DEATH OF FORMER ICRC PRESIDENT
ERIC MARTIN

It was with deep sorrow that the members and staff of the ICRC learnt that Professor Eric Martin, an honorary member and a former President of the International Committee, died suddenly on 6 January. Although Professor Martin's general state of health had considerably declined in the last few months, he had remained very alert and had continued to take a close interest in the ICRC and in many events linked with Geneva's social activities.

The late Eric Martin was born on 13 August 1900 in Geneva where he studied medicine. He qualified in 1925 and set up a practice in his native city in 1927. In 1936, he was appointed "privat-docent" of the Geneva Faculty of Medicine, and in 1946 associate professor. In 1953, he occupied the post of professor and became an honorary professor in 1970. He specialized in internal medicine and his work on numerous aspects of geriatrics and in other fields of medicine earned him considerable appreciation abroad.

Professor Eric Martin was President of the ICRC from 1973 to 1976, after having been a member of the Swiss Red Cross Central Committee and having chaired its Geneva branch for several years.

All those with whom he had contact liked and respected him. He will be remembered as a man with a very warm personality, radiating intelligence and humanity, combined with lively humour.

The texts of this Bulletin have no official character, and may be freely reproduced.
In December 1979 the ICRC, UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) continued forwarding to Cambodia food, medical supplies, school material and other relief goods. The three aircraft chartered by the ICRC and UNICEF, based on Bangkok and Singapore, made 116 flights, conveying some 2,300 tons of goods to Phnom Penh. During the same month 15,500 tons were dispatched by ship to Kompong Som.

Delegates of the ICRC and UNICEF were permitted to attend the distribution of relief in the provinces bordering the Tonle Sap lake. From 14 to 21 December they accompanied a convoy of 23 lorries, loaded with some 200 tons of food and medical supplies, on an 880 km tour of the provinces of Kompong Chhnang, Pursat, Battambang and Siem Reap. Road conditions and collapsed bridges compelled the convoy to keep to the main roads and even there to travel at no more than about 30 km an hour.

The ICRC and UNICEF delegates reported that the population was suffering from severe malnutrition. However, there appeared to be no actual famine in the region. The most serious cases were in the hospitals and orphanages where substantial food and medical relief was absolutely essential.

Nevertheless, only a fraction of the international relief has actually been distributed. The ICRC and UNICEF are greatly concerned about the situation and hope that this circuit of lake Tonle Sap will be the first of other distributions on a larger scale, for in view of the predicted paucity of the next harvest a deterioration of the situation is to be feared in the next few months.

These conclusions, reached by the delegates carrying out the joint operation during their discussions with the authorities in the provinces visited, are shared by ICRC Operations Director J.P. Hocké, who was also in Cambodia in mid-December. In Phnom-Penh he met President Heng Samrin, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, of Trade and of Health, and officials of the Red Cross, with whom he conferred on problems holding up the distribution of relief. A one-day trip to the province of Takéo, some 100 km southeast of the capital, gave Mr. Hocké an idea, if not a complete picture, of the situation.

The ICRC and UNICEF, like the WFP which provides most of the food for the combined relief operation, are aware of the urgent necessity of stepping up distribution in every region of the country. With almost 50,000 tons of relief goods in local warehouses at the end of December and a logistic infrastructure ready for action (more than 150 lorries already provided by the ICRC and UNICEF and about 300 provided by the USSR), this is an objective not beyond achievement.

So full are the Cambodian warehouses that consignments must temporarily be held up. Consequently, only 6,700 tons of food will be sent to Cambodia in January - and possibly a further 6,000 tons if warehouse space is released - instead of the 30,000 tons programmed by ICRC/UNICEF/WFP.

THAILAND: A CHANGING SITUATION

In Thailand the ICRC and UNICEF are still co-ordinating the food and medical assistance for Cambodian refugees at the Khmer-Thai border and in spite of the changing and dangerous situation are continuing to provide supplies and medical care for the 600,000 or so people in need. The general state of health has improved among the refugees, due no doubt to the help which has been reaching them for the past few months.

Dispensaries have been set up in each camp in the border region. They are run by a Red Cross co-ordinator or by voluntary agencies, and they provide surgical, obstetric and general medical services.

In addition, wounded casualties may be treated in the surgery centres displaying the red cross outside the Samet and Mak Mun camps, and in several field hospitals in the region.

At the end of December the medical personnel working under ICRC auspices numbered 849 (400 from the voluntary agencies and 440 from the International Red Cross). National Societies of 17 countries had medical teams working in Thailand: Australia (6 teams), Belgium (1), Canada (16), Denmark (6), Finland (3), France (11), Federal Republic of Germany (13), Ireland (1), Netherlands (3), New Zealand (7), Norway (2), Sweden (3), Switzerland (7), United Kingdom (1), United States (13) and Thailand (78 people). The first phase of the assistance programme has now been completed and the ICRC is at present re-assessing the situation with an eye to succeeding stages.
ANGOLA-NAMIBIA: TWO-PHASE REPATRIATION

Following an agreement between the Angolan and South African authorities, the ICRC contributed to the exchange of an Angolan airplane which had made a forced landing in Namibia last July with a South African plane which had been stranded in Angola since April.

The operation was in two phases. On 16 December the ICRC delegate in Pretoria accompanied the four passengers of the Angolan machine to Kinshasa, from where they were flown to Luanda. They were met by the ICRC delegate in Angola who handed them over to the authorities.

On 22 December the two aircraft flew back to their respective countries.

PRESIDENT HAY TO UNDERTAKE A GOODWILL MISSION IN THE GULF STATES

The President of the ICRC, Alexandre Hay, will undertake a mission in the Gulf States from 27 January to 6 February. His tour will take him in succession to Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

During this voyage, the first official visit by an ICRC President to the Gulf States, Mr. Hay will meet Heads of State and high officials to whom he will give an account of ICRC activities, particularly in the Arab world, and will describe the financing of the institution.

In Kuwait and Bahrain Mr. Hay will also meet the leading members of the National Red Crescent Societies, with whom he will review problems of mutual interest relating to the humanitarian activities of the International Red Cross.

From 1 to 12 December, Serge Nessi, head of the ICRC Financing Division, visited the countries in the President’s itinerary for interviews with the government and National Society authorities and to prepare the ground for Mr. Hay’s visit.

APPEAL BY ICRC AND LEAGUE IN AID OF REFUGEES IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Following the joint League-ICRC mission in December 1979 in the People's Republic of China, an appeal was launched by the League and ICRC to National Societies for their support aid of the Red Cross Society of China’s refugee relief and resettlement project.

The appeal called for the provision of hospital supplies and for funds to purchase locally various relief goods for an estimated total amount of 4.2 million Swiss francs.

The People's Republic of China had announced that it was prepared to accept 260,000 South East Asian refugees, of whom 10,000 were still in Indo-China.

The Central Tracing Agency put forward some suggestions to the Chinese National Society relating to the tracing of missing persons and the forwarding of family messages from and to the refugees.

RED CROSS EMERGENCY RADIOCOMMUNICATIONS: WARC 79 BRINGS RESULTS

The 1979 World Administrative Radio Conference (WARC) closed on 6 December 1979. The final act signed on that day will constitute the new Radio Regulations for the next twenty-five years.

In issues Nos. 41 and 45 (June and October 1979), the ICRC Bulletin published an account of the items which concerned the Red Cross, especially those referring to the use of emergency radiocommunications in armed conflicts and the identification of medical transports.

The Red Cross considers that the results obtained at WARC are satisfactory. One of the ITU Conference's resolutions related to the use of radiotelegraph and radiotelephone links by Red Cross, Red Crescent, and Red Lion and Sun organizations. It confirmed that it was necessary that the International Red Cross should be able to count upon a reliable radiocommunications network, as its work was often carried out in difficult circumstances (when normal communication facilities were interrupted, or not available, due to war or natural disasters, etc.).

A second resolution dealt with the use of radiocommunications for ensuring the safety of ships and aircraft of States not parties to an armed conflict. Its aim was to ensure that those means of transportation would not be brought to a standstill or, by mistake, be the target of attacks, as had been the case in previous conflicts.

With regard to the medical means of transportation by land, water or air, WARC-79 added a new section to article 37 of the Radio Regulations, under the heading "Medical Transports". This was a significant addition, for the text refers to urgency and safety signals which will be given priority in radiocommunications for medical
means of transportation.

A resolution which does not affect directly the Red Cross but could nevertheless be useful must also be mentioned here. It refers to the international use of radiocommunications, in the event of natural disasters, in frequency bands allocated to the amateur service. The ITU Conference, however, took into account that, in such situations, unlike in armed conflicts, only short-term use would be made of such facilities.

**VALERY GISCARD D'Estaing At ICRC**

While in Geneva on 10 December 1979 to receive the Nansen Medal of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, President of France, came to the headquarters of the ICRC. Together with Mr. Olivier Stünzi, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Daniel Hoeffel, Secretary of State for Health and Family Affairs, and Mr. Jean-Marie Soutou, President of the French Red Cross, Mr. Giscard d'Estaing was welcomed by ICRC President Alexandre Hay, members of the International Committee, the institution's Directors and leading officials of the League of Red Cross Societies.

The President of the Swiss Confederation, Mr. Hans Hürlimann, who met Mr. Giscard d'Estaing on his arrival at Geneva Airport, was also a guest of the ICRC during this visit.

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**THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF "ICRC BULLETIN" WISHES ALL ITS READERS A HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

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**"LE MONDE" SUPPLEMENT ON ICRC**

The French daily newspaper "Le Monde", on 25 and 26 November last, published a six-page supplement on the International Committee of the Red Cross. Most of the articles come from the pen of a well-known reporter, Jean-Marc Théoléryre. "Le Monde" Geneva correspondent Isabelle Vichniac, and Professor Jacques Freymond, former director of the Graduate Institute of International Studies and former Vice-President of the ICRC, also contributed.

An off-print has been made of these six pages and may be obtained from the ICRC Press and Information Division in Geneva.

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**YAOUNDE SEMINAR: A COMPLETE SUCCESS**

From 26 November to 7 December 1979 the Second African Seminar on international humanitarian law was held in Yaoundé (Cameroon). Organized jointly by the Henry Dunant Institute and the Cameroon Institute of International Relations (CIIR), the meeting was attended by eighty persons - doctors, teachers, diplomats and military officers - from a score of African countries.

The courses, some of which were given by African lecturers, were followed with attention and the subsequent discussions were all the more animated for being concerned in many cases with actual situations. The seminar was fully successful and was undoubtedly important for the dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law in Africa. Such seminars are expected to take place regularly every two years.

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**IN BRIEF..........................**

The Central Tracing Agency delegate in Indonesia, Romaine Tissières, on 7 December, escorted a person from Dili to Lisbon in the first family reuniting operation from East Timor to Portugal since 1975.

The last boat repatriating Bihari families from Bangladesh to Pakistan sailed from Chittagong on 20 November with 1,541 persons (245 families) aboard. The ICRC gave assistance for these operations which began last June by tallying the passengers as they embarked.

Two further repatriation operations from Viet Nam to Taiwan took place on 22 and 29 November under ICRC auspices, enabling 307 Chinese who had till then lived in Viet Nam to join their relatives in Taiwan.

Visits to places of detention in Colombia: the series of visits to civilian and military places of detention in Colombia, begun in November 1979, ended on 21 December 1979. The ICRC team went to 14 places of detention altogether in Bogota and other towns and saw 254 persons detained on security grounds.
IN BRIEF

Two Jordanians who had wandered into Israel at the beginning of December were escorted back to Jordan on the 14th by the ICRC. The same day the delegates brought back an Israeli who had strayed in Jordan.

A family was reunited at Kuneitra on 20 December when, under ICRC auspices, a woman living in the Syrian Arab Republic was able to join her family in the occupied Golan territory.

Kampala: An office of the Central Tracing Agency (CTA) was opened on 12 December in the ICRC delegation in Kampala. Within a few days of the publication of articles in the press explaining the CTA's function and tasks, about thirty persons came to the office seeking news of missing relatives.

The ICRC medical assistance programme in Uganda has reached the final stage, with the end of the emergency phase following on the armed conflict which ravaged the country. The last allocation of funds - 100,000 Swiss francs - has been made for the provision of medical supplies to provincial dispensaries and medical centres not yet in receipt of aid from the Government.

Uganda: From 28 November to 14 December a tandem of delegates, on of them a doctor, carried out a further series of visits to prisons. They went to eight places of detention in the east and west of the country and distributed medicaments and other relief to a value of about 19,600 Swiss francs.

BACKGROUND

1980 - RCBS FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

In a series of twelve broadcasts totalling 72 hours on the air, the International Red Cross Broadcasting Service in 1979 gave an overall view of Red Cross operations throughout the world. Reports from the various theatres of action, coverage of several seminars and conferences and news bulletins brought home to listeners the concerns and hopes of Red Cross delegates who were increasingly involved in the crisis situations which disturbed the peace of the world.

Thanks to the Swiss post, telephone and telegraph authority which has for fourteen years given the ICRC free time on the air, our broadcasts in French, English, German, Spanish and Arabic will continue in 1980 on the following dates:

- 28 and 30 Jan.
- 25 and 27 Feb.
- 24 and 26 March
- 28 and 30 April
- 26 and 28 May
- 23 and 25 June
- 22 and 24 Sept.
- 27 and 29 Oct.
- 24 and 26 Nov.
- 29 and 31 Dec.

As in 1979, the French and English broadcasts will take place on Monday, and those in German, Spanish and Arabic on Wednesday. The frequency is unchanged, i.e. 7210 kHz in the 41.6 m band. In addition, as usual, programmes will be beamed every second month to Africa, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific.

The 1980 programme and copies of broadcasts may be obtained on request.

FOR CAMBODIAN REFUGEES IN THAILAND

THE CENTRAL TRACING AGENCY MEANS HOPE

For the past few months the ICRC has been carrying out a massive relief programme in the camps along the border with Cambodia for the endless numbers of refugees crossing into Thailand.

In addition to food and medical care, the Red Cross is providing assistance in another and no less important sphere of activity. David Bedford, a British Red Cross press officer lent to the ICRC, describes here what he saw in Thailand of the work of the Central Tracing Agency. His coverage is one more demonstration of the truth that to give hope is very often as important as to distribute milk and blankets to those in distress.

Ever since Henry Dunant wrote letters to the relatives of dying soldiers from the battlefield of Solferino the Red Cross has accepted that one of its major roles is to transmit family news between relatives divided by war.

In the Kampuchean refugee camps in
AID TO CAMBODIAN REFUGEES: TWO LARGE PRIVATE DONATIONS TO THE ICRC

In December the ICRC received two large donations towards its action for Cambodians. One was 100,000 Swiss francs from the Swiss Association for Aid to Tibetans which had organized a collection among its members. This sum will be assigned to activities in Thailand for Cambodian refugees.

The second donation, equally admirable, was the result of an association of virtuosity and generosity. To raise funds for Cambodian children, Yehudi and Hepzibah Menuhin gave a concert in Geneva which netted 27,800 Swiss francs. These box office receipts, together with funds from other sources, will be used for the benefit of an orphanage in Cambodia which provides a home to orphans and children separated from their parents.

Thailand the need for this service is exceptionally clear. For over four years the people of Kampuchea received no news from the outside world. Those whose relatives had become refugees around the world, following the Khmer Rouge take-over in 1975, received no word from them; hundreds of thousands of others were separated from their families during the events which followed the take-over. Now, following the mass exodus of refugees into Thailand, thousands of them desperately seek news of their families. In the Khao I Dang refugee camp, for example, hundreds of refugees gather every time a lorry arrives from the border carrying more refugees - they gather in the hope that the latest lorry will carry a member of their own family. Many Kampuchean refugees who fled to France in 1975 have flown to Thailand to seek their relatives.

Camp letter-boxes

The International Committee of the Red Cross has established a tracing and mailing service for the refugees in the camps. ICRC delegates provide airmail forms for refugees to use to write to relatives - those whose addresses are known. Replies from relatives are received at a Red Cross PO Box number in Bangkok and, with the help of refugee leaders, are distributed in the camps. A postal system has also been established between the camps. Where addresses are not known refugees can fill out Red Cross enquiry forms. The forms, on which refugees are asked to give the essential personal details about both enquirer and sought person, are sent to Bangkok where the details are card indexed and the enquiry is sent to the Red Cross Society in the country where the lost person is thought to be or to the Central Tracing Agency in Geneva.

Lists of the names of people being sought are pinned to notice boards in the camps; enquiry letters from abroad are also displayed. Refugees recognising their names on the boards can get further information from Family Re-Union Committees (run by the Kampucheans themselves) or from other central points. The names of all arrivals at the camps are now being registered to speed the tracing process.

CTA - "CAMBODIA SECTION"

The Central Tracing Agency's Cambodia section now comprises a staff of twelve persons: two in its Bangkok office, five visiting various places in Thailand along the border with Cambodia, and five more in Geneva. With the arrival of large numbers of Khmer refugees in Thailand, all information concerning them is now centralized in Bangkok, while the Geneva office co-ordinates activities and deals with cases which have not been settled in Thailand (Cambodians who had fled between 1975 and August 1979, like those now in Viet Nam, for example, whose cards are filed at CTA headquarters).

The work, patiently carried out for the past four years, is now bringing its reward: lists of names recorded in Geneva and forwarded to Thailand have already helped many refugees to obtain news of their relatives in other countries.

Speed is the essence for success

Speed is vital to many of the refugees. In conversation with Red Cross delegates they
stress how important it is for them to know the fate of their relatives. It is common for a refugee to pass an enquiry form to a delegate one day and to ask whether there is any news the next. Medical teams from the Thai Red Cross and the ICRC regularly have to explain that news of relatives may take time to arrive. Already, there have been some remarkably quick success stories. One Kampuchean mother who had become a refugee in 1975 for example flew in to search for her six year old daughter from whom she had been separated during the fall of Phnom Penh. The daughter was found the same day among the 32,000 refugees in the Sa Kao camp. The operation on behalf of the Kampuchean refugees comes just months after the ICRC began its major operation to trace the relatives of Vietnamese "boat people". Red Cross tracing experts fear that many Kampuchean and Vietnamese refugees could still be searching for relatives in thirty years time.

Lessons of the Second World War

Their view comes from the observation that many of the Eastern and Central European people separated from their families during World War 2 and who later became refugees throughout the world are still searching for relatives. And, say the experts, there are many similarities in the factors which determine whether relatives will be quickly found. First, the 1975 Kampuchean and Vietnamese refugees have been scattered as thoroughly around the world as the post World War refugees. "Boat people" have also been re-settled in many different countries. Second, the family separations which took place during World War 2 were just as thorough and dramatic as the separations which have taken place in Kampuchea and Vietnam recently. In both cases, countless people disappeared without trace in the dramatic circumstances usually associated with war. Thirdly, both categories of refugees have gone through traumatic, dehumanising experiences - National Red Cross Societies who have been tracing post World War 2 refugees for many years claim that such experiences have a great bearing on the immediate desire of refugees to seek lost relatives.

The British Red Cross, for example, which is still finding 12 people a month who have not been heard from since World War 2, claims that many post war refugees were at first scared to search for relatives for fear of receiving confirmation of their worst fears. The Society also claims that many of the former concentration camp inmates who took refuge in Britain had, through their experiences, lost the desire to search, wanting only to build a new life and to forget what they had been through. It is only now, some thirty-five years later, that many of the survivors can bring themselves to enquire - their enquiries are also prompted by a new generation which encourages its parents to search.

So, if the Second World War experience is anything to go by, both Kampuchean refugees and "boat people" will still be searching well into the 21st century. The Red Cross is well aware that the major factor influencing the possibility of their success is the thoroughness of record taking in these early stages. Wartime records held by the ICRC are still acting as a starting point for searches mounted by National Red Cross Societies for survivors of World War 2 persecution. The ICRC and the National Societies in the countries of first asylum for boat people and Kampuchean refugees now have index cards bearing the essential details on hundreds of thousands of refugees who have fled during 1979. The details on these cards are being put on computer in Geneva and will act as a base for thousands of searches in years to come.
It is the custom at the end of each decade to take a retrospective look at the previous ten years. An institution such as the ICRC does so with mixed feelings. In the humanitarian sphere the development of protection and assistance activities is for the most part a reflection of the tide of war and crisis, of mounting violence, brutality and inhumanity. In this the seventies set a distressing record. Except for the two World Wars, the ICRC has never in its existence of more than a hundred years been engaged on so many fronts at the same time, has never confronted so many tragedies to help so many victims. Some comparisons are significant.

In 1970 the ICRC maintained fifteen delegations throughout the world; it now has delegations in 25 countries. The permanent staff of 258 in 1970 has risen to 347. Expenditure has rocketed too. Ten years ago the ordinary budget was 15.6 million Swiss francs; for 1980 it is 35.8 million.

This far from cheerful picture of our world is not, however, without some bright spots. In recent years, for instance, the ICRC has continuously extended its protection and assistance to further categories of people, such as political detainees and a number of hostages, victims of skyjacking, kidnapping or other illegal detention. Legal protection for conflict victims was also strengthened with the adoption of the two 1977 Protocols to the Geneva Conventions.

The activities of the ICRC are an indication of contemporary events and this glance at the seventies hardly gives cause for optimism. The inescapable conclusion is that the day when the ICRC will no longer be necessary seems further away than ever.

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ACTION CONTINUES IN CAMBODIA

In January the joint ICRC-UNICEF mission noticed encouraging signs for the continuation of the relief programme in Cambodia. Although the World Food Programme's deliveries had to be reduced because some warehouses were bursting at the seams, large quantities of goods arrived by air and sea and distributions were organized in various parts of the country.

Last month the three Red Cross aircraft based at Singapore and Bangkok made 65 flights, conveying some 240 tons of food, 43 tons of cotton material and 83 vehicles. Three vessels unloaded a thousand tons of rice, 1,766 t of fertilizer, 465 pumps and 75 agricultural machines in the port of Phnom Penh and another ship discharged 84 t of diesel oil, 32 vehicles and 3 cranes at Kompong Som.

The joint relief mission was informed, moreover, that three convoys, each of a hundred lorries, transported from Kompong Som to Phnom Penh 1,500 tons of rice provided by the WFP. In addition, medical supplies, 43 t of baby food and 12 t of sugar were distributed in orphanages and hospitals.

On 27 January a medical team provided by the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR reached Phnom Penh. It consists of four doctors, three nurses and three technicians and will be assigned to provincial hospitals. The ICRC is planning to send further medical teams to Cambodia.

... AND IN THAILAND

In Thailand, fighting between various groups of combatants at the beginning of January resulted in four deaths and many wounded among the refugees. Several ICRC hospitals and dispensaries were looted and burned and a food convoy was attacked by armed raiders. Thousands of refugees fled in panic, some were transferred to the Khao I-Dang camp, some swelled the crowds at the border assembly points, and others surged back into Kampuchea. As a result the ICRC and UNICEF were compelled to suspend distribution in a number of camps and several measures were taken jointly with the HCR and voluntary agencies to cope with the situation. Medical teams at Khao I-Dang and other camps to which the most serious cases were transferred were placed on the alert, and delegates in the border region were instructed to restrict their movements for their own safety.

CHILDREN DANCE AT KHAO I-DANG

A charming scene, but one she did not quite expect to see, was witnessed by Brigitte Meng, of the ICRC information service in Thailand, when on a visit to refugee camps near the border between Thailand and Cambodia.

"Two months before I went there, Khao I Dang was just a wide open space. When I arrived, the camp already housed 100,000 refugees. It was a calm day: the women were preparing the evening meal, groups of men squatting by the roadside were conversing softly, as if unwilling to disturb the languorous quiet of the afternoon. On either side of the "street" there was a line of neat little huts stretching, it seemed, endlessly before me.

Suddenly, my gaze was drawn to a crowd of people standing around close to a large tent. As I drew nearer, a young girl came up to me and asked me, her voice tinged with pride, whether I would like to follow her. As she led me inside the tent, I was astonished to see an unexpected sight. About a score of little girls, their ages ranging from four to ten, were doing their daily classical dancing exercises. I watched with admiration their infinitely graceful little bodies, moving with studied application, while my youthful guide explained that they were going through the steps of the parrot's dance.

Since a month, in every section of the camp, classes in dancing, singing and acting have been organized for young and old, for amateurs and professionals.

Here indeed is wonderfully hopeful sign, that cultural activities should suddenly have developed in this refugee camp, where only two months before, the overriding concern was to keep alive!"
Several days after these incidents near the Cambodian border and the suspension of deliveries to the camps affected, distribution was gradually resumed even though the situation was still dangerous and unstable. On 14 January the Red Cross lorries were again able to go to the Phnom Chat camp and on the 15th to the Samet camp, but not until the 20th were supplies again able to go to the Mak Mun camp. The provision of drinking water and of medical treatment in the various camps was affected to a lesser degree by the disturbances.

AFGHANISTAN: ICRC MISSION ACCEPTED DELEGATES AT KABUL

At the end of January a Central Tracing Agency specialist left Geneva for Kabul, to join the ICRC regional delegate, Dr. Jaun who reached the Afghan capital on 22 January together with ICRC Director Jacques Moreillon for talks with the Afghan Government and Red Crescent about the humanitarian problems arising from the recent events.

On 23 January the three ICRC representatives, accompanied by the Secretary-General of the National Society, were received in audience by Mr. Babrak Karmal, President of the Revolutionary Council and Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, and by the Minister of the Interior.

In the course of that interview the Afghan Government gave a formal assurance to the ICRC that it would in all circumstances respect the principles of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 to which Afghanistan is a party, and in particular that all the armed forces on Afghan territory will abide by the rules of article 3 of those Conventions relating to armed conflicts not of an international character.

In addition, the ICRC received authorization to visit regularly and without witnesses all political and security prisoners and all persons captured while fighting. The ICRC delegation was informed that there were 57 political prisoners in Afghanistan and no prisoners captured during fighting.

A Tracing Agency office will be set up jointly by the ICRC and the Afghan Red Crescent for the purpose of transmitting family messages to and from relatives outside Afghanistan and of searching for missing persons.

The ICRC and the Afghan Red Crescent will together examine whether relief operations are necessary. If so a programme will be implemented jointly by the two organizations.

STOP PRESS

We have just learned that the ICRC delegates at Kabul have not yet been able to visit detainees in the Pouli-Charkhi prison.

AFGHAN REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN: INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS APPEAL

Following a joint mission carried out at the beginning of January to assess the needs of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, the League of Red Cross Societies and the ICRC have launched an appeal for 14.5 million Swiss francs. This amount should enable the Pakistan Red Crescent to bring aid to about 100,000 refugees for a year, as part of the relief operations supervised by the Pakistan Government.

International Red Cross assistance will be concerned with the supply of emergency relief items and medical care. It is in addition to the aid provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who had launched an appeal on 16 January.

About 500,000 Afghan refugees with little more than the clothes they stand in are at present in the mountains of Pakistan (in the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan) and have to confront extremely bitter winter conditions.

ICRC VICE-PRESIDENT IN BURMA AND THAILAND

During the first fortnight in January, Mr. Richard Pestalozzi, ICRC Vice-President, was in Burma and Thailand.

In Rangoon, Mr. Pestalozzi, who had been invited by the Burmese authorities, was received by the Head of State, President Ne Win. He also met leaders of the National Red Cross Society. This was the first high-level visit to Burma for more than ten years. It gave the ICRC Vice-President the opportunity to give an account of the ICRC's activities in general, and more particularly of the work it is at present performing in South-East Asia, and to strengthen ICRC ties with the Burma Red Cross.

In Thailand, Mr. Pestalozzi met several officials of the Government of Thailand and of the Thai Red Cross, as well as the
representatives in Bangkok of the organizations taking part in the assistance programme for Cambodian refugees (UNICEF, HCR, WFP and several voluntary agencies). He also travelled to the area on the border with Cambodia where he witnessed at first-hand the medical work, food aid and Central Tracing Agency activities.

DISSEMINATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW: IMPETUS MUST BE MAINTAINED

In 1979, considerable efforts were made to disseminate knowledge of international humanitarian law and the principles of the Red Cross: numerous seminars and meetings were organized throughout the world by the ICRC, League and National Red Cross Societies, and also by non-Red Cross organizations.

The seminars at Bogota and Tunis, held under the auspices of the ICRC and the National Societies of Colombia and Tunisia respectively, were attended by the representatives of 38 countries of Latin America and French-speaking Africa. At a seminar at Krakow, organized by the Jagellone University and the Polish National Society, special attention was focussed on the teaching of international humanitarian law in universities. An interesting innovation was tried out by the Danish Red Cross, which in November invited fifteen Danish journalists to attend a series of lectures at the Henry Dunant Institute and visit the international Red Cross bodies in Geneva.

In a different field of activity, a colloquium on children's publications, prompted by UNESCO, was held in Monaco. Its aim was to develop the teaching of human rights in out-of-school activities.

Outside the Red Cross movement, the International Institute of Humanitarian Law at San Remo organized its sixth round table meeting in September, while the Second African Seminar on International Humanitarian Law was held at Yaoundé from 27 November to 5 December under the auspices of the Henry Dunant Institute and the Cameroon Institute of International Relations.

Besides those international meetings, a number of National Red Cross Societies organized courses and lectures in their own countries. Others concentrated their efforts more on publications. The Australian Red Cross issued recently a booklet, "You and International Humanitarian Law", describing the essential rules of the Geneva Conventions and their Protocols in clear and concise terms.

Considering plans for 1980, Robert Gaillard-Moret, head of the ICRC's Documentation and Dissemination Division, said that the Red Cross must pursue its long-term undertaking without relaxing its efforts. "Next year", he added, "the ICRC will complete its series of regional seminars with the First Arab Middle East Seminar, organized in conjunction with the Jordan National Red Crescent Society and to be held from 13 to 23 April in Amman. It is also planned to have a European seminar on Red Cross medical services and international humanitarian law. We count a good deal on the support and co-operation of all National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for the success of our dissemination programme, and it is very necessary to maintain the impetus of the last two years if all the work we have so far put into our task is to bear fruit."

Over 8,000 Red Cross pictures

After spending fourteen years in most Latin American countries, where he took a very considerable number of photographs which have been admired in picture galleries and a selection of which are shortly to be published in a book, Luc Chessex went to Africa.

He has now returned with no less than 8,640 photos and slides on the activities of the ICRC, and of the Red Cross in general, in Chad, Zambia, Botswana, Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe/Rhodesia.

It is the ICRC's intention to exploit this material extensively, in collaboration with Luc Chessex. Besides the usual kind of utilization of photographs for various publications intended for National Societies and the media, it is planned to organize a roving display and a multivision programme.

Luc Chessex, whose artistic nature is deeply responsive to all kinds of impressions, told us that during his travels he was struck by "the juxtaposition of two elements which have absolutely nothing in common: the superlative kindness of the people he met, as opposed to the horrible wounds and mutilations which are the atrocious effects of war". This apparently undefinable contrast will no doubt be perceptible in the African pictures taken by Luc Chessex.
The video recording studio run jointly by the League of Red Cross Societies and the ICRC has been in existence for almost a year. In those twelve months the studio, with a staff of three, has been most productive, with an output of six films and several recordings for internal use by the two institutions. During the same period various technical problems in Geneva were solved. In the field the lightweight filming equipment was tested - sometimes under severe conditions - in the reporting of events.

The following films are available in English and French: "Refugees in Asia", produced just one year ago, is a report on Red Cross assistance to refugees in Burma returning to Bangladesh; this was followed by a documentary on the reinsertion into Portuguese society of families from Angola and Mozambique; next came "HBC 88 Top Urgent" about the ICRC and International Red Cross radio network (produced on the occasion of the "Telecom 79" exhibition and the World Administrative Radio Conference); then a report on assistance to Cambodian refugees in Thailand and another on the work of the Chinese Red Cross for Indochinese refugees. At present a second film on Red Cross relief in Thailand is in the montage stage.

Two films are planned for the next few months: one on relief for the benefit of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and the other on the Debre Zeit rehabilitation centre for the disabled in Ethiopia. In addition a series of cassette recordings will be produced for use in Red Cross training by the League, the ICRC and National Societies.

IN BRIEF

Visits to places of detention in Uruguay: In accordance with an agreement reached with the Uruguayan Government, four ICRC delegates, including a doctor, began on 30 January a series of visits to places of detention in Uruguay. The delegates went first to "La Libertad" prison; the visits are being continued to all civilian and military places of detention.

Visit to prison in Iran: From 24 to 30 January, two delegates of the ICRC visited Evin Prison in Teheran, where they saw about 800 detainees. A visit to this prison had already been carried out by the ICRC at the end of August 1979.
IN BRIEF

In N'Djamena (Chad) an information campaign has started with a view to making the Red Cross and its activities better known to the population. The ICRC delegates have already had the film "Challenge in Africa" shown three times in one of the town's cinemas. The film will be repeated for several weeks and each time leaflets printed specially for Africa will be distributed to the audience.

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF THE RED CROSS

The January-February 1980 issue of the International Review of the Red Cross contains an article in which a specific aspect of international humanitarian law is examined: spiritual assistance to prisoners of war.

Another feature in this issue is a summary of the deliberations of the League General Assembly which met in October 1979.

BACKGROUND

RED CROSS HELICOPTERS AND DOCTORS FOR 60,000 INHABITANTS OF EAST TIMOR

RELIEF ACTION ON A NEGLECTED ISLE

For several months now, the Indonesian Red Cross and the ICRC have been carrying out an emergency food and medical aid programme in the eastern part of Timor for about 60,000 displaced persons, most of them living in remote, almost inaccessible, mountainous regions.

Jean-Claude Marti, on the staff of the Information Bureau of the League of Red Cross Societies was in Timor during the last few weeks and has given here a graphic description of the relief action.

The inhabitants saw the helicopters coming in one after another during a good part of the morning, depositing passengers, bags, cases and taking off again, while distributions were made with clockwork regularity. That particular day, the joint Indonesian Red Cross and ICRC assistance operation had begun in Luro, a village where seven thousand persons were to receive aid, like some fifty thousand others in seven villages in the interior of Timor. But these distributions did not mark the actual start of the project. Already in April 1979 a preliminary mission by an ICRC team to assess the situation there had led to the conclusion of an agreement with the Indonesian Government and Red Cross, whereby the ICRC was to send logistical support staff and doctors, and provide also the funds to carry out the National Society's action.

Disastrous sequel to war

The eastern half of Timor became a prey to war in 1975. Some of the island's six hundred thousand inhabitants fled to the mountains, where for four years they had tried to survive in conditions of acute privation. Fields were left fallow, farm animals were no longer to be found, people ate the seed which they should have sown, and famine spread through part of East Timor.

It was therefore urgently necessary that the present relief programmes should be undertaken on a very large scale. Dr. Pascal Grellety, the ICRC medical co-ordinator for the Timor action, said on his return from his assessment mission that he had hardly ever seen anything more terrible.

"Our plan, drawn up in July 1979", said David Delapraz, ICRC regional delegate for South-East Asia, "was aimed to provide relief for the most destitute among those people, numbering about 60,000 persons, who took refuge in eight extremely remote mountain spots. Four villages - Hatolia, Uatulari, Dilor and Fataubessi - were accessible by road. The four others - Laclubar, Natarbura, Illomar and Luro - could only be reached by air. That explains why their inhabitants' health had so much deteriorated and also why the present operation's costs are so high, since about a third of the budget is absorbed by transport costs. There are difficult problems of logistics, especially at the present time, as the rainy season has begun."

Impressive means employed

The only way to proceed was to make use of modern means of transport. Three medium-size helicopters, each with a capacity of 250-300 kgs, have been hired, in addition to an Islander aircraft which helps to expedite the dispatch of goods.

The number of people working on the project is just as impressive: there are 115
Indonesian Red Cross volunteers, including five doctors, in addition to an ICRC medical delegate and a relief expert who are participating in this operation.

According to Dr. Grellety, the critical emergency situation is due to several factors: "The inhabitants of these mountainous regions have no doubt always suffered chronically from malnutrition, but after four years of privation, diseases caused by lack of proper food have spread to the whole of East Timor. In some villages, the situation has assumed disaster proportions. This has been most noticeable in those places where people had gathered after fleeing to the mountains during the fighting in November 1978."

The Red Cross assistance programme is planned for a period of six months. "We had to be careful," said Dr. Grellety, "not to make the mistake of setting up a sort of out-patients dispensary. It is absolutely useless to send a doctor with a medicine chest and just wait for the patients to go to him to be treated. The people won't be persuaded to come and it will be only a waste of time and money. In Timor, it was necessary to employ mass medicine methods."

"A la carte" relief

To do this, a system which proved to be as simple as it was effective was introduced for supervising the distribution of food and keeping a check on medical care. The inhabitants are given different coloured cards, depending on each particular case.

A yellow card is issued to every family, entitling it to obtain a balanced food ration (equivalent to about 1,360 calories), to supplement its consumption of locally produced food. It was calculated that each person should get a weekly ration of the following: 1.4 kg of rice or maize (a traditional item of food in Timor), at times a mixture of both; 700 g dried beans; 140 g fat or vegetable oil; 155 g powdered milk; 70 g sugar and 70 g salt. In addition, every family is given two bars of soap per month.

This aid, affecting 60,000 person, is being supplemented by additional foodstuffs and medical assistance to about 20,000 with a blue card whose state of health has been gravely undermined by severe malnutrition. These are mostly children, who are given protein biscuits, vitamins, etc., and pregnant women (but these are very few in number).

A third category of person, whose state of health has been found to be even more precarious, numbers about 5,000 individuals, who have been given a red card, entitling them to still more intensive care (medicaments, extra food).

Dr. Grellety went on to say that the amount of work in the medical field was enormous; "It is quite common for the medical teams to treat as many as 900 patients in a day. Some very simple checks are used to get an idea of the inhabitants' general state of health: the diameter of the arm (for malnutrition) and the size of the spleen (for malaria). In some villages it was found necessary, because of their inhabitants' general state of health, to distribute extra quantities which are considered as forming part of a general treatment and are therefore in addition to the quota of food distributed every week to heads of families."

Excellent co-operation

The Red Cross programme supplements the aid provided by the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) along the coast to some 240,000 people. As an example of the excellent co-operation enjoyed with the CRS, the latter gave the Red Cross a gift of 30 tons of maize seed and lent it barges to help with transport. Furthermore, this co-operation may be adapted to any changes in the situation. In the villages accessible by road, the Red Cross might soon be able to concentrate on medical aid, while the CRS might be given the task of distributing foodstuffs.

The aid programme is beginning to bear fruit. "In the village of Hatolia, for instance," said Dr. Grellety, "which is surrounded by coffee plantations, the people began gathering the harvest of coffee beans last November - for the first time in four years - and have been able to improve their everyday meals. This is in addition to the relief items we have given them."

The other villagers too depend on agricultural pursuits. After having been abandoned for several years many fields are still uncultivated and not enough crops are grown. Accordingly, a substantial part of international aid should be used to provide seed to grow crops that will eventually produce harvests and stimulate the island's economy.

Only a long-term aid programme can give the inhabitants of East Timor the possibility to become self-sufficient.
When an aid programme has to be carried out, like the one undertaken for the Khmer people, whether in Thailand or in Cambodia, all kinds of general extraneous circumstances must be taken into consideration by the delegates and doctors working among them. Not the least important are the cultural factors. A true dialogue may only be established through the respect of a pattern of values which can be extremely rich - even though it may perhaps appear to be at times difficult to comprehend - and through the regard paid to the individual and to the deep-rooted personality of the group of which he forms a part.

The Khmer and Thai peoples today are the inheritors of a civilization going back many centuries. The utter destitution to which the Khmers have been reduced and the great poverty of the Thais in the north eastern region of Thailand where the assistance operations are being carried out may lead the members of the humanitarian bodies involved to forget the proud and ancient civilization of these people and to act with some condescension towards them.

Thus, a break regrettably appears. The western concern for efficiency too often becomes a kind of abrasiveness, which may be acceptable in certain parts of the world, but is viewed with distaste in the East, where it is a sign of bad manners. It is true that the very magnitude of the task obliges the relief workers to seek maximum results and not to "lose time".

And yet, to provide care for people is not only to get them to stand on their own two feet. The patients' reaction is in relation to the attitude and beliefs of the group to which they belong. The group's support is of prime importance, especially for the Khmers who, one day, will no longer enjoy large-scale medical aid from the west.

ICRC assistance in Thailand will be a success only if it avoids the destruction of cultural cohesion and does not lead to complete dependence.

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AID PROGRAMMES FOR KHMERS: SOME PROGRESS

The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Alexandre Hay, accompanied by the Director of the Operations Department, Jean-Pierre Hocké, and the delegate general for Asia, Jean de Courten, went to the People's Republic of Kampuchea on 23 February. On 28 February, they travelled to Hanoi, before going to Thailand for the last stage of their mission.

There were in February encouraging developments in the humanitarian aid programme jointly conducted by the ICRC and UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) in Kampuchea. First, in the medical field, a Red Cross medical team from the Soviet Union (10 persons) arrived at the hospital at Takmao (Kandal province) and a Hungarian medical team (5 persons) at the hospital of Kompong Speu, to the south of Phnom Penh. The medical units in Kampuchea, co-ordinated by the ICRC, were further strengthened by the recent arrival of a seven-man Red Cross team from Poland.

The delegates of the ICRC and UNICEF, stationed at Phnom Penh, can now strike further afield and have been able to travel up the Mekong to Kratie in the north and continue from there to Stung Treng, not far from the border with Laos. It was the first time that they visited this area. In the south, too, visits were extended to Kampot and Kep. Some places, such as Svay Rieng and Kompong Cham, are visited frequently, and this makes it easier to assess requirements, bring supplies to hospitals and dispensaries and supervise to a certain extent relief distributions in the provinces.

These substantial improvements should not, however, blind us to the fact that the volume of supplies transported to the provinces and the rhythm of distributions are still on a fairly moderate scale. Still greater efforts must be made to help the Khmer population survive the monsoon season and to reduce as much as possible the hardships that will be their lot for a long time yet, as the harvest this year will be much below what it used to be.

In Thailand, too, the approaching monsoon period will pose problems which, although not insoluble, will require a good deal of effort on the part of the Red Cross workers and voluntary relief bodies responsible for hygiene and health. Priority must be given to improving sanitation on the border rather surprisingly, medical problems would seem to be on a minor scale. This is no doubt due to the large number of specialized medical personnel working in the camps, who have given intensive care to the Cambodians seeking refuge in Thailand.

Today, common sense dictates that this medical personnel whose work is organized by the ICRC should be reduced. Already the number of such persons made available by about a score of National Red Cross Societies has fallen by about a quarter. It would be desirable if all the other organizations taking part in the medical aid programme were also to follow this trend, to avoid the danger of the people becoming too dependent on a type of medical care which, being too sophisticated, would not correspond to their needs. That is how the ICRC doctors on the spot, who are co-ordinating these programmes, see the problem. Besides, the figures speak for themselves: in Khao I Dang, the largest of the camps, which at present holds over 110,000 Khmers, there is one hospital bed for every 64 persons, and one doctor for every 1,000 persons. In Sakaeo, where the death rate has dropped from 1.05 o/oo in October 1975 to 0.03 o/oo in February, the proportion of medical personnel to refugees is 1 to 200.

One should of course rejoice at the extraordinary results obtained: what looked liked a terrible calamity has been avoided, the danger of epidemics has been overcome, and acceptable health conditions have been ensured for these people, a large proportion of whom were at one time on the verge of total collapse. But now, in the words of the ICRC chief physician, "the time has come to lay the main emphasis on the quality of our services and to apply a policy of moderation where numbers are concerned".

AFGHANISTAN: FURTHER ICRC APPROACHES

A delegate and a doctor of the ICRC visited, on 6 and 7 February, the Puli Charkhi prison near Kabul, where they saw 42 political detainees. The ICRC visit was in response to the assurances made on 23 January by Mr. Babrak Karmal, the Head of State, to an ICRC mission that the ICRC would be authorized to visit at periodic intervals, without witnesses being present, all political prisoners and persons detained on security grounds, and all persons captured in the fighting.
To this end, the ICRC delegates made further approaches to the Afghan authorities, following the events in Kabul at the end of last month, asking to be allowed access to all the persons who had been recently placed under arrest. The ICRC also offered to provide medical assistance to civilians, by sending medical supplies and, if necessary, by despatching doctors.

A member of the Central Tracing Agency staff is examining with the Afghan Red Crescent and authorities the practical arrangements to be made for enquiries about missing persons and exchange of mail between members of dispersed families.

PAKISTAN: MOBILE MEDICAL SQUADS BRING AID TO AFGHAN REFUGEES

The ICRC despatched in mid-February a delegate and a doctor to Pakistan where they have been working closely with delegates of the League of Red Cross Societies to help the Pakistan Red Crescent Society with its relief programme in aid of Afghan refugees.

The ICRC has been asked to provide medical assistance. With this end in view, Dr. Georges Muheim, the co-ordinator of the project, has formed two mobile medical squads, while twelve field dispensaries will be set up in the North-West Frontier area. The members of these mobile teams have been recruited locally and will be provided with the necessary vehicles and material for their work. Stocks of medicaments and other medical supplies will be built up in Peshawar.

This medical aid is in addition to material relief supplied by the League to the Pakistan National Society, on the basis of a joint budget amounting to 14.5 million Swiss francs.

IRAN: PRISON VISITS CONTINUE

Continuing the visits to places of detention in Iran which began in January (see ICRC Bulletin No. 49), an ICRC delegate went to two provincial prisons in February. From 12 to 14 February he visited the Tabriz prison and on 19 and 20 the Kermanchah prison. He saw, in all, some 500 detainees.

Visits are scheduled also to other provincial prisons in Iran.

As mentioned in our previous issue, in January the ICRC visited the Evin Prison in Teheran in which there were 809 detainees of various categories.

NORTH LEBANON: ASSISTANCE TO CIVILIAN VICTIMS OF FIGHTING

Following the skirmishes which took place in northern Lebanon on 12 February, the ICRC has been giving protection and assistance to several hundred civilians who have had to flee their villages. Blankets, food and other relief supplies have been distributed to the stricken families, and an ICRC nurse has been dispensing medical care. In addition, various dispensaries in the region have been provided with medicaments. One child has been conveyed to a Beirut hospital for an operation.

On 20 February an ICRC team was able to reach the village of Knat, where the inhabitants had been isolated for several days because of the fighting. The delegated conveyed 31 people, including 17 children, to reception centres, and the corpse of a combatant to Beirut.

RHODESIA: EXTENSION OF ICRC DELEGATION'S ACTIVITIES

At the request of the British transitional government in Rhodesia, two ICRC medical delegates have been visiting at regular intervals, since the end of January, nine of the fourteen assembly points for the Patriotic Front forces. The ICRC doctors have been going from place to place in an ICRC aircraft. Because there is no landing strip close enough to the five other assembly points, these are visited by doctors of
the Patriotic Front.

At the same time, the ICRC's information delegates stationed in Salisbury have started to spread information about the ICRC and Red Cross to the men in those various assembly points, a campaign which is widely appreciated by the combatants. At a later stage, in addition to the distribution of booklets and strip cartoons, Red Cross films will be shown.

Furthermore, two more medical teams have been providing care since the beginning of February to the refugees returning to Rhodesia from Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique. One of the teams is at the Tegwani Mission (close to the border with Botswana) and looks more particularly after those refugees who, after leaving the camps at Gwai (near the Zambian border) and Tegwani, need medical treatment for some time still. The second medical team is stationed in a mission near Umtali, where certain refugees stay for a while before proceeding to their home villages. The persons receiving medical attention by the ICRC are first screened by the Minister of Health.

Besides these additional activities, the ICRC is continuing to provide material and medical assistance to the war victims.

LONDON: ICRC PRESIDENT MEETS LORD CARRINGTON

While in London in mid-February, ICRC President Alexandre Hay, accompanied by Jean-Pierre Hocké, Director of Operations, met Lord Carrington, the Foreign Secretary.

They discussed essentially humanitarian problems arising from the conflicts in southern Africa, south-east Asia and Afghanistan.

Mr. Hay and Mr. Hocké also conferred on subject of a similar kind with other members of the British Government.

A FRUITFUL MISSION

Mr. Alexandre Hay's mission to Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates, between 27 January and 6 February, was fruitful in more than one sense.

Apart from the fact that this was the first official visit paid by an ICRC President to that part of the Arab world, it provided the occasion to give a detailed account of the ICRC's different activities, mainly of those carried out in Muslim countries, to the Heads of State and eminent dignitaries of the countries visited and to the leaders of their National Societies. Furthermore, it was an opportunity to make known some of the problems faced by the ICRC, in particular its swelling financial requirements, which continue to increase owing to its manifold commitments in areas beset by conflict. In this connection, the ICRC received assurances that more substantial contributions would be paid towards its budgets. But the President's mission was especially gratifying in that personal links were forged, giving hopes for a permanent dialogue.

NORTH LEBANON: ASSISTANCE TO CIVILIAN VICTIMS OF FIGHTING

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CENTRAL TRACING AGENCY TASKS FOR INDO-CHINA REFUGEES IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA: FITTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

The Red Cross meeting on refugees in South-East Asia, held in Singapore on 4 and 5 February, was attended by representatives of countries giving temporary asylum to refugees,* of donor countries and of the League and ICRC. They examined and adopted the budget for the second stage of the on-going programmes. It was estimated that twelve million Swiss francs would be required for the six months from February to July 1980. The expenses relating to the aid operations in Thailand for the Cambodian refugees are not included in this budget.

The tracing and mail transmission services have now been set up in South-East Asia, and the data on refugees, collected over

*These countries, also called "first-asylum countries", include the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Macao, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand.
the past few months, are being fed into
the Central Tracing Agency (CTA) com­
puter in Geneva.

On her return from Singapore, Florence
Vondra, head of the CTA Asia section,
said: "We have fitted nearly all the pieces
together now for our work, but we must
keep in mind that this is going to be a
long-term job. It is absolutely essential to
circulate all the information we get if we
wish to do an efficient piece of work and
if we are to obtain results right now as
well as at some time in the future. That is
why it is most important that there should
be a common approach to the methods and
means employed within the Red Cross, just
at it is essential to act in close co-ordina­
tion with all the various bodies engaged in
providing aid for the Indo-China refugees,
and most particularly with the United
Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
(UNHCR)".

With this objective in mind, a meeting will
be held in Jakarta at the end of April.
Technical questions will be examined at
this seminar by representatives of the
tracing services of the National Societies in
the countries of first asylum and by the
delegates of the Geneva-based Central
Tracing Agency.

IN BRIEF

Mission in seven Latin American countries:
André Pasquier, ICRC delegate general for
Latin America, set out on 10 February on
a mission to Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay,
Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala,
equipped with the start of a month. Besides visiting
the ICRC delegations and contacting Na­
tional Society leaders in each of those
countries, Mr. Pasquier attended at La
Paz, Bolivia, from 2 to 4 March, the First
Meeting of Presidents and Technical Semi­
nars of Red Cross Societies in South
America.

ICRC delegates in Argentina continued, in
February, to visit places of detention. They went to Cordoba, Rio Quarto and
Mendoza, where they saw in four places of
detention, including a hospital, 68 persons
detained on charges of subversion. On 18
February, the delegates started a visit to
the Villa Devoto prison in Buenos Aires.

In Nicaragua, the ICRC delegates visited
in February 12 places of detention in
Managua and other towns. They saw over
3,500 detainees who were being held in
connection with the events in Nicaragua.
The ICRC was allowed access for the first
time to a place of detention under the
authority of the Security forces, where
detainees under interrogation were being
held.

Jordan: Escorted by the ICRC, two per­
sons who had strayed into Israel were
handed over to Jordan by the Israeli
authorities on 13 and 18 February.

Seminar in Melbourne: Roland Duc, ICRC
regional delegate for south-east Asia
attended a seminar in Melbourne from 10 to
16 February for the Junior Red Cross
Societies of countries of Asia and the
Pacific. One of the subjects on the agenda
of this meeting which had been organized
by the League of Red Cross Societies was
the dissemination of knowledge of inter­
national humanitarian law.
The ICRC in Geneva makes use of radiocommunications to keep rapid and efficient contact, in all circumstances, with its delegations in the field. Its radio operators are the men, who, quietly and unobtrusively keep going this very important aspect of its work.

In the delegation, only an impressively tall antenna and the characteristic bleep of radio signals give an indication that a wireless station is operating there.

The head of the ICRC telecommunications service, Kurt Ruesch, received recently a letter from one of his staff stationed in Thailand, giving a vivid and amusing description of his work at the ICRC delegation and of the general atmosphere there. Here are some extensive extracts:

Hallo, Kurt!

It is high time I gave you some news of my job in Thailand. I know I should have written long before, but I must say that I have hardly any time at all to write letters.

Yesterday, I asked Victor to take along some papers, describing my work and the present state of the VHF network (portable transmitter-receivers carried by delegates). I hope that they will give you a better idea of what is going on here.

Right now, the most urgent jobs have been done. But, all the same, we ought to have the rest of the mobile stations delivered as quickly as possible. There will be quite a lot of work for us when the new stuff arrives. The present VHF network is working satisfactorily. Our chaps seem to have got accustomed to using their radio sets and everything is going on much better than before...

We have had some trouble with our equipment. At first, we had to work very fast and we couldn't be everywhere all at the same time. Then, there were some problems with the antenna masts: either, like at Sa Kaeo, we couldn't pierce the concrete, or else, we couldn't find a solid mooring-point on the corrugated iron roofs of the building or alongside those thin wooden walls. The way those Thai houses are constructed did not make the work any easier, either. Quite often, we had to improvise some way or other and that meant a lot of time wasted...

We had trouble also installing radios in cars. Sometimes we were given 20 minutes for the job, either at crack of dawn or after dark. Our worthy delegates needed their cars all day and what a business it was to get the cars for sufficient time to install the sets.

Busy the whole day long

Anyway, our days are fully occupied, and I can tell you that if I were doing this sort of work in Switzerland, I would have

"BANGKOK CALLING ARAN, OVER..."

At the ICRC's Bangkok delegation, the radio station performs an important function, for it enables almost continual contact to be kept between the delegates in various places along Thailand's border with Cambodia and those stationed in Bangkok.

Ten radio and two telex operators keep the radio network working satisfactorily. It consists of eight fixed stations and a score of mobile VHF transmitter-receivers. These short-distance links are of great help to the Red Cross medical teams and delegates working in a very remote part of the country.
yelled a long time ago, but here it's different. Sometimes, we have to begin the day with a long trip, dozens, even hundreds of kilometres, to some place or other, and then we have to find whoever is in charge, or a vehicle, and that is not easy. After that, there is the actual installation of the equipment, with all the improvisations, and in difficult conditions (especially in the middle of the day, with the tropical sun beating down on the roof, so hot you can hardly put your feet on it and so flimsy there is a danger of crashing through down to the ground). In the evening, when we stop work (hardly ever before eight o'clock), we go to sleep under a mosquito-net on the open terrace of the house close to the border. Contrary to what you might think, the mosquito-net is there not so much to protect us from the insects, but so as not to have blackened faces when we wake up in the morning: quite often, there are bush fires all around us! In addition, there are sounds all through the night: from time to time, you hear a gun; or else, it's a pig being slaughtered squealing away in the pig-sty nearby (I mean at Aranyaprathet). At Sa Kaeo, there is a bit more comfort; at least, there are showers. Of course, Bangkok is still better...

KURT RUESCH

Born in 1923 in Winterthur (canton Zurich). After training in electrical mechanics from 1938 to 1941, he specialized at the technicum in telecommunications, while at the same time doing his military service.

In 1947, Kurt Ruesch decided he would take up flying and was engaged by Swissair. In 1950, he qualified as a wireless operator, in 1954 as a navigator and in 1958 as an airline pilot. He flew for many years on Swissair's long-range air routes. In 1963, he was called upon to establish the first radio link between ICRC headquarters at Geneva and its delegation in Yemen; then from 1970, in agreement with Swissair, he worked for the ICRC on a half-time basis. When, in 1978 Kurt Ruesch reached retiring age for pilots, he joined the ICRC on a full time contract and was appointed head of the telecommunications service. The service comprises at present 38 persons (radio and telex operators), 26 of whom are stationed in those regions where the ICRC is active. In this way, Geneva has a direct link with 17 radio stations in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East, and these keep contact with 28 sub-stations.

Traffic on this network has increased tenfold within the last fifteen years, parallel to the expansion of the ICRC's tasks in various parts of the world shaken by conflicts and disturbances.

Contact with the Thais

My contacts with the local people are excellent. The Thais are extremely pleasant guys and will do anything for you. For instance, the chappie who drives the minibus (all packed with wireless stuff); he's so willing to help, even setting up our equipment. He never grumbles when he works extra hours (and he sure does), or because he didn't take a single day off for seven weeks on end (like me, too). Whenever I can, I stop for a while at a village and try to get the inhabitants to chat with me. But it's not so easy, there aren't many Thais who can speak English. You can just guess what a problem it can be when we have to buy some spare parts or other material. You have to be able to draw well!

The climate hardly bothers me at all. Well, of course, it's hot, and it's very trying when one has to work out of doors. One gets tired much quicker than at home, and one gets terribly thirsty. But it's the fatigue which is the worst thing, because there is not enough time for a real rest, so one feels worn out all the time.

I must say, before ending, that it's really not too bad. It's true, one can never plan ahead, as the situation changes from day to day. It is difficult at times, but all things considered, I like very much this kind of work and do my best. I hope that I shall receive some items of equipment soon. Until then, all the best, to you and to all the others in Geneva.

U.Z.
It is with considerable alarm that we are witnessing today throughout the world an increasing number of situations causing, in defiance of all fundamental humanitarian principles, great bodily and spiritual suffering to the victims of riots, of kidnappings, of tortures of all kinds, of brutalities inflicted on those victims while in prison, of ruthless combats, of intensive bombardments, not to mention of countless other acts of violence.

This disturbing trend has led the ICRC to consider increasing its staff strength. Even where it was thinking of disengagement, for instance in Lebanon and Chad, further outbreaks of violence have obliged it to keep on its delegates on the spot and to renew its stocks of relief supplies. Elsewhere, as in El Salvador, the deterioration of the political scene has impelled the ICRC to set up, with the National Society there, an emergency plan of action.

Is it not a strange paradox that the Red Cross, whose primary mission is to bring relief and comfort to the war wounded, today feels obliged to get ready for war? Some might imagine that, not unlike Cassandra whose prophecies of doom brought misfortunes upon her people, the Red Cross is cynically devising plans in the expectation that war will indeed break out. But that is a completely false assumption. If the Red Cross is drawing up rules of international humanitarian law and placing its staff and its logistical preparations on a state of almost permanent alert, it is because it is determined to be ready for efficient and timely action in all circumstances. It is bound by its duty to do so.

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CHAD: ICRC EMERGENCY ACTION

On 25 March, an aircraft chartered by the ICRC left Geneva for N'Djamena, carrying a fully-equipped surgical team - a surgeon, an anesthetist, a nurse and a specialist in charge of the surgical instruments - and 750 kg of medicaments and surgical material.

The ICRC delegation in N'Djamena, already previously reinforced with the arrival of six doctors and nurses made available by the Swiss agency for technical co-operation, was still not fully able to go to the assistance of the very large number of casualties caused by the violent fighting which had broken out on 21 March between the armed forces of the main groups in Chad. The capital was virtually cut in two, it was extremely dangerous to venture into the streets, and yet the many wounded lying around after each burst of fighting had to be removed and cared for.

The ICRC evacuated fifty casualties to a field hospital set up by FROLINAT in the thickly inhabited district of Farcha.

Water and electricity had been cut off from the Central Hospital, but after having cleaned it and put it into some order, the ICRC delegates managed to obtain authorization during a brief cease-fire to bring in medicaments, food and water. Since 26 March, it has been again rendered operational by the new surgical team and is taking in numerous wounded, most of them civilians.

STOP PRESS

On 27 March, the ICRC sent an appeal to the heads of the two main groups in Chad, calling for a 48-hour truce, to start on 28 March at 12 noon local time, to enable the wounded and the civilians caught in the line of fire to be evacuated. The ICRC also asked that the Central Hospital close to the combat zone should to be declared to be a neutralized zone.

The call for the truce, however, was unheeded and fighting continued unabated. The ICRC personnel, therefore, began on 30 March to remove the more seriously wounded casualties from the Central Hospital to the Hospital at Farcha beyond the front line. It is intended to continue their evacuation on 31 March and subsequent days, provided it was safe enough to do so.

AID PROGRAMME FOR KHMER POPULATION: CRUCIAL PERIOD

On 26 March, the donor countries to the humanitarian aid programme for the Khmer population held a meeting at the United Nations in New York, with the special co-ordinator, Sir Robert Jackson, in the chair. Representatives of the ICRC, UNICEF, WFP, FAO and UNHCR reported to the delegations of 25 donor countries on the results obtained in the field by this programme.

The main purpose of the meeting was to present the aid programmes for the period from April to December 1980. The United Nations organizations and the ICRC all stressed that it was particularly urgent to supply food and seed to the Cambodian people as swiftly as possible as their very survival was at stake.

The aid provided so far constituted only the beginning of the emergency programme. It was essential that it should be pursued and expanded during the crucial period extending from April to June. A special effort should be made to ship to Kampuchea 60,000 tons of food (mainly rice) and 30,000 tons of seed. The infrastructure for their delivery and distribution must be improved and the public health facilities must be consolidated by putting into service again 1,000 medical stations, 20 dispensaries and 15 hospitals. On the border between Thailand and Cambodia, 30,000 tons of foodstuffs must be provided, and the medical programme co-ordinated by the ICRC will have to be continued. Aid for Thai inhabitants affected by the events must also be pursued. More than ever before, it was indispensable to obtain massive aid from the international community, if Cambodia was not to fall back into the situation of famine which prevailed just over a year ago.

AFGHANISTAN: MEDICAL AID IN KABUL HOSPITALS

The ICRC has approached the USSR authorities and has offered its services relating to any humanitarian problems which might arise, as a result of the presence of Soviet troops on Afghan soil. The ICRC has also requested Soviet support for the discharge of its humanitarian mission in aid of all victims of the conflict in Afghanistan.

In response to a request from the Afghan Red Crescent, the ICRC has despatched Dr. Jürg Nagel to Afghanistan in order that he should assess the needs of Kabul's
hospitals and dispensaries. The ICRC medical delegate left Geneva on 22 March, taking with him 300 kg of emergency medical material.

In Afghanistan itself, the ICRC delegates are continuing their negotiations on matters relating to the provision of protection, in particular ICRC visits to persons recently taken into custody, and on questions regarding Central Tracing Agency enquiries.

EL SALVADOR: ICRC AND NATIONAL SOCIETY GET READY FOR EMERGENCIES

In El Salvador, the deterioration in the situation has led the ICRC, the League and the National Red Cross Society to set up, in liaison with various benevolent organizations, an emergency plan to provide immediate and efficient aid to victims, in case of need. To that end, medical material stored in Nicaragua has been transferred by the ICRC to El Salvador.

During the recent combats in the capital, the ICRC and the El Salvador Red Cross had already worked together in evacuating civilians and wounded from danger zones. In addition, in the last few weeks, ICRC delegates have visited 16 detainees held on political grounds in three places of detention.

ICRC APPEAL FOR FUNDS TO ENABLE IT TO CONTINUE ITS ACTIVITIES IN LEBA NON

The atmosphere of instability which has become a general feature of the situation in Lebanon, where a constant state of tension prevails, requires the ICRC to pursue and develop further its various assistance and protection activities and to extend them to all parts of the country. In order to be prepared for all contingencies, which might arise in any of the many potential sources of disturbance, calling for swift action by its delegates, the ICRC has reinforced its staff strength and has increased to six the number of its permanent offices in Lebanon: two in Beirut (east and west), two in the north (Tripoli and Jounieh) and two in the south (Tyre and Saida).

This new arrangement is essential if adequate aid is to be given to the inhabitants in distress. It implies medical assistance in the form of purchases of medicaments, first aid equipment and ambulances, and financial aid for the construction or improvement of medical centres. Aid must also be given to the displaced persons, who are in need of blankets, clothing, basic foodstuffs and powdered milk. In addition, while constituting a response to emergency needs, medical assistance would represent a contribution to the splendid work performed by the Lebanese Red Cross, "Palestinian Red Crescent" and other bodies.

In order to be able to discharge its humanitarian tasks, the ICRC launched on 24 March an appeal to Governments and National Societies for the sum of 3.2 million Swiss francs. It is estimated that this amount should cover the costs of ICRC humanitarian aid in Lebanon until the end of 1980.

At the height of the fighting near Knat, the ICRC, together with the Lebanese Red Cross, brought assistance and protection to about 2,000 persons living in the area. About six tons of various relief supplies (rice, flour, milk, blankets, mattresses and clothes) were distributed to the inhabitants and medical supplies sent to about a dozen hospitals and dispensaries. The ICRC is continuing making visits at regular intervals to several centres for displaced persons and, with the National Society's help, is helping refugees needing intensive treatment to be admitted to hospital.

NEW DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL TRACING AGENCY

On 1 March the ICRC appointed Mr. Ulrich Wasser director of the Central Tracing Agency (CTA), to succeed to Mr. Pierre Basset who had reached retirement age.

In October 1977 Mr. Basset had initiated the modernization of the CTA, involving the introduction of electronic data processing and the construction of a new building. Mr. Basset, who directed the preparatory work will continue to manage these operations: the building work is scheduled to begin early in 1981. These two projects are being financed by the Swiss Government which has made a grant of 15 million Swiss francs.

The new CTA director, Mr. Ulrich Wasser, was born at Moutier in 1945. His youth was spent partly in Berne and partly in Vaud, and it was in Lausanne that he obtained his degree in economics in 1969. After further training he joined the ICRC in 1973 to deal, mainly, with administrative and financial matters, particularly in a number of delegations in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, until 1978 when he was appointed Management Controller in Geneva, a post he occupied until his appointment at the head of the CTA.
"It is the human side of the ICRC mission which interests me most", he said, "and the work of the Agency has always appealed to me. To convey news between the dispersed members of families, to seek the missing, to organize repatriation constitutes a genuine "moral help" which transcends frontiers of all kinds and in my view is the pre-eminently humanitarian mission".

Ulrich Wasser's new assignment involves a great deal of work. While the computer immensely accelerates the work, the very numerous situations calling for CTA experience increase the number of tasks to be performed. The CTA today in Geneva employs 90 people, while in the field 30 of its specialists are assisted by 150 local employees. As a point of interest, we might mention that during World War II the staff strength of the CTA rose to a peak of 3,000!

IN BRIEF

The ICRC Visitors Service, in 1979, received more than 5,200 visitors from the four corners of the earth. Most were in groups from National Societies, nursing colleges and schools. Programmes of audio-visual shows and lectures on the institution's activities were arranged for a total of 174 groups.

A delegate training course from 9 to 14 March, at Cartigny, near Geneva, was the first this year. Twenty-five candidates, including four women, from the French and German-speaking parts of Switzerland, attended this course on the theoretical, practical and legal aspects of Red Cross and ICRC activities, given by members of the institution's staff and their colleagues from the League.

RED CROSS SEMINAR ON PUBLIC RELATIONS

Information officers of 14 National Societies of countries in Asia and the Pacific area met from 25 to 29 February at Manila, at the invitation of the Philippines Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies. The seminar was admirably organized by the host Society and gave participants the opportunity for fruitful exchanges of views on the various subjects on the agenda, such as the role of the information services and public relations in promoting Red Cross principles and action, fund-raising techniques, recruitment of voluntary workers and the dissemination of international humanitarian law.

KUWAIT: EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTION TO THE ICRC

The Government of Kuwait has decided to grant an extraordinary contribution of 1 million Swiss francs to the ICRC. This amount is additional to the 200,000 francs pledged at the end of last year and to the annual 100,000 francs that Kuwait has promised to contribute to the institution's regular budget.

Notification of this extraordinary donation was made after the visit by the President of the ICRC, Mr. Alexandre Hay, to Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates from 27 January to 6 February.

In connection with the extensive relief campaigns conducted by the Red Cross in several countries in South-East Asia, the participants stressed that the National Societies of the host countries accepting refugees needed additional means to develop the efforts directed by their information and public relations services towards their own inhabitants. It was found that, generally speaking, the latter were inadequately informed about the work which the local branches of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies performed, side by side with the two international bodies of the Red Cross, with the result that the local population's attitude towards the Red Cross was often one of misunderstanding, to say the least. This was a serious phenomenon, which demanded swift public relations action.

IN BRIEF

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania has sent to the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Berne its instrument of accession to the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions. The instrument of accession will enter into force on 14 September 1980, six months after its deposit with the Swiss Government, depositary of the Conventions. Twelve States are now bound by Protocol I; Cyprus has not ratified Protocol II.

Ten sailors (8 Syrians and two Lebanese), members of the crews of two boats wrecked not far from the Israeli coast, were transferred from Israel to Lebanon under the auspices of the ICRC. This operation was carried out on 9 March at Roch Hanikra (Ras Nakoura).
INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF THE RED CROSS: A GLANCE AT ITS VARIOUS EDITIONS

The March-April issue of International Review of the Red Cross will contain an article by Professor Yadh Ben Achour of the University of Tunis, on "Islam and humanitarian law", on which he presents an interesting and original point of view, yet rooted in traditional Muslim thought. In the same issue may be found the resolutions of the World Administrative Radio Conference (WARC 79) - held in Geneva from 24 September to 30 November - on Red Cross emergency radio communication.

International Review appears in three main editions: in French, since 1869 (2,000 copies today); in English, since 1961 (1,900 copies); and in Spanish, since 1976 (675 copies). In addition, an abridged version is produced in German (500 copies). Since the beginning of this year the German version has the same cover as the others.

RCBS IN APRIL

In April the RCBS shortwave radio programmes will be broadcast as usual on 7210 kHz in the 41.6 metre band, at the following dates and hours:

MONDAY 28 APRIL, in English and French, and WEDNESDAY 30 April in German, Spanish and Arabic, from 0600 to 0700, from 1130 to 1230 and from 1700 to 1800 hours GMT.

PROBLEMS RELATED TO MEDICAL CARE FOR CAMBODIAN REFUGEES IN THAILAND

WESTERN MEDICAL METHODS OPPOSED TO TRADITIONAL HEALING PRACTICE

"A certain number of children and adults are suffering from depression, delusion or other neurotic or psychotic troubles. Interpersonal relations among members of a family or between some individuals and the group happen to be significant of psychological difficulties. We cannot ignore these sufferings and just provide the basic supplies, but we must try to find an adequate answer which avoids laying down a Western model in a foreign culture. It is of the utmost importance to consider the traditional Khmer approach in this matter even if this seems odd, non-scientific and irrational to us. Only a mutual comprehension and respect between us and those who are traditionally involved in the care of psychologically suffering persons can be really effective and harmless".

This extract from a medical report despatched by the ICRC delegation in Thailand has given rise to the enquiry which the ICRC Bulletin publishes here below. We believe that the psychological aspect of the care provided by the medical teams to patients in the camps set up near the border between Cambodia and Thailand is of considerable interest to all our readers.

Dr. Jean-Pierre Hiégel, who has kindly answered our questions on this matter, is a specialist in neuropsychiatry and psychoanalysis. Since November 1979, he has been working as the field co-ordinator of the ICRC medical department in Thailand. His interest in Far Eastern traditional medical practice was awakened many years back. In the course of several extended visits to Indonesia, he conversed with a number of "dunkun" and was able to gauge the efficacy of a therapy when it is applied in close correlation with a nation's culture.

Replying to the ICRC Bulletin's first question, Dr. Hiégel said that respect for the traditional medical methods practised by the "Krou Khmers", the traditional healers in Cambodia, and a deep regard for the beliefs of the Khmer people should be firmly inculcated in the minds of the ICRC medical teams working near Thailand's north-eastern borders and in the HCR camps set up for new arrivals among the refugees. It was in these camps that these Cambodian doctors were again working, with the assistance of the ICRC and voluntary workers.

Dr. Hiégel went on to say: "There is undoubtedly a good deal of work to be done in this field with the medical teams.
Some doctors and nurses feel that a form of therapy which is deeply rooted in the culture of a nation has considerable merit. But many look askance at practices with which they are not familiar and which do not correspond to scientific norms, and they are reluctant to wander away from the beaten track."

Question: "Have you met with much opposition from Western doctors?"

Response: "There are always some individuals who reject any kind of thinking which is different from their own. Some do not manage to view with any objectivity those problems which are remotely at variance with their ingrained biases. No doubt ever enters their mind. But it is when one is prepared to open one's mind to doubt that tolerance is born."

Q: "Do you not believe that the Khmers might have more faith in modern medicine?"

R: "The Khmers we have treated put their trust in scientific medicine as much as in their traditional healers. It should not be forgotten that healing is as much an art as it is a science. Western doctors, however renowned they may be elsewhere, are not considered by the Khmers to have the creative gift of the art of healing. The traditional healer has the advantage of being able to calm the person who seeks his help because they both speak the same tongue: that of their common culture."

Q: In the treatment of Khmer patients, do you think that traditional healing is more efficacious than modern medical methods?"

R: "Each kind of therapy is appropriate for a specific field of action. The "Krou Khmers" themselves acknowledge that modern medical methods produce swifter results, that they may be, in certain cases, more efficacious, and that they are necessary in an emergency. Traditional healing methods act not only upon the symptoms observed in a patient, but also, in a very wide sense, on his psychological, somatic make-up. It is told that a "Krou Khmer" said to a Western doctor concerning a sick man whom they had both examined: "You heal him first and then I shall treat him". There is more wisdom in this sally than is apparent at first sight. The implication is that the traditional healer treats his patient from every possible aspect."

AID TO KHMER POPULATION: A FILM IN ELEVEN LANGUAGES

"A question of relief" - Derek Hart's latest 16 mm film, produced with ICRC co-operation, will be ready for distribution in April in eleven languages: Arabic, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Swedish. The complexity of the problems met with in organizing aid for the Khmer civilian populations is vividly represented in the film, which was shot in Kampuchea and Thailand, with Raymond Grosjean as cameraman and Georges Meaume in charge of sound.

The film runs for 26 minutes and copies may be ordered from the Audio-visual Service of the ICRC, price 600 Swiss francs for the 16 mm version and 250 Swiss francs in video-cassette.

A therapy which calls upon spirits

Q: "When providing humanitarian care, should traditional therapy be systematically incorporated in the treatment?"

R: "Treatment should never be systematic; if it were it would lose all meaning. But every time traditional therapy is actively practised in the culture of a people, in its way of life, we have to accept that co-operation may be possible. With the "Krou Khmers", that is easy as they work openly. They do not seek to clothe their practice in mystery, for it is exempt from witchcraft."

Q: "Yet they acknowledge that people fall ill from supernatural causes as much as natural ones, do they not?"

R: "That's correct. There are spirits that can enter and possess a man and make him sick. Essentially, he may be possessed by the spirit of his ancestors, or by the village genie, or again by the "Krou Komnent" who corresponds to our guardian angel. These spirits are not hostile; but they are potentially mischievous if they are spurned or neglected, or if their existence is denied. The spirits of the dead are called upon by "thmops", who practise black magic. Although the traditional therapy has a sacred, ritualistic and magical character, it is practised in broad daylight."
Q: "Is it specially recommended for the treatment of psychological problems?"

R: "There is no doubt that the well-established methods for investigating these problems, such as chemotherapy or psychoanalysis, are not appropriate when they are transposed to another culture. Even at the level of diagnosis, one must be careful. We have come across many Khmers whose behaviour, attitudes and words, when analysed in relation to our own clinical and cultural references, would have produced a diagnosis of schizophrenia. Actually, this symptomatology was the expression of the possession of which the patients were, in their own view, the victims. These patients were not psychotic in any respect, but they suffered in their body and in their psyche. Sooner or later, they were comforted and reassured by the "Krou Khmer", and they recovered their normal condition, as soon as they were certain that the spirit which had entered their body had been chased out.

One should not, however, restrict the action of traditional healing to psychiatric disturbances."

Rediscovery of one's own culture

Q: "What attitude do you believe should be adopted when helping the refugees?"

R: "A person who becomes a refugee is wounded in his pride; he cannot keep his head above water all by himself; his affective environment is continuously disrupted, and he is no longer the master of his fate. He has lost all he had, and the only thing that he owns is that which is an integral part of his person, namely his own culture. He needs tangible evidence of our sympathy, esteem and respect. We can offer him those marks of esteem by our dedication when caring for him, but at the same time, we must not impose upon him our own models, and we should respect his beliefs and his traditions. Such an attitude on our part is particularly important, if we wish to reduce the secondary depressions which are frequently met with among the refugees in the camps. To rediscover one's own culture and to find it extolled by foreigners allows the refugees to survive psychologically."

Western and traditional therapy

Q: "Are Western methods of treatment harmful for the refugees in the camps?"

R: "All excess can be harmful. Humanitarian aid may be cut off at any time, but once it has been provided, it is never without some consequence. Medicaments too easily distributed may create psychological addiction. Many people in the United States and Europe cannot stand the slightest pain or the least bit of physical or spiritual discomfort, without immediately seeking relief which will avoid the necessity to probe into their inner selves. If we acted as if we were sure that the people we were now helping would have access to Western-type therapy for the rest of their lives, there is a danger, should they lose their faith in their "Krou Khmers" or their equivalent, that one day they will find no one to lean upon."

The traditional medicaments employed by the "Krou Khmers" are prepared from plants and from products of animal and mineral origin. It certainly cannot be denied that the plants are of real therapeutic value, for many extremely active substances have been obtained from them - quinine from the cinchona tree, penicillium notatum, digitalin from the common foxglove (digitalis purpurea). Elephant bone, the bones of a black horse and a cobra's head are held by the "Krou Khmers" to be very active substances, which are in certain cases mixed with various plants. They act by virtue of the power attributed to them by the prescriber and their utilizer. The psychological action of medicaments, and likewise of modern drugs, has in part an effect on their activity.

The sacred, ritualistic or magical therapeutic practices consist in sprinkling the patient with lustral water. The power of this purificatory water to chase away evil spirits is conferred upon it by a ceremonial conducted by the "Krou Khmer", or by Buddhist priests, consisting in reciting magic words in Pali, while lighted candles tied with sticks of incense are placed above the water. Sometimes, rice and magic herbs, which serve to keep the evil spirits away, are also scattered over the patient.
The Red Cross has chosen for this year's World Red Cross Day, which falls on the anniversary of Henry Dunant's birth, the theme "Red Cross everywhere for everyone", laying stress on the principle of universality.

Red Cross universality is manifest in its principles as much as in its action. With its 230 million voluntary members in 126 National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies, the organization founded by Dunant is governed by a set of fundamental principles which reject such restrictive criteria as race, nationality, religion or political regime. Perhaps no organization is more universal than the Red Cross, except the United Nations, whose members are States. With 146 countries bound by the Geneva Conventions, the Red Cross is also well established throughout the world.

In its action, too, the Red Cross reveals its world-wide character: it is at work in peacetime as well as in time of war and goes to the aid of all victims without distinction.

All the National Societies, big or small, rich or poor, have equal rights. But it is their duty to help each other, particularly in those cases where a country's limited resources cannot cope with a sudden expansion of its needs. In such circumstances, international action by the Red Cross is a striking example of its solidarity and at the same time a symbol of its universality.
On 1 April an airplane left Geneva with four delegates, a doctor, a nurse and seven tons of relief supplies to reinforce the ICRC delegation in Chad. On 8 April a surgeon, a doctor and two nurses also flew out to Chad.

During the last few weeks the ICRC teams in N'Djamena have continued working for the victims of the fighting in difficult conditions made dangerous by the almost total disregard for the cease-fire.

In the part of the town held by Hissen Habré's Armed Forces of the North (FAN) one of the ICRC's priorities was to remove the wounded across the river Chari to Kousseri in Cameroon where the French EMMIR had set up a field hospital. From 1 to 20 April more than 900 casualties made the crossing, almost 300 remaining in the hospital in N'Djamena. In addition, the ICRC delegates helped in the burial of corpses lying strewn about the streets.

From the other part of the town too, held by President Goukouni's People's Armed Forces (FAP), the wounded were sent to the French military field hospital outside the town. Nevertheless, the great number of casualties soon made it necessary to improvise an additional medical centre for patients requiring post-operative care. To the 6,000 or so people who have stayed on in N'Djamena, 12 tons of food was distributed in April.

The ICRC has been able to start visiting prisoners of war held by both sides and lists of missing persons have been posted up in the hospitals and at a number of places in N'Djamena.

In Cameroon the ICRC delegation co-ordinates its medical teams' activities with the EMMIR, mainly by grouping the wounded who have managed to cross the Chari by their own means. At Kousseri, where there are at present some 80,000 refugees from Chad, an office of the Tracing Agency has been set up for the tracing of missing persons.

Food and other essentials for the refugees are being provided by the Cameroon and French Governments, with assistance from several voluntary agencies, so that it has not been necessary for the ICRC to do so.

The fighting in N'Djamena having become even more violent towards the end of April, the ICRC took the precaution of organizing a logistic base at Kousseri, where the delegates spend the night.

At the request of the Colombian Government the ICRC intervened for the benefit of the hostages held since 27 February by members of the M-19 revolutionary group in the embassy of the Dominican Republic in Bogota.

On 6 and 7 April an ICRC delegate talked in private with all the hostages in order to assess their detention conditions and state of health, and also to give them comfort. This strictly humanitarian visit permitted by the Colombian Government and the members of M-19, in no way implied ICRC participation in the negotiations between them.

On 26 April the release of the hostages under ICRC auspices was agreed upon and on the following day the persons who had occupied the embassy, their hostages, several officials who had been involved in the negotiations, and an ICRC delegate were taken to Bogota airport in two buses provided by the Colombian Red Cross. The ICRC delegate flew with the hostages to Havana where he attended their release and then, on the same day, returned with them to Bogota.

Throughout the whole period of the hostages' ordeal in the embassy, the Colombian Red Cross provided them with food and medical attention.

In the last few weeks a special effort has been made to supply rice seed for planting in Cambodia before the start of the rainy season. The ICRC and UNICEF have jointly organized an air lift to deliver some 5000 tons of seed, most of which is provided by the FAO and Oxfam. Since the beginning of April two aircraft, and later a third, have operated on this service. Sometimes they made as many as six flights a day between Bangkok and Phnom Penh. The seed is transported from Phnom Penh by train and lorry to Battambang, Kompong Thom and other provinces for distribution to the peasant population.

Medical aid is being provided in four Cambodian towns by medical teams from the National Societies of USSR, Poland, Hungary and the German Democratic Republic. ICRC delegates at Phnom Penh have continued accompanying relief convoys organized by the Ministre of Health and the local Red Cross.
In Thailand too the approach of the rainy season has made special action necessary. Work is being carried out on roads to and in the camps and on the raising of some constructions, hospitals and dispensaries, on piles.

Reduction of medical staff to about 100 doctors and nurses is under way. This has been made possible by the refugees' improved health, and necessary by the frequent incidents which make life in the camps dangerous. In this connection, one camp had to be definitively closed. The ICRC is very concerned by this problem and in co-operation with the Thai authorities is trying to provide better protection for certain vulnerable groups of refugees.

AFGHANISTAN: A SECOND VISIT TO PULI CHARKHI PRISON

The ICRC delegates in Afghanistan are continuing to protect and assist victims of the conflict.

On 12 and 13 April, a delegate and a doctor of the ICRC visited Puli Charkhi Prison, near Kabul, and saw 385 political and security detainees. The first time this prison was visited by the ICRC was in February of this year.

The Afghan Government has now agreed on the principle of visits by the ICRC to prisons in other parts of the country.

ICRC DELEGATES VISIT AMERICAN HOSTAGES IN TEHERAN

On 14 April two ICRC delegates, one of them a doctor, visited the hostages held in the United States Embassy in Teheran, after weeks of negotiation.

A basic condition demanded by the ICRC when visiting detained persons is that it be permitted to talk with them in private and to repeat the visit periodically.

In view of the exceptional circumstances in the case of these hostages, the ICRC submitted to the adamant refusal of the persons holding the hostages to allow interviews without witnesses. Breaking with customs, the ICRC realized that principle had to yield to expediency so that it could record the identities of the hostages (about which there had been some doubt until the ICRC's visit), see detention conditions, provide some comfort and transmit family messages.

Any reports drawn up by the ICRC delegates on such visits will be confidential.

TIMOR: AID PROGRAMME EXTENDED TO 14 VILLAGES - NEW BUDGET

In the last few weeks a further survey was made of the situation in the eastern part of Timor, to adjust the programmes of food and medical assistance provided by the Indonesian Red Cross and the ICRC for the civilian population. Since October 1979, some 60,000 persons in eight remote mountain villages have been receiving food and medical care from the joint Indonesian Red Cross and ICRC campaign.

This new survey established that it was necessary to continue providing aid to seven of those eight villages for a further six months. In addition, the programme will be extended to seven more localities; 87,400 persons in all will receive assistance.

In nine villages the Red Cross will furnish medical assistance and supplement food sources; in the five others only medical care will be given, the food available being considered adequate to meet needs. The inhabitants of one village, who are particularly under-nourished, will receive full food rations until 15 October.

It was been estimated that 6.6 million Swiss francs will be needed to cover expenses, including transport costs by air, land and sea. The ICRC has launched an appeal to the international community for funds to be swiftly provided to enable the ICRC to continue its operations on Timor.

RED CROSS ACTION IN PAKISTAN: UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

On his return to Geneva after a mission to co-ordinate medical action in aid of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, Dr. Georges Muheim outlines below the conditions in which the Red Cross work is being carried out.

"Local living conditions in northern Pakistan are an unusual background to the work of the Red Cross. The region - particularly the North West Frontier Province - is inhabited also by semi-nomadic Pashtoons who spend the summer in Afghanistan and winter in Pakistan, where the climate is milder. In addition, there is a tribal spirit which conditions the socio-cultural aspects of everyday life: the attitude towards women, for example, makes it almost impossible for our teams to examine female patients. Men traditionally bear arms and inter-tribal rivalries are rife. Our delegates have therefore to be escorted by armed members of each tribe wherever they go. These circumstances
make it very difficult to assess the situation of each ethnic group among the Afghan refugees.

Some refugees have found shelter with relatives or friends. This complicates relief distribution. Moreover the refugee camps are unlike those in other parts of the world, but consist rather of settlements around villages, the refugees and the local population intermingling. For that reason the Pakistan authorities and the HCR have decided to register the refugees, this being the only way of exercising any supervision of relief distribution."

DONATION TO ICRC BY US FIRM

In the course of a ceremony which took place in Monte Carlo on 2 April, Avon Products Foundation Inc., of New York, donated 10000 dollars to the ICRC. Mr. Frank Casey, Vice-President, handed the cheque to H.H. Princess Grace of Monaco, who is President of the Red Cross Society in Monaco.

HENRY DUNANT: TWO NEW PUBLICATIONS

Two works dealing with different aspects of the personality of Henry Dunant have just been published in Switzerland. One of them is "Henry Dunant, the life and faith of the founder of the Red Cross" ("Henry Dunant Leben und Glauben des Rotkreuzgründers"), written in German by Felix Christ (ImbaVerlag, Fribourg, Switzerland; FriedrichWittig Verlag, Hamburg, 1979, 64 pp, collection "Gebetste Chrissyentum") and the other is "Henry Dunant, l'Algerien ou le mirage colonial", by Jacques Pous (Ed. Grounauer, Geneva, collection Histoire 4, 1979, 291 pp, preface by Henri Guillemin).

Dr Christ, a doctor of theology of the University of Basle, is Chief Press Officer of the Swiss Red Cross in Berne. For many years he has studied the spiritual side of the character of the founder of the Red Cross. Henry Dunant's life is outlined in five chapters early years, the Red Cross, solitary wanderings, hope and lasting fame. At each stage Dr Christ places the emphasis on the relation between faith and works, an unusual approach to the deepest motivations of the man who was a great deal more than merely "the Good Samaritan of Solferino".

The author's theological studies and his careful reading of manuscripts preserved in Geneva have enabled him to fill out aspects of Dunant's personality which are still little known. For example, he describes and comments, with great exactitude and pertinence, on the three diagrams by Dunant displayed in the Institute which bears his name. These bizarre compositions, decorated with bright colours and symbolic emblems, trace the history of the human race as recounted in the Bible. Such representations always fascinated Dunant. They gave him insight into the risks of a world war and spurred him to work for peace.

The second book illustrates quite another side of the complex personality of Dunant, the "Algerian", in other words the colonizer and financier. The author had access to archives only recently made available to the public and his work deserves the closest attention. While Algeria was still smarting under the aftermath of the French conquest, Henry Dunant was among those Europeans who came to colonize it and became involved later in speculative operations which were neither philanthropic nor completely untainted by questionable dealings. These are the thorny problems surrounding the activities of Dunant which embarrass his admirers. But it must be conceded that a great man may also have his weaknesses; and Dunant, in later years, grew out of the phase in which men feel obliged to conquer their fellows to impose their will and their culture on them and in his writings he defended each individual and each type of culture. His final position and his message, set against the ideas prevalent at the end of the 19th century, gain in originality and in grandeur.

IN BRIEF

Two accessions to the 1977 Protocols: In April, the Gabonese Republic and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas sent to the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Berne their instruments of accession to the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949. The Protocols will enter into force for each of these two countries in October, six months after the deposit of their instruments of accession with the Swiss Government.

Geneva meeting: The delegates of 33 National Societies, in Geneva for the League Executive Council, were received at the ICRC on 24 April by President Hay and the directors of the ICRC. They took part in discussions on various problems of topical interest concerning the Red Cross as a whole and later saw a film made in Thailand and Cambodia, entitled "A question of relief".
QUEEN ELIZABETH II AND PRINCE PHILIP VISIT ICRC

During their State visit to Switzerland, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom, and H.R.H. Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, visited the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva on 30 April. The royal couple were accompanied by Federal Councillor Mr. Pierre Aubert and Mrs. Aubert.

The Queen and Prince Philip and their suite were welcomed by the President of the Geneva State Council, Mr. Guy Fontanet and his wife, by the Mayor of Geneva, Mr. Roger Dafflon, and by the President of the ICRC Mr. Alexandre Hay. Among the eminent persons then presented to Her Majesty were the General Directors of several international inter-governmental organizations, officials of the canton, the municipality and the League of Red Cross Societies, and members of the ICRC. After an address by Mr. Fontanet, referring to the mutual esteem between Geneva and the United Kingdom, the President of the ICRC outlined the role of the Red Cross and its current activities throughout the world. The royal couple then signed the canton's, the town's and the ICRC's visitors' books and examined with marked interest a selection of documents from the records of the Central Tracing Agency.

Her Majesty then greeted the crowd of mainly British nationals gathered in the grounds of the ICRC before leaving for Geneva airport to fly to Berne.

RCBS IN MAY

The dates and frequencies of the Red Cross Broadcasting Service programmes in May will be as follows:

OMNIDIRECTIONAL FREQUENCY
7210 kHz in the 41.6 metre band from 0600 to 0700, from 1130 to 1230 and from 1700 to 1800 GMT: MONDAY 26 May, transmission of programmes in ENGLISH and FRENCH; WEDNESDAY 28 May, SPANISH, GERMAN and ARABIC.

BEAMED FREQUENCIES

ASIA AND PACIFIC Tuesday 27 May, from 0945 to 1015 GMT, in ENGLISH on 9560 kHz, 15305 kHz, 21520 kHz and 21695 kHz.

MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

Thursday 29 May, from 0945 to 1015 GMT, in ENGLISH and FRENCH on 15430 kHz, 17830 kHz and 21430 kHz; in ARABIC on 21630 kHz.

THE BRITISH RED CROSS

The Patron and President of the British Red Cross is Her Majesty the Queen. For readers of "ICRC Bulletin", press attaché David Bedford has drawn the following outline of that National Society.

In peacetime, the British Red Cross Society's principal task is to alleviate suffering among the sick, the handicapped and the frail elderly.

The Society thus has two main aims: to train the public and its own members in emergency skills and to give voluntary service to the community in the fields of first aid, nursing and welfare.

As a voluntary aid society subject to the terms of the principles of the Red Cross and of the Geneva Conventions, the Society has an obligation to maintain a trained membership ready to act as an auxiliary to the public authority in time of emergency whether in peace or war. As a para-medical training organisation it has a responsibility to train members of the public so that they are prepared to deal with emergencies such as accident or sudden illness.

Service to the community takes many forms. For example, trained volunteers escort the sick and handicapped on essential journeys, visit the housebound in their homes and man first aid posts at public events: trolley shops, book and picture libraries and a beauty care service are run in hospitals. Young members take handicapped children on holiday, befriend the frail elderly, go shopping for the disabled and are ready to use their training in emergency skills at any moment.

The British Red Cross also plays its part in the overall work of the world Red Cross movement. It supports international relief efforts mounted by both the ICRC and the League and provides specialist personnel when requested. It regularly launches special appeals to the public for funds to help finance particular relief operations.

IN BRIEF

Repatriation from Viet Nam to Taiwan:
On 24th April, 152 Taiwanese nationals returned to their country from the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, under ICRC auspices. Since 1976, when these repatriation operations began, 3537 persons have been repatriated to Taiwan by the ICRC in 24 flights.
IN BRIEF

In Uganda a team of six delegates, including a doctor, in March and April, visited 13 places of detention in which there were about 6,000 detainees. They provided blankets, medicaments, toilet necessities and various other relief goods to a value of more than 30,000 Swiss francs.

In Uruguay the ICRC is visiting civilian and military places of detention. Its delegates saw 204 women detained for security reasons in the women's prison of Punta de Rieles. Visits are continuing in military establishments, in five of which the delegates saw 26 security detainees.

In the Middle East, on 16 and 24 April, two people crossed the Allenby Bridge under ICRC auspices; one to return to Jordan and the other to territory occupied by Israel.

ETHIOPIA: A VIDEO FILM ON A NEW VENTURE

The Debri Zeit orthopedic centre in Ethiopia is unlike others in that, although it was financed and initially equipped by the ICRC, it is run entirely by Ethiopian personnel, most of whom are themselves amputees trained by specialists of various nationalities, and the material is all purchased locally.

The new venture deserves to be known among orthopedic circles and also throughout the Red Cross world. This will now be possible, as a 35-minute video film, available in French and English, has been produced by Jean-Philippe Naef for the ICRC. It will be ready in May and may be obtained at the price of 250 Swiss francs.

BACKGROUND

THE ICRC IN THE THICK OF THE FIGHTING IN N'DJAMENA

A DRAMATIC ACCOUNT

More than a month ago, towards the end of March, civil war broke out at N'Djamena, the capital of Chad, between the two main factions, the "People's Armed Forces" (FAP) under President Goukouni Oueddei, and the "Armed Forces of the North" (FAN) commanded by the Minister of Defence, Hissen Habre.

As mentioned in our previous issue (No 51 of 2 April 1980) the ICRC is represented in N'Djamena by a score of delegates - several of whom are doctors and nurses of the Coopération Technique Suisse who were already there and spontaneously offered their services at the outset of the fighting. Dominique Gross, a delegate of the ICRC Information Division, went to Chad at the beginning of April with the reinforcements sent from Geneva. He stayed for ten days and describes below the catastrophic situation in N'Djamena:

On 26 March, when the ICRC surgical team moved into the N'Djamena Central Hospital, in the part of the town controlled by Hissen Habre's troops, it first had to clean it before bringing in medical supplies, food and water. Being in the centre of the fighting area, the hospital was soon crowded with casualties. Inside the hospital compound a distressing sight meets the eye.

There are casualties everywhere, under the trees, in the shade of the huge flag draped from the roof down to the ground, beneath blankets or pieces of cloth, seeking protection from the sun. They lie on the ground surrounded by their families who try to keep the flies away from their wounds. No cries, no complaints: no one gives way to panic. The atmosphere is heavy with despair and with a resignation born with dignity.

A scene of horror

In the blood-stained corridors it is difficult to make one's way among the wounded and their families. Almost overwhelmed by the number of arrivals - at least sixty every day - without water, sometimes without electricity, the Swiss doctors and the Chad nursing orderlies, nearly all of whom stayed on at their posts, dealt with those cases needing immediate attention. The most seriously injured and those requiring long operations are given sedatives and left for later treatment. Pointing to a soldier with a bullet in his chest, the surgeon says, "We could save him with an immediate operation, but ten others less severely injured would die in the meantime". So the doctors can do no more than carry on with others, disinfecting wounds, extracting bullets and shrapnel and amputating whenever a limb is seriously in-
"For the first few days we tried to give treatment but it is almost impossible to prevent gangrene, so now we systematically amputate" says a doctor. In the operating theatre the scene is beyond description. It is crowded with wounded, there is blood everywhere, even on the operating table, yet here too there is no panic, no cries or complaints. The patients show an extraordinary resistance to pain.

In all this horror there are incidents which raise the medical team’s spirits, such as the delivery, by a caesarian section, of a baby whose mother was wounded in the stomach. This was the second birth in the hospital and both families are now safe across the river Chari which separates Chad from Cameroon.

Evacuation by canoe

In spite of the large Red Cross flags, the hospital has been under fire and even shells have fallen on the roof and in the grounds. It soon became obvious that the hospital was unsafe, and with the installation of a French military hospital on the Cameroon side of the river Chari, it is now possible to evacuate the N’Djamena Central hospital almost entirely, and also the university which has been converted into a makeshift hospital. Before removing patients to safety they must be sorted out according to the gravity of their injuries. Those who have been given first aid are first taken by lorry to the river, a trip which is an ordeal for many who have no more than a blanket or straw mat to lie on because of the shortage of stretchers. On the river the canoes hired by the ICRC await to take their suffering passengers across to the Cameroon bank. A convoy of three or four canoes is quickly organized. The people fleeing Chad willingly drop their loads of belongings on the sand and help in transhipping the wounded. Everything is done calmly, with no cries or complaints.

Standing in the stern of his canoe, the owner punts his craft over the river, which is quite low at this time of the year. The trip takes half an hour beneath a burning sun. The families also come aboard, to provide shade for their injured relatives and to keep the flies away. Great care must be taken not to move too suddenly while in the canoes, which can capsize quite easily. On the far bank, in Cameroon, groups of porters await the convoy, recognizable by the Red Cross flag flying in one of the canoes. For the wounded the ordeal will soon be over. They are lain again on a lorry and conveyed to the EMIR (Elément militaire d’intervention rapide) which the French army has set up at the small town of Kousseri, in Cameroon. After being given treatment, the wounded are assigned to the various services and put army tents in the yard. Here too conditions are primitive, but the families soon get themselves organized, preparing meals and fetching water for the patients. The most important thing for the wounded and their families is that they are now at a safe distance from the fighting.

Orderly exodus

The flight from N’Djamena had begun during the first period of calm when the civilians who had gone to earth in their homes during the several days of fighting fled in their thousands to Cameroon. By 2 April their number was estimated to be between 60000 and 80000.

At daybreak long queues form on the Chad side of the river. The families have hastily assembled a few belongings, mainly articles of use such as kitchen utensils, mattresses, bicycles and occasionally bags of food for a few days. If the family comprises many members they attempt to take with them a metal bed or a cupboard; things which may be sold in Cameroon and on the proceeds of which they could live should the situation not return to normal. Again, as in the hospital, it is striking how calm they all appear to be. There is no panic, some of them joke, the sight of a European floundering in the river causes laughter.

On the far side of the river, many families have settled under trees, having stretched lengths of cloth between the branches as a protection against the fierce rays of the sun. The women prepare the meals while the men wander from group to group seeking friends and neighbours and discussing whether it is best to stay where they are until the fighting ceases or to go further south, recross the frontier into Chad and rejoin their village or tribe. Those fortunate enough to have managed to get their cars carried across the river by metal boats have fled further away.

At the moment the refugees' plight is not too desperate. The Cameroon authorities have the situation in hand. Food is distributed and France has been granted every facility to set up a military field hospital in the town of Kousseri, opposite N’Djamena. However, if the number of refugees goes on increasing or if the present situation continues for long, there will be a serious risk of epidemics and hunger.
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No. 53
4 JUNE 1980

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HEINOUS CRIMES THAT MUST BE STOPPED

While the international community's efforts in aid of Indochinese refugees in South-East Asia have resulted in a considerable improvement of living conditions in the reception centres during the last several months and in hastening the procedure for their resettlement, there is still a dramatic problem that has not been eliminated. Although no reliable figures are available, it has been estimated from numerous eye-witness accounts that one out of two Vietnamese refugees falls a victim to pirates once or even several times while at sea and that forty per cent do not reach port alive.

The International Red Cross expressed its concern in February 1980 at the meeting of National Societies held at Singapore and on several other occasions. Other international agencies, in particular the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, have also examined the question. Practical measures have at last been introduced - for example high-speed patrol-boats - but they are still very inadequate.

It is highly necessary that States should realize where their responsibilities lie and protect the unfortunate boat people from pirates, not only in their territorial waters but also on the high seas. Only governments, by co-ordinated action, can put an end to these heinous crimes. The Red Cross can but tend the wounded and raise its voice in protest.

The texts of this Bulletin have no official character, and may be freely reproduced.
On 26 and 27 May, the "Meeting on Humanitarian Assistance and Relief to the Kampuchean People", convened by the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, was held in Geneva. At the meeting, which was attended by the representatives of 62 countries, the ICRC and UNICEF made a joint statement, setting out their policy in the conduct of their programme in aid of the Kampuchean people in the People's Republic of Kampuchea and in Thailand.

The statement began: "Since the autumn of 1979, the ICRC and UNICEF, in co-operation with FAO and WFP, have conducted a major relief operation for the Kampuchean people. Although much has been achieved, even more remains to be done if the situation is not to become very serious once again in the months ahead. But the ability of the partners in this operation to achieve their objectives depends, on the one hand, on the willingness of the international community to provide active support and adequate financial and material resources and, on the other, in no small measure, on the authorities of the countries involved to grant the guarantees necessary for this operation to truly and fully meet the needs of the affected populations."

The ICRC and UNICEF statement also stressed that their policy aimed "at encouraging Kampucheans to remain in or return to their homes rather than establish themselves on the Thai border".

Furthermore it was emphasized that while it was fundamental to humanitarian law that medical aid be provided to wounded military and civilians alike, it was essential that civilians who constituted the only category entitled to food and other non-medical aid, particularly women and children, should be physically separated from combatants.

The President of the ICRC, Mr. Alexandre Hay, addressing the meeting on 27 May, referred first to the principles and rules of international humanitarian law (in particular the Geneva Conventions of 1949), and expressed his thanks to the participants who, during the two days of the meeting, had undertaken to provide financial support and thus allow the humanitarian aid programme to be pursued for the next few months. Mr. Hay ended with the following words: "The ICRC is prepared to continue this programme, provided the fundamental humanitarian principles are respected and the major difficulties encountered by the ICRC are resolved. This last condition has not yet been fulfilled. The ICRC therefore hopes it may count upon the international community's support and the co-operation of all the parties concerned".

**AN ARTIFICIAL LEG WORKSHOP AT SA KAEO**

Bernard Guedel was touring through Thailand on his own when he arrived at Sa Kao last November. The work of the medical teams helping the Cambodian refugees interested him so much that he decided to stay for a while and give a hand. A prosthesis technician by trade, he soon noticed that there was many amputees in the refugee camps. It was one of them, Tian, whose leg had been cut off below the knee, who suggested to Bernard that artificial legs could be made with local materials.

At the end of January a small workshop was set up under a tent in the camp. Using wood and zinc, the first artificial legs were produced. They proved to be light, weighing only 2 kg compared to 12 kg for an ordinary prosthesis, solid and cheap.

In two months 80 artificial legs were produced by the amputees under Bernard's supervision. He has now left Thailand to work with the ICRC team at the Debre Zeit orthopedic centre in Ethiopia, while Tian is carrying on the good work producing artificial legs for his fellow Cambodians.

**IN BRIEF**

Visits to detainees in the Philippines: The two ICRC regional delegates for South-East Asia, together with a CTA delegate and an extra delegate from Geneva, carried out a series of visits to places of detention in the Philippines. The visits took place between 17 March and 30 April, and the delegates saw altogether 950 detainees - 434 of whom were detained on political grounds - in 25 places of detention on the islands of Luzon, Samar, Mindanao, Cebu and others.
CHAD: ICRC ACTIVITIES HINDERED BY HOSTILITIES

During the last few weeks fighting has continued in N'Djamena and has severely hindered the work of the ICRC teams, both in the zone held by the "People's Armed Forces" (FAP) under President Goukouni Weddei and in that held by the "Armed Forces of the North" (FAN) commanded by Hissen Habré. In the FAN area, the Central Hospital was shelled several times, although it had been declared a neutral zone from the outbreak of the combats. It was therefore decided, on 18 May, to evacuate it and transfer the patients to the Kabalaye Mission school in an area further away from the front.

The ICRC delegation in the FAP zone retired to Farcha for similar reasons.

For the population of N'Djamena living conditions are worsening every day. The departure of the French infrastructure, especially as regards air transport, has created logistical difficulties for the ICRC, which will now have to send its delegates and consignments via Maroua, a town in Cameroon some 250 km south of Kousseri.

STOP PRESS

The deterioration in the political situation and the much greater risks involved to its staff compelled the ICRC to suspend all its activities in the FAN zone, as from 28 May.

ANGOLA: RELIEF PROGRAMME FOR DISPLACED PERSONS STARTED

An initial distribution of maize (5 tons) was carried out by the ICRC at Katchiounga (formerly Bela Vista) between 14 and 17 May. The recipients numbered about 1,700 persons. The first stage of the relief programme organized by the ICRC and the Angolan Red Cross, planned to start in the Provinces of Bié and Huambo, is aimed to reach 50,000 displaced persons, most of whom are women and children who have been greatly weakened by severe malnutrition. It is hoped to extend gradually the programme to more people and to other regions. The initial budget is for an amount of 7.5 million Swiss francs.

A substantial volume of foodstuffs has been provided by the European Economic Community (EEC): 600 tons of maize, 100 tons of powdered milk and 50 tons of butter oil. These supplies, which have been shipped by sea, are expected to arrive in Angola at the end of June. The ICRC has meanwhile sent from Botswana about a hundred tons of grain for distribution.

Ten ICRC delegates are working in Angola, mainly at Huambo, not counting the members of the ICRC orthopedic centre at Bomba Alta. They have met with some difficult problems, particularly as regards safety and logistics.

THAILAND: LOCAL POPULATION ALSO RECEIVES AID

The volume of the aid programme for the Cambodian refugees in Thailand is so big that one tends to forget the poverty of the local inhabitants in about two hundred villages along the border. The livelihood of this peasant population has been substantially disrupted by the influx of refugees and the presence of international aid organizations. The Thai Red Cross has therefore sent a mobile team into the area to bring to the local population badly needed extra food and medical care. This assistance has been greatly appreciated, as for example in Ban Nong Man, where in a single day 242 patients, mostly women and children, came to the medical consultation organized in the village school.

ANGOLA: PEG LEGS FOR WAR AMPUTEES

At Huambo, the second largest town in Angola - a country which some years ago was in the throes of a murderous civil war - the ICRC set up in August 1979 an orthopedic centre in some empty premises with a floor space of 600 sq. metres. Several workshops have been fully equipped: for carpentry, metalwork, plasterwork, milling and lathe work and working with plastic materials. In other rooms, patients try on the artificial limbs and do physiotherapy exercises, while two store-rooms and an office have also been fitted out.

Alain Garachon, the ICRC physiotherapist who co-ordinates the work at this centre, spent several months at Huambo with his team of assistants, who all had to turn their hands during the first few weeks to all sorts of odd jobs, connecting electrical fittings, making stands for the machines, shelves, cupboards, tables, chairs, benches, worktables and physiotherapy equipment. It was only after this initial work had been completed that they could start making the prostheses, not complicated jointed limbs, but simple peg legs fashioned out of locally purchased wood. Factories in Angola were asked to put the finishing touches to metal or rubber parts.

"The amputees", said Alain Garachon, "are
nearly all young lads who fought in the civil war and paid for the part they played in it with the loss of one or more of their limbs. They are so eager to be able to get about without crutches that very often they help the ICRC team in making their own prostheses'. However, fitting the limbs is only a part of the work done by the Huambo Centre. The amputees must go through a course of muscular rehabilitation. But this, according to Alain Garachon, does not involve too many problems. The youth of the patients is a positive advantage, for they get very quickly accustomed to their artificial limbs and resume a practically normal life.

To the question whether the ICRC would continue to run the centre for a long time, Alain Garachon replied in the negative; the aim is to hand it over as soon as possible to the Angolans, who would be responsible for it under the supervision of their National Red Cross Society or some other Angolan institution.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA REFUGEES: TRACING AGENCY WORKSHOP IN JAKARTA

On 15 and 16 April, the Second Tracing Agency workshop for National Societies taking part in the programme in aid of the Vietnamese "boat people" in South-East Asia was held at Jakarta under the auspices of the Indonesian Red Cross.

During the workshop senior Tracing Agency officials of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of Indonesia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand submitted reports on their activities and accounts, gave their appreciation of the present situation, exchanged ideas and discussed their particular problems. Representatives of the ICRC Central Tracing Agency and CTA technical advisers in South-East Asian countries also were present, and two delegates from the Australian and British Red Cross Societies.

One of the items on the agenda was the presentation of a pilot programme designed to test computerized Agency information at present being conducted on the "boat people" cards at the CTA, Geneva.

The discussions attested to the excellent work performed at the various Tracing Agency Offices and to the fact that their personnel had now acquired sufficient experience to manage on their own without the help of advisers from Geneva.

As from June, only a roving technical adviser will be stationed at Kuala Lumpur to co-ordinate the entire South-East Asia Tracing Agency network.

AFGHAN REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN: MEDICAL TEAMS FULLY OCCUPIED

The two mobile medical teams, recruited in Pakistan by the ICRC with the assistance of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society for the joint League-ICRC programme in aid of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan, have been extremely active since the beginning of April 1980. One of the teams has its base in the Kurram area and has to look after the health of about 100,000 persons living in six different camps. From 8 to 30 April, it treated 1,570 patients. During the same period, the other team, which visits five camps containing 60,000 refugees in North Waziristan, treated some 2,100 cases.

The recruitment of a third mobile team is under consideration, so as to provide additional medical assistance to the refugees, particularly in the Kurram area.

THE ICRC AND THE HEBRON INCIDENTS

Following incidents in the occupied territory in the West Bank of Jordan, the ICRC informed the Israel Government that it viewed with concern the consequences for the Arab civilian population. The ICRC delegates went several times to various places where a curfew had been imposed (Anabta, Hebron and the Dehaisha Camp for Palestinians near Bethlehem). While it had not appeared necessary to give assistance, as the inhabitants were able to go out for a few hours a day to obtain supplies, the ICRC's démarches, consistent with the Geneva Conventions of 1949, were to protect the civilian population, and particularly to avert the infliction of collective punishment.

ARAB LEAGUE SECRETARY-GENERAL VISITS ICRC

"The dialogue established with the ICRC is the first step to co-operation which can only bring advantages to both parties." That is in substance what Mr. Chedli Klibi, Secretary-General of the Arab League, stated at the end of his visit to the ICRC on 20 May.

At the meeting which Mr. Klibi had with the ICRC President, Alexandre Hay, and with senior ICRC staff, various current problems involving ICRC activities, in particular in Islamic countries, were reviewed.

Mr. Klibi and ICRC officials also conferred with the representatives of the Arab countries' permanent missions to the international organizations in Geneva.
The Fourth Introductory Course to Red Cross international activities, organized by the Henry Dunant Institute, with ICRC and League co-operation, took place in Geneva from 28 May to 4 June 1980. About thirty delegates from 24 National Societies in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia attended the course.

The purpose of these courses, which are held every year, is to improve the knowledge of participants about the international aspects of the Red Cross movement. They represent, moreover, a useful contribution by the ICRC and League to the training of senior National Society officials throughout the world.

IN BRIEF

Golan families reunited: On 7 May at Kuneitra, under ICRC auspices, a family of three persons coming from the Syrian Arab Republic went to the occupied territory of Golan, while one person went in the opposite direction to join his family in Damascus.

The mortal remains of American soldiers killed at Tabas (Iran) were handed over to the United States authorities on 6 May, through the intermediary of the ICRC and the Swiss Government. An ICRC delegate was present at the ceremony which took place at Zurich-Kloten Airport.

Visit to places of detention in Jordan: On 15 May, an ICRC team composed of three delegates, a doctor and an interpreter began a series of visits to places of detention in Jordan.

The ICRC delegate general for Latin America, André Pasquier, left Geneva on 15 May for a mission lasting several weeks. Mr. Pasquier's first stop was in the Bahamas, where he attended a seminar held by the local Red Cross, after which he flew to Colombia. At Haiti, he will be present at the First Meeting and Technical Seminar for National Societies of the Caribbean countries. He will conclude his mission with a visit to Cuba.

In Colombia, a new series of visits to places of detention began on 23 May with a visit to "La Picota" Prison. The ICRC delegates will go to all civilian and military places of detention in Colombia.

In Zaire, the first visit by ICRC delegates to a place of detention under the authority of the State security police in Kinshasa was carried out on 1 May. The delegates saw about a hundred detainees and handed over to them some relief articles. Further visits have been planned for the next few weeks.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF THE RED CROSS

The May-June 1980 issue of International Review of the Red Cross contains a study by H.G. Beckh on "The reuniting of families in Europe during and after the second world war" and the text of a resolution on the same subject, adopted recently by the International Institute of Humanitarian Law at San Remo. A further extract, entitled "Voluntary Service", from Jean Pictet's Commentary on the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross may also be found in the same issue.

BACKGROUND

AFTER YEARS OF HARD WORK IN SOUTHERN AFRICA THE ICRC PULLS OUT, ITS MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Peace in Zimbabwe: the agreements have been signed and the country is now independent. For thousands of people who had fled from the fighting, the time has come to return to their villages and to normal life. For the ICRC, these events mark the end of an extensive action of protection and assistance which has been going on for several years in southern Africa. By the end of June, the ICRC set-up will return to what it was before 1978, and current activities will be handled by the regional delegation in Lusaka.

One of the ICRC's African information officers in Botswana, James Mwakisyala, describes below this phase of the disengagement as seen by him and his African and European colleagues in the last few weeks.

It looks like everything is really over in Botswana for the International Committee of the Red Cross of the (ICRC). After nearly three years of strenuous travels into and between the refugee camps of Dukwe, Selebi-Pikwe and Francistown, the medical delegates have at last laid down their syringes and surgical gloves.
In the short span of about two months after the Lancaster House agreement on a cease fire and elections, the three camps, which had a total of about 23,000 refugees, were almost completely vacated. The Rhodesian refugees were repatriated. This repatriation was the last round for the ICRC delegation in Botswana, since its main task there was to provide vital medical assistance.

The ICRC started its humanitarian work in Botswana in 1978, following the intensification of the guerrilla war in Rhodesia which forced hundreds of people to flee their country into Botswana to seek refuge. The majority of these refugees were children and women and young men.

During the years preceding the London agreement of December 1979, the ICRC medical staff worked night and day to treat various diseases and injuries and to organize intensive vaccination and inoculation campaigns to prevent the spread of diseases.

Although the refugee population was nearly 23,000, there were only a few doctors and nurses to treat these people. At most times the delegation had one doctor who travelled to all the camps, and a nurse for each of the three camps, and there were a few locally recruited nurses.

The amount of work which had to be done by the medical staff made it necessary for the ICRC to open in the capital, Gaborone, more than 450 km from Francistown where the ICRC had its main base, a small office for fast cooperation and contact with all concerned government authorities. The Gaborone office was small and, being made of metal sheets, hot; but work had to continue.

The successful peace talks in London created a remarkable change in the health of the refugees. As soon as the repatriation began, Dr. Ursula Rombach noticed a decline in the number of patients. Her view was that "they have no time to be sick anymore".

Talk of going back home in the camps was a very salutary medicine. When I visited Dukwe camp, one of the three refugee camps, there was hardly any seriously sick person with the exception of about two or three, including a mental case, in a clinic where well over 20 could be admitted.

At this camp, more or less a big village, the girls were busy plaiting their hair in exotic styles, mending their clothes and making suitcases or bags from plastic cut-ups of green tents. Generally speaking, everybody was busy readying himself or herself for the trip home.

Before the Lancaster House agreement, the ICRC delegates were heavily engaged in providing medical assistance to many people in the camps. At Dukwe camp which had about 12,000 people, the ICRC doctor treated as many as 60 patients a day, at Selebi-Pikwe (8,000) she treated between 30 to 50 patients, while at Francistown camp (5,000) she tended up to 40 patients a day.

When the ceasefire came, the work load of the medical staff began to decline. Fewer and fewer patients needed attention.

Dr. Rombach, who used to travel to all three camps to treat patients, first stopped going to Selebi-Pikwe because that camp was emptied first. Then repatriation began at Dukwe, ending with the Francistown camp. The ICRC nurses in charge of these camps, Mrs Jetty Steinemann in one and Miss Elisabeth Nyffeneger in the other, had less and less work every day.

The ICRC's work in the camp was not for in vain. Refugee camp commanders expressed their gratitude for the untiring efforts of the ICRC staff.

The Francistown refugee camp commander, Mr. Albert Sibanda, once said the refugees "really appreciated the help of the ICRC".

On one occasion at the peak of the repatriation in early February 1980, I accompanied Dr. Rombach to the Dukwe refugee camp. On the highway we encountered a long convoy of trucks carrying jubilant refugees. We quickly pulled aside. Dr. Rombach got out of the car. Although the trucks were moving past us fairly fast, the refugees recognized the Red Cross sign immediately and on seeing Dr. Rombach they waved vigorously and applauded their doctor. They kept on shouting 'bye doctor' until we could hear them no longer but saw their hands in the distance.

Dr. Rombach allowed herself a smile and waved back without a comment. There was
no doubt whatsoever that they knew their doctor very well and they appreciated her work.

It was obvious from the expression on her face that she was sure the refugees were going home healthy.

Now the Zimbabwe refugees have gone back to their homeland and so has Dr. Rombach - back to her West German Red Cross Society - while the nurses will be heading home to Switzerland or elsewhere.

At present only a skeleton staff remains in Gaborone. The local staff have been relieved of their duties and they must seek other employers.

The small staff is still in Botswana to wind up the ICRC operations there at the end of the month. Afterwards Botswana will be covered again by the regional delegation in Zambia. For the ICRC it is a very happy occasion to have rendered humanitarian assistance to well over 23,000 people to the very last minute.

MEANWHILE IN ZIMBABWE...

During the war, the ICRC was the only international organization helping war victims in Zimbabwe. Now the elections have brought peace again; they have also brought international recognition, and Zimbabwe will certainly be given financial and technical help from various States, associations of States and also from organizations such as the United Nations. These forms of aid, for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country, will be more appropriate than ICRC help, which is always of an emergency type, mainly to relieve immediate suffering inflicted by the war. Nevertheless, the ICRC will not rush out of the country. Most of the assistance programmes will be handed over to other organizations such as the National Red Cross Society, governmental institutions or other welfare organizations. The ICRC will pull out after it has been assured that wherever still necessary this work will be done.

Since June 1976 more than 4,500 tons of relief has been distributed to destitute families and a special feeding programme for undernourished children has been established and is yet to be completed.

Medical assistance in the rural areas was one of the most important tasks of the ICRC in Zimbabwe. Owing to the war, only a few doctors remained in mission hospitals. With their own aircraft the ICRC medical teams flew daily to one or two of their 27 clinics around the country, and also to mission hospitals. This medical assistance is still needed and discussions are going on to hand over these activities.

The Tracing Agency will certainly be one of the last ICRC department to leave the country. In wartime civilians often have to flee from their homes and villages and become refugees in towns or in neighbouring countries. Many families are dispersed and sometimes relatives just disappear. In such circumstances, the ICRC Tracing Agency is generally the only institution where people can inquire of the whereabouts of their relatives. By collecting all information, official and unofficial, about missing persons, detainees or any other victims of the war, the Tracing Agency does all it can to find answers to all the inquiries. Unfortunately, it is not always successful and frequently success takes a very long time. Since the Tracing Agency started to operate in this country, in November 1978, more than 500 requests have been received and less than 300 have been solved at the moment. The Tracing Agency activities have to continue for months after the end of the war to solve as many cases as possible.

Another aspect of ICRC work is the ICRC shelter camp in Seke, near Salisbury, where some 640 displaced families coming from rural areas have found shelter. Most of these people might return to their villages during the coming weeks and months, but in the meantime plans to hand over this camp to the relevant State authorities are being worked out.

ICRC delegates in Zimbabwe will still be busy during the coming months. Later, the ICRC in Zimbabwe will carry on with such peacetime duties as dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law.
The outbreak of conflicts in Asia and Africa, disturbances in Latin America, bursts of violence in the Middle East, these and other situations, throughout 1979, created many difficult tasks for the International Committee of the Red Cross, whose mission was often further complicated by obstacles stemming from incomprehension on the part of individuals and nations. Despite the difficulties it encountered, the ICRC did a great deal, but at the same time not enough, in 1979, to give balm to both physical and moral wounds, to feed the hungry, house the victims of disasters and bring cheer to separated families.

A GREAT DEAL, in so far as the assistance it provided in 45 countries amounted to 30,040 tons of relief worth 55 million Swiss francs, as against 17,400 tons worth 40 million francs in 1978. A great deal, too, because ICRC staff at Geneva and in the field grew from 390 in January to 562 in December, an increase of more than 44 per cent in a single year (not counting the very large number of medical and paramedical personnel made available by National Red Cross Societies, particularly in Thailand).

NOT ENOUGH; however, in so far as the ICRC was not always able to extend the assistance and, above all, the protection, it would have wished to those in need. In 1979, visits to "political" detainees benefited some 7,100 prisoners - a respectable figure, but lower than that for the previous year (28,700). However, it should be noted that this activity is not regulated by any provisions of international humanitarian law and that in 1979 the ICRC was obliged to concentrate most of its strength and financial resources on situations of armed conflict covered by 1949 Geneva Conventions.

No record of humanitarian work, however comprehensive, can completely reflect reality. Words and figures can never convey the full scale of human suffering. While the gap between the immense humanitarian tasks to be done and the meagre resources available for their performance may often appear to be disproportionately wide the ICRC sees this, not as an obstacle, but as a spur for still greater efforts.

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JOINT ACTION FOR KHMER PEOPLE: IN KAMPUCHEA RICE SOWING IN PROGRESS

In Kampuchea, as the rainy season is starting, the joint ICRC-UNICEF programme, conducted with FAO help, has provided 28,000 tons of rice seed, while another 10,000 tons is on the way. An additional 22,000 tons has been distributed at the Thai border for the western provinces of Kampuchea. It is reported that the distribution of seed throughout the country is proceeding satisfactorily and that many farmers have been seen at work in the rice-fields.

On the other hand, difficult problems have been encountered in the distribution of food, mainly because of insufficient transport facilities. The joint programme has ordered an extra 300 lorries to supplement the 1,200 vehicles it already has in the country.

The ICRC medical co-ordinator, accompanied by a nurse and the Soviet medical team, went to Kandal Province.

In Thailand, the situation along the border began to deteriorate on 22 June. Many refugees and some of the local population fled to escape the combats. On 24 June, ICRC delegates and medical teams arrived on the scene and managed to evacuate about 170 wounded from the camps at Samet, Mak Mun and Nong Chan to hospitals in the Khao I-Dang camp.

On 25 June, ICRC President Alexandre Hay in Geneva sent a message to the Thai Government, expressing the ICRC's concern for the victims of the fighting and urging the evacuation of the civilian population from the combat zones.

STOP PRESS

The two ICRC employees (Robert Ashe, relief expert, and Pierre Perrin, co-ordinator of medical assistance) and the two press photographers who on 26 June had been reported missing in the area of Nong Chan arrived back in Aranyaprathet safe and sound on 29 June, after having spent two days on Cambodian territory.

IN BRIEF

In Malaysia the ICRC regional delegate for South-East Asia, accompanied by a delegate from Geneva, visited from 23 to 28 June two prisons containing over 700 persons detained under the Internal Security Act.

AFGHANISTAN: CONSULTATIONS IN GENEVA

The ICRC delegate arrived back from Kabul on 16 June for consultations in Geneva concerning the pursuit of ICRC activities in Afghanistan.

It will be recalled that in January 1980 an ICRC mission to Kabul had encountered the highest authorities in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. At that time the ICRC had received assurances that it would be authorized to carry out its traditional activities in protecting and assisting victims and tracing persons reported to be missing. Since then, its delegates in Afghanistan twice visited the prison of Puli Charkhi, near Kabul. At the same time, about 2.5 tons of urgently needed medical material was delivered by the ICRC to various hospitals in the capital.

Recent events in Afghanistan and certain difficulties encountered by the ICRC in its humanitarian mission have led it to recall its delegate for consultations. The authorities have again been approached and a high level mission is expected to go to Kabul within the next few weeks.

EL SALVADOR: STRENGTHENING OF THE ICRC DELEGATION

In view of the deterioration of the situation in El Salvador, the ICRC has reinforced its delegation. Three delegates, including a physician, arrived at the end of June and an additional delegate and a specialist from the Central Tracing Agency are expected in the near future.

Arrangements have also been made with the National Red Cross and the Ministry of Health to improve hospital services and the storage of medical supplies and food.

MISSION TO LATIN AMERICA

The ICRC delegate-general for Latin America, André Pasquier, returned to Geneva on 9 June after a mission to the Bahamas, Colombia, Haiti and Cuba.

In Nassau Mr. Pasquier attended the Biennial Seminar of the Bahamas Red Cross and in Port-au-Prince he took part in the First Meeting of Presidents and Delegates of National Societies of the Caribbean Countries (the latter meeting being organized under the auspices of the League of Red Cross Societies).

In all the countries visited, the delegate
general conferred with government officials and was able to discuss a number of questions relating to ICRC activities. His visit moreover enable him to strengthen the ICRC's ties with the Red Cross Societies of the Caribbean countries.

SOUTH LEBANON: EVACUATION OF WOUNDED

In the fighting which took place at Sidon at the beginning of June, ICRC delegates and Lebanese Red Cross first aiders conveyed a score of wounded to hospitals in the town. These operations were fraught with danger, as the cease-fire was not fully observed; two first aiders were slightly wounded and their ambulance hit by gunfire.

CHAD: THE ICRC RETIRES TO KOUSSERI

Several shell splinters having fallen on 19 June on the ICRC delegation in the zone held by the Peoples Armed Forces (FAP) (fortunately there were no casualties), it was decided that the delegation should withdraw temporarily to Kousseri in Cameroo. Negotiations are under way to obtain assurances that the ICRC can safely resume its mission in all parts of the country.

ICRC PRESIDENT IN ITALY

ICRC President Alexandre Hay was in Rome from 15 to 20 June on an official visit, accompanied by Mr. Melchior Borsinger, delegate-general for Europe and North America, and Mr. Serge Nessi, head of the Financing Division. The purpose of the visit was to obtain greater moral and material support from the Italian Government for ICRC activities throughout the world.

On the day of their arrival the ICRC representatives conferred with leading officials of the Italian National Red Cross and visited the Society's main services. On the same day Mr. Hay was received by the President of the Republic, Mr. Sandro Pertini.

Other talks with senior government officials enabled the presidential delegation to explain in detail the ICRC's current activities to the Ministers of Finance and of Health, the Presidents of the Chamber of Deputies and of the Senate, and the Chairmen of the Foreign Affairs Committees of the Chamber and the Senate. Discussions were held also with the leaders of the main political parties.

On 20 June the ICRC representatives were received in audience by H.H. Pope John-Paul II, after an interview with Mgr. Casaroli, the Vatican Secretary of State.

Several people the ICRC delegation wished to see being away from Rome, Mr. Hay will return in July, when he expects to meet the President of the Council of Ministers and the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

UNVEILING OF A BUST OF HENRY DUNANT IN GENEVA

Until a month ago, the City of Geneva, rather incredibly, could not boast a statue to Henry Dunant. This lack has now been made good. On 2 June a bronze bust of Dunant, in the prime of life, was unveiled at La Treille at the foot of the old town. It is the work of Luc Jaggi, a Geneva sculptor who died a few years ago.

The idea to erect a statue to the founder of the Red Cross came from a group of citizens of Geneva who collected the funds to purchase the bust and have it placed at an appropriate site. It is indeed a proper tribute paid to Dunant by his native town and the persons who pushed the scheme through are to be heartily thanked for their laudable effort.

A BOOK ON INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

The International Red Cross Conference is "the supreme deliberative body", the "parliament", of an institution which is represented the world over. It meets every four years and representatives of governments signatories to the Geneva Conventions take part in its proceedings. It adopts resolutions which give the Red Cross guidance for the future. Nevertheless, and strange as it may seem, Mr. Perruchoud's book is the first devoted entirely to International Red Cross Conferences and their resolutions. The book is entitled "Les resolutions des Conferences internationales de la Croix-Rouge" (The resolutions of the International Red Cross Conferences) (Ed. Henry Dunant Institute, 470 P., Geneva, 1979).

The book contains two parts. The first, on the legal framework, gives a history of the International Red Cross Conference, a chapter on the organization of the International Red Cross and a chapter on its
place in the international legal order.

The second part of the book studies the content, effect and implementation of resolutions adopted by the International Red Cross Conferences.

Finally, fairly well developed and particularly interesting conclusions give some general considerations on the basic ideas, structure and principles of the institution, and also on its prospects.

The reader will find in the book a detailed study, a systematic exposition and a personal view on each point. This book will be highly appreciated by all who are interested in the Red Cross.

NORWEGIAN JOURNALISTS AT GENEVA SEMINAR

Seven Norwegian journalists and four officials of the Norwegian Red Cross Society attended a seminar in Geneva from the 16th to the 21st June on the Red Cross and International Humanitarian Law.

The seminar, organized by the Henry Dunant Institute, was intended to illustrate the diverse fields of action of the international Red Cross bodies and to explain the Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Protocols.

Several senior executives of the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies addressed the gathering. A similar seminar for Danish journalists was held in Geneva last November.

RCBS IN JULY

In July RCBS will be broadcasting on the short wave, on 7,210 kHz in the 41.6 metre band on:

MONDAY 28 July in ENGLISH and FRENCH, and on WEDNESDAY 30 July in GERMAN, SPANISH and ARABIC, from 06.00 to 07.00, from 11.30 to 12.30 and from 17.00 to 18.00 GMT.

BEAMED FREQUENCIES

ASIA AND PACIFIC Tuesday 29 July: from 09.45 to 10.15 GMT, in ENGLISH on 9560 kHz, 15305 kHz, 21520 kHz and 21695 kHz.

MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

Thursday 31 July: from 09.45 to 10.15 GMT, in ENGLISH and FRENCH on 15430 kHz, 17830 kHz and 21520 kHz; in ARABIC same hours, on 21630 kHz.

IN BRIEF

A Jordanian who had strayed across the border was handed over to the Jordan authorities by the Israelis. The transfer took place across the Allenby Bridge on 5 June under ICRC auspices.

A transfer operation was arranged on 3 June at Rosh Hanikra (Ras Nakura) in the presence of the ICRC, when a Lebanese who had strayed into Israel was permitted to return to Lebanon.

The Mayor of Ramallah, who was the victim of a criminal outrage in June, was taken to Amman for medical treatment on 23 June. The transfer was arranged under ICRC auspices across the Allenby Bridge.

Visits to places of detention in Iran. Since the beginning of June, ICRC delegates stationed at Teheran have visited several places of detention, namely, at Tabriz, Kermanshah, Isfahan, Mashad and Shiraz. More visits are planned to detainees in prisons at Sari, Abadan and Ahwaz.

Mission in Namibia / South West Africa:

On 3 June the head of the ICRC delegation in South Africa, Roger Santschy, accompanied by a delegate and a physician, visited 118 prisoners in South African hands in the Marienthal camp in Namibia/South West Africa.

Mission in Paraguay: from 9 to 12 June, the ICRC regional delegate visited five places of detention in Asuncion, where 7 prisoners were detained for political reasons.

Three places of detention in Argentina were visited in June by ICRC delegates, who saw altogether 36 detainees. The ICRC team is currently visiting the La Plata Prison.

Seminar in Montevideo: The first inter-American seminar on the dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law and the principles of the Red Cross was held in Montevideo from 30 May to 7 June. It was organized by the Uruguayan Red Cross and attended by delegates from ten South American countries, the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies.

Training course for delegates: From 15 to 20 June, at Cartigny, near Geneva, the second 1980 training course for ICRC delegates was attended by 25 candidates.
IN BRIEF

In Bucarest, a seminar of the Balkan Red Cross Societies on the role and activities of voluntary nurses was held from 27 to 30 May. The ICRC was represented by Philippe Grand d'Hauteville, regional delegate for Europe, and by François Musy from the Medical Division.

Visit to the Federal Republic of Germany: From 2 to 4 June the head of the Legal Division of the ICRC, Hans-Peter Gasser, was in the Federal Republic of Germany on the invitation of the National Red Cross Society. Mr. Gasser took part in discussions on international humanitarian law, conferred with governmental officials and visited the International Tracing Service (ITS) in Arolsen.

BACKGROUND

AID FOR THE BOAT PEOPLE IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA
A TRACING BUREAU NETWORK

The ordeals of the Vietnamese boat people have frequently hit the headlines of the world press in recent months. A number of humanitarian organizations - the most important being the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) - have been very active in providing temporary shelter and resettling the refugees arriving on the beaches of the countries of South-East Asia. The role of the Red Cross has been to furnish complementary aid, mainly by tracing missing persons and reuniting members of dispersed families. To that end the ICRC Central Tracing Agency has set up, together with the National Societies in the area, a network linking several offices whose work is comparatively little known. Claude Châtelain, press attache at the ICRC, who went to Malaysia and Indonesia to see for herself what was being done to help the refugees, has written the following report for the ICRC Bulletin.

Together with several dozen of his fellow countrymen, the young man whose story is related here left Viet Nam covertly on board a fishing boat. The journey was long and dangerous and the passengers suffered much hardship. One country after another refused to let them land. Finally, they were allowed to disembark on Malaysian soil and were transferred to the Island of Bidong.

The young man knew that a brother of his had been living in Australia for several years. He was anxious to join him there, but first of all, he had to write to him. The problem was that he could not leave Pulau Bidong to post his letter. What was to be done? He was told to apply to the "Tracing and Mailing Service" (TMS) of the Malaysian Red Crescent Society, the office which had been opened in February 1979 to settle this kind of problem for the many thousands of Vietnamese boat people.

Some months later, the young man's sister also fled from Viet Nam in practically identical circumstances, but she finally ended up not in Malaysia but in Indonesia and was put in the refugee camp on Pulau Galang, near Tanjung Pinang. Her immediate concern was to find her brother's whereabouts. She knew the day he had left and the registration number of the boat on which he had sailed, but had no idea where he had landed - or even if he was still alive. She was told she could enquire at the TMS of the Indonesian Red Cross, which had three of its voluntary workers living on the island. Her enquiry was sent to Jakarta and the voluminous TMS card-index there revealed the boat's number, though not her brother's name. When it was found that the boat had arrived in Malaysia, the enquiry was transmitted to the TMS at Kuala Lumpur. Here again, the information relating to the brother, who had meanwhile been accepted by the Australian Government, was found in the card-index; a TMS employee contacted him at a transit camp in Kuala Lumpur, where he had been transferred from Pulau Bidong before leaving for Australia. The young man was able to send a message to his sister through the TMS, and in this way contact between the two was re-established.

Development of the network

From 1975 onwards, an unusual phenomenon impinged on the attention of the world; the exodus of Vietnamese by sea on a massive scale. At first, it was only occasionally that a boatload of refugees would land on the coast of a neighbouring country and their arrival did not cause much of a stir. But very soon the number of boats increased dramatically, and in 1978 and 1979 tens of thousands of Vietnamese refugees landed on the beaches in various countries of South-East Asia. The
governments concerned, fearful of the consequences of such a large influx of refugees, started to prevent them forcibly from landing on their territories. Some of these small craft sailed the high seas for months, their decks packed with people from gunwale to gunwale. Very often they were far from being seaworthy and fell an easy prey to raiders and to the hazards of the open sea.

Soon, world opinion was shaken by the extent of the human misery and the hardships endured by the "boat people", as they came to be known. The UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations stepped in. When many countries offered to take in a certain number of the Vietnamese refugees, the South-East Asian States agreed to allow them temporary asylum. Camps were set up, and they were housed, fed and cared for. After so many setbacks and suffering, hope at last dawned that they might once again begin to lead a normal existence somewhere.

Besides providing material assistance, it was necessary to give the refugees the chance to get in touch with members of their families.

Accordingly, in 1979, offices of the Tracing Agency were opened by the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies affected by this problem. For most of those Societies this was an entirely new undertaking: how to establish a card-index, how to obtain and record the information from various sources, how to utilize that information, what procedure should be applied to follow up requests for tracing persons? These and many other questions raised by the newly-created Tracing and Mailing Services were all matters which had to be settled competently and precisely. The Central Tracing Agency, therefore, seconded some members of its specialized staff to these Services in 1979, to train local personnel for these particular tasks, and an "adviser" was also despatched for several months. In some cases, the work was taken over by the League of Red Cross Societies. In April 1980, at a TMS conference (the second of its kind) organized at Jakarta, it was considered that good results had been obtained and that, as from June, the local TMS would be entrusted with the work all on their own. A single "adviser" from Geneva would remain for the whole region, to help settle any particularly complicated problem that might arise.

The network of the Tracing and Mailing Services for the Vietnamese boat people has grown in proportion to the size of the problem and includes the National Societies of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Hong Kong and Thailand. All the TMS are directed by women. They have a single aim: to alleviate the psychological suffering of the boat people.

Mail and money transfers

In Malaysia, the main TMS office is at Kuala Lumpur. In February 1979, it had a mere handful of employees, but by May 1980 their number had grown to thirty full-time staff, including seven field officers, who week after week visit the camps on the east coast of Malaysia and the outlying islands, and the transit camps in Kuala Lumpur. They collect the thousands of letters which are delivered to the TMS post office box every day in the camps, and supervise their distribution, usually carried out by members of the Vietnamese Camp Committees. They seek persons in respect of whom enquiries have been made, and take care of the refugees' banking operations.

The TMS has a special bank account, to which families abroad can transfer money or send cheques for their relatives in the camps. It hands over to the payees a hundred Malay dollars per month, while the balance is credited to a savings account. When a refugee leaves definitely to start life anew in a receiving country, he thus has a nest-egg which he can take away with him.

Quite often refugees view this procedure with suspicion and do not inform their relatives or friends about it. They prefer to receive by registered post a cheque payable to themselves and it is only when they find that it cannot be cashed unless it is endorsed to the order of the Red Crescent Society that they realize their mistake.

This is just one more stage on the hard road towards learning how to be a displaced person. The TMS field officers have understanding for this sort of attitude and show a good deal of patience. If necessary, they explain over and over again what should be done about remittances and take the greatest care that no misunderstanding should arise: every recipient must come in person, prove his identity by means of the card received from the UNHCR, open his envelope and check the content in front of the cashier, sign a receipt - a copy of which is sent to the person who sent the remittance - and put their thumbprint on it.

In the Kuala Lumpur offices everyone is
busy working but the atmosphere is much more relaxed. Cards must be filled in, air-letters (heads of families receive four a month) have to be sealed and stamped (this is done by a machine), envelopes must be prepared for money transfers, replies sent to enquiries. All these young men and women, a complete cross-section of the very varied Malay types, are directed gently but firmly by Evelyn Naidu, who is of Indian origin. She confided quite candidly that in all her working life the job she has been doing here since February 1979 has been the most rewarding one.

**Camps and islands**

In 1979 there were in Indonesia eleven camps holding over 50,000 refugees. In August 1979, the Indonesian Red Cross set up its Tracing and Mailing Service. The nucleus of the Jakarta card-index was first constituted by about a hundred enquiries about persons who were thought to be in Indonesia. The card-index expanded very quickly as enquiries began to pour in from all corners of the world. As most of the camps were situated in the Riau Archipelago it was very soon found necessary - especially with a view to conducting enquiries on the spot - to open a sub-office of the TMS at Tanjung Pinang, on Bintan Island, the administrative and trading centre of the archipelago.

The data on refugees are centralized at Jakarta in a card-index containing more than two hundred thousand cards and kept up to date regularly in the light of information provided by the various humanitarian organizations involved in aid to the boat people. All enquiries received direct at the Jakarta TMS and those coming from the other National Societies forming part of the TMS network and from the Central Tracing Agency in Geneva are dealt with at Jakarta. Enquiries that have to be carried out in the field, that is to say on Pulau Galang, where all refugees formerly in other camps have now been collected, are dealt with at Tanjung Pinang. The last of those camps, in the Anambas Archipelago, was closed down and the refugees transferred to Pulau Galang in May 1980.

At Tanjung Pinang, most of the work is concerned with sorting the mail. All letters for the camp are sorted by boat registration numbers; a list of names is then drawn up in triplicate, two copies are sent to the camps, one to be posted up and the other used for cross-checking. Every addressee must sign on the list when receiving his letter, to avoid complaints. Outgoing air-letters sent by the refugees in the camp are stamped by a machine in Tanjung Pinang; if necessary, extra stamps are stuck on (at Pulau Galang postage stamps are on sale). Also at Tanjung Pinang, about 800 cards a day are filled in, but none are kept; they are all sent to Jakarta to complete the information stored in the card-index there.

A young women, Dwi Sisronegoro, is at the head of the Indonesian TMS. She co-ordinates the work of a staff of 35 persons, 13 at Jakarta and 22 at Tanjung Pinang, where she has been only once since the sub-office was opened. Until the end of May 1980, an "adviser" from the Central Tracing Agency had been stationed there, assisted by Netty Lenggogenie, the number two in the Service. Now, the adviser has left and Netty is fully in charge.

So Dwi will have to go more frequently to Tanjung Pinang, although she has none of her family there; a small problem will have to be overcome, as the custom in Indonesia demands that a woman should not travel alone, or else, if she does so, that a member of her family should meet her on her arrival and put her up at his or her house!

Malaysia and Indonesia are two countries which have been particularly affected by the exodus of the boat people. In addition to their regular activities, their Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies have also had to deal, through their cards, circulars, printed forms and so forth, and at times in difficult conditions, with the most fragile kind of material: human feelings, which are all the more tender when they are those of human beings like these refugees, who have been so dreadfully buffeted by fate.

Besides these two links, there are in the TMS network in South-East Asia several others, whose activities are not much publicized but which are just as essential as the material assistance which the people receive.
BEYOND THE STATISTICS

For readers of this Bulletin, as for the general public, the work performed by the International Committee of the Red Cross is often presented in the form of statistical data: number of places of detention visited, so many tons of relief supplies distributed, thousands of family messages sent during this or that conflict, and so on.

Yet, although the figures give information about the volume of work done, they provide only a vague idea of what the ICRC's action really means to those who stand in need of it. The mere sight of a Red Cross flag in an area where terror stalks the land brings more than protection to the population under threat, it tells them that they will not be subjected to arbitrary decisions. Relief supplies to hospitals cut off from the outside, family messages delivered to separated relatives bring with them joy and hope. And one can imagine the emotion of the detainee who is able at last to talk privately with the ICRC delegate, visiting him in his cell when he thought that he had been forgotten by all.

The psychological aspect associated with all humanitarian activity is often as important as the material relief.

Behind the cold array of figures there emerges the warmth of personal contact, a sum of hope and life which is immeasurable and which can never be expressed in the form of statistics.

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AFGHANISTAN: ICRC PROPOSAL REJECTED

Since mid-June 1980, the ICRC has repeatedly put forward the proposal to send a high-level mission to Kabul, to discuss with the Afghan Government the problems which have arisen in connection with the ICRC's action to provide aid to the victims of the conflict.

The ICRC approached the Afghan Government when its delegates were recalled to Geneva on 15 June, because of obstacles encountered in the performance of their mission: not only were they not allowed to extend their programme of protection and assistance, but their visas were not renewed.

On 26 July, the Afghan Government notified the ICRC that it was not prepared to receive the proposed mission or to discuss the problems in question. In a message sent to the Head of State on 1 August, the ICRC asked that the authorities might reconsider their position. The Government of the U.S.S.R. was also approached in connection with this matter.

At the end of January, following assurances it had received from the highest authorities, the ICRC had opened in Kabul a full-time delegation. Between that date and 15 June, when the ICRC delegates left Kabul, they made two visits to the prison of Puli Charkhi and provided medical supplies for the hospitals in the capital.

OPERATION TO AID THE KHMER PEOPLES: HIGH-LEVEL TALKS

With a view to creating conditions favourable to the continuance of humanitarian work, not only in Kampuchea but along the whole of the Thai border, high-level talks were conducted with the authorities concerned from 16 to 25 July, in a frank and constructive atmosphere.

The discussions in Thailand led by representatives of the ICRC and UNICEF and by Sir Robert Jackson, special representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, were successful chiefly in redefining the division of responsibilities in the area south of Aranyaprathet: the ICRC will restrict its operations to the medical field and the traditional role of protection. UNICEF is to organize the distribution of food to the most vulnerable groups of civilians (women and children), with the help of WFP (World Food Programme) and a number of voluntary agencies. Discussions will continue in Bangkok.

At Phnom Penh, Mr. Jean-Pierre Hocké, ICRC Director of Operations, and top officials of WFP and UNICEF have had talks with the various ministry officials concerned. Assurances were obtained regarding the persons who were to receive the relief and the possibilities of supervising the distribution of food and seed.

IN THE FIELD....

In Kampuchea, the delegates of the joint operation accompanied several relief convoys during July. They travelled to the region of Tonle Sap and to the provinces of Svay Rieng, Kompong Cham and Kompong Som. Everywhere the delegates were able to see the progress in planting rice, the seed for which was supplied by the international community.

In the medical sphere, the first stage in the programme for putting the country's hospital services back into operation, begun by the ICRC in April, has now been completed. More than 600 standard units of medical supplies and medicines have been distributed in the village clinics and the district dispensaries, with about ten surgical units provided to hospitals. The assistance given amounts to almost one million Swiss francs and will continue, during the second half of the year, on the basis of a similar budget divided up in roughly the same way (500 dispensary units, covering a total population of approximately 5 million inhabitants).

A fifth medical team, provided by the Swedish Red Cross, will be operational at Svay Rieng from the end of August. Four teams, from East Germany, Hungary, Poland and the USSR, are already working in the provinces of Kompong Thom, Kompong Speu, Kompong Cham and Tak Mao.

In Thailand, the tension prevailing during recent weeks on the border with Kampuchea has resulted in the flight of many thousands of refugees from the camps. These movements of population and the fear of increasing violence have led to a reduction in the distribution of food. The medical teams, on the other hand, have had to cope with an abnormally high amount of work, owing to the influx of wounded refugees. The Red Cross medical personnel in Thailand number 214 persons provided by the ICRC and by 21 National Societies.

In Viet Nam Chinese repatriated to Taiwan:
The repatriation of 140 Chinese, former residents in Viet Nam, to Taiwan was organized through the ICRC. They flew via Bangkok on 3 July.
ICRC PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL ENVOY IN CHAD

Laurent Marti, special envoy of the ICRC President, left Geneva on 26 July for Cameroun and Chad. His assignment is to make a renewed attempt, by means of thorough discussions, to remove the obstacles to ICRC operations in Chad. Mr. Marti is to meet the President of the Provisional Government of National Unity, Goukouni Oueddei; he will also see Hissen Habré and the heads of the various political groups.

The ICRC delegates in Chad were obliged for safety reasons to quit N'Djamena on 20 June, and they are temporarily based at Kousseri, on the Cameroun bank of the Chari river. Since then, the ICRC has been able to carry on its operations only in one part of the Chad capital (zone occupied by the "People's Armed Forces" (FAP); for over two months, it has been unable to have access to the zone held by the "Armed Forces of the North" (FAN).

BOLIVIA: ICRC ACTION

Following the coup d'état in Bolivia on 17 July, the ICRC regional delegate for the Andean countries and a medical delegate went to La Paz, where they arrived on 25 July. In conformity with the mandate of the ICRC, they at once made approaches to the authorities with the aim of organizing protection and assistance to the victims (visits to persons held in detention as a result of the events, in particular).

ARABS PRISON PROTEST: ICRC ACTION

During July, ICRC delegates in Israel and the Occupied Territories made a number of unscheduled visits to jails where Arab civilians are imprisoned. The visits followed the start of a hunger strike by the inmates of Nafha prison in the Negev desert.

The ICRC was given permission by the authorities to visit the jail on July 18th and on 23rd, after some of the prisoners were transferred to the prison at Beit Maatsar, ICRC delegates were able to visit them and speak to them in private. During the same week, two detainees who had been transferred to Beit Maatsar's Hospital died.

On July 24th, the delegates made another visit to Nafha and saw six detainees in private. They later passed on news about the detainees' condition to their families, and also obtained permission for the families of those held at Beit Maatsar to visit them there on July 27th.

Meanwhile, relatives of the detainees began a sit-in and hunger strike at the ICRC office in Jerusalem in support of the prisoners. Demonstrations were also held at the ICRC's offices in Beirut and Amman.

In a statement to the press on July 25th, the ICRC recalled that since Nafha prison opened on May 2nd 1980 and until the start of the hunger strike, ICRC delegates had visited the jail three times and reported their observations to the Israeli authorities at various levels.

The ICRC has been visiting civilian Arab detainees in Israel and the Occupied Territories for 13 years.

THE WESTERN SAHARA CONFLICT AND THE ICRC

On 8 July an ICRC delegate and a doctor, who were on a mission to Mauritania, again visited 115 Polisario Front fighters still held captive in the country.

Since their capture in September 1976 - nearly four years ago - the Mauritanian and Moroccan prisoners in the hands of the Polisario Front have still not been seen by ICRC delegates, despite the numerous representations made by the ICRC to the authorities concerned.

The Moroccan Government, too, has not yet authorized the ICRC to make a further visit to about a hundred Algerian prisoners and a number of Polisario Front combatants in Moroccan hands. The previous visit was in the spring of 1978.

AFRICA: 20 MILLION NEEDED

At the end of June, a further appeal was made to 77 Governments and 108 National Red Cross Societies for funds to cover the costs of ICRC activities throughout the African continent. This appeal, like its predecessors, is backed up by a detailed report, published on 1 July, summarizing the operations of the ICRC in Africa during the first half of 1980 and outlining those planned for the rest of the year, accompanied by a statement of the current financial position and an estimate of the costs. The amount requested is 20 million Swiss francs, which will be divided up almost equally between the protection and assistance operations in the Horn of Africa, Uganda and Chad and the activities in southern Africa. When hostilities were brought to an end in Zimbabwe, ICRC activities in southern Africa were considerably reduced for a time but in recent
months they have been increasing in Angola (programme of assistance to the thousands of displaced persons there).

The report reminds donors that the ICRC would prefer to receive contributions which are not earmarked for any particular action.

VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA: JOINT ICRC/LEAGUE MISSION IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

At the invitation of the Chinese Red Cross, a joint ICRC/League mission was in the People's Republic of China from 15 to 24 June, as part of the international Red Cross action programme for the benefit of Vietnamese refugees.

Patrick Vice, regional delegate of the League for Hong Kong and Macao, and Florence Vondra, head of the Asia section of the Central Tracing Agency (CTA), had several talks in Peking and Canton with leading officials of the National Society; they mainly discussed questions relating to medical assistance and tracing activities for the benefit of Vietnamese refugees. They also visited the Red Cross hospital in Canton and several State farms and refugee reception centres in the province of Kwantung.

FORTY YEARS WITH THE ICRC: MELCHIOR BORSINGER RETIRES

Melchior Borsinger - twinkling eyes, handsome moustache, very much like a distinguished British gentleman of the old school in appearance, but endowed with a core of Swiss solid common sense - retired at the end of July. He had spent no less than forty years with the ICRC and at the end of his career was delegate general for Europe and North America. Mr. Borsinger enjoyed the affection of his colleagues at the ICRC and commanded the respect of all those he had to deal with. In the course of his years at the Red Cross, he had accumulated an unrivalled fund of experience and knowledge of Red Cross matters.

Melchior Borsinger's father was a Swiss diplomat, his mother Irish, and his early days were spent in Great Britain, Belgium, France, Austria and Switzerland, before he settled in Geneva towards the beginning of the second world war. In 1940 he joined the ICRC and worked for a time at the Prisoners of War Central Agency and then in the press department. Later, from 1946 to 1950, he was assistant to the director of relief operations. This was at a period when huge food relief programmes were being organized by the ICRC in aid of countries (such as Greece) which needed massive assistance to help them recover after the war years.

From 1950, Melchior Borsinger worked at the European desk, was assistant to the presidential office, directed for a time the International Tracing Service at Arolsen and performed many different missions in various European countries. He was appointed delegate general for Europe and North America in 1970. Because of his wide experience of international relations, he also travelled extensively on missions to many parts of the world and took part in several international conferences, dealing with Red Cross as well as with United Nations affairs.

"When I look back, I am particularly struck by the evolution in the tasks assumed by the ICRC. Whereas its mandate during the war years was rather rigidly enforced - to protect the victims -, today, it is defined to cover a much wider range of activities, for one can no longer detach protection duties from those related to assistance, by the very nature of the conflicts, most of which occur in the developing countries. I do not consider at all this evolution as a restriction on the ICRC's field of activity, as some people might be led to think; on the contrary, I believe that it is a significant force for a large-scale development of the whole of the Red Cross movement".

Melchior Borsinger's optimism is reflected in his many "non-Red Cross" activities, such as horse-riding, gardening, history and many others, to which he will no doubt be at leisure to devote all his time, and in the pursuit of which we wish him many happy and fruitful years.

ICRC PRESIDENT IN LIBYA

ICRC President Alexandre Hay was in Tripoli from 7 to 9 July at the invitation of the Libyan Government. He was accompanied by Serge Nessi, head of the Financing Division, and Jean Hoefliger, delegate-general for the Middle East and North Africa. Mr. Hay was received by Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, the President of the General People's Congress (Prime Minister) and the Ministers of Health and of the Economy.

In-depth discussions enabled the President of the ICRC to explain the activities of the Committee and the problems facing it.

The Libyan authorities and Red Crescent not only expressed considerable interest in
these discussions but also assured the presidential delegation of their full support to the action of the ICRC.

UNITED STATES:
MISSING PERSONS CONFERENCE

A conference, organized by the American branch of Amnesty International on the question of missing persons, was held at the end of June in Racine (United States). The ICRC, which was invited to send a representative, despatched Nicolas Vecsey, deputy director of the Central Tracing Agency. Some thirty participants, belonging to various bodies and organizations from all over the world, also attended.

The matter discussed at the conference concerned the world-wide problem of missing persons and the action taken by non-governmental organizations. Nicolas Vecsey read two papers on the Central Tracing Agency's tasks in this domain.

Before returning to Geneva, he took the opportunity of his stay in North America to visit the tracing services of the Canadian Red Cross in Toronto and those of the American National Red Cross in Washington.

FINANCING IN LATIN AMERICA

A prospecting mission was carried out in six countries of Latin America from 11 June to 16 July. The deputy head of the Financing Division of the ICRC, Paul Schoch, travelled to Venezuela, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Panama and Mexico, meeting government representatives and the heads of National Red Cross Societies to describe the ICRC activities and the resultant budgetary obligations.

Those consulted by Mr. Schoch showed understanding of the ICRC's problems and promised their full support.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF THE RED CROSS

The July-August issue of International Review of the Red Cross contains a paper by Jacques Moreillon, director of the ICRC Department of Principles and Law, on "The Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross, Peace and Human Rights" and an article entitled "Application of the New Humanitarian Law" by S. Miyazaki, professor of law at the Meiji University of Tokyo.

In the same issue may be found an article commemorating the centenary of the Argentine Red Cross, celebrated in Buenos Aires last June.

ANNUAL REPORT 1979: INNOVATIONS

The ICRC is innovating this year by including in its Annual Report 1979 a very well documented introduction summarizing the main chapters of the Report.

An offprint to be made of this introduction in French, English, Spanish and German will be a low-cost and effective means of informing the general public, the Report itself being rather intended for professional circles.

The Annual Report 1979 is already available in French and English. Its Spanish and German versions will be coming out shortly. Another innovation will be the Arabic version of the Report which is being prepared.

IN BRIEF

ICRC President in Italy: As announced in the previous Bulletin, ICRC President Alexandre Hay, accompanied by Serge Nessi, head of the Financing Division, returned to Rome for talks with some of the persons who were absent during his previous visit in June. Mr. Hay met the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Defence Minister, as well as several senior officials, who all reaffirmed the Italian Government's support for the International Committee.

Jordan: Mr. Jacques Moreillon, Director of the Division of Principles and Law, and Mr. Serge Nessi, Head of the Financing Division, stayed in Amman, Jordan, from 23 to 25 July. There, in addition to seeing the leading personalities of the National Red Crescent Society, they met the Minister of Health and the General Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Several subjects were discussed, including the financing of the ICRC and the organization of a seminar on the dissemination of international humanitarian law to be held in 1981.

The ICRC delegate in Iran visited two prisons in the province of Khuzistan in July. At Ahwaz, he saw about 330 detainees, and seven at Abadan. Visits to places of detention in the provinces will continue in August.

Relief in Angola: In July, the distribution of ICRC relief to displaced persons in southern Angola totalled almost 35 tons of food, 4,200 blankets and 500 kg of soap. For the first time, supplies have been distributed at Chiumbo and Sfinge to 2,800 adults and 2,000 children, who received food and blankets.
IN BRIEF

Uganda: a series of visits to places of detention in Uganda began on 28 July and will continue until the end of August. The ICRC team - two delegates and a doctor - have visited about 15 prisons. The last series of visits took place in March 1980; interim visits have been made since then to some prisons, because of the problems noted (in particular, epidemics and deaths among the detainees owing to malnutrition).

Chile: The ICRC regional delegate for the Cono Sur in South America, François Robadey, who was in Chile from 23 June to 3 July, visited eight places of detention, holding 122 detainees.

THAILAND: A DELEGATE'S IMPRESSION

On his return from Thailand, one of the ICRC information delegates gave us as an account of the humanitarian work being on the border with Kampuchea:

Sa Kaeo; at one side of the road, some thirty or forty miles from Aranyaprathet. A great fenced area containing rows of bamboo shelters, with, in the centre, a water tower bearing the letters UNHCR. From the road, only the roofs are visible, stretching as far as the eye can see. The reality strikes home to the visitor: this is no longer the fictional world of the television reports. Yet the first impression fades as more harrowing scenes appear, only to be effaced in turn by the sum total of human despair.

Samet: crowds of people throng the narrow road leading from the "old" to the "new" Samet. The "old" Samet was a reception camp with fairly solid shelters and a minimum basic infrastructure in anticipation of the rainy season: roads, drainage, ditches, a hospital. Now that the order came to evacuate it, the refugees must move to another site - the "new" Samet - about two kilometres distant, slightly nearer the frontier. The shelters have been dismantled, carried on men's backs and re-erected in the mud and pools of water caused by the rain. The camp looks like an anthill; the people worm in silence, their faces devoid of expression, registering neither hope nor despair. They are always being moved on and have grown resigned. Surrounded by all the armies fighting in Kampuchea their best guarantee of survival is passivity.

The refugees, numbering about 80,000, had not quite settled into the new camp when they had to disperse into the forest to escape the fighting between rival factions. The camp was looted and partly

BANGKOK - PHNOM PENH AIRLIFT: SOME ELOQUENT FIGURES

The co-ordinator for the Cambodia/Thailand airlift operations, Roland Riegert, said that the eight months he spent on the job were the hardest in the whole of his career but also the most rewarding. When he arrived in Bangkok in October 1979, he managed to get the airlift operating to Phnom Penh in just three days.

Roland Riegert received full support from the Bangkok Airport Authority, which allocated three aircraft parking spaces for the ICRC and did not charge any airport fees. For eight months, he directed the operations without a single major incident taking place. During all that period, twelve big cargo transport planes (mainly C-130's and DC-10's) were used, and ten crews numbering altogether 332 personnel of various nationalities flew at different times, made 1,400 flights and carried over 12,000 tons of relief supplies. The record carried in a single day was in April when three flights transported 268 tons of goods.
REVIVING THE PAST: TRADITIONAL KHMER DANCING

It was very hot at Khao I-Dang, but a large crowd turned out to watch the first show of traditional Khmer dancing by the former Palais Royal Classical Dance Troupe of Phnom Penh.

Thanks to gifts of costumes and instruments by private donors, the troupe's fifty performers - dancers, musicians, singers, costumiers and decorators, all living at the Khao I-dang holding centre - have been able to revive their show.

The company, which has now been put together again, is anxious to find a third country where its members might preserve this part of Cambodia's cultural heritage and become financially independent on the professional stage.

Near Kok Sun, at the side of the road, some ten thousand people wait to be evacuated: they sit in close ranks, without speaking, guarded by Thai soldiers. They fled the camps at Mak Mun and Nong Chan when fighting broke out two days before. They were brought to the area of Nong Chan camp by bus. A thousand Kampucheans on bicycles, who had crossed the frontier to find food and could not go back to their country because of the fighting, followed the buses. The former rice paddies all around are inches deep in water, and the land looks like a morass. The refugees huddle together on little islets of dry ground. Four bamboo poles and a plastic sheet provided by the ICRC and UNICEF enable them to make a frail shelter. There is no clean water, there are no latrines: the refugees do what they can, dig holes, make the best of the situation and await the next order to move on. This will surely come in a day or two - just enough time to get settled a little, then everything has to be dismantled and they are once more on the move, for a kilometre or so. Each person carries as much as possible, personal belongings only. Some women travelling alone carry a small child and a bit of food. They are unable to load themselves with anything more - bamboo poles or plastic sheets - and they certainly have nothing to give them shelter when it rains.

Hunger is no longer the main problem of these refugees. The food distributions appear to be sufficient. But there is the black market which arouses people's cupidity and sometimes causes violent disputes. Insecurity has replaced the struggle for survival. Until a political solution has been found, the Cambodian refugees will go on being harried, moved from place to place and threatened, in spite of the international aid being lavished on them.

A RAY OF HOPE AT KHAO I-DANG...

Khao I-dang is one of the HCR camps in Thailand accommodating some 120,000 displaced Kampucheans. Each day the ICRC Central Tracing Agency delegates come to bring family mail, post up requests of people seeking news of their relatives or to make enquiries on persons reported missing.

The Agency office is a small bamboo hut with a table and chairs. On the uneven gravel floor lie large cardboard boxes full of mail addressed to cities all over the world: Paris, San Francisco, Bern, Sydney... all represent hope for those sending letters, and for those receiving them the joy of having found a relative thought to be lost forever.

At the entrance of the hut a silent crowd closely follows the sad story of a woman whose words are translated into French by a relative. The woman anxiously follows the dialogue, which she can only partly understand. Hearing her name mentioned several times reassures her that it is indeed her case being dealt with. The translator says: "She is my cousin. Her husband has two wives and is in France with the second, whom he passed off as his sister. The name of his first wife was not recorded on the Red Cross enquiry card when the family arrived here. That was how she was separated from her relatives and remained at the camp with one of her sons".

This is but one of the thousands of cases which the Agency tries to settle by re-establishing contacts between persons separated by circumstances.
PROTECTION ACTIVITIES AT RISK

A careful observer regularly following ICRC activities throughout the world will not have failed to note the enormous difficulties encountered by the organization in carrying out what it calls its protection activities for people who have fallen into enemy hands. At a time when armed conflicts are increasing in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the ICRC has the utmost difficulty in ensuring the application of humanitarian rules, despite their universal acceptance at the conference table. For instance, the access of ICRC delegates to captured combatants remains unsatisfactory in far too many cases and protection activities for populations subjected against their will to the authority of foreign troops are often not very effective. Yet never in the history of humanity have the legal instruments for the protection of human beings in time of war been so broad-based. The four Geneva Conventions signed by almost 150 States were supplemented three years ago by two Protocols to adapt the Conventions to the realities of armed conflict in the world today. The partial failure of ICRC protection activities is directly linked to the restrictive or even obstructive interpretation sometimes made by States of their treaty obligations. Thousands of civilians or captured combatants are thus deprived of all protection and subjected to the arbitrary authority of their enemies, often amidst indifference on the part of the international community.

The ICRC does not have the political, economic or military power to induce States to meet their commitments. It is for them alone to respect and ensure respect for humanitarian rules, as is clearly stated in Article 1 common to the four Geneva Conventions. The turbulent state of international relations today demands that all States realize that disregard for fundamental humanitarian rules will lead straight to disaster. It is therefore high time to react.

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BOLIVIA: PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE FOR DETAINES

In Bolivia, ICRC protection activities, begun on 25 July immediately after authorization had been granted by the Bolivian authorities, are still in progress. During the first series of visits ending on 17 August, the delegates spoke privately with 176 detainees held in four places of detention and three hospitals, in La Paz and its surroundings.

On 18 August, the delegates went to Beni department, where they saw 69 detainees in 2 camps.

During the visits, relief articles (medicaments, toiletries, blankets, straw mattresses) to a value of 5,000 dollars were distributed to those detainees who had no money and received no kind of assistance from their families.

The ICRC also paid the fares from La Paz to Trinidad for five persons who had recently been released but did not have any money to return to their homes in Trinidad.

CAMBODIA / THAILAND OPERATIONS

In Cambodia

During the past few weeks, the ICRC delegates in Cambodia went to various places in the provinces of Kompong Cham, Svay Rieng, Kompong Chhnang, Battambang, Sisophon and Pursat. They witnessed considerable activity in the paddy-fields and market-places, and along the roads and dykes that are being gradually repaired. They noted that Kampuchean are making a special effort to improve hospitals and infirmaries.

The objectives of the international aid programme for the period September to December 1980 were defined when senior officials of the joint ICRC/UNICEF operation visited Phnom Penh recently. Emphasis was laid on the importance of checking the distribution of relief and developing medical activities. Results have been most encouraging: weekly meetings with the official "Committee to combat famine" have made it possible to find solutions to numerous technical problems connected with the different assistance programmes; a better use of the logistical means has contributed to the transport and delivery of larger quantities of seeds and food in the provinces; delegates are also finding it easier to move around.

"BOAT PEOPLE": APPEAL FOR FUNDS

On 28 July a joint appeal was launched by the League and the ICRC for funds to enable both organizations to continue contributing to the assistance programme carried out by the South-East Asian Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for the boat people.

This appeal for nearly 8 million Swiss francs is extremely urgent, for as at 23 July the assistance programmes were faced with a considerable deficit. Moreover, should the donor Societies not respond rapidly to this new appeal, the League and the ICRC would be compelled to reduce considerably or perhaps even discontinue the activities financed by the Red Cross.

In past weeks, medical activities increased considerably. South of Aranyaprathet, large sections of the population were afflicted by a malaria epidemic; quinine and mosquito-nets were supplied. All along the border, the tense situation which prevailed, causing a considerable movement among the population, did not make the work of the medical teams any easier.

Doctors and nurses working under extremely trying conditions were backed up by mobile dispensaries.
TIMOR: PROGRAMME EXTENDED TO MID-OCTOBER

The joint aid programme organized by the Indonesian Red Cross and ICRC in Timor was originally planned for a period of six months from November 1979 to April 1980. By common consent, it has been extended to 15 October 1980.

A general improvement in the situation of the inhabitants who have been receiving this aid has been observed. Besides the aid programme, the Red Cross is distributing rice and maize seed furnished by the CRS (Catholic Relief Services), in order to encourage the development of agricultural projects.

In some villages, whose inhabitants do not have enough protein foods, a project has been begun to raise chickens that will thrive in local conditions, and it is planned to have also ducks where water is available. Vegetables are also grown for the needs of hospital patients.

Other smaller tasks have been completed: bamboo water conduits have been repaired, new channels installed, a water cistern constructed for the hospital at Uatulari and bridges, roads and medical posts repaired. Inhabitants are given instruction in first aid and hygiene.

Of the fourteen villages selected for the second stage, ten (61,829 persons) are getting medical and food assistance, while the remaining four (27,276 persons) receive only medical aid.

With the end of the rainy season quite a number of problems have been tackled. Considerable damage has been caused to roads; violent winds and poor visibility have restricted the movements of helicopters, very rough seas have rendered the south coast of Timor almost inaccessible by sea. The logistic infrastructure has consequently had to be constantly readapted to the circumstances.

The following items were purchased at Jakarta for the continuation of the programme: 500 tons of dried beans, 61 tons of oil, 30 tons of salt, 8 tons of milk for children, 32 tons of sugar, 88 tons of soap and 15,000 blankets.

The medical aid programmes undertaken in the first stage are being continued. Although the problems of under-nourishment in the villages receiving aid have not been entirely eliminated, the number of children suffering from marasmus is steadily diminishing. Cases of malaria, too, have gone down. A programme has been set up to combat filariasis and patients suffering from tuberculosis are seen at regular intervals. The number of births is on the increase.

On 25 August, there were 264 people working for the Indonesian Red Cross on the joint programme (6 Red Cross staff, 11 doctors, 16 nurses, 135 local voluntary workers, 14 drivers and 82 workmen and 3 ICRC delegates (one doctor and two relief delegates).

ISRAELI PRISONS: MORE ICRC VISITS

The hunger strike by Arab detainees in Israeli prisons was the chief concern of the ICRC delegates in Israel and the Occupied Territories during most of August.

Several special visits were made to the prisons where the strike was taking place, including Nafha, where the protests started. The delegates were able to speak to the detainees in private and pass on news of their condition to their families.

The strike at Nafha ended just a month after it started, on August 15th, and the protest movement at other prisons began to draw to a close.

The ICRC office at Jerusalem, which had been occupied for three weeks by relatives and sympathisers of the detainees, was finally vacated after the strike at Nafha ended. This allowed a return to work by the ICRC delegates, who had been obliged to close the office on August 11th because they were unable to continue normal working.

At a diplomatic level, the ICRC delegates had further meetings with senior Israeli officials about conditions in the prisons and about the hunger strike. On August 14th the Head of the ICRC delegation, Mr. Chappuis, met the Israeli Interior Minister, Mr. Burg.

Meanwhile, the ICRC continued its efforts to recover the body of a detainee who died during the hunger strike. The body, whose return was demanded by the prisoner's family, had been buried by the Israeli authorities in the occupied West Bank of the Jordan.
LIBERIA: ICRC RESUMES CONTACT

Mr. Frank Schmidt, ICRC delegate general for Africa, was in Monrovia from 9 to 17 August to renew contact with the Liberian Red Cross and to offer the country's new authorities the services of the ICRC to carry out visits to persons detained after the coup d'état of 12 April 1980.

The last time an ICRC delegate had gone to Monrovia was in 1975, when visits to places of detention begun in 1973 were brought to an end.

Mr. Schmidt's mission led him to meet the Head of State, Sgt.-Major Samuel K. Doe, the Minister of State for presidential affair, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and of Defence, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and the members of the "People's Redemption Council" (the military council governing the country).

With the purpose of stimulating public interest in the aims of the ICRC and of the National Red Cross Society, the ICRC delegate general for Africa and National Red Cross leaders gave several interviews to the local press. One of the interviews, lasting 20 minutes, was televised.

ANGOLA CONTINUATION OF RELIEF PROGRAMME

From 4 to 17 August, ICRC delegates in Angola distributed clothes and 7.92 tons of relief (food, blankets, soap) in the northern area of Bailundo. Distributions were made in three villages: Katuta, Kaialula and Kawe, to 656 persons.

A distribution (3 tons of food, soap and blankets) took place for displaced people in Chitawera, Chiconda, Ferreira and Kawe.

In the eastern area of Katchiungo, 11 tons of food were given to 3,000 displaced persons and 3 tons of milk powder, maize flour, sugar and butteroil were distributed to 1,500 children at Katchiungo itself. Maize flour and blankets (14.2 tons) were distributed at Chiumbo to nearly 3,000 displaced persons, including 900 children. At St Johns, about 22 tons of food and soap were distributed to 2,100 displaced persons, and about 2.5 tons of food to 1,200 children and 300 sick and aged persons. At Kaputa, 900 children received 1.2 tons of food

UNITA's declaration of intent

In a letter to the ICRC dated 25 July 1980, UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) officially expressed its undertaking to respect the fundamental rules of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts.

"ANOTHER AFRICA"

With this title Luc Chessex, who is a talented and internationally recognized Swiss photographer, proposes a different view of the African continent. Last year he travelled to various African countries and over a period of nine months made a series of trips - one might say journeys on safari, since safari means journey in Swahili. But these were a rather unconventional form of safari. His guides were the ICRC delegates in Uganda, Chad, Zambia, Botswana and Zimbabwe, and his target the victims of armed conflicts and the activities carried out by the ICRC to assist them.

Luc Chessex made a careful selection from his abundant harvest of 7,200 photographs, and the result is an exhibition of 140 black and white pictures. The opening took place in Lausanne, Switzerland, on 2 September, and the exhibition will continue until 8 September. Geneva and other Swiss and European towns will subsequently have the opportunity of reliving Luc Chessex' African experiences through these photographs.

The idea for the exhibition was conceived in Africa and so the photos will return to that continent. Three sets, two of which are smaller in size and therefore easier to handle and more convenient for posting have been produced. ICRC delegations will then be able to display them to the public in their various areas of activity.

MALAWI: NATIONAL RED CROSS INFORMATION EFFORT

On his second visit to Malawi, from 26 July to 1 August, the regional delegate for Southern Africa took with him a large quantity of publicity material - specially prepared for the information campaign in Southern Africa - and a number of Red Cross information booklets. This material was requested by the Malawi Red Cross, which wishes to intensify its information activities among various sections of the population.
RATIFICATION OF THE PROTOCOLS

The Embassy of Finland in Berne has forwarded to the Swiss Government two instruments, dated 4 July 1980, signifying the ratification by Finland of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, adopted on 8 June 1977.

The instruments having been deposited on 7 August 1980, the Protocols, in accordance with the relevant provisions, will enter into force for Finland six months after that date, on 7 February 1981.

This latest ratification brings to fifteen the number of States parties to Protocol I (Ghana, Libya, El Salvador, Ecuador, Jordan, Niger, Yugoslavia, Tunisia, Sweden, Botswana, Cyprus, Mauritania, Gabon, Bahamas and Finland) and fourteen to Protocol II (Cyprus having ratified only Protocol I).

SAN REMO: CONGRESS ON HUMAN SOLIDARITY AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION

From 10 to 13 September, the International Institute of Humanitarian Law will be organizing in San Remo (Italy) a congress on "international solidarity and humanitarian action", under the patronage of the President of the Italian Republic. A number of eminent persons will take part in the congress and deliver lectures on subjects relating to human rights, problems of development, the protection of victims of armed conflicts and natural disasters, refugees and political detainees.

ICRC President Alexandre Hay and the Secretary General of the League of Red Cross Societies, Henrik Beer, will be leading the delegations of both institutions, and the Henry Dunant Institute will be represented by its director, Jacques Meurat.

ZSH-380 "WE READ YOU LOUD AND CLEAR"

On 27 July, a member of the technical personnel of the ICRC Telecommunication Service flew to Pretoria to set up a radio station in the ICRC delegation there. The first contact Geneva-Pretoria was obtained on 31 July. ICRC headquarters now has a weekly contact with its delegation in the R.S.A.

At present, there are seventeen delegations that can communicate by radio with ICRC headquarters in Geneva.

IN BRIEF

In Uganda: a number of places of detention were visited between 25 July and 21 August. Five ICRC delegates, including a doctor, visited prisons in Luzira (Upper, Murchison Bay and Women's), Mbale (Main and Women's), Tororo, Jinja (Main and Remand), Rwimi, Kiburara, Fort Portal, Kigo and Gulu.

Following customary ICRC procedure, the delegates will forward to the authorities their observations and their suggestions for improvements to the conditions of detention.

Protection and assistance activities for detainees constitute the ICRC's main work in Uganda. Several rounds of visits to places of detention have been carried out during the past year.

In Iran: ICRC visits: At the end of July an ICRC delegate in Iran visited a camp people displaced from Iraq established near the border by the Iranian authorities.

More than 3,000 people are sheltered at the camp, out of a total of about 35,000 who have crossed into Iran.

The delegate distributed Red Cross message forms for use by those people wishing to write to their families in Iraq.

An ICRC delegate visited 330 people detained by the Iranian authorities in the town of Ahwaz.

Prison visits were also carried out at Abadan and Zanjan.

In Nicaragua, between 28 July and 12 August, ICRC delegates visited seven places of detention containing altogether 3,427 detainees. The main visits were carried out from 28 to 31 July at the Jorge Navarro Social Rehabilitation Centre at Tipitapa, and from 4 to 7 August at the Heroes y Martires Rehabilitation Centre at Nueva Guinea.

As part of its aid programme for the detainees, the ICRC provides 50,000 dollars' worth of food and 10,000 dollars' worth of medical aid each month.

In Uruguay, the ICRC carried out a second visit to "La Libertad" prison in Montevideo early in July. Its delegates spoke privately with 40 detainees of their choice and visited every part of the prison.
Henry Fournier does not differ much from other ICRC delegates, as far as one may generalize, for after all each one does have some characteristics which are his very own: personality, physical appearance, attitude to life. Henry hails from the Canton of Valais, a land of high peaks and deep, narrow valleys; he speaks with the typically strong accent of its inhabitants and his rugged features are those of one who has long lived in close contact with the mountains. In June 1979, still with no experience of ICRC work, he arrived in Beirut, the capital of a country ravaged by internal strife, whose name had for many years been constantly in the headlines. Over a year later, in August 1980, Henry Fournier, now a seasoned delegate, relates with feeling and at times in somewhat melancholy vein, some of the more striking incidents during his mission for the ICRC.

25 June 1979
The Swissair DC 9 touches down smoothly on the runway of Beirut's international airport. As I emerge from the aircraft, I feel the warm clammy atmosphere. With a last glance at the air hostess standing at the top of the steps, I think to myself: "Well, this is it! I've left Switzerland far behind me now!".

The reddish earth around the runway is just how I expected it to be, from my friends' cursory descriptions. In the arrivals hall, Frank Lador, the ICRC delegation's administrator, soon spots me, and takes charge of my luggage and the mail-bag: "Yalla! Let's go!".

The car has gone no more than a few hundred yards when it comes to a halt: "A check point", says Frank. We are stopped at several others by guards belonging to different factions. For a while, the road is bordered by a series of camps; every now and then, men heavily armed with automatic weapons drive out in their jeeps.

We arrive at last at the house, where I shall be staying, but only for a single night. Michel Cagneux, the head of the delegation, tells me that I must go early the next day to Jounieh, where I shall be stationed. A Valaisan in the Metn! Michel cannot resist a smile at the thought. Jounieh! I listen meekly to Pierre Girardier briefing Pierre Guberan, who is getting ready to take over from Michel Cagneux. At noon, with his portable receiver held against his ear, Guberan learns that an air combat is taking place over southern Lebanon, and that there are reports of pilots having been taken prisoner! "What has been done?" he asks. But the delegate at the other end does not seem to know; as I stand there, I now feel that the time has definitely come for me to put aside all thoughts about books and teaching, for I have entered a totally different world. Fortunately, very soon the Lebanese staff welcome me with friendly smiles and put me at my ease. Toufic, Neyla, Antoine, Mourir, Christine tell me little by little about the problems and the situation in the area. July: the days are stiflingly hot, the combatants' warlike instincts are dulled by the heat. Jounieh is a wonderful place! Nothing particular of note to be recorded, except for the glorious sunsets over the Mediterranean.

1 August 1980
It's going to be an exciting day, I have to drive through Beirut all alone! "You ought to go by the "Ring of Death"!" says Toufic. "It's easier", adds Antoine, "but you must drive fast, it's no fun on the Ring, you know!". The Ring is the thoroughfare separating West from East Beirut and is the line along which trigger-happy snipers take a wicked pleasure in scaring motorists out of their wits, by firing a bullet sometimes too perilously close to be comfortable. I steel myself for the dash through the Ring, with a rather strange sensation inside me, and find myself on the other side. Feeling rather pleased with myself after this exploit, I rejoin the delegation and celebrate this First of August - the Swiss National Day - far, from my native land. This evening I have heard many bangs near the harbour area. In Jounieh, people have come out on their balconies trying to see what is happening. I get to know, through the radio, that the town centre and the Achrafieh area are being shelled. I think to myself that I cannot just stay idly here but have not the slightest idea what to do - an awful moment for a young delegate, all alone in a sub-delegation. I go to Antélia, Neyla will let me know. Little by little, I find that the clashes were not so far away and that the situation in Jounieh is rather different from that in the rest of Lebanon. People are getting killed, quite close to where I am. The telephone rings. It is Antoine, my Lebanese colleague: "You know, Henry, the missing person we were looking for yesterday has returned home. She had been detained by some militiamen up in the
mountains. They told her to let us know that she had been released". Antoine's call fills me with great satisfaction. I realize that we are doing a very important job here.

12 September

The weather is perfect, it has become just a little bit cooler. Last night, I slept in the western part; early this morning, I must cross to the other side. On the corniche road of Sin el Fin, I am stopped by militiamen who order all cars to make a detour. I wonder what is going on. There has been fighting at Bourj Hammoud, in the eastern suburbs of the town, since the previous night. Christine calls me on the radio to say that one of the sides wants to arrange a cease-fire, in order to evacuate seven severely wounded persons, trapped in the combat area. After prolonged discussions, an agreement is reached and we are able to set off on our mission. From the airport, Pierre Guberan, just about to leave for Geneva, gives last-minute instructions and wishes me good luck. At 11.30, the operation has to be called off: when the ambulances arrived on the scene, snipers made it quite clearly understood that they were determined to stop the ICRC attempt. We were obliged to turn back. Many months later, in December, I was reminded of this incident when a stalwart, bearded young man claimed that he knew me. When I asked him to explain, he replied: "Do you remember that little incident at Bourj Hammoud ? - "Yes I do, very well"", I replied. - "Well, it was I who was firing on your people", he said. - "Whatever for ?" I asked. - "Because the previous night, two of my brothers had been killed by the people of Bourj Hammoud and a third had been taken prisoner".

It is pleasant to dream amid the olive groves of Lebanon, in the marvellous plain of Koura and to bask in the Mediterranean sun. But I am rudely brought back to earth by an officer of the Lebanese Army. "Many hostages have been taken in the north of Lebanon. We fear the worst; only you can save the situation!" And so, all the members of the ICRC delegation spend endless days and nights all through October and November, sharing the anguish of innumerable families, who pray for the lives of one or more of their relatives in the hands of their enemies.

24 December

I accompany the indefatigable Pierre Guberan on his journeys in the north of Lebanon, to try and get permission to visit the hostages and bring them Christmas messages and presents. Our attempts are only partly successful. Only the hostages held by one of the sides will receive our gifts. It is a sad Christmas, but one that will remain etched in my memory.

The winter has been severe and distressful. All over the country, from north to south, desultory fighting has caused many deaths. Annaya, Knat - and many others, too - are names which bring to our mind grim incidents in which we have been very closely involved. We have seen hundreds of mountain-dwellers fleeing their villages, their homes destroyed by indiscriminate shelling; we have gazed into the eyes of wounded civilians, signifying their gratitude to us as we evacuate them to safer areas; we have lived through poignant dramatic events, like the one of the old woman discovered hiding - or perhaps cruelly trapped - under her household furniture, both of her legs broken, and whom we traced only because our attention was drawn to the strange attitude of her fowls whose heads were turned towards the entrance of the partly ruined cottage. Her name turned out to be Wardié, and both legs had to be amputated, but today she happily calls herself a "daughter of the Red Cross".

March 1980

Spring is slow in coming, but "hope springs eternal in the human breast". Today, we are informed by telephone that 69 prisoners have been released and have been reunited with their families. With the coming of spring, madly welcome, there is, everywhere in the air, talk of mutual understanding and peace in Lebanon.

July 1980

What cruel disappointments, all hopes have been dashed! Peace is not yet to be. Violent fighting on the beaches along the coast has caused many deaths. It is dreadful to behold, but I must forget; Geneva headquarters has called me back and I must return to Switzerland. After working tensely all through the night, I meet my Lebanese colleagues who have come to spend with me my last few hours on Lebanese soil.

17 July 1980: it is a very fine day in Beirut. As the aircraft gains altitude, the reddish colour of the airport gradually becomes fainter, and my straining eyes soon lose sight of the friends, the people, the country, whose dramatic events I have shared for a whole year.

Farewell, and anon, dear Lebanon!
International solidarity is the practical demonstration of the feeling that it is the duty of each one of us to help any of our fellow-men in distress and in these days there are many ways in which international solidarity may be displayed. In conflicts and in natural disasters, private individuals, benevolent associations, humanitarian organizations, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and governments, all bring their contribution to succour individual persons or whole communities, who may very often be in distant places, practically unknown, and widely differing in race, language and religion. The reason is that we have the feeling that we have some duty towards men and women who have fallen victim to man-made disasters or to the elemental forces of nature. Yet, there is still a field where it seems international solidarity is lacking.

One hundred and forty-five States, practically the entire international community, have signed the four Geneva Conventions of 1949. Article 1, common to all four Conventions, states: "The High Contracting Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances". But when a State commits a grave breach of international humanitarian law and of the Geneva Conventions, what do the other signatory States do to ensure respect for the Conventions? Would it not be appropriate for those States to declare that the fundamental humanitarian obligations must be universally carried out?

That would not constitute an interference in the domestic affairs of another State, for the parties to the Conventions have not only undertaken to respect but also to ensure respect for those Conventions. They would thereby provide a fine example of their active international solidarity and would reaffirm their own determination to respect, whenever necessary, international humanitarian law.

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IRAQI-IRANIAN CONFLICT: ICRC OVERTURE

Hostilities between Iraq and Iran having erupted, the International Committee of the Red Cross, on 23 September, reminded the Parties to the conflict, through their Permanent Missions to Geneva, of their obligations under the four 1949 Geneva Conventions.

In particular, the ICRC urged the two governments to ensure that the wounded, the sick, the prisoners of war and civilians are protected and treated humanely, and that hospitals and medical units are respected.

In addition, the ICRC stated that it was prepared to undertake the tasks devolving on it in such a situation, consistent with the Geneva Conventions, for the benefit of military and civilian prisoners of war, and missing persons.

The ICRC, already has a two-man delegation in Iran, and on 27 September two delegates left Geneva for Baghdad.

AFGHANISTAN: APPEAL BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED-CROSS

On 16 September the ICRC launched the following appeal.

"Since the beginning of the armed conflict in Afghanistan, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been greatly concerned over the fate of the civilian and military victims of the fighting. In accord with the mandate conferred on it by the Geneva Conventions of August 12th 1949, and by the Statutes of the International Red Cross, the ICRC on several occasions reminded the parties militarily engaged in the conflict in Afghanistan to respect international humanitarian law and to allow the ICRC to carry out fully its traditional tasks of protection and assistance. In particular, the ICRC asks the Afghan government for permission to recommence and develop the activities it had undertaken from January to June this year.

All the States which are parties to the Geneva Conventions have an obligation to ensure that these Conventions are respected. The ICRC therefore calls on them to give this appeal their full support."

ICRC MEMBER IN PAKISTAN

Professor G. Etienne, a member of the ICRC, was in Pakistan from 16 to 31 August. His mission was to carry out a survey of ICRC activities, in the joint ICRC-League operation in aid of Afghan refugees, and to put forward proposals for future action.

Since the middle of February 1980, the ICRC has been engaged in medical aid in Pakistan. It is working closely with the Pakistan Red Crescent and with three locally recruited medical teams, two of which are stationed at Parshinar covering Kurram Province, and the third at Miram Shah for North Waziristan. About one-third of the total number of refugees are in these two districts. In less than a month (1 to 24 July) the three teams have seen 12,828 cases.

During the few months it was present in Afghanistan, the ICRC had to limit its activities to two visits to the prison of Pul Charki in Kabul (in February and April 1980), and to handing over a small amount of medical relief supplies to hospitals in the capital.
CHAD: THE ICRC RESUMES ITS ACTIVITIES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE FRONT

The ICRC, which had been compelled for several months to limit its activities in N'Djamena to the part of the city held by President Goukouni Weddeye's forces (FAP), is about to resume its operations on both sides of the front.

A mission carried out from 25 July to 1 August by Mr Laurent Marti, the special representative of the ICRC President, with a view to negotiating with the parties concerned, had not succeeded in easing the situation in any way. Mr Marti, who has been on a second mission to N'Djamena since 5 September, has now concluded an agreement with all the parties to enable the ICRC to resume and even intensify its assistance programme to all the victims of the conflict.

Following this agreement the ICRC delegates, who for the time being are still based at Kousseri in Cameroon, have undertaken a number of surveys on both sides of the front. To meet the considerable needs, they are currently working on a new food and medical assistance programme and are planning to re-open the ICRC delegation at N'Djamena in the near future.

EL SALVADOR: VIOLENCE AS A FACT OF EVERYDAY LIFE

Every morning at 8 o'clock sharp the delegate of the ICRC Tracing Agency in El Salvador, Denis Berthoud, sits down at his desk in the premises of the El Salvador Red Cross at San Salvador.

He has a long, exhausting and often frustrating day before him. He immediately opens the two morning newspapers lying on his desk beside a pile of files ready there for him: no leisurely reading this, but perusal of the many local reports, mostly accompanied by passport photographs, of persons missing or found mutilated and murdered by the road side every morning. He is not so much struck by the horror underlying the number of names he finds there as by the systematic repetition of violence and the poignancy of the passport or communion photographs of so many young people.

While noting the names down in order to compare them with the lists of missing persons Denis cannot but think of the stream of families and relatives of detainees or missing persons who will be passing through his office all day. Mainly anxious mothers and sisters, and sometimes brothers or fathers, will come to him to report the arrest of one of their family during the night or ask questions; too often he will have to confess that no trace of their relatives has yet been found.

Fortunately by the end of the day some families will have left his office with good news or at least with some information concerning their relatives' state of health and place of detention, thanks to visits made by an ICRC delegate. What a relief for the family and delegate alike when he can tell them that the person they are looking for has just been released. Such joy, however, will be short-lived. Gunshots will once again rend the silence of the night and the printing presses will turn out in the early hours of the morning the small reports and photographs which will be Denis Berthoud's first concern on sitting down at his desk a few hours later. His is a nervously exhausting job, but day after day he pursues his task with the knowledge that there will be people whom he will succeed in helping, detainees who will be traced, visited, and thus afforded some degree of protection.

The ICRC delegation in El Salvador, which currently numbers five delegates, has recently signed an agreement with the Government on the opening of the delegation headquarters. The delegates are to continue their visits (about twice a month) to political detainees held in army, security forces and police premises, and in prisons. The strengthening of the emergency task-force of the El Salvador Red Cross began a few months ago with the co-operation of the ICRC and the League and will soon be completed.

Bedevilling the already uphill humanitarian duties of the ICRC is the gruesome nightly occurrence of murders and disappearances. To try and counter such violence the ICRC considers that action in the field should be combined with an increased drive to motivate the population. A surveying mission accordingly drew up an information programme whose details are currently being discussed in Geneva and which will be intended to remind the population, and combatants in particular, of their humanitarian obligations, i.e. respect for an enemy hors de combat, prohibition of torture and execution of a wounded or captured adversary, respect for the civilian population, hospitals and the emblem of the Red Cross.

This programme is to be carried out as an adjunct to the campaign for the dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law which began in September with a series of lectures to thousands of soldiers and policemen in fifteen barracks throughout the country.
BANGLADESH: ACCESSION TO THE PROTOCOLS

The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has forwarded to the Swiss Government an instrument, dated 17 April 1980, signifying the accession by Bangladesh to the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, adopted on 8 June 1977.

The instrument having been deposited on 8 September 1980 the Protocols, in accordance with the relevant provisions, will enter into force for the People's Republic of Bangladesh six months after that date, on 8 March 1981.

This accession brings to sixteen the number of States parties to Protocol I (Ghana, Libya, El Salvador, Ecuador, Jordan, Niger, Yugoslavia, Tunisia, Sweden, Botswana, Cyprus, Mauritania, Gabon, Bahamas, Finland and Bangladesh) and fifteen to Protocol II (Cyprus having ratified only Protocol I).

CONFERENCE ON THE USE OF CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

The Second Session of the United Nations Conference on Prohibitions or Restrictions of use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects opened on 15 September in Geneva.

The ICRC is represented by a delegation of four led by Mr Maurice Aubert, who is a member of the Committee. The delegates' main task is to see that what has been achieved so far in the field of international humanitarian law is not called in question.

"A FAMILY GATHERING"

Selection, training, assessment, communication and information: these were the five points discussed at a short but intensive seminar on 15, 16 and 17 September in Geneva, attended by representatives of ten National Red Cross Societies which give active support to the extensive aid programmes carried out by the ICRC in the world.

The purpose was to give personnel which the National Societies make available to the ICRC, mainly for medical tasks, an opportunity to discuss among themselves their experiences in the field and possible ways and means of finding the future human resources needed in the spheres of logistics, relief, administration and information.

The solutions put forward for increasing Red Cross cohesion in the field should draw still closer the various components of the Red Cross family, increase Red Cross efficiency in emergency actions and help the mass media and the public in general to understand better such operations.

THE ICRC IN MOURNING

On Monday 22 September sad news reached the ICRC: the previous day Jürg Baumann, a 25 year-old delegate stationed at Khartoum since 3 October 1979, was killed in a car crash caused by a mechanical failure on the road to Gedaref (Sudan).

Jürg Baumann will be warmly remembered by all those who knew him in Israel (from 21 February to 27 September 1979), Sudan and at headquarters.

IN BRIEF

In Bolivia, the ICRC continued its visits to detainees. By 21 September, ICRC delegates had spoken without witness with 408 persons held in 16 places of detention and distributed relief supplies to a value of about 8,500 dollars. The Central Tracing Agency delegate arrived at La Paz in mid-August. By 21 September, over a thousand persons had come to her office with their problems.

The ICRC delegation in Lusaka recently received confirmation in writing of the authorization which the Zambian Government had given it orally some months previously to visit all prisons in Zambia.

In Zaire, a series of visits begun on 19 August 1980 to 29 places of detention in Shaba Province ended on 29 August.

Photography assignment in Angola: From 30 July to 28 August 1980, Miss Anne-Marie Grobet, an ICRC information delegate, was in Angola with the ICRC delegates bringing aid to displaced persons in the provinces of Huambo and Bie. Her mission was to take pictures of this extensive relief operation. A press kit containing a selection of Miss Grobet's photographs is being prepared for National Societies and the media.

Training course for future delegates. From 14 to 19 September, the third seminar held this year for future delegates took place at Cartigny (near Geneva). Twenty-three men and two women took part in the course.
OVER A YEAR LATER... A FEW REFLEXIONS ON THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA AND THAILAND

The lid flew off in 1979. The whole world had in fact been dreading the explosion from one month to the next since Democratic Kampuchea closed its frontiers in 1975. Cambodia was physically and morally in ruins and needed a helping hand to enable it to recover gradually. In nearby Thailand and at the frontier between, hundreds of thousands of Kampuchean refugees were also in need of assistance.

The various relief activities began, to alleviate the distress of an entire population suffering from hunger, weakness, physical hardships and moral despair. Fifteen months later and after expenditure of a hundred million dollars the situation has visibly improved and it may be said that efforts to assist the Kampuchean population have been widely acknowledged with success. Admittedly all is far from perfect and activities are being challenged, their usefulness is called into question and reassessments are necessary. This situation will no doubt continue for some time; but the threat of worse to come is waning, there is now hope for the future, and that is what counts.

The ICRC and other organizations collaborating in this humanitarian operation are said to have wasted time on fruitless discussions with governments while people were dying like flies. To this the Director of the ICRC Operations Department, Jean-Pierre Hocké, retorts that the ICRC has never spared any efforts to attempt to gain access to the Kampuchean victims, especially since 1975. From 1975 to 1979, however, the ICRC's offers of service did not receive the slightest acknowledgement from the Phnom Penh authorities. Last year, when new authorities took over in Kampuchea, several months of negotiation with them were still necessary before an agreement was reached to enable the ICRC to launch a large-scale operation to meet the real needs of the population.

Only in the summer of 1979 was a joint ICRC-UNICEF mission formally invited by the Phnom Penh authorities to make an assessment of the situation in Kampuchea. It was the first of several missions made until the signature of the agreement in September.

In order to meet the considerable needs within the country the ICRC, UNICEF and the WFP (World Food Programme) immediately concentrated their efforts on providing food for the Kampuchean population, the ICRC included in its delegation a doctor and a nurse to set up a medical programme. It quickly became obvious, however, that the mere provision of relief supplies was not enough. Food arrived in the ports, but there were no facilities to unload and transport it. A whole fleet of lorries had to be imported, and for the first time in its history the ICRC began to repair railways.

Emergency medical and food relief (e.g. enriched food for the orphanages) had to be flown from Bangkok to Phnom Penh; hence the organization of an airlift from October 1979, with an average of one flight per day. The airlift is still operating today and in addition to transporting relief it is used for staff from the international and voluntary organizations working in Kampuchea. The setting up of this vital component of the assistance operation was made possible by the generosity of Australia, Belgium, France, Great Britain, Italy, Netherlands and the United States and the understanding shown by the Thai authorities.

During the first six months of the joint action in Kampuchea, the provision of food relief, which consisted mainly of rice, but also of oil, dried fish, milk and sugar, was a priority. Material assistance was also supplied and it included different articles like fishing and mosquito nets, tools, sewing machines, blankets, cotton, soap, bicycles, mats, sheets, tarpaulins and water filters. Ravaged by fifteen years of war and distress the country was lacking in everything. UNICEF and the ICRC worked to the best of their ability to alleviate the hardships of its inhabitants.

The fact that the ICRC was unable to have a close check kept at all times by its delegates on the distribution of assistance, in accordance with its principles, was due to several reasons, like the size of the country, the huge amount of relief delivered, the difficulty in obtaining visas to increase the staff of its delegation, and lack of mobility.

This was a shortcoming in the assistance operation in Kampuchea and the ICRC is grateful to the international community for having understood that overriding this problem was the vital importance of actually providing relief and for having had the courage of its humanitarian convictions.
Nevertheless, in recent months supervision has considerably improved, and has confirmed that international assistance has reached its goal. Today it can undoubtedly be said that famine was averted by the joint action, thanks largely to generous donors. But what of the future? The Kampuchean population will no doubt survive but it is impossible to foresee the day when the country will be able to feed its population unaided.

The next harvest in November will tell. Additional needs, however, are expected to arise next year. Agricultural assistance (gifts of seeds in particular) has yielded very good results; nevertheless, how can one reasonably expect a country on its knees to recover within a single year?

At the beginning of the operation medical assistance was limited to renewing the equipment of hospitals in Phnom Penh where absolutely everything was lacking. Medicaments and instruments, and even pens and paper for drawing up patients' files, had to be supplied; several blood banks were set up. Subsequently the hospitals of the 19 provinces of Kampuchea and finally the district ("srok") and commune ("khum") hospitals were provided with drugs and medical equipment. At present and for reasons of efficiency only the supply programme for the "sroks" is being continued.

The first complete Red Cross medical team arrived in Kampuchea from the USSR in January 1980 and was based in Takmao. The hospital there had been used as a prison for several years and was actually a hospital only in name. Doctors and nurses first had to clear the premises, clean them and then equip the hospital. Other teams gradually arrived - from Poland (based in Kompong Cham), Hungary (based in Kompong Speu), and Eastern Germany (based in Kompong Thom) - to strengthen the delegation. A Swedish team was recently installed in Svay Rieng. An ICRC medical co-ordinator in Phnom Penh is in charge of supervising the medical programme and is assisted by nurses who maintain contact with the medical teams in the field.

In Kampuchea the most acute medical problems were directly linked to the shortage of food. One year after the beginning of the joint action serious malnutrition among the population has become fairly rare. The people who managed to survive for five years in a country in ruins recovered astonishingly fast with international assistance. They were the most resistant to start with. The others died.

**EAR-MARKED**

ICRC's Tracing Agency in Thailand recently received a strange enquiry. A Khmer from Sa Kaeo Camp wanted to know the whereabouts of his uncle. The description he gave to the Central Tracing Agency was as follows: "My uncle was born in Siem Reap, Kampuchea. He lives in the Aranyaprathet market, near a four storeyed hotel. He has one ear missing, and he sells pork."

Although the details given of his location were rather vague, the physical description was so clear-cut that the Tracing Agency was able to find the man without any difficulty.

Diseases like tuberculosis and malaria, however, endemic in Kampuchea, are far from being eradicated. Medical assistance will therefore probably still be required there for quite some time.

The ICRC has been active for a long time on the border between Kampuchea and Thailand. From 1975 to 1978 its delegates regularly visited police stations where "illegal immigrants" were being held. In September 1979 the ICRC carried out several surveys along the border; the situation there was alarming; the people were in great need of food and medical assistance and the ICRC immediately undertook to do its utmost to alleviate the hardships of the civilian population.

The ICRC has been accused of providing assistance to combatants and civilians alike. Mr Hocke's answer is that it is necessary to show a little realism and keep in mind the way in which operations are carried out in the field.

If civilians are not assembled in camps along the border, where hundreds of thousands of people are constantly on the move owing to the political and military situation, it is simply impossible to maintain a close check on the distribution of relief. The only possible procedure is to watch general tendencies as they emerge in the long run. Insofar as civilians benefit from the main bulk of the assistance the operation may be considered a success and therefore continued; if the opposite occurs the ICRC must review its methods of distribution and perhaps even cease taking part in food distribution. This was one of the reasons which recently prompted the ICRC to concentrate most of its activities...
on medical assistance in the border area and no longer to participate in the distribution of food for "resident" population along that border; in any case, the emergency phase was finished and other organizations were ready to take over from the ICRC. For another matter, of course, there was a certain confusion due to the vast numbers of persons involved and, second, the fact of the operation in Thailand were, first, a need to employ the sophisticated methods and to do so with little or no experience of Asia wanted to work in a camp under its protection; it continues, jointly with UNICEF, distributions to people coming to the border from Kampuchea for food.

In Thailand food and medical relief activities were carried out simultaneously from the beginning of the operation in September 1979 for in both fields equally important needs had to be met. Transport being available and so many persons being in dire need, the operation began on an impressive scale (e.g. at the beginning 50 lorry-loads of food and 500,000 litres of drinking water were transported daily to each of the twelve camps involved in the operation).

The medical and food assistance saved thousands of lives. Through mass vaccination epidemics were almost miraculously avoided. Credit for this achievement goes partly to the ICRC, but it was neither alone nor the first in providing relief to the population in need; in 1975 voluntary organizations were already working in the country, and only in October 1979 did the Thai Government request the ICRC to co-ordinate the overall medical action for refugees and displaced persons. A large staff was immediately required to meet the many and very different tasks involved in the operation (e.g. at the beginning hospitals of over a thousand beds in some of the camps had to be set up from scratch).

Red Cross staff strength still numbers 202, representing 19 National Societies. In the spring of 1980, the ICRC reduced its medical activities in the camp at Khao I Dang (where it now only deals with surgical cases) and transferred all responsibility for those at Kamput and Sa Kao to UNHCR. Except for a brief interruption following the violent fighting at the end of June it continued its work in the border area. The two main difficulties of this part of the operation in Thailand were, first, a certain confusion due to the vast numbers of persons involved and, second, the fact that some doctors arriving from Europe with little or no experience of Asia wanted to employ the sophisticated methods and drugs they had the habit of using. They rapidly came to realize however, that they would create needs incompatible with the means generally available in the country and that people would get accustomed to a form of care which they would not be able to find back home. The whole of the operation carried out by the ICRC was in fact based on the idea that all the refugees gathered at the border would return to Kampuchea when living conditions had improved. Already in the first few months of 1980 on the initiative of one of its physicians, the ICRC tried as often as possible to combine the medical care provided by its staff with Khmer-traditional medicine. A traditional medicine centre was set up in each of the camps and ICRC and Khmer doctors worked together to find common solutions to medical problems.

The operation has proved a success from many points of view and in addition to the victorious struggle waged against diseases caused by malnutrition, there has been an increase in the number of births among the population assisted by the ICRC. At the beginning of the operation none of the women were pregnant; some of them had not menstruated for years owing to their poor health and psychologically disturbed condition. They were given proper care and almost cured.

As part of this gigantic operation the ICRC has also carried out a number of protection activities. Its mere presence along the border provides a measure of protection for the population constantly threatened by insecurity in the area. Unremitting efforts are made to avoid the separation of parents and children, brothers and sisters, and to search for missing persons. The ICRC delegates are caring for over 3,000 Vietnamese refugees who left their country on foot and reached Thailand. Most of them have been gathered in a camp protected by the ICRC (NW 9). Negotiations are being held with the Thai Government to transfer these persons to a safer area until countries of asylum can be found for them. ICRC delegates visited over 200 "illegal immigrants" of various nationalities in prisons at the military base of Aranyaprathet last March and at Sikkiu in May and August.

One of the most difficult problems encountered by the ICRC in both Cambodia and Thailand was the constant clash between its humanitarian mandate and various political interests.

A number of modifications will no doubt have to be made to the operation at the end of the year. The emergency phase will have been completed by then and it will be time for the ICRC and the other organizations collaborating with it to review the situation.
NEW DEVELOPMENT IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

The United Nations conference on the prohibition or restriction of certain conventional weapons that may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects ended on 10 October with the adoption by consensus of a Convention and three Protocols. Each of them deals with the prohibition or restriction of the use of a specific category of weapons, namely non-detectable fragments, mines and booby-traps, and incendiary weapons. But above all the Convention contains a mechanism providing for the periodic revision of these rules and for the addition of Protocols relating to new categories of weapons.

The conclusion of this Convention marks the end of a major stage in the history of international humanitarian law, which began over twenty years ago with the ICRC meetings and conferences of experts, whose work culminated in the adoption in 1977 of the Protocols additional to the Geneva Convention.

The principal aim of the whole undertaking was to ensure a more effective legal protection for civilians in armed conflicts. Today it may be said that that goal has been achieved. One must of course remember that legal texts are of little value if they are not applied, and the supervision of their application remains a difficult problem in the case of international humanitarian law.

But the results achieved so far should not be underestimated. Thanks to the texts just adopted, children who would have been burnt by the use of napalm should in future be spared and civilians who might have been blown up by mines should remain safe. Countless men and women might have been maimed or killed if it had not been for international humanitarian law. But it does exist. This is the ICRC's firm conviction, and that is why it has great satisfaction in noting this new development in international humanitarian law.

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CONFLICT BETWEEN IRAQ AND IRAN: ICRC VISITS PRISONERS

As a result of the fighting which continued throughout October, prisoners of war were taken by both sides. On October 10th ICRC delegates were able to start visiting the prisoners held in Iraq; on October 22nd the visits began in Iran.

The purpose of the visits is to ensure the application of the Third Geneva Convention, under which prisoners of war are protected. This includes checking their conditions of detention and physical state, helping them send messages to their families and, if necessary, providing them with material assistance. As laid down in the Convention, ICRC delegates talk to the prisoners in private and send confidential reports to the detaining power and to the prisoners' country of origin.

The ICRC delegations in both countries were reinforced during the month to cope with the expanding work brought about by the conflict. At the end of October there were eight delegates in Tehran and eight in Baghdad.

At the request of both sides, the ICRC agreed to investigate the possibility of supervising the evacuation of merchant ships stranded in the Shatt-al-Arab river between the two countries. The ships had been unable to leave since the conflict began and in some of them the crew were reported to be either in danger of their lives or at the least having grave difficulty in obtaining food and water. Negotiations were undertaken to overcome a large number of technical problems surrounding an evacuation of the ships. When these are dealt with the ICRC is expected to appeal for a cease-fire so that the ships can move out into the Gulf.

EAST TIMOR: FURTHER EXTENSION OF THE JOINT ACTION

In view of the still precarious situation for part of the population assisted by the ICRC and the Indonesian Red Cross, the decision has been taken, in agreement with the authorities, to continue for a further six months, the food and medical assistance programme for the inhabitants of various remote villages. The programme was delayed by transport difficulties due to bad weather. Red Cross activities are focusing on five particularly deprived villages with a total population of approximately 38,000 people. The ICRC is also pursuing its efforts to re-unite dispersed families. On 8 October, 6 children arrived - via Djakarta and Zurich - in Lisbon, where they were welcomed by their parents and the Portuguese Red Cross. These children were on a list of about 30 cases, involving the re-uniting of very close relatives, for which both the Portuguese and Indonesian Governments had given their agreement. The ICRC hopes to carry out other similar operations.

IN BRIEF

In Chad the ICRC, unable to continue assisting all the parties to the conflict, has interrupted its programme (temporarily one hopes), and recalled the members of its delegation to Geneva.

Until 20 June - when the delegation was transferred for security reasons to Kossa seri in Cameroon - the ICRC had been based at Ndjamena, but from 28 May it had already been forced to suspend its activities in the part of the city held by Mr. Hissen Habré's forces.

From the end of March to mid-May the ICRC delegation had been strengthened by medico-surgical teams and additional delegates to assist the many victims of the conflict.

From 1 to 30 September 1980 the cost of material, food and medical supplies bought by the ICRC amounted to 716,000 Sw. frs; transport and operational costs were evaluated at 1,755,000 Sw. frs. Among all the contributions made in cash or in kind for its operation in Chad the ICRC wishes to mention in particular the contribution of 1 million dollars made by the Iraqi Government.

From January to September 1980 the Central Tracing Agency office in Chad sent out and received 18,000 family messages; it opened 501 enquiries, organized the transfer of 166 families and received 3,000 visitors.

THANKS

The ICRC was extremely touched by the messages and letters of condolence it received following the death of its delegate in Sudan, Mr. Jürg Baumann, and would like to thank all the National Red Cross Societies which offered it their sympathy.
13 OCTOBER 1980: FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF RED CROSS FLIGHTS TO PHNOM PENH

On 13 October 1980 the Bangkok and Phnom Penh delegations celebrated the first anniversary of Red Cross flights out to Phnom Penh.

On 13 October 1979 the first relief flight organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross took off from Bangkok to Kampuchea. The plane was a British Hercules and it carried emergency drugs for the Kampuchean population.

Since then 714 shuttle flights have been organized, 562 from Bangkok and 151 from Singapore. A total of 13,709 tons of medicaments and various relief supplies, valued at approximately 25 million Sw. frs, have been flown to Kampuchea. Different types of aircraft were used: Hercules, Transall, DC-10^ and Fiat G 222. They were placed at the ICRC's disposal by the British, Australian, French, Dutch, American, Italian and Belgian Governments.

The planes also carried a total of 1397 passengers on these flights, the majority of whom were staff working for the humanitarian organizations based in Phnom Penh, visitors and journalists.

EXODUS FROM NO-MAN'S-LAND

It is 10 a.m. on 26 September at NW 9, a border camp with several thousand Vietnamese refugees. Some of them have already made up their bundles and are squatting among their belongings. It is a great day for them, because they have been accepted by a country where they will be able to start life afresh. All around them the camp is bubbling over with excitement, and, far from being disappointed, those staying behind are joyful in the hope that they will also soon be selected to leave the camp.

Today, 192 refugees are lined up in eleven groups and will be moved to the UNHCR transit camp at Chonburi, before leaving Thailand; 189 are going to the United States and three to Switzerland. This is the first time so many are departing together. An earlier group of 141 refugees left NW 9 on 1 August.

This is also a great day for the ICRC, which, given the camp's rather special situation, is also in charge of negotiations for the resettlement of refugees: it took the delegates nearly 4 months to obtain permission for both groups to leave the camp; over one thousand names had been submitted to various embassies in Bangkok.

"We are fully responsible for this camp", explains ICRC delegate Léon de Riedmatten, "since UNHCR does not work at the border". Normally the ICRC only deals with the repatriation of victims of conflicts (prisoners, wounded, civilian internees). Another major consideration that prompted the ICRC to speed up negotiations was the extremely precarious situation of these Vietnamese refugees living in a border camp located in a combat area and in the midst of a hostile population.

"In obtaining permission for the departure of these refugees to their host countries, we are merely discharging our duty to protect war victims", says Léon.

For several months the ICRC has been trying to obtain the Thai authorities' agreement to move the camp to a safer area, but without success so far.

The three Red Cross buses are waiting on the far side of the trench dug by the Thai army. The refugees are called in groups and, making their way through the crowd which has gathered to bid them farewell, one by one they cross the bamboo footbridge separating the no-man's-land in which the camp is situated from Thai territory.

Their papers are checked by two Thai officers, their belongings loaded onto the buses and off they go. One last look back at the others standing at the edge of the trench, one last goodbye, and the camp is already out of sight behind the trees. At the first check-point they all laugh and shout "bye-bye". Each one watches the countryside go by with renewed curiosity after months of confinement. Gradually heads begin to nod; some of the passengers sing to the accompaniment of a guitar, barely audible above the noise of the engine.

At last, the buses arrive at Chonburi. The refugees gather their bundles and look at the rows of houses under the blazing sun. They will still have to wait for the lists to be checked once again, but they now have time to be patient. One of them laughingly cries out: "One already feels a little bit at home here !".
RE-ASSESSMENT OF ICRC MEDICAL ACTIVITIES IN ANGOLA

The chief doctor of the ICRC Medical Division, Dr Rémi Russbach, was on a mission in Angola from 24 September to 9 October to review the medical assistance programmes set up by the ICRC.

The first project (Bomba Alta Centre for amputees of the lower limbs) was begun almost a year ago; the second was developed in the course of the past six months simultaneously with the food relief activities for displaced people (see "Background") and is intended to assist those same people.

The displaced population is mainly suffering from malnutrition and disease directly or indirectly linked to an acute lack of food: 80 per cent of the people of all ages who recently arrived in the villages scattered along the roads have more or less serious symptoms of malnutrition, marasmus, kwashiorkor, infections of the respiratory and digestive organs and skin diseases -scabies in particular. They are extremely weak through lack of food and therefore have very little resistance. The ICRC's primary concern is therefore to feed them, according to a daily diet of 2,000 calories laid down by nutritionists. Regular checks are made in the assisted villages to see that the relief provided is properly used.

Medical relief mainly focuses on basic care. The ICRC has begun training voluntary workers recruited from among the displaced population. Medical care chiefly consists of rehydrating children suffering from diarrhoea, disinfecting wounds and dressings and carrying out an intensive treatment of scabies.

Each time the ICRC medical delegate or nurses make their bi-monthly or weekly visit to the villages they evacuate the most serious cases to the hospitals at Katchiungo, or sometimes Huambo. In the case of extremely advanced states of malnutrition, which cannot be remedied by a normal diet (infants in particular) the patients are referred for treatment in two intensive nutrition centres set up by the ICRC in Bailundo and Katchiungo; these are run by Angolan staff trained by the ICRC. For the time being, ICRC medical activities in aid of displaced persons are restricted to the Province of Huambo and the Katchiungo and Bailundo areas. Security problems compel the ICRC delegates to reduce the length of their visits to the villages, which means that medical staff can provide only essential care, to the detriment of patients requiring intensive treatment.

This second programme will be extended as soon as the ICRC is able to reach other villages and perhaps even other provinces. The ICRC would subsequently like to strengthen the staff of provincial or district hospitals by sending medical personnel and so provide additional services. For the moment the ICRC delegates are impeded by a lack of security for they would have to spend the night in the remoter places.

Since its creation the Bomba Alta Centre has equipped 118 patients, some of whom have been fitted up with temporary prostheses. These are made by Angolan technicians trained by ICRC prosthesists. Permanent artificial limbs, based on local techniques, will soon begin to be made at the Centre.

The Centre is run in collaboration with the Angolan Red Cross and the ICRC hopes that in one year from now it will be operating independently.

Dr Russbach's greatest hope is that security conditions will improve to enable the ICRC to extend its activities in Angola.

At present it can meet only a very small proportion of the needs of the inhabitants, some of whom are, according to him, among the most needy people in the world.

IN BRIEF

South Africa: visits to prisoners. The annual series of visits to South African places of detention, which had begun on 12 October, was completed on 25 October. The ICRC delegates visited in 8 places 515 convicted prisoners and 4 detainees held under Section 10 of the Internal Security Amendment Act.

The ICRC has been carrying out such visits since 1963 and is pursuing its efforts to gain access to persons detained under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act.

In Nicaragua, the ICRC dental delegate, sent from Geneva on 7 October on a limited assignment to perform 600 urgent extractions in the detention Centre, "La Zona Franca", had dealt with about half of them by 17 October; he had treated 151 patients and performed 249 extractions.

Following a request made by the ICRC a detainee from Ashkelon Prison, in Israel, was exceptionally allowed to visit his dying mother in Jerusalem.
ANGOLA - A SCENE OF DISASTER

Since the country acceded to independence in 1975 Angola has hardly ever made the headlines of international news. And yet the consequences of the conflict currently raging there have sorely affected a large part of the population. Tens of thousands of people have been displaced and are now living in extreme distress, which the ICRC, whose assistance was requested by the Luanda authorities in April 1979, tries to alleviate as far as possible.

Huambo and Bié are the provinces no doubt most affected by poverty and the struggle opposing the governmental forces and the UNITA combatants. The ICRC delegates are based in Huambo and from there they operate the ICRC emergency assistance programmes for displaced persons under extremely difficult and perilous conditions. Anne-Marie Grobet, who is an ICRC information delegate, was there during of August. She accompanied the delegates in the field and brought back many poignant pictures.

She set her impressions down in writing in a series of narratives, a few extracts of which are reproduced below.

A WOMAN AND HER TWO CHILDREN come forward towards the nurse who has just stepped out of the ICRC truck and prepared her case of dressings on a log. The woman is young, and although her body has been stricken by hunger and fatigue, she evidently was once a good-looking young girl. The elder of her two children carries his little sister and shows her to the nurse: the two tiny feet are a mass of festering sores, the face and arms are covered with crusts, and both eyes are almost hidden by the swellings caused by infection. The little girl does not move while the sores on her feet and arms are cleansed and bandaged. It is only when the nurse starts to treat her deeply burnt hand that she twitches and starts to cry. She is three years old at the most. Her mother leans on a stout stick for support, her feet are crevassed and swollen right up to the calves, a characteristic sign of malnutrition. The right foot has a septic sore on the ankle and another on the heel. Her movements are those of an old woman's. She is only thirty years old.

THE BOY, who is perhaps not more than twelve years old, appears to be shoulder­ing - as well as he can manage - the role of his father, who is almost certainly dead. It is he who has assumed the task of obtaining his family's share of the relief supplies. He finds a place for his mother and small sister a short distance away from the crowd and gets into the queue, clutching a flat wicker basket to hold the ration of maize flour which is being distributed. The mother has covered a hole in the bottom of the basket, at the cost of much time and effort, with scraps of discarded wrappings she has picked up. The yellow powder is poured into the basket; it resembles a shaft of sunlight, a symbol of hope returning. The boy's eyes are rivetted on the golden maize. One wonders when it was that he had last seen maize flour.

The basket is now full and he must carry it away. Even though he is now the strongest member of the family, he finds he cannot lift it all by himself. The women just behind him in the queue help him to place the basket on his head. He takes it to his mother and gently exchanges a few words with her. He speaks to her as if he were as old as she, as if that were how it had been for years, as if he had discarded his childhood behind when they had all left their home to hide in the bush. Now, the important thing is to keep the family alive.

THE NEXT STAGE is the preparation of the "papa": a mixture of milk, sugar, butteroil and maize flour, which is cooked over an open fire in a small pot provided by the delegates in every "village" where the ICRC provides assistance. Most of the children are already queuing up for their ration, at least the more vigorous ones. The boy's small sister is too feeble and cannot manage all alone, and he goes to get her portion with all the determination and gravity of an adult conscious of his responsibilities. He tastes the papa in the old tin he brings for his sister before seeking another for himself. The mother helps the little girl to eat and tastes herself the food. And now the child begins to cry; she is starving, she cannot wait and watch her mother eating her food. But soon, big brother comes with the second ration, and all is well, there is enough for both mother and daughter; he goes back immediately to queue again.

This time, he returns holding a big shining tin of butteroil, six smaller tins with red wrappings, containing tinned fish, salt
and proteins, and also a bar of soap. There is still one more problem to be solved, although he has the whole day to think about that: how will he carry all this stuff to their straw hut at the far end of the "village"? They know no one who can help them. Here, the people have arrived from vastly different areas; the rule is each man for himself, and the Red Cross will provide. But who knows when the Red Cross will came back?

On the morning of August 7th, the ICRC lorry and its two armoured Land-Cruisers came to halt by the "village" of Kajailula, about fifteen kilometres before Bailundo on the road from Huambo. The "villages" set up by the side of the tarred roads are in fact places where the civilians whom the war in Angola has driven away from their homes in the bush have been resettled. At Kajailula, some aspects of community life, such as solidarity, are still to be found. The chief, or "soba", wields undisputed authority. He greets us with the humble postures of gratitude adopted by poverty-stricken people, but he very soon regains his dignity as he supervises the distribution operations and imposes discipline upon his people. The women and children are the first to approach the vehicles. The older men emerge more slowly from their straw huts, the material employed for their construction indicating that they have been hastily improvised (later the huts will be made of dried mud), and then pass under the ancestor's archway before coming towards us. This consists of a double row of stakes fixed on either side of the path, about two metres apart, with another stake placed across horizontally on their tips. It has not been there for more than a few days and serves for the passages of the elders - the living, as well as the spirits of their forefathers gone to rest - so as to ensure the village's welfare.

They begin to unload the relief supplies. It is amazing how these puny-looking men find enough strength to carry the loads from the truck. But sometimes, four or six are needed to carry a fifty-kilogramme case.

The all too familiar signs of famine are visible: bony-thin arms, bloated stomachs, small wrinkled buttocks, heads of a disproportionate size on tiny shoulders. It is extremely disquieting, too, to see, in this spectral vision of a population decimated by starvation, teenagers, as well as their fathers and mothers, so thin and frail that one wonders that they are able to stand up. This is humanity at its lowest ebb. All the inhabitants watch quietly as the blankets and bags of maize flour pile up in the shade of three tall trees by the side of the road, while at the same time the two nurses set up their cases of dressings and nivaquine. Between the relief supplies and the nurses' dressing station, a fire has been lit and water set to boil in a cask: in two hours' time there will be "papa" for the children.

Before beginning the distribution, the ICRC delegate speaks to the four hundred or so "deslocados" who have gathered here and explains the source of the relief supplies brought to them, the meaning of the red cross signs painted on the vehicles and worn by the people who have arrived in them; and he stresses in particular the neutral aspect of this aid.

As the ICRC convoys move on from one village to another, and more and more people are told what it is all about, will the safety of Red Cross personnel be better secured in the regions where armed clashes are still taking place? There are good grounds for hope.

The "papa" is primarily for the children. If there is any left after they have all been fed, it is distributed to the grown-ups. There is no need to issue any special ration cards to check who has already been given his share.

The remains of the meal are clearly visible all over the child's face, right up to the eyebrows! If a youngster has washed his face, he looks so different from the others that it is even easier to tell that he has been fed, and in any case the "papa" shows on his teeth. Older children who taste the contents of their kid brother's pan on their way back from the distribution of maize, will also be found out this way. But this is not the time to be too strict; the needs are too great for that.

On the other hand, the weakest among these people may not have been able to get into the food queue. How is one to know? They are the ones who require food most urgently. For example, a young woman sitting all alone on the ground in the sun, her eyes staring into the distance, her body constantly shaken by brief twitches. In her arms lies an infant, its head hanging backwards, with staring, expressionless eyes. Both mother and child are racked with fever, their strength has ebbed away. The woman manages to swallow down a bowl of "papa" while a nurse holds the baby. If a determined effort had not been made to find such people, she would have been overlooked.

Tirelessly, at every stop, the delegates go into the darkest corners of the huts to seek out those who are so sick and feeble that they cannot move, or those who may even fell too humiliated to show themselves to the people outside.

In a village like Kajailula, where the feeling of solidarity is firmly established,
The first time that an ICRC relief team stopped at Sfinge on 13 July, the hundreds of people sitting listlessly in the sun or huddled in their huts did not even have the strength to get up and watch the unexpected and rather alarming arrival of the unknown newcomers. The very weakest were lying prostrate on the ground after months of isolation, destitution and starvation. Every single child suffered from some form of ailment: emaciated bodies, swollen stomachs, faces bloated by kwashiorkor, feet deformed by oedema, infected wounds, limbs scorched by contact with hot hearth-stones in attempts to provide warmth to fever-racked bodies. As we approached, we noticed a glazed and distant look in the children's eyes, and the creases on their skin belied their tender age.

So when we took along the most desperate cases to the hospital at Huambo, giving priority to the youngsters, we almost left behind a fourteen-year-old girl, mistaking her for an old woman. Her face was wrinkled and her body, covered by a piece of ragged sacking, was more like a skeleton, on which hung greyish folds of skin. Her name was Guilhermina and some time later, we saw her at Huambo Hospital: now, she had a noblewoman's high-bred looks, her head was held high, her eyes, set widely apart, were inclined slightly upwards towards her temples, her nose was finely sharped and she glanced at us with a shy smile. She was still thin, of course, and one could still feel the bones jutting out, when placing one's hand on her shoulder. But her skin had become smooth and satiny and the movements of her limbs were well articulated.

To the question whether she would like to return to Sfinge, she would reply softly: "Tomorrow", and tears would flow down her cheeks. She had become so weak, when she had arrived at Sfinge six months ago, that she could not remember anything of her wanderings in the bush. One day, the next time we go through Sfinge, we shall take her with us, and we wonder if her mother will recognize her. Her father is dead.

"RESPEITA A CRUZ VERMELHA...C.I.C.V"

Today, 15 August 1980, the third ICRC relief convoy left Huambo for Sfinge, two hours' drive away. The previous trip was on 29 July. That day, the delegates took with them buckets of paint and paintbrushes and on the way back to Huambo got to work on a first-hand information campaign intended to reach all combatants: the road to Sfinge was reputed to be unsafe, ambushes had taken place, and a mine had been discovered on the road only two days before the ICRC convoy was due to bring the first consignment of emergency relief goods for the 2,000 "deslocados" (displaced people) collected at Sfinge. There was no likelihood of any government aid reaching them as the region was infested with groups of armed men.

Why has it been necessary to display red crosses on both sides of the road and even on a prominent rock overlooking the pass? All our vehicles have the letters "C.I.C.V" (Comité internacional de Cruz Vermelha) and big red crosses displayed on the white bodywork and are easily recognizable. It has to be explained what the Red Cross IS, explained to everyone in a country where guerilla warfare is still active and the red cross symbol is meaningless for most of the population.

The problem of "identity" was clear to us: at each first visit we made to a "village" of "deslocados", the faces of the people who came forward to meet us betrayed signs of fear and suspicion more frequently than they expressed hope. They had obviously never seen a red cross in their life.

Problems involving security and logistics are the major obstacles to our relief activities in Angola. One of the difficulties is how to weigh the risks. What should be done when several thousand "deslocados" have been reported gathering in a certain district, but when we have practically no indications about how we should reach them? We have no choice but to wait, even though the delay might cost a thousand lives by the time conditions allow us to get to these victims of the Angola conflict. Hence the urgent need to make ourselves known in the country.

We would have liked to be able to find out who those people are, where they come from, how many days they have wandered, what they have lived through, what they have seen and thought, how they have been living for the last five years, how many times they have fled, survived, sought to start a new life from nothing, only to flee once more. How many of their people have been lost on the way? It is hard to imagine what should have happened to them. One can only observe and try to understand.
Protection and assistance are by no means synonymous but they often supplement each other in forming the keystone of Red Cross activities throughout the world. The Red Cross movement has decided that the year 1981 will be devoted to their promotion.

Under normal circumstances people are protected by laws and find means of sustenance in their own environment. When an armed conflict breaks out or a natural disaster strikes the established structure of society collapses. Laws are transgressed, the natural environment is thrown into confusion and situations arise in which security, health and people's lives are threatened: this is the context in which Red Cross protection and assistance activities are carried out.

After quite a modest beginning, the Red Cross has become, 118 years later, a universal movement numbering, in addition to the International Committee, 126 National Societies, forming a world federation, and almost 250 million members. International humanitarian law has developed considerably and now comprises over 600 articles intended to protect human beings under various circumstances; the material assistance and relief provided by the Red Cross benefit countless numbers of people in times of war and peace.

The Red Cross follows its vocation, impelled by its ideal of humanity, which is manifested in assistance action, and thus has it conquered the world, bearing witness that it is not prejudiced by race, religion, culture or the times in which we live. Suffering may be found all over the world and the Red Cross tries to provide protection and assistance to all who suffer wherever they may be.
CONFLICT BETWEEN IRAQ AND IRAN: CONTINUATION OF ICRC PROTECTION ACTIVITIES

ICRC delegates continued, throughout November, to visit prisoners of war held by the opposing forces. Through these visits, lists of POWs were established and sent to the prisoners' country of origin. Family messages written by the POWs were also sent through ICRC channels.

As the conflict entered its third month, more prisoners were reported taken by both sides and the ICRC delegates in both capitals stressed to the authorities their wish to see the new POWs as quickly as possible and to be notified of their capture within the shortest time.

The conflict has also produced a large number of civilian victims and the ICRC has repeated its requests to make surveys of the affected areas to find out the fate of civilians who might be in need of protection and assistance.

CAMBODIA/THAILAND OPERATION

Since the beginning of the year the food aid to the people of Kampuchea in both Cambodia and Thailand has been given priority and has been accompanied by a large-scale medical assistance operation. This saved the Kampuchean people from extinction, and the harvest which has just started seems promising.

Consequently, the ICRC and UNICEF have agreed to terminate their joint operation at the end of 1980. However, the UN agencies, the ICRC and the voluntary agencies will continue co-operating to see that needy populations receive maximum benefit from international assistance.

The ICRC delegates' assessment of the situation has enabled the institution to define its objectives for the first few months of 1981.

In Kampuchea the ICRC will continue providing medical aid, as medicaments are still lacking and medical services are inadequate. The ICRC hopes also to carry out its traditional activities of protection and of seeking the missing.

In Thailand the ICRC medical programme will be adjusted in co-operation with the voluntary agencies. A surgical unit will be maintained at the Khao I Dang camp and some medical teams will continue working in the border region. Initially, medical co-ordination will remain an ICRC responsibility. In mid-December the ICRC will cease its participation in the distribution of food to non-residents (Khmer civilians coming from Kampuchea for supplies and medical treatment at the border). It was at the end of July that the ICRC stopped participating in food distributions to the resident population at the border.

The ICRC is continuing its efforts to provide protection, mainly for Vietnamese refugees who have trekked across Kampuchea and are now in a camp for which the ICRC is responsible. The Central Tracing Agency, in co-operation with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, will go on with its work of recording refugees, tracing the missing and reuniting people - mainly children - with their families.

Needless to say, the ICRC will remain alert to any change in the situation and to any unexpected needs.

EL SALVADOR: RED CROSS ASSISTANCE TO DISPLACED PERSONS

An appeal will soon be launched to raise funds to finance ICRC activities in El Salvador which has been extended as a result of increasing violence. With the help of the National Red Cross Society of El Salvador, the ICRC has recently established an assistance programme for about 45,000 displaced people mostly women, children and the elderly. The cost of food and medical aid to these victims will amount to approximately two million Swiss francs for the period from 15 November 1980 to 15 March 1981.

For over a year the ICRC has been maintaining a permanent delegation in El Salvador, to provide protection for people arrested for security reasons and has cooperated, with the League to increase the National Society's capacity for action.

During his stay in El Salvador (from 17 to 30 October) the delegate general for Latin America, Mr. Pasquier, worked out the details of this programme with members of the ICRC delegation and leading officials of the El Salvador Red Cross. The Red Cross is active as a neutral institution in combat areas which are not easily accessible for government agencies particularly those belonging to the departments of San Miguel in the north, Morazan in the east, and San Vicente, Cabanas and Chalatenango in the central part of El Salvador.

Food supplies, which are mainly composed of rice, dried beans, oil, sugar and milk powder, are provided by the ICRC while
the El Salvador Red Cross with its teams of voluntary first aid workers distributes the food under the supervision of the ICRC.

As El Salvador does not have a blood bank, the ICRC, in cooperation with the National Red Cross Society, established an emergency programme to collect blood which is to be provided free of charge to the various hospitals. This programme will subsequently form part of a project for a national blood bank, which the National Red Cross is planning to set up.

To ensure co-ordination and supervision of this assistance operation, three additional delegates are to join the ICRC delegation, bringing its number to eight.

ZAIRE: OUTLINE OF ICRC ACTIVITIES FROM 1978 TO 1980

In April and May 1978, Kolwezi, in Shaba Province, was the scene of savage massacre. Very soon after, the ICRC, with the help of Zairian Red Cross volunteers worked out an emergency programme to bring aid to the survivors.

The most urgent and most distasteful task was burying the dozens of corpses lying abandoned in the sun, to prevent the outbreak of epidemics. The next thing was to supply relief goods to the inhabitants, some of whom had sought refuge in the bush where they had had almost nothing to eat while others had remained in town where the shops had been completely stripped of food and other goods by looters. The first Red Cross train to arrive in Kolwezi a few days after the arrival of an ICRC delegate carried foodstuffs supplied by a local mining company. The relief operations soon swelled considerably and by the time they were brought to a close, 436 tons of various goods, including foodstuffs, medicaments and blankets, had been sent to Kolwezi, mostly by plane from Geneva, while the remainder, purchased in Zambia and Likasi, was forwarded by rail in wagons marked with the red cross. In addition, the ICRC was able to get a number of dispensaries running again and stocked them with medical supplies. It also helped to trace missing persons and to that end five letter-boxes where family messages could be deposited were set up on the road from Lubumbashi to Kolwezi. The emergency phase, during which a doctor was on duty, lasted three months. For a further two months, the ICRC, which had meanwhile opened a delegation in Kinshasa, continued to give aid to alleviate the after-effects of the Shaba incidents, mainly by supplying the dispensaries of the National Red Cross Society and several religious missions with medicaments.

As soon as it began working in Zaire, the ICRC approached the authorities with a view to obtaining access to any person imprisoned because of the events. It was in Shaba that its first visits were made to people detained for having acted against the security of the State.

In 1978, the ICRC visited a number of reception centres for Zairian refugees returning from Angola to their homes. In May and June of that year ICRC delegates also visited 54 detention centres in Shaba Province. In 1979 and 1980, visits were extended to Kinshasa and the province of Equateur. Further visits to places of detention in Shaba were made in August 1980. After the establishment of the ICRC delegation in mid-1978, cells in Kinshasa police stations were regularly visited at intervals.

Recently, the ICRC obtained authorization to visit all civilian and military detention centres, as well as prisons under the authority of the State Security Department. It endeavoured to persuade the authorities that it was necessary to improve detention conditions, and it attempted to get other organizations to take an interest in this problem with a view to covering the costs of such improvements.

Zaire's huge area, the problems of transport and the small number of delegates which the ICRC could put in the field, meant that protection work developed rather slowly, but recently the ICRC has been stepping up those activities. Until now only some prisons in Kinshasa and in the provinces of Equateur and Shaba had been visited by its delegates, it will be soon extending its work to detention centres in other parts of the country.

To execute this project, the ICRC delegation which previously consisted of only one delegate, accompanied by colleagues despatched from Geneva only during long rounds of visits, was strengthened by the arrival, on 20 November, of a second delegate. From January 1981, the delegation's staff will be further augmented.

The CERP at the ICRC: About forty members of the European Federation of Public Relations visited the ICRC on 7 November and attended a lecture given by the Chief of the Press and Information Division on the information campaign carried out in southern Africa from 1978 to 1980.
PRESIDENTIAL VISIT TO CHINA

At the invitation of the Chinese Red Cross, ICRC President Alexandre Hay, accompanied by his wife, by the Director of the Operation Department, Mr. J.-P. Hocké, and the Chief of Documentation and Dissemination Division, Mr. R. Gaillard-Moret, was in China from 2 to 11 November.

During his mission Mr. Hay gave an account of ICRC activities to various officials, including the Vice-President of the Standing Committee of the People's National Assembly, Mr. Liao Cheng-Zhi; the Minister of Health, Mr. Quian Yin-Zhong, who is also the President of the Chinese Red Cross; the Vice Minister of Education, Mr. Koa Yi. The ICRC representatives discussed questions relating to the dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law with Mr. Koa Yi and during their visit to the Ministry of Defense. They also talked about the possibility of China's signing the 1977 Protocols.

The Chief of the Documentation and Dissemination Division extended his stay in China for a week to contribute to the preparation of a dissemination programme, which will be run in schools by the National Red Cross Society.

AN ICRC DELEGATION IN MOSCOW

An ICRC delegation, led by Mr. Richard Pestalozzi, ICRC Vice-President, went to Moscow at the invitation of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the USSR, and stayed there from 27 to 31 October 1980.

In the course of a lengthy series of discussions, the members of the delegation and leaders of the Alliance exchanged views on a great number of subjects, including the dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law; the ratification of the 1977 Protocols; the Red Cross and Peace; and the ICRC's activities throughout the world.

At the ICRC delegation's request, arrangements were made for them to meet also a number of government officials, prominent persons from scientific and university circles, and representatives of the Soviet Armed Forces and of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. One of the results of those conversations, also in which the topics mentioned above were discussed, was that the ICRC representatives and their interlocutors agreed to review ways and means of co-operation in the years ahead, in particular for dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law.

VISITS TO PLACES OF DETENTION IN NAMIBIA/SOUTH WEST AFRICA

On 20 November the ICRC began a series of visits to all persons detained in Windhoek under State security decrees.

A few months ago the ICRC made two visits to security detainees at Marienthal, and to persons held in Windhoek and Gobabis; before the invitation had been extended to them by the Administrator General for Namibia/South West Africa on 19 November, the ICRC delegates had never been authorized to see all the detainees.

Visits are currently being carried out in detention centres throughout the country in accordance with the customary ICRC procedures.

IN BRIEF

Declaration of intention by the African National Congress

On 28 November the President of the ANC, Mr. O.R. Tambo, handed to the President of the ICRC, a declaration stating that the ANC in the course of the struggle in South Africa, intends to respect the principles of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts; the declaration also notes the ANC's intention to respect wherever practically possible the rules of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional Protocol I relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts.

Uganda: relief for West Nile province. On 17 November a ten-ton lorry left Kampala for the Moyo district in the West Nile province. Its load of beans, medicaments, blankets, cooking utensils and soap was the first ICRC assistance to the civilian victims of the recent fighting in the province between government troops and former soldiers of Idi Amin Dada's army. This relief distribution was a sequel to a survey carried out by the head of the ICRC Uganda delegation from 10 to 13 November in the districts of Arua and Moro.
Broadcasting times during December for RGBS on the short wave, on 7,210 kHz in the 41.60 metre band, are:

Monday 29 December in English and French and on Wednesday 31 December in German, Spanish and Arabic, from 0600 to 0700, 11.30 to 12.30 and 17.00 to 18.00 GMT.

**IN BRIEF**

In Bolivia, the ICRC delegates carried out, from 3 to 16 November, 18 visits to two detention centres in La Paz and to Viacha Prison near the capital. They saw the 169 detainees held there at the beginning of the month. Detainees are gradually being released and their number had fallen to 74 by 15 November.

**BACKGROUND**

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW: ANOTHER STEP FORWARD

Mines and booby traps, incendiary arms such as napalm, and weapons leaving non-detectable fragments are the subjects of one convention and three protocols adopted two months ago at the second and final session of the United Nations conference on the prohibition of certain conventional weapons.

This adoption marks the end of an important era in the history of international humanitarian law, an era in which the ICRC has played a starring role. But what does this latest addition to international humanitarian law, mean in theory and in reality, how effective will it be and what were the developments which led to its adoption? "Background" this month answers these questions in an in-depth look at this latest development.

Civilians caught in future international conflicts will benefit from a more effective legal protection, thanks to the successful United Nations conference which ended on October 10.

With the unwieldy title of "United Nations conference on the prohibition or restriction of use of certain conventional weapons that may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects" the conference resulted in the adoption of one convention and three protocols.

Each of them deals with the prohibition or restriction of use of a specific category of weaponry and included in the convention is a basic mechanism which allows for the revision of these latest rules every 10 years or less, if requested. An open system, the convention also allows for the addition of protocols if new weapons in the future warrant prohibition or restrictions.

The first protocol refers to weapons with non-detectable fragments which once embedded in a person's body cannot be traced by X-Ray. Although conference members considered that these rarely used arms did not have much relevance to the present, the protocol was adopted as an insurance against the future.

In common use today are the mines and booby traps which are the subjects of protocol two. While conference members were not ready to denounce the use of these weapons, the task of this protocol is to ensure control over the placement of such arms. This was deemed necessary as experience has shown that even long after conflicts have ended, this type of weaponry can still be in place, can still be potent and thus can be a source of danger to civilians. For example, in Egypt and Libya, mines planted over 30 years ago are still being found today.
To safeguard the well-being of civilians, both during and after the conflict, the protocol calls for either placing the mines by hand and drawing up a plan of where they are located or installing built-in self-destruction mechanisms which render the weapons harmless after a certain period of time.

A complete ban on incendiary weapons, such as napalm, was sought after by some states taking part in the conference.

However, because of certain military advantages which could be gained by using these weapons, the ban could not be agreed upon. Instead, protocol three states that a military target cannot be attacked from the air with incendiary weapons if that target is within a civilian area. This avoids not only possible direct injury but also incidental injury to civilians.

Some states wanted to go further and include within the protocol protection against incendiaries for soldiers because of the "cruel suffering" these weapons can inflict, but again this move did not receive the consensus of the conference.

These latest additions to international humanitarian law come 116 years after what is considered to be the beginning of modern humanitarian law when the first Geneva Convention was agreed upon in 1864.

This was the first time in the history of the world that there had been an agreement on a multi-national scale. Following this convention, the development in humanitarian law split into two directions - a) the provision of protection for victims in conflict situations and b) the fixing of certain rules on the conduct of conflicts and hostilities.

While the rules relating to the former were extensively detailed in the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, each of which is devoted to protection conditions for a certain category of people, the laws relating to the conduct of hostilities were not well developed.

These laws were based on the St Petersburg Declaration of 1868 and the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907. But these were the only laws and the separation between the two categories was distinct, the two known as the Geneva Law and the Hague Law. This distinction was clear because the Geneva conventions provide essentially for the protection of victims in the hands of their enemy.

But what became obvious, particularly during World War Two, was that the civilians needed a more general form of protection against the effects of hostilities. It was therefore necessary to marry, to a certain extent, the two laws.

RULES THROUGH THE CENTURIES

While the first Geneva Convention of 1864 heralded the start to the modern era of humanitarian law, rules governing the conduct of warfare go back centuries and even millennia.

In Ancient Greece, the rules were few, but couriers between opposing parties and ambassadors were respected, treaties observed and the use of poisoned arrows considered contrary to the divine laws. A distinction between civilians and soldiers had been defined in China several centuries B.C., while Islamic civilisations have long prohibited the use of poison. Ancient Romans were not only forbidden to use poison in the course of combat, but were obliged to limit their choice of weapons.

The Middle Ages saw a recession in the development of laws governing conduct in conflicts as the concept of the "just war" attained prominence resulting in a belief that anything which could bring about victory of the just fight could be done or used.

By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the rules were once again being formulated and ideas expounded. For the first time, thought was given to the differentiation between necessary and unnecessary military might while again the abhorrence of poison figured prominently. This stand against poison, however, may not have been the result of totally humanitarian notions. According to one 17th century writer, the prohibition was proposed by a number of European princes. Although they were better protected by their armies against the ravages of hostilities than most people, they could not protect themselves so easily against the consequences of poison.
This was completed in 1977 when the Geneva Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions were adopted after four years of a diplomatic conference. This adoption was the result of more than 20 years of work by the ICRC, guardian of the Geneva Conventions, which organised preparatory conferences and drew up the drafts which formed the basis of the agreement accepted by the states.

Among the principles outlined in the 1977 Protocols was the prohibition of attack on civilian populations "as such". Although the phrase "as such" was an ambiguous description, the parties which took part in the conferences had to keep in mind that they could not institute a law forbidding war.

They had to remember that the humanitarian laws only come into action after the first law of the United Nations, forbidding war, is broken. As a result, humanitarian law must accept war and all that it engenders, as a fact, as it is only during war that it is activated.

A second reason for the ambiguity is the military point of view, the military necessities within war. It is difficult to know to which extent an attack against a military target touches civilians. As a result, the 1977 Protocols included the Principle of Proportionality - when attacking a military target, it must be done in such a way that will cause little damage to civilians while taking into account the military objective.

When it came to weaponry, it was agreed to ban their indiscriminate use. But while there had been discussions promoting definite rules on the use of weapons, the Diplomatic Conference on Humanitarian Law would not accept the proposal. It was considered that laying down such rules was not within its competence.

However, a resolution was passed requesting a special UN conference. And the result of this resolution was the UN Conference on conventional weapons.

Like the 1977 Diplomatic Conference, this conference of two sessions was bound by military and political as well as humanitarian considerations. The most significant weapons, nuclear and chemical, could not be included in the agenda as their remifications could not be confined within the definition of humanitarian laws. Questions of international strategy, and balance of power could not be dealt with.

Instead, the conference had to restrain itself to certain categories of conventional weapons. Even so, while these arms do not have a strategic importance, military considerations had to be accounted for and as a result, it was necessary to have the military viewpoint represented if the laws were to be accepted by the very people who would have first-hand control over their implementation.

And the acceptance and success of the conference was important, because if it failed, it was likely that the states would not be prepared to discuss the subject again for some time.

Having reached an agreement, it is now necessary to have at least 20 states formally accept for the convention and its protocols to come into force. Even then, it will only pertain to the international circuit and between the states signing the accord.

Enforcing international humanitarian laws is difficult. There is no international body which has such power. But such humanitarian rules adopted by consensus in a diplomatic conference have a moral value as soon as they are adopted independent of their formal recognition. A certain moral obligation is upon the states to abide by the rules. As such, these rules have an importance which is independent of legality.

Much of the credit for the latest success can be given to the ICRC. During the recent conference, the ICRC acted only as an observer as it is not the role of the Red Cross to deal with military necessities and it does not have the expertise necessary to decide on military priorities, as well as to discuss the intricacies of the weapons concerned.

But for more than 20 years, the ICRC has been organising the meetings and conferences of experts which culminated in the 1977 Protocol which in turn had a direct bearing on the recent addition to international humanitarian law.

The ICRC is well aware that the supervision and application of the international laws are difficult and that the laws can also be ambiguous. But the need to improve protection for the victims was imperative.

Because of the nature of the situation in which the laws must operate, namely armed conflict, ambiguity was unavoidable. And while the extent of the rules is only modest, the ICRC realises that the laws will at least save some people who otherwise might have endured suffering or death.