also went to Tunis and into the "maquis" to negotiate the release of French prisoners.

The menace of an atomic catastrophe, however, remains, against which the ICRC fears that it will be powerless. In an attempt to have the conventions on the protection of the civilian population adopted the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross will therefore be held in the summer of 1963. These conventions are necessarily linked with the first steps, which are still awaited and which still seem so far away, towards an international disarmament agreement. May, however, the death of ICRC delegates remind belligerents, brothers who are enemies, of elementary principles which, since the first battles of the cave-men, have tended to be neglected in favour of efficiency: "All those who are not engaged in fighting must be respected; the taking of hostages is forbidden; a wounded man who has surrendered shall not be killed; prisoners should be treated with humanity".
To remind the world as it is today of these rules of humanity somewhat resembles the fruitless toil of Sisyphus. The International Committee of the Red Cross has, however, undertaken to do so, and this faith in mankind, reaffirmed each day is not the least of its merits in a world in which all persist in treating it with ridicule.

Mr. Laszlo Nagy, in the GAZETTE DE LAUSANNE, recalls how the late lamented Dr. Marcel Junod described the man of the Red Cross as the "third combatant": "Designed to relieve man's suffering in the cruel and stupid mechanism of war, the Red Cross has always offered battle without arms, and for the sole purpose of having human dignity respected. "Mr. Nagy continues by drawing the following conclusions from Georges Olivet's disappearance:

"Those responsible for this assassination must be pursued and punished. But from the Red Cross point of view, it is not the most important thing to make an exemplary punishment of the criminals. Mr. Olivet and his companions are dead, but the work for which they sacrificed their lives must continue. "And life goes on ..." could be the motto of this action of sacrifice, at least as long as death does not cease from exercising its destructive power.

Although shaken and battered by this tragic blow, the ICRC continues its activity on the field of battle. and, as if nothing had happened, the refugee trains leave for Rhodesia, the feeding of the population continues, as does the visiting of prisoners and the successors of those who have fallen take the route to the battle area, not troubling themselves about welcome given to them by those whom they intend helping.

That is the reason why all criticism surrounding Olivet's death should stop and that one should rather give all one's support to the "third combatant", who already more than a hundred years ago followed the path of charity and real humaness.

Mr. Bernard Béguin, Editor of the JOURNAL DE GENEVE stresses the fact that "Georges Olivet did not die for nothing". He writes in particular:

"The splendour of this end was not in its willing provocation of death, but in its acceptance in the service of a cause of life and love for others. To risk death has become for some people an easy escape. One is indeed struck by the intellectual poverty, the moral indigence of these professional "oreakers", who trail
their profession of arms, their leopard-like muscles and their bird-like brains around from one war to another. Lansquenets without fear and without hearts, and cherishing legendary paste-board figures, they have unfortunately some considerable following.

Recently a young Swiss student was expressing himself in a French weekly. Like the pigeon he was bored with being at home: "History is being made without us, without giving us the slightest possibility of making any impression on it. We have no cause and no ideas about which we can express ourselves a little forcibly"...

The reply to this has been given by Georges Olivet. Instead of giving a purpose to life by blowing up dwellings with plastic or setting traps in children's prams, he fought his battle, defended his cause and lived for his ideal which was one of life and not of death. He thought of History as it was passing, and he chose to bring to it the mark of friendship, generosity and serenity. In a world full of hatred, violence and fear, he chose peace.

And if only death gives you a purpose in a cause, well then, it is done: men have died for that very cause. But what counts above all, is that they knew the reason for their having lived".

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THE ICRC RECEIVES NUMEROUS MARKS OF SYMPATHY

The ICRC received numerous messages of sympathy from a variety of countries and circles on the occasion of the death of Mr. Georges Olivet, its delegate at Elisabethville, killed at the same time as Mme Vroonen and Mr. Smeding, voluntary workers of the Katanga Red Cross. The President of the League of Red Cross Societies, Mr. John A. MacAulay, addressed a telegram to Mr. Léopold Boissier, President of the ICRC, in which he expressed strong emotion and insisted on the necessity of bringing the circumstances of this triple drama to light. In fact such an event, added the President of the League implies a threat to the moral authority and future effectiveness of Red Cross international actions. For that reason a vigorous reaction is required.

Messages of sympathy to reach the ICRC from the National Red Cross Societies, included the following countries: Burma, Chile, France, German Federal Republic, Ghana, Great Britain,
Greece, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, United States of America and Venezuela. The Society of the Red Cross of the Congo, not yet officially recognized, also expressed its sympathy.

In addition, condolences were also sent by Mr. Thant, temporary Secretary-General of the United Nations, by Mr. Felix Schnyder, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, by several Governments, by the League of Arab States, by the Order of Malta, as well as by numerous other groups, associations or private individuals.

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THE MISSION TO THE CONGO OF MR. F. SIORDET,
VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE ICRC

As had been briefly stated in the press, Mr. Frédéric Siordet, Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, proceeded to the Congo following on the death of Mr. Georges Olivet, delegate of the ICRC, killed at the same time as two voluntary workers of the Katanga Red Cross. The principal object of his journey was to ensure that a comprehensive enquiry should be made in order to bring the circumstances of this tragic event to light.

Mr. Siordet first stopped at Leopoldville, where he had been awaited by Mr. Jean de Preux, delegate of the ICRC. He was received by Mr. Cyrille Adoula, President of the Central Government of the Congo, and met the head of the United Nations mission to the Congo, Mr. Sture Linner.

Accompanied by Mr. Paul - Etienne Jaccaud, Swiss Vice-Consul, Mr. Siordet and Mr. Jean de Preux flew to Elisabethville, where they were most courteously welcomed by the Katanga authorities, as well as by the United Nations representatives. The Vice-President of the ICRC was received by Mr. Moïse Tshombe, Head of the Katanga Government, and then had talks with Mr. Falmagne, the Katanga Public Prosecutor. The latter informed him of the results of the enquiry which had been opened by the Katanga legal authorities. Mr. Siordet also met Mr. Brian Urquhart, representative of the United Nations, who informed him that these had not yet been able to open an enquiry, since they did not possess legal facilities locally to undertake such a task.

Mr. Siordet visited the spot where Mr. Olivet and his two companions had been killed, and had shown to him the remains of the ambulance in which they found themselves at the moment of the drama. He then returned to Leopoldville, where he had a further
meeting with Mr. Adoula and also met Mr. Linner once more.

On January 4, Mr. Siordet returned to Geneva where he reported to the ICRC. The International Committee therefore decided to request the United Nations to form an independent commission to enquire into the tragic circumstances surrounding this sorrowful event.

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THE ICRC CONTINUES ITS ACTIVITY IN THE CONGO

In spite of the violent end of its delegate, Mr. Georges Clivet, the ICRC has continued its humanitarian activity in Katanga following on the hostilities which recently took place there. This activity has been chiefly carried out by Mr. Geoffrey-C. Senn, delegate, who has again visited UNO prisoners of war in the hands of Katanga forces, and of Katangans captured by UNO troops. He has also taken part in the evacuation of civilians and in the supplying of the population.

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RED CROSS "OBSERVER"

Following on statements suggesting that "observers" of the International Committee of the Red Cross be placed on the frontier between Northern Rhodesia and Katanga, press correspondents have asked the International Committee of the Red Cross if it would be in a position to undertake tasks of this nature. The International Committee of the Red Cross wishes at once to stress that it has received no official requests on this subject.

Such a proposal having however been discussed at length in the press, the International Committee wishes to point out that its humanitarian action, within the terms of the Geneva Conventions implies the carrying out of certain functions of observation and control. Without being strictly defined by the letter of the Conventions, these functions encompass, in a general manner, all that is essential for the Committee to be able to fulfil its rôle, which is above all to aid the victims of conflicts and to have human dignity respected.

Thus, the Delegates of the Red Cross and the National Societies can be called upon to ensure, in the case of prisoners of war and of detained persons, that the Conventions are strictly
applied; in the despatch of relief supplies, the Red Cross sees to it that consignments reach those for whom they are intended and that these are equitably distributed amongst them. It can be called upon to carry out observations internally or on frontiers in order to guarantee the nature or the integrality of consignments. Such observation has, on several occasions, been a condition imposed by the belligerents or the authorities of a State for the crossing of frontiers or for the passage through a blockade.

The Red Cross could therefore not carry out any control "in abstracto" or one of a "customs" character, nor any sort of political arbitration between the parties in the form of observation. Control or observation by the Red Cross has always and above all a humanitarian purpose. When it does assume such functions, the Red Cross invariably applies the principles of neutrality and impartiality which are its own.

Since the principles are strictly bound to the humanitarian aid given by the Red Cross, the International Committee is often asked to engage itself in other tasks in connection with certain conflicts. This was the case in particular with relation to Article 16 of the Peace Treaty between the Allies and Japan for the payment of compensation to former prisoners of war in Japanese hands and for indemnification to victims of pseudo-medical experiments. In all these cases, actions connected with the victims of war were involved.

Finally, if the statutes of the ICRC allow it "to take any humanitarian initiative which comes within its rôle as a specifically neutral and independent institution and consider any question requiring examination by such an institution", the representatives of the Red Cross could not be called upon to set up road blocks or inspect vehicles for arms.

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India

THE INTERVENTION OF THE ICRC IN THE GOA CONFLICT

As it made it known in a press release published on January 4 (see p.15 ), the International Committee of the Red Cross attempted, in accordance with the Geneva Conventions, to go to the aid of the victims of the conflict which had just broken out between India and Portugal. In the company of Major-General Lakshmanan, Secretary-General of the Indian Red Cross, Mr. C. Pilloud, Deputy Director for General Affairs of the ICRC, went to Goa on December 24, where he made contact with General Candeth, Commander of the Indian forces. The latter authorized him to go at will to the places in which the prisoners were located, to visit them and to bring them
any humanitarian aid which he considered necessary.

The delegate of the International Committee thus visited Panjim, Murmagao and Margao three camps for military prisoners and Portuguese interned civilians to whom the local Red Cross branch had distributed Christmas parcels. These temporary camps have since been abandoned and the prisoners transferred to the camp of Ponda (territory of Goa).

During his stay at Panjim, Mr. Pilloud visited the wounded collected in the military and civilian hospitals, in which notably the Captain of the frigate "Alfonso de Albuquerque" was receiving treatment.

Mr. Pilloud intervened with the Indian authorities for them to communicate the official list of prisoners and internees to the Central Tracing Agency, at the ICRC headquarters.

At the same time, the ICRC concerned itself in the fate of Indian nationals interned or regrouped in Mozambique, at Macao and Timor; it hopes to obtain authorization from the Portuguese Government to visit them.

Furthermore, it intervened with the Portuguese Red Cross on behalf of several passengers of Indian nationality, arrested on landing at the airport at Lisbon.

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Algeria

EFFORTS OF THE ICRC ON BEHALF OF FRENCH PRISONERS OF THE ALN

While continuing its numerous efforts on behalf of Algerians detained by the French authorities in Algeria and France, the International Committee of the Red Cross has continued to intervene with the Algerian nationalists on behalf of Frenchmen who have fallen into their hands. These efforts are usually made through a representative of the "Algerian Red Crescent" in Geneva, a body which is not officially recognized but with which the ICRC maintains working relations for the benefit of the victims of the conflict. On different occasions the ICRC has also intervened directly in Tunis with members of the GPRA and seniors officers of the Algerian Red Crescent.

Thus, during 1961, the ICRC made representations on two occasions in Tunis, where a delegate, Mr. Pierre Gaillard, went
in March and where Miss M. van Berchem, a member of the Committee, accompanied by Mr. Gaillard, undertook a mission at the end of November. The aim of these interventions was to remind the GPRA of the exact obligations resulting from its adherence to the Geneva Conventions, in particular the necessity to communicate the names of prisoners captured to the ICRC in Geneva and to send news to the families of the captives through the Central Tracing Agency. Since the end of 1959 the ICRC had obtained no news of missing French presumed to be prisoners of the ALN.

In February 1961 the French military authorities advised the ICRC of the disappearance of some soldiers probably captured during an engagement on the defence line near the Tunisian frontier. What the ICRC emissaries in Tunis had to do was to obtain confirmation of these captures. Up to the last days of 1961 no precise information had been given with the exception of some verbal assurances, but on December 30, the ICRC received the news that the GPRA had decided to make a gesture of clemency by releasing two French soldiers.

The Central Tracing Agency at the ICRC headquarters immediately communicated names of the two men to their families and on the same evening of the 30th, Mr. Gaillard went to Tunis. On the next day he took charge of the two prisoners and handed them over to the French authorities.

The two men did not complain about the conditions of their capture or detention but they deplored the fact that, for almost a year, they had not been able to communicate either with their families or with the ICRC. The latter, which is delighted at this release, has nevertheless insisted to the GPRA that the three other prisoners, whose names were supplied by the two soldiers who had been released, be allowed to write to their families without delay, through the Central Tracing Agency.

Aid to the resettled populations in Algeria

The International Committee of the Red Cross has just taken further measures to intensify its aid to the resettled populations in Algeria. Over a period from 1959 to the end of 1961, it has handed over relief valued in excess of 1,187,000.- Sw.Fr., mostly for the women and children in the resettlement centres.

The last of these consignments, made in December, comprised 20 tons of powdered milk. The ICRC hopes to succeed in sending 30 tons of powdered milk before the end of February, as well as various gifts from National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
Most of these relief supplies sent by the ICRC are distributed on the spot by the mobile teams of the French Red Cross. In order to help the latter to cope with the heavy tasks devolving upon it in this sphere, the ICRC proposes to intensify the search for relief in the coming months. It has also decided that an assistant-delegate should go and second the ICRC representative detailed to carry out this relief action in co-operation with the French Red Cross.

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Laos

THE ICRC CONTINUES ITS ACTION IN LAOS

On returning from his mission to Saravane (see Information Notes No. 7, p.4) Dr Jürg Baer, ICRC doctor-delegate, welcomed Mr. L.G. Stubbings to Vientiane. Mr. Stubbings, who is Secretary-General of the Australian Red Cross and a delegate of the League of Red Cross Societies, was in Laos from November 18 to 22. Dr Baer explained the International Committee’s programme of action and the aid received from National Red Cross Societies on behalf of the victims of the conflict and particularly refugees. The ICRC delegate in Saigon, Mr. Werner Muller, also made every effort to facilitate Mr. Stubbings’ mission on behalf of the flood victims in the Republic of Viet Nam.

On December 1, Dr. Baer left for Savannakhet with Mrs. Nouphath Chounramany, President of the Women's Committee of the Laotian Red Cross, where both visited the military prisoners being nursed in the civilian hospital and handed over parcels to them.

They then went to the camp for military and civilian prisoners and distributed relief supplies. The ICRC delegate was able to talk to several detainees freely and without witnesses.

Dr Baer handed over to the Women's Committee of Savannakhet clothing for Laotian and Thai refugees lodged in a camp. He also handed over 6 cases of blood plasma (a gift from the Netherlands Red Cross) to the civilian hospital and the military hospital, as well as to the medical post at Doughen.

Having returned to Vientiane, Dr. Baer left again on December 9 to make a tour in Attopeu province. During his flight he made short stops at Pakse and Saravane, where he left relief supplies for the hospitals and refugees.
At Muong May (capital of Attopeu province) Dr. Baer had clothing, condensed milk, tins of sardines, pepper and salt distributed to 854 Kha refugees living on the outskirts of the town. On the following day he handed various gifts to the sick and wounded in the civilian hospital, the military hospital and the Philippine hospital (Operation Brotherhood), where he also left 8 cases of blood plasma, a gift from the Netherlands Red Cross.

On December 12, Dr. Baer took part in a meeting organized by the Chief of the province (the Chaokhoueng) with a view to setting up a provincial Committee of the Laotian Red Cross at Muong May.

Dr. Baer then returned to Vientiane and left again, on December 22, for Luang Prabang, the royal capital, accompanied by Mr. André Durand, ICRC general delegate in the Far East, and Mrs. Nouphath Chounramany, President of the women's Committee of the Laotian Red Cross, with a consignment of more than 2 tons of relief supplies.

These supplies were distributed to the Meo refugees who now number almost 2,000 and who are in the town and on the outskirts.

Blood plasma was also handed over to the civilian and military hospitals, while members of the Women's Committee distributed parcels to the sick and wounded being nursed in these establishments.

It should also be mentioned that on December 18 the ICRC sent a memorandum to various National Red Cross Societies on the relief action carried out in Laos since August. This document states what remains to be done if the work undertaken on behalf of the refugees, the sick and wounded, and other victims of the events, is to be successfully concluded. Following this preliminary report, several Societies have already sent fresh contributions to the International Committee.

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Japan

REPATRIATION OF KOREAN RESIDENTS

In November and December, 1961, ICRC delegates accompanied by representatives of the Japanese Red Cross and the Japanese authorities went to a number of prefectures in order to verify the conditions on which the Koreans residing in Japan can register for departure to North Korea. It had, in fact, been anticipated
in September 1959 that the members of the Korean colony in Japan (about 600,000) would have the choice of three possibilities: remaining in Japan, returning to North Korea or going back to South Korea. It is to guarantee the freedom of choice that a special ICRC mission has been operating in Japan for two years and that delegates of the International Committee have been present at registrations and at embarkation.

At each of these visits the ICRC delegates have been received by the Red Cross and the authorities responsible for the organization of those being repatriated. They have examined special cases submitted to them, have given their advice on the problems of family resettlement which departure for North Korea raises, and they have made the appropriate recommendations to the Japanese Red Cross and Japanese officials.

In all, 404 visits were made to 46 prefectures in 1961.

Nearly 75,000 people left Japan for North Korea between December 59 and December 1961. The average number of departures in the first weekly convoys was about a thousand. That of the last 10 departures was about 250. From November 20, 1961, one boat instead of two has been making the crossing between Niigata and Chongjin.

The repatriation operations are due to be continued officially in this form until November, 1962.

Departures which were suspended on December 16, 1961, are due to restart on January 19, 1962.

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PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION TO VICTIMS OF

PSEUDO-MEDICAL EXPERIMENTS

As we mentioned in our Information Notes Nos 1 and 5, the International Committee had accepted to act as intermediary for the handing over of financial assistance to Polish and Hungarian victims of pseudo-medical experiments carried out in concentration camps under the Nazi regime.

We would point out that payment was made on December 4, 1961, through the channel of the ICRC, of sums allocated to the victims in accordance with decisions taken by the neutral Commission which met last August to examine the substantiation of the claims and the amount of compensation.

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Press release

THE DEATH OF MR. GEORGES OLIVET
December 24, 1961

The International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva has received from its delegation in the Congo confirmation of the death of its representative, Georges Olivet, mortally struck, with two members of the Katanga Red Cross, whilst carrying aid to the victims of the fighting at Elisabethville.

The ICRC wishes to pay public tribute to this faithful servant of the Red Cross, who did not cease, since the beginning of the hostilities in the Congo, from risking his life with exemplary courage in order to mitigate suffering and save many human lives, for his devotion to the Red Cross ideal he paid with his life. Mr. Frédéric Siordet will be proceeding to the Congo to take part in the enquiry opened by the authorities.

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RELEASE OF FRENCH PRISONERS
December 30, 1961

On the occasion of the ending of the year some French prisoners will be released by the GPRA at Tunis under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross. They will be handed over in the morning of December 31 to a delegate of the ICRC who has just left Geneva for this purpose.

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THE ICRC AND THE INDO-PORTUGUESE CONFLICT
January 4, 1962

As soon as hostilities between India and Portugal broke out, the International Committee of the Red Cross attempted to come to the aid of the victims of the conflict, in accordance with the Geneva Conventions. Its representative, Mr. Claude Pilloud, Deputy Director for General Affairs, went to Goa on December 24, in the company of Major-General Lakshmanan, Secretary-General of the Indian Red Cross.
The ICRC delegate visited three camps of military prisoners and Portuguese civilian internees to whom the local branch of the Red Cross had distributed Christmas parcels. He also visited the wounded, amongst whom was the Captain of the frigate "Alfonso de Albuquerque".

Mr. Pilloud requested the Indian authorities to communicate the official lists of prisoners and interned persons to the Central Tracing Agency at the ICRC headquarters, in order to enable it to reply to inquiries for news received from families, although the prisoners had been authorised to write letters and send telegrams.

The ICRC also concerned itself with Indian nationals interned or regrouped in Mozambique, at Macao and at Timor. It requested the Portuguese Government for authorisation to visit them as well.

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THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS REQUESTS AN ENQUIRY ON THE DEATH OF ITS DELEGATE IN KATANGA

January 12, 1962

Mr. Frédéric Siordet, Vice-President of the ICRC, who went to the Congo after the death of Mr. Georges Olivet and his two companions, observed that the legal authorities of Elisabethville had opened an enquiry, which evidently cannot extend to territory under the control of the United Nations nor to its personnel.

As regards the representatives of the United Nations in the Congo, they informed Mr. Siordet that they had opened no enquiry, since they were not in possession of adequate legal or technical resources.

Under these conditions, the ICRC has now requested Mr. Thant, Secretary-General of the United Nations, to form an independent commission entrusted with making an enquiry on the death of Mr. Olivet.

In his letter to Mr. Thant, Mr. Léopold Boissier, President of the ICRC, in particular wrote: "In view of the seriousness of the circumstances which led to the tragic end - in an ambulance marked with the sign of the red cross and flying moreover the flag of the ICRC - of Mr. G. Olivet and of his two companions, the ICRC, the founding body of the Red Cross and guardian of the principles of which the Geneva Conventions are the expression, has the moral duty to undertake everything so that the true facts may be established and the responsibilities determined. It could not, in fact, leave without issue the question of such a serious attack, not so much against the safety of its representatives, who accept the normal risks, as against the intrinsic value of the red cross emblem for which it has the obligation to demand respect".

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No 9

Genève, le 1er février 1962

Congo

THE ICRC AND THE EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS IN KATANGA

Whilst the Swedish Government and the United Nations were taking steps to obtain the release of their men held by the Katanese, the International Committee of the Red Cross negotiated their liberation. Eleven Swedes, two Norwegians and two Irish prisoners of the Katangans, were thus exchanged for thirty-three Katanga troops. (See p. 9 our press release No. 752). From the beginning of their detention, the ICRC, had endeavoured to ensure that these prisoners benefited from its protection.

During the visits which Mr. G.C. Senn, delegate of the ICRC, made to prisoners on both sides, he was able to speak with them freely and without witnesses. He also intervened with the detaining authorities to obtain improvements in their conditions of internment. Whilst taking these steps, he also negotiated for their release. For this purpose he had several meetings with the United Nations representatives in Elisabethville as well as with the Katanga authorities. One factor greatly facilitated these negotiations: the return to Elisabethville at Mr. Senn's suggestion of the thirty-three Katanga prisoner which the UN had transferred to Leopoldville,

The delegate of the ICRC had already negotiated a similar exchange on a smaller scale by obtaining the release of two Swedish officers and two other ranks, as well as of the Deputy Inspector-General of the Katanga Police, of a policeman and of two members

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of the Katanga Gendarmerie. All these men had been arrested by mistake.

On December 24, the Katanga Minister of the Interior had requested Mr. Senn to intervene on behalf of four policemen held by UN forces. Four Swedish prisoners, who had been arrested on the 27th, were only detained for 24 hours, the exchange having taken place on the 28th. On the following day, the delegate of the ICRC was called to the centre of Luano, near Elisabethville, to take charge of a number of other Katanga gendarmes which a Swedish company had also arrested by mistake.

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THANKS FROM SCANDINAVIA

Following on the exchange of prisoners in Katanga, the International Committee of the Red Cross received a telegram from Stockholm expressing the Government's gratitude and that of the families of the released Swedish prisoners. This message stated in particular: "The skill and efforts of the Red Cross, in upholding communications with the prisoners and in negotiations leading to their eventual exchange despite all difficulties, have been widely appreciated in all Swedish quarters. According to unanimous reports, Mr. Senn has worked bravely and with unusual skill and should be amply credited for what he has achieved".

The Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs also expressed his Government's thanks to the ICRC "and particularly to the Red Cross representative in Katanga for all aid and assistance rendered to UNOC personnel imprisoned in Katanga, which included two Norwegian nationals, and for all the efforts made to secure their safe release."

The President of the Swedish Red Cross, also sent a telegram to the ICRC, expressing "most sincere appreciation for your efficient and successful intervention on behalf of the Swedish UN prisoners held by Katanga forces".

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AN IMPORTANT EVACUATION OPERATION

The ICRC delegate has also actively contributed through another operation towards easing the situation in Katanga. This was the evacuation of a contingent of Katangan troops and their
families who had been placed under the protection of United Nations forces in Albertville.

During the hostilities which broke out in North Katanga between troops of the Congolese national army and Katangan police, a number of the latter found themselves cut off from their units. To avoid capture by Congolese troops, they sought the protection of UN forces who put quarters at their disposal. However, a rumour spread through Elisabethville that these Katangan policemen were being considered as prisoners of war. General Muke, Chief of the Katangan forces, called on the ICRC delegate, Mr. Senn and asked him to intervene. Mr. Senn mediated between the Katangan officer and the UN Command. Ensuing negotiations resulted in an arrangement under which a commission was to go to Albertville to offer the interned policemen the choice between being transferred to Elisabethville or remaining in Albertville under UN protection. This commission was composed of the ICRC delegate, a civilian representative of the UN, the President of the Katanga Red Cross and an interpreter.

The members of the commission consulted the Katangan policemen interned in Albertville individually. All expressed the wish to be repatriated to Elisabethville together with their families. In all 317 persons were thus transferred including 123 men, their wives and children.

A four-engined DC-4 was used for the airlift, which took place in rainy weather and lasted a week. The distance between Albertville and Elisabethville is about 400 miles.

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RELIEF ACTION ON BEHALF OF THE CIVILIAN POPULATION

The civilian population in Katanga has suffered greatly by recent events. In many cases it has not yet recovered, particularly in Elisabethville. This has prompted the delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. G.C. Senn, to undertake various relief actions, and particularly to organize the evacuation of civilians from areas threatened by fighting. However, for military reasons, it was not always possible to carry out the evacuations scheduled. Such was the case at Square Uvira, situated in the North-West of the European quarter of Elisabethville.

On December 15, the ICRC delegate was informed by the UN Command that the evacuation could not take place but that it would be possible to organize supplies, under Red Cross auspices,
to some 200 people, Europeans and Africans, who were in the area. This task was carried out by the Katanga Red Cross under the supervision of the ICRC delegate.

Electricity and water mains to Square Uvira had been cut off and a round-the-clock curfew had also been imposed on the inhabitants. On December 16, the ICRC delegate informed them that relief supplies would shortly be arriving, but as there was continual firing in the area, UN troops launched a mopping-up operation to allow the Red Cross vehicles to advance without undue risk. This delayed the arrival of supplies until the 17th, and even then snipers were still active.

On arrival in Square Uvira, Mr. Senn and members of the Katanga Red Cross found the Europeans in a state of great anxiety and some women in a state of hysteria. The sight of the Red Cross vehicles was a great comfort to them. A second relief convoy was organized on the afternoon of the same day, to bring urgently needed medicaments to the inhabitants of the square.

This operation had its counterpart in numerous other relief actions which the ICRC delegate organized on behalf of the civilian population during the events in Katanga.

Within the last few days, Mr. Senn has left, via Stanleyville, for Kongolo, in Northern Katanga, where a number of missionaries were massacred during recent disorders. His intention is to carry out distributions of foodstuffs and medicaments to the civilian population, and to arrange for their evacuation if necessary.

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TRACING missing PERSONS

Following the events in Katanga, a fairly large number of people have lost track of close relatives and have approached the Central Tracing Agency at ICRC headquarters in Geneva. More than 500 requests have been forwarded by the Katanga Red Cross, whose efficient co-operation has made it possible to give information on nearly 70 per cent of the cases.

Since the beginning of the crisis in the Congo in summer 1960, the Central Tracing Agency has opened 1,150 enquiries. Although the majority of the requests concerned Belgian nationals, they sometimes referred to settlers of other nationalities as well as Congolese without news of their relatives cut off in other regions of this vast country.

* * * *
After the death of Mr. Olivet

COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY TO BE SET UP

As we already informed the press (see p. 9 our releases Nos. 751 and 754), Mr. Thant, Acting Secretary-General of the United Nations, has agreed to the request of the International Committee of the Red Cross to set up an impartial commission to enquire into the circumstances of the death of Mr. Georges Olivet, ICRC delegate, and his two companions from the Katanga Red Cross. Mr. Thant and the President of the ICRC, Mr. Boissier, have held consultations with a view to designating the members of this commission.

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MESSAGES OF SYMPATHY TO THE ICRC

The reactions of world opinion to the death of the ICRC delegate, Mr. Georges Olivet, and two voluntary workers the Katanga Red Cross, killed whilst carrying out their humanitarian mission, show to what extent feelings have everywhere been aroused. The press of various countries has reported the event and some reviews have devoted articles to it, drawing the lessons to be learned as a result of this tragedy.

The feeling which has been aroused in the Red Cross world, which took the death of the three victims as a personal loss was very strong. Thus, on hearing the news, the Belgian Red Cross flew its flag at half mast and its President, H.R.H. Prince Albert, immediately sent a telegram which was the first expression of sympathy received by the President of the ICRC.

Besides the National Red Cross Societies indicated in our Information Notes No 8, the ICRC has also received messages of sympathy from the Societies of the following countries: Burma, Bulgaria, Canada, Poland and Portugal.

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MISSION OF THE ICRC IN CENTRAL AFRICA

The rapid political and social evolution taking place in most African countries sometimes causes serious disturbances and there are often many victims in the armed forces as well as amongst the civilian population. This is a matter of concern to the ICRC, especially as the essential precepts of humanitarian law—notably the Geneva Conventions of 1949—still appear to be but imperfectly known in many of these countries. Furthermore, the action of the Red Cross on behalf of the victims of conflicts of every description often meets with many obstacles.

In the light of this situation, the ICRC has entrusted its Vice-President, Mr. Samuel Gonard, a former Corps Commander in the Swiss Army, to undertake a study mission in the countries and territories of Central Africa. Mr. Gonard will be accompanied by Mr. Georges Goffemann, for a long time in the service of the ICRC, who has just completed one year in the Congo as a delegate.

The object of this mission is to examine the methods of ensuring, without any distinction especially of race, a minimum of protection to the victims, military and civilian, of international or internal conflicts which may break out in Africa, and to study the possibilities of Red Cross action on behalf on the victims of such conflicts. The observations and conclusions of this mission are intended solely for the guidance of the ICRC, which will then consider the measures to be taken in future.

Mr. Gonard and Mr. Hoffmann will leave Geneva at the beginning of February 1962. They will remain in Africa for about two months. They will visit the following countries: Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Kenya, Uganda, Ruanda-Urundi, Congo (Leopoldville) and Congo (Brazzaville).

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Portugal

ICRC ACTION IN GOA FOLLOWING EVENTS

Accompanied by Colonel José Victor Mateus Cabral, Secretary-General of the Portuguese Red Cross, Mr. J.-P. Maunoir, ICRC delegate, visited on January 16 the interned Indian civilians held by the Portuguese authorities at the Caxias prison, near Lisbon.

Mr. Maunoir had previously handed to the Portuguese Red Cross and Government the reports of visits made by a delegate of the ICRC on December 25 and 26 to Portuguese prisoners of war and interned civilians held by the Indian armed forces.

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Between Indonesia and the Netherlands

TRANSMISSION OF FAMILY MESSAGES

Following the interruption of all normal postal channels between Indonesia and the Netherlands, the ICRC offered its services to the National Red Cross Societies of these two countries for transmitting family messages.

The International Committee's proposal having been accepted by both sides, the Central Tracing Agency is proceeding with this exchange of news.

This consists of brief messages of a family character which those concerned write on forms drawn up by the ICRC, and made available to the public through the National Societies. Once the form has been completed, the National Red Cross forwards it to the Central Agency, which arranges for its transmission to the National Society of the country of destination. The reply goes through the same channel.

Urgent communications are telegraphed by the Agency.

The Netherlands Red Cross has published notices in the press drawing the attention of those who have relatives in Indonesia to this means of transmission.

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Laos

DESPATCH OF ARTIFICIAL EYES

The International Committee of the Red Cross has just despatched a consignment of twelve artificial eyes to the military hospital at Vientiane. The hospital's chief medical officer has confirmed the arrival of this consignment for which he has expressed his deep gratitude.

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Algeria

THE REPORT ON THE ICRC's IXth MISSION

The International Committee of the Red Cross has handed to the French Government the report on the IXth mission carried out by its delegates in Algeria in November and December 1961. Shortly after this document was submitted, Mr. Pierre Gaillard, who headed the mission, and Mr. Pierre Boissier, delegate of the ICRC in Paris, had talks with senior officials of the French Government, and in particular with members of the penal administration, on the steps to be taken in connection with the suggestions contained in the report.

In the course of their mission, the delegates of the ICRC visited 51 places of detention. In 16 of these, European activists were detained.

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Egypt

CLOSING OF THE ICRC DELEGATION IN CAIRO

The delegation maintained by the ICRC in Cairo since the beginning of the Second World War in 1939, with an interruption of 4 years from 1952 to 1956, closed down on December 31, 1961. The ICRC delegate in Cairo will remain several weeks longer on the spot in order to wind up the delegation's work.

During the twenty years or so of its existence, the delegation has carried out humanitarian tasks deriving from the Geneva Conventions on an extensive scale time of war, and after the hostilities. It subsequently offered its services to stateless persons wishing to emigrate, and contributed, in co-operation with the leaders of the various communities in Egypt, to the solution of their problems requiring the intervention of a neutral intermediary.

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Press release

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS AND THE RELEASE
OF PRISONERS IN KATANGA

Press release No 752b, January 16, 1962

The International Committee of the Red Cross is happy
to announce the release of 15 United Nations soldiers (11 Swedes,
2 Norwegians and 2 Irish) who were prisoners of the Katanga forces.
These men were exchanged on January 15 for 33 Katangan policemen
who were prisoners of UNO. The exchange and release of these troops
from the opposite camps follows the efforts made by Mr. G.C. Senn,
who for some years has been a voluntary ICRC delegate in Africa.

Taking over in Katanga from Mr. Georges Olivet, who was
killed while carrying out his mission, Mr. Senn intervened on
several occasions on behalf of soldiers captive in one camp or
another. On December 20, he visited the prisoners in the hands of
the United Nations who were detained at Luano airport, near
Elisabethville. On December 25, he visited the United Nations troops
detained by the Katangans and handed over Christmas parcels and
various relief supplies. He repeated this visit on January 2. With
regard to the Katangans held prisoner by UNO and who had been
transferred to Leopoldville, the ICRC delegate obtained their return
to Elisabethville, which was the prelude to the exchange and release
which have just taken place.

Previously, on December 28, Mr. Senn had obtained a
preliminary release of Prisoners: 4 Swedes detained since the
previous day were exchanged for 30 Katangans arrested on December
22 by the UNO forces.

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THE ICRC VISITS INTERNED ACTIVISTS

No 753b, January 18, 1962

A delegate of the International Committee of the Red
Cross visited the Centre of assigned residence at St-Maurice l'Ardoise in the Gard Department (France) on January 16. This camp, which
had previously contained interned Algerians, now holds about fifty
activists.

The delegate spoke without witnesses with ten internees
who were thus able freely to express their views on the conditions
of their detention.
Following on this visit, the ICRC, in accordance with its custom, will communicate its observations and suggestions to the competent French authorities.

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UNO AGREE TO THE ENQUIRY REQUESTED BY THE ICRC
No 754b in January 19, 1962

Mr. Thant has now informed the International Committee of the Red Cross that he willingly agrees to the setting up of an independent commission of enquiry which would attempt to throw light on the circumstances in which Mr. Georges Olivet and his two companions met their deaths.

The ICRC has warmly thanked Mr. Thant for his prompt decision.

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Documentary

THE DISSEMINATION OF THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS

We begin the publication below of a series of studies on the following subjects:

I  The Law of Geneva
II  The principles of the Geneva Conventions
III  The protection of the wounded and the sick in time of war
IV  The status of prisoners of war
V  The protection of civilians

These texts, which will supply the material for a series of specimen lectures, have been written by Mr. Henri Coursier, under the direction of Mr. J.S. Pictet. They are based on the Commentary on the Conventions published by the ICRC, of which many passages are summarized. In the form of popular lectures, they will be forwarded to all National Red Cross Societies. The ICRC takes this opportunity of reminding them that the Powers Parties to these Conventions have pledged themselves "to disseminate them as widely as possible in time of war and in time of peace".
Although this is primarily a responsibility for Governments, the National Red Cross Societies can most usefully co-operate in this sphere with their authorities.

The specimen course formed by these texts will be submitted to them as a model. National Societies can make use of them as they wish, either as they stand, or as a basis for their own courses of instruction. This course will also be sent to the law faculties of various countries, requesting them to include the law of Geneva in the university curriculum.

These texts, which are an integral part of public international law, are binding to all the powers who have ratified or acceded to the Conventions. The Conventions have been incorporated in the national legislation of all these States. In accordance with the international engagements entered upon by the ratifying powers, these texts must be included in the official curriculum.

to be continued
Algeria

VISIT TO DETAINED PERSONS

The French Government having given its authorization, the ICRC has just started on a new round of visits in prisons and camps in which persons arrested as a result of the events in Algeria are detained. These visits, which will continue until the end of March, will enable the ICRC delegates, Mr. Pierre Gaillard, Mr. Michel Martin and Mr. Germain Colladon, to visit Algerian nationalists as well as French activists.

On the other hand, Mr. Roger Vust, delegate of the ICRC in Algiers, is engaged in ensuring that relief in kind and in cash reaches certain categories of detained persons in Algeria. Furthermore, he has discussed with the civilian and military authorities the steps to be taken following on the 9th ICRC mission in Algeria, whose report was submitted to the French Government at the beginning of January.

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CULTURAL RELIEF

The ICRC is at present despatching additional cultural material for Algerians detained in France. This consists chiefly of books in Arabic, copies of the Koran, grammars and literary works.

The ICRC had already distributed in 1960 and 1961 cultural relief, consisting of school text books and assorted literature in French and Arabic, in some thirty places of detention in France for detained Algerians.

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RELIEF TO THE RESETTLED POPULATION

In Algeria, the ICRC has to undertake increasing commitments and in addition to the assistance which it has given to prisoners and internees since the beginning of the conflict, it has intensified its relief action to the civilian population in the resettlement centres.

Thus it has just delivered 26 tons of relief supplies in Algiers. Mr. Jérôme Santandréa who accompanied this consignment handed it over on arrival to Mr. Roger Vust, the ICRC resident delegate. This comprised 20 tons of powdered milk placed at the disposal of the ICRC by the Swiss Confederation out of surplus dairy produce, as well as 6 tons of clothing and miscellaneous relief, including sugar, soap, concentrated soup, etc.

Other donations are also being despatched: 35 tons of sugar acquired through ICRC relief funds are already on their way. The Swiss Red Cross will hand over supplies of malted milk, ophthalmic drops and tonics of a value of 30,000 Swiss francs to the International Committee.

The resettled population in Algeria has already benefited from ICRC relief exceeding an amount of 1,300,000 Swiss francs.

These supplies are distributed in the resettlement centres by the General Delegation of the French Red Cross in Algeria, in co-operation with the ICRC resident delegate.

Generally speaking, however, the needs of the resettled population continue to be extremely pressing. It is estimated that there are about 2,200,000 persons, mostly women and children, distributed among some 2,000 centres.

In most cases these centres are located near land which can be cultivated by their owners who have kept their own produce and livestock and who can thus subsist under normal conditions.

Other camps, on the other hand, have been established in barren regions, often at great distances from towns. Deprived of their means of sustenance, these groups suffer great hardship and are entirely dependent upon assistance given by the public authorities and various charitable organizations.

The ICRC started to tackle this problem when the first Centres were set up in 1957. Whenever its delegates went on missions to places of detention, they made contact with the General Delegation of the French Red Cross, so that relief action could be organized in those Centres in which conditions were the hardest.

At the present moment, the French Red Cross has available for its distributions 21 mobile nursing teams, each of which is provided with a lorry equipped as a dispensary.
Distribution on the spot is made by the local Red Cross Committee of which 67 exist for the whole of Algeria.

The permanent ICRC delegate, at present assisted by a deputy, frequently takes part in the distribution of relief in the various Centres.

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Congo

OPENING OF IMPARTIAL ENQUIRY INTO THE DEATH OF GEORGES OLIVET AND HIS COMPANIONS

Mr. Thant, Acting Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Mr. Léopold Boissier, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, have reached rapid agreement on the setting up of the impartial and independent commission of enquiry into the circumstances of the death of the ICRC delegate, Mr. Georges Olivet and of the two Katanga Red Cross workers, Mrs. Vroonen and Mr. Smeding. It will be remembered that the ICRC had asked UNO to open proceedings to endeavour to throw some light on the tragic event which, in December 1961, cost the lives of these three people.

The following have been appointed to take part in the commission: Professor Leopold Breitenecker, Director of the Vienna Institute of Forensic Medicine, Judge Björn Kjellin, President of the Malmö Court of Appeal, and Colonel Hans Roost, an officer instructor of the Swiss Army, from Lucerne. The ICRC and UNO will both be represented by observers. Judge Lukas Burckhardt, from Basle, has been chosen as the ICRC's observer.

The commission met from February 6 to 8 in Geneva. Its members were welcomed by Mr. Spinelli, Director of the European Office of the United Nations, representing the Acting Secretary-General, and by Mr. Boissier, President of the ICRC. The commission's mandate was defined during these preliminary meetings and the documents available in Geneva were studied.

The commission left Geneva on Friday, February 9 and arrived in Elisabethville the following day.

In the delicate task entrusted to it, the commission has been assured of the co-operation of all interested parties. The ICRC has also received an assurance from President Tshombe, that every facility would be accorded it on the Katanga side, and that it would have access to the results of the enquiry already opened by the Katanga Legal authorities.

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ACTIONS ON BEHALF OF THE CIVILIAN POPULATION OF KATANGA

Previous information Notes have stated that the ICRC delegate in Katanga, Mr. G. C. Senn, left for Kongolo at the end of January, to distribute foodstuffs and medical supplies to the civilian population. However, he was not able to continue his journey beyond Stanleyville, as the Congolese Authorities did not consider they could guarantee his safety in Kongolo, where serious disorders had broken out shortly beforehand and missionaries had been massacred. During an interview with General Lundula, Commander-in-Chief of the Congolese Forces in Orientale Province, Mr. Senn insisted on being allowed to go on to Kongolo, but finally had to enounce this plan. Nevertheless, he took steps to have 17 nuns and 47 seminarists evacuated from Kongolo.

Shortly afterwards, the ICRC delegate went to Manono, in North Katanga, where in co-operation with United Nations representatives, he handed over medicaments to the population and the local hospital.

The ICRC has also just sent a consignment from Geneva to Elisabethville, consisting of 60,000 pills for the treatment of tuberculosis. The supplies are intended for an anti-tuberculosis campaign in West Katanga.

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The Indo-Portuguese conflict

THE ICRC AND INTERNED PERSONS AND PRISONERS

The International Committee of the Red Cross has been authorized by the Portuguese Government to visit Indian nationals interned in the Portuguese overseas territories as a result of the conflict in Goa. It designated Mr. Robert Guinand to make these visits in Mozambique and Mr. Jacques Ruff in Macao.

On the other hand, the Indian Red Cross has sent the ICRC lists of wounded Portuguese prisoners and killed during the military operations in Goa, Diu and Damao. The total number of killed is given as 13. These lists have been immediately transmitted to the Portuguese Red Cross at Lisbon.

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Laos

CONTINUATION OF THE ICRC ACTION

Following on its appeal of December 18, the ICRC has received various contributions from National Red Cross Societies and private donors. These donations will enable it to continue its relief action until March 31. If further contributions are not made during the next few weeks, the ICRC may be obliged to terminate its action, in spite of reports from its delegate at Vientiane describing distress which in many cases gives cause for alarm.

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Japan

DECREASE IN NUMBERS OF REPATRIATED KOREANS

The departure of Koreans resident in Japan and wishing to be repatriated to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was renewed at the beginning of 1962, but at a reduced rate. The 86th convoy which sailed from the Japanese port of Niigata in January consisted of less than 100 persons. At the beginning of the repatriation operations, more than one thousand Koreans left Japan each week.

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THE ACTIVITY OF THE CENTRAL TRACING AGENCY IN 1961

During the past year, the Central Tracing Agency dealt with 66,348 cases and opened 20,525 enquiries with the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Government ministries, Registrar and Municipal offices, etc. The volume of work thus continues to be considerable.

The Central Agency has naturally had to deal with additional work as a result of the events in Algeria, the Congo, Tunis, Angola, Goa and Indonesia, which involved tracing military and civilian missing, as well as the transmission of family messages.

The Central Agency has also, however, had as in the past, to continue its activity deriving from the Second World War and from the conflicts and disturbances which have taken place since 1945. It has in particular involved discovering the fate of combatants missing on operations or of prisoners
of war and civilian internes who have not returned to their own country, delivering certificates of captivity or of hospitalization to former prisoners making such requests, and to take steps to obtain records of decease.

Furthermore, the Central Agency continues to receive numerous requests from families whose members were separated during the second world conflict, in the immediate post-war period, the events in Hungary, etc. These cases require very thorough investigations, either in the country of origin or of emigration. The result of such enquiries enables the Agency, at the request of those concerned and provided they fulfil the necessary conditions, to undertake steps leading to their being reunited with their close relatives.

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that, in the various sections of the Central Agency, the proportion of enquiries with positive results continues to increase. Thus, during 1961, about one third of the enquiries had fruitful results. This is most encouraging and illustrates how the National Societies and the various bodies, both official and unofficial, are co-operating ever more effectively with the ICRC in its work.

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Press Release

PRINCESS GRACE VISITS THE ICRC
No 755, January 31, 1962

Princess Grace of Monaco, President of the Red Cross of Monaco, visited the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross at Geneva, where she was welcomed by its President, Mr. Leopold Boissier. Accompanied by several personalities, notably by Mr. Henry Soum, Minister of the Principality of Monaco at Berne, the Princess, who herself takes the keenest interest in the work of the Red Cross Society which she presides, listened to an account of the rôle and the mission of the ICRC, and was then shown the card-indexes of the Central Tracing Agency.

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STUDY MISSION TO CENTRAL AFRICA
No 756, February 5, 1962

One of the Vice-Presidents of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. S. Gonard, formerly commanding an Army Corps in the Swiss Army, has just left Geneva to undertake a study mission in a certain number of countries and territories of Central Africa. The object of this mission is to examine conditions in which the ICRC might be called upon to pursue its customary tasks on the African continent.
Mr. Gonard is accompanied by Mr. Georges Hoffmann, who has recently spent a year in the Congo as a delegate of the ICRC. They will stay in Africa for about two months and will visit the following countries: Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Uganda, Ruanda Urundi, Congo (Leopoldville) and Congo (Brazzaville).

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THE ICRC AND THE EVENTS IN NEW GUINEA

No 757, February 7, 1962

Following on the incident which took place on January 15 last in the waters of the ARU islands between units of the Indonesian and Netherlands naval forces, the Netherlands Government, responding to an appeal made by the Acting Secretary-General of the United Nations, agreed to release Indonesian nationals captured during this engagement. This agreement took place shortly after the ICRC, carrying out its customary rôle, had obtained a list of the prisoners concerned and the authorization to visit all Indonesians detained in New Guinea.

The Acting Secretary-General of the United Nations having requested the support of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the latter instructed its delegate general for Asia, Mr. André Durand, to proceed as soon as possible to New Guinea in order to visit interned Indonesians and to make immediate arrangements for the transport and repatriation of prisoners entitled to benefit from the agreement made between Mr. Thant and the Netherlands Government.

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DOCUMENTARY ARTICLE

1. The Red Cross and the formulation of the Law of Geneva

Henry Dunant, who conceived the idea of the Red Cross on the battlefield of Solferino, had more than one forerunner. Bonaparte himself wrote to the Emperor of Austria, after Marengo: "It is on the battlefield, amid the sufferings of vast numbers of wounded men, surrounded by 15,000 dead bodies, that I adjure Your Majesty to listen to the voice of humanity". (Henry Dunant - "A Memory of Solferino, page 60).

This voice has made itself heard on various occasions in the course of the centuries; a series of agreements between belligerents, "cartels" for the exchange and ransom of prisoners of war, "capitulations" for the surrender of fortresses, or "armistices" contained clauses relating to the
treatment of the wounded and sick and sometimes even provisions for the pro-
tection of the civilian population. But these agreements only applied to specific
cases and at the end of the time set for their duration, once hostilities ter-
minated in any event, they ceased to have effect. Furthermore, they only bound
the contracting parties on a basis of strict mutual observance, and even these
were under no obligation to renew them should a new conflict break out sub-
sequently.

The Treaty of Friendship and Trade concluded in 1785 between
Prussia and the United States, conceived by Frederic II and Franklin, both
famous for their philosophical ideals, was of a less precarious nature. Con-
cluded in time of peace with a view to wartime, it laid down rules for the pro-
tection of the wounded and prisoners which closely foreshadowed the provisions
of the Geneva Conventions. But it was merely a Treaty between two Powers
and not an international agreement binding on other States.

It was to be through the Red Cross movement and the Conven-
tions which it had inspired, that these humanitarian rules were finally incor-
porated in the law of nations, thus giving them universal significance.

A Committee of five persons (General Dufour, Dunant, Moynier,
Maunoir, Appia) met on February 17, 1863 in Geneva to put Dunant's idea into
practice.

The Committee of Five which then took the name of "Comité
international et permanent de secours aux blessés militaires", was to become
the International Committee of the Red Cross. It decided to convene an interna-
tional conference in order to "remedy the inadequacies in the Army Medical
Service in the field".

This seemed to he a daring move on the part of a small group
of private individuals trying to intervene on an international level. Its efforts
were however successful beyond expectations, and between October 26 and
19, 1863, unofficial delegates as well as doctors and civil servants from no
less then sixteen different countries (Austria, Baden, Bavaria, France, Great
Britain, Hanover, Hesse, Italy, Netherlands, Prussia, Russia, Saxony, Spain,
Sweden, Switzerland, Wurttemberg) met in Geneva. As experts they came to an
agreement by which they gave their full approval to the recommendations made
by the Geneva Committee. These had been that States were to encourage the
establishment on their own territory of private Societies linked with each other
and capable of working as auxiliaries to the medical Service. A subsequent
diplomatic instrument was to guarantee the principle of the neutralisation of the
wounded and of all personnel whose duties were to aid them. The equipment
necessary for them to carry out their rôle, as well as ambulances and hospitals,
were to be protected by a distinctive sign, the emblem of the red cross on a
white ground.

The recommendations of the 1863 Conference soon led to the
forming of National Societies first Germany (Wurttemberg, Oldenburg, Prussia)
and in Belgium. But only an international Conference consisting of diplomats
with authority to underwrite the various engagements which had been made
on behalf of their own governments could officially implement the programme of the Committee of experts. The Diplomatic Conference, which met in Geneva in August 1864 had precisely this object in view. Convened by the Swiss Federal Government, at the suggestion of the Committee of Five, it in fact led to the signing of the First Geneva Convention of August 12, 1864. (In addition to the signatory Powers: Baden, Belgium, Denmark, France, Hesse, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Prussia, Spain, Switzerland, Württemberg, the following States took part in the Conference: Great Britain, Russia, Saxony, Sweden, United States).

(To be continued)
Geneva, 1 March 1962

Algeria

STILL PLENTY OF WORK TO BE DONE

The prospect of a "cease-fire" in Algeria will not in any way imply a diminution in the ICRC's humanitarian activity on behalf of the victims of the conflict. This covers various fields: visits to prisons and places of detention in France and Algeria, representations to the authorities of penal establishments, and the question of the resettlement centres.

In France, the adoption by the Government at the end of November 1961 of the political regime, so-called "régime A", for prisoners incarcerated as a result of the Algerian conflict, was followed up less than three months later by visits from ICRC delegates to various establishments. Made with the authorization of the French Government, these visits were in compliance with requests submitted by those under detention.

Visits to places of internment in France

Between February 12 and 16, delegates of the ICRC thus visited the prisons of the Grandes and Petites Naumettes at Marseilles, where they spoke with FLN detainees as well as with French activists, all held under "régime A". The delegates also went to the Thol (Ain) punishment centre and the administrative internment camp at Larzac (Aveyron).

During the second half of February the prisons at Périgueux, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Foix and Montauban, and the punishment camp at Mauzac (Dordogne), in which members of the MNA are detained, were also visited.
Furthermore, the ICRC has continued to transmit to the benevolent funds of Algerians detained in France and in Algeria, the amounts which have been remitted to it for this purpose.

... and in Algeria

The resident-delegate of the ICRC in Algeria, has actively continued to take steps resulting from the observations and suggestions contained in the report of the ICRC's XIth Mission in that country, which had been handed to the French Government at the beginning of January. The ICRC representative had in particular long discussions on February 13 with Mr. Jean Morin, Delegate General of the French Government.

Aid to French prisoners in the hands of the ALN

Since the release on December 31, 1961, thanks to the persistent efforts made by the ICRC, of two French prisoners held by the ALN since January 1961, the ICRC has continued to take steps to enable three other prisoners, still in captivity, to write to their families, which they have not been permitted to do for more than a year. The ICRC has handed family message forms to the detaining authorities for this purpose in accordance with the practice of the Central Tracing Agency. So far none of these steps has led to any result.

A series of representations have been made on behalf of one prisoner held by the ALN in an area close to the Moroccan frontier, who has been prevented from sending news to his family since 1959.

These four men are the only prisoners in FLN hands whose names are known to the ICRC. Enquiries have been opened in more than 400 other cases, whilst the French Government has drawn up a nominal roll of more than 350 posted as missing. The ICRC has up to the present still been unsuccessful in obtaining any other list.

Resettled populations

Continuing its relief programme to the resettled population, the ICRC has despatched, since the beginning of 1962, 20 tons of powdered milk and 35 tons of sugar to Algeria. These supplies are now being distributed through the local committees of the French Red Cross and its mobile teams.

Furthermore, the ICRC will make use of cash contributions (130,000 Swiss francs having so far been received from various sources
including the Swiss Red Cross), for the purchase of "kachabias" (children's cloaks with hoods), blankets, soap, ophthalmic drops, malted milk and tonics. In addition 150 tons of powdered milk and 10 tons of processed cheese, provided from surplus government stocks, will be distributed during the course of the year.

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Congo

ENQUIRY INTO THE DEATH OF Mr. OLIVET AND HIS COMPANIONS

The commission charged with making an impartial and independent enquiry into the circumstances of the deaths of Mr. Georges Olivet, delegate of the ICRC, and of Mrs. Vroonen and Mr. Smeding of the Katanga Red Cross, has ended its stay in Elisabethville where it was helped in its work by the United Nations and the Katanga authorities. Since its arrival in Elisabethville on February 10, it collected a considerable amount of evidence and information concerning the drama which has cast gloom over the Red Cross world. The members of the commission have just returned to Geneva where they will hold a meeting on the subject, although their final report cannot be expected before several weeks.

Since no equipment existed locally enabling a thorough examination of the bodies to be made, the mortal remains of the three victims have been transported to Vienna, where the work will be continued at the Institute of Forensic Medicine whose director, Professor Leopold Breitenecker, is a member of the commission. A brief and moving ceremony took place at the Elisabethville airport, UNO troops paying the last honours to the bodies as they left. Senior United Nations officials, the chief of protocol of the Government and officers of the Katanga army were also present.

We would recall that the two other members of the commission are Judge Björn Kjellin (Sweden) and Colonel Hans Roost (Switzerland), the ICRC observer being Judge Lukas Burckhardt.

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THE MISSION OF THE ICRC IN CENTRAL AFRICA

Mr. S. Gonard, Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, charged with a study mission in Central Africa, visited the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, and Kenya. He has just left for Dar-es-Salam, capital of Tanganyika. Mr. Gonard, who is accompanied by Mr. Georges Hoffmann, delegate of the ICRC, has had a number of talks in these countries with the civil and military authorities, as well as with the local Red Cross
organizations. These talks dealt with ways of ensuring a certain amount of protection, without any discrimination whatsoever, for the victims of international or internal conflicts, which might break out in Africa.

Laos

ICRC ACTIVITY IN LAOS

The fighting in the Southern provinces of Laos on the borders of Burma and China, has sparked off a further influx of refugees and large numbers of civilians have arrived in the royal capital of Luang-Prabang. They come on foot, by canoe, helicopter and plane, but they all have one thing in common, an urgent need of relief supplies.

To meet these increased needs, the ICRC has raised a fresh credit of 50,000 Swiss francs on its relief funds, which brings to more than 200,000 Swiss francs the total devoted by the International Committee to assisting the victims of the conflict, particularly some 10,000 refugees who left the danger zones and withdrew to the Mekong valley.

ICRC delegate, Dr. Jürg Baer, immediately organised, in cooperation with the Lao Red Cross, distributions of clothing, blankets and milk (gifts from the French Red Cross and the Children's Funds).

The Queen was present at the distribution on January 23. She also watched parcels being handed to the sick and wounded, and blood plasma and blankets (gifts from the Netherlands Red Cross) being handed over to the directorate of the hospitals.

On January 29 and 30, the ICRC delegate organised other distributions in Paksé, Sedone province, in Southern Laos, on behalf of Khmer refugees who had arrived at the beginning of the year.

The ICRC has also made arrangements to send 35 cases of medical supplies to the Laotian Red Cross at Xieng-Khouang (seat of Prince Souvanna Phouma's Government). These supplies were gifts from the Polish, Indian and Swiss Red Cross Societies. This consignment will be delivered through the intermediary of the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.
New Guinea

INDONESIAN PRISONERS VISITED

The ICRC has accepted the mandate offered it by Mr. Thant, Acting Secretary-General of the United Nations, for the release of Indonesian prisoners in Dutch New Guinea (West Irian), and instructed Mr. André Durand, Delegate General for Asia to proceed to the spot. He arrived in Hollandia on February 12.

The ICRC delegate has visited the 52 Indonesian prisoners captured as a result of the naval engagement of January 15, and he has also visited a certain number of Indonesian civilian internees who had infiltrated into New Guinea and been arrested by the Netherlands authorities during 1960 - 1961.

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The Indo-Portuguese Conflict

VISIT TO PRISONERS AND INTERNEES

A delegate of the ICRC, Mr. Jacques Ruff has visited 53 Indian nationals interned in the Portuguese territory of Macao, following the Goa episode.

Mr. Ruff then went to New Delhi where he obtained the Indian Government's permission to make a further visit to Portuguese prisoners and internees in Goa. Accompanied by an Indian Red Cross representative, he proceeded to Goa and has begun a tour of the internment camps. These prisoners and internees had previously been visited by an ICRC delegate in December a few days after the ending of military operations.

Furthermore, Mr. Robert Guinand, delegate of the ICRC, arrived in Lourenço Marques, on February 15, to visit Indian nationals interned in this territory of Portuguese East Africa. He has begun an extensive tour of the internment camps.

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THE VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ICRC TO ROME

Mr. Léopold Boissier, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, has been to Rome for a short visit. He had the honour of being received by His Holiness Pope John XXIII whom he informed of the
problems which our organization has to face. He was also received by the Sovereign Order of Malta with which the International Committee has occasion to co-operate. He then devoted several days to visiting the Italian Red Cross which welcomed him with great cordiality. He visited its various installations and sections and familiarized himself with its multiple activities. On his return journey he took the opportunity of making contact with the Secretary-General of the Provincial Committee of the Italian Red Cross in Milan. Finally, Mr. Boissier was received privately by Mr. Gronchi, President of the Italian Republic and by Mr. Segni, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and he also met the Minister of Health, Mr. Giardina at a lunch party given in his honour.

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DOCUMENTARY

(3) Continuation of the model course by Mr. Henri Coursier on the Geneva Conventions

FROM THE 1864 CONVENTION TO THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The importance of the First Geneva Convention cannot be too greatly stressed in the history of the International Red Cross. No doubt if one reads the text of this famous Convention today, one may consider it to be somewhat slight in comparison with the four Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949. The original principles of the law of Geneva, in particular with regard to the respect for and the protection of ambulances, military hospitals and military personnel, and respect for local inhabitants, that "wounded or sick combatants to whatever nation they may belong, shall be collected and cared for" (art. 6), and the adoption of the distinctive sign of the red cross on a white ground, are an essential part of this international agreement.

But as Louis Renault wrote "the Geneva Convention was important and unique since it aimed at regularizing in a permanent manner a situation, which until then had only been haphazard".

Contrary to the temporary or limited agreement of which we have spoken above, the Geneva Convention was designed to take its place within the framework of positive international law by virtue of the ratification or accession of all the Powers.

During the wars and during the internal disturbances which broke out between 1864 and 1914, the Red Cross came to the aid of their victims. This was the case notably in 1866 in the Austro-Prussian War, in 1870 in the Franco-Prussian War, during the Spanish troubles in 1873-1874 and in the wars between Russia and Turkey (1877), Spain and the United States (1898),
Russia and Japan (1904-1905), Italy and Turkey and in the Balkan War (1912). But it was above all during the First World War, in view of the special importance of that conflict, that the Red Cross was able to carry out its mission.

All the belligerents possessed extremely well equipped Red Cross Societies, which gave their full support to the military authorities and vied with each other in the establishment of hospitals and ambulances. One need only point out as an example, that during the first two years of the 1914-18 war, the daily expenses of the British Red Cross amounted to £5,000 and in the third and fourth years they amounted to £10,000 and £20,000 respectively.

The International Committee of the Red Cross for its part greatly extended its aid office, which had been established in 1870 in Basle to assist prisoners of war. Since the Hague Convention of 1907 had made official provision for the protection of these prisoners, the International Committee possessed a legal justification for enabling it to carry out its activities. It established the Central Prisoners of War Agency in Geneva which was soon to number 1,200 voluntary helpers.

Between 1914 and 1918, there were 120,000 enquiries about military personnel and five million files were classified as correspondence in the Central Card Index of its Information Office. The Agency received an average of 2,000 to 3,000 letters daily and replied to 18,000 enquiries. (The Franco-Belgian Section, which occupied forty people alone, was responsible for 2,500,000 files). The Agency forwarded correspondence between prisoners and their families and also dealt with official documents, affidavits and others, which required the prisoners' signature.

Delegates of the International Committee visited prisoners of war and their confidential reports often helped to improve conditions in the prison camps. Special sections were established to deal with civilian internees, trace missing persons and certify deaths. Remittances were forwarded through a banking section. Finally, two million private parcels and 2,000 train waggons of collective consignments were dispatched.