

Far East

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necessary to maintain a permanent general delegation in the Near East and consequently the position of General Delegate was abolished.

FAR EAST

Japan

The repatriation of Koreans resident in Japan which began in December 1959¹ continued throughout 1960. The ICRC special mission, set up in Tokyo in 1959, has continued to lend its services to the Japanese Red Cross during the operations and preparations which preceded each embarkation for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

As in 1959, the ICRC delegates went to the registration offices of the Japanese Red Cross set up in prefectures or town-halls. They were present during the registration of Korean families which expressed the wish to leave Japan and they gave the Japanese officials concerned any advice which was requested of them on the application of the instructions issued by the National Red Cross Society. In fact, the repatriation of unaccompanied children of less than 16 years has frequently caused problems which the Japanese Red Cross and the ICRC special mission have endeavoured to resolve in the best interest of the child, taking into account Japanese legislation as well as the ways and customs of the Korean people. In addition, the ICRC delegates made sure that no pressure was put on candidates for repatriation, either to leave for North Korea or to stay in Japan. There were very few incidents. A small number of irregular registrations were cancelled.

Before each embarkation, the special mission closely examined the documents which were presented, principally to avoid minors under 16 years of age being parted from their parents or leaving unaccompanied.

At Niigata, the port of embarkation, the delegates also continued to be present each week at the final interrogation of Koreans, at which the latter were invited by a representative of the Japanese

¹ See *Annual Report 1959*, pp. 16-22

Red Cross, to confirm for the last time their willingness to leave Japan. A small number of Koreans changed their minds, mostly for family reasons. On the other hand, an appreciable contingent of Koreans (quite a high percentage of those registered for each vessel) failed to turn up at the time of embarkation. Thus vessels expected to carry a thousand people sometimes sailed with 800, or even 700 people on board.

The reason for these abstentions was without doubt, at least in part, the uncertainty engendered by the negotiations which took place at Niigata in September for the renewal of the agreement concluded in Calcutta on the 13th August 1959 between the Red Cross of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Japanese Red Cross, which was to last for 15 months. This agreement was finally renewed on the 27th October for one year dating from 13th November. Following this, representatives of the two National Societies met on 24th November, to accelerate the rate of repatriation by allowing 1,200 passengers per week instead of 1,000 from 1st March 1961.

By the end of the year, 52,000 people (of whom about 4,000 of Japanese nationality) had left Japan for North Korea in 51 convoys.

Thailand

On the 5th January, the first boat repatriating the Vietnamese from Thailand to the People's Republic of Viet Nam left the port of Bangkok for Haiphong. An ICRC delegate was present at departure. This repatriation operation, which was carried out in application of the agreement concluded in Rangoon on 24th August 1959 in the presence of an ICRC delegate, continued at the rate of about 1,500 repatriations per month. The Thai Red Cross took part in this, notably by organizing the reception of Vietnamese arriving in Bangkok from country areas, where they were met by a team of nurses and voluntary aids.

Democratic Republic of Viet Nam

The ICRC continued its interventions regarding the repatriation of certain Europeans who had remained in the Democratic Republic

of Viet Nam after the armistice in 1954. It thus prepared for the return of some people under the jurisdiction of a number of countries of Western Europe.

Laos

Laos was one of the Asiatic countries with which the ICRC had to occupy itself most in 1960. At the beginning of the year, the relief action undertaken on behalf of the victims of the events of 1959 continued with a consignment of condensed milk, layettes and hospital beds, which were handed over to the Laotian Red Cross by the ICRC delegate in Saigon.

On the 9th August, a *coup d'Etat* brought about a recurrence of military activity and from then on the North of the country was held by the Pathet-Lao forces, the centre by those of Captain Kong-Le, who had seized power in Vientiane and the South by those of General Phoumi, a member of the Savannakhet Committee.

As a result of this, communications were broken between Vientiane and the province and the Philippine Red Cross approached the ICRC on behalf of Philippine doctors of "Operation Brotherhood", a technical assistance organization patronized by the Philippines. The ICRC took the necessary steps with the Red Cross and the Laotian authorities. These had an immediate effect and the doctors who were stationed in the Northern province of Sam-Neua were able to return to Vientiane.

In the meantime, the forces of General Phoumi had launched an offensive northwards and engaged the troops of Captain Kong-Le in action on the outskirts of Paksé. At the request of the Laotian Red Cross, the ICRC sent to Vientiane in November, surgical kits valued at 4,000 francs.

At the beginning of December, after Paksé had been taken, units of the Royalist army, commanded by General Phoumi, reached the immediate outskirts of Vientiane. A large number of inhabitants then left the town to take refuge in neighbouring villages as well as in Nong-Khai (Thailand), on the opposite bank of the Mekong. On 13th December, fighting broke out in Vientiane, causing heavy losses amongst the civilian population which had re-

mained on the spot. The hospital of Mahosot, to which a large number of wounded were brought, was short of blood plasma and medicaments. Several areas were on fire and all communications were cut.

On 21 December, Mr. André Durand, head of the ICRC special mission in Tokyo, arrived on the spot with a consignment of antibiotics which he immediately handed over to the hospital. Shortly after, blood plasma sent from Switzerland was also handed over in Vientiane, where there also arrived aid from various sources in the form of medical personnel, provisions and medicaments.

In addition to these, with the help of the Laotian Red Cross and voluntary aids, the ICRC delegate undertook a relief action for 5,000 people without shelter as a result of the destruction caused by the hostilities. These distributions of rice, milk, clothing, mats, blankets and household utensils, were carried out by means of credits established by the ICRC and a gift of 2,000 dollars from the Japanese Red Cross. They were continued in 1961. The National Red Cross Societies of Thailand, Cambodia, the Republic of Viet Nam (South) and the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam (North) also sent aid to Laos.

Nepal

In agreement with the Government in Kathmandu, the ICRC has sent aid to the Tibetan refugees in Nepal. The latter, estimated to number about 22,000, are to be found particularly in the valleys in the North of the Himalayan Kingdom. The largest groups are in Khumbu (the Mount Everest region), in the valley of Thakkhola (Mounts Anapurna and Dhaulagiri) and around Wahmgchung (North-East of the country).

The first relief from the ICRC to the Tibetan refugees was distributed through the intermediary of the *Aide suisse à des régions extra-européennes*. An ICRC delegate, Mr. Charles Ammann, returning from Japan, arrived on the spot during June and took part in the distributions. The ICRC later called on Mr. Toni Hagen, a Swiss geologist who knows Nepal well, and asked him to organize a relief action. Mr. Hagen proceeded with the study necessary for the

accomplishment of his mission and towards the end of the year he made reconnaissance flights by helicopter over several regions of Nepal in order the better to evaluate the number of refugees and their needs.

China

At the request of the Chinese Red Cross, the ICRC undertook several investigations on the subject of missing Chinese fishermen. One of its representatives was able to talk with some of these fishermen now residing in Taiwan.

EUROPE

Greece

In April, a doctor-delegate of the ICRC, Dr. Jacques de Rougemont, visited the camp for political exiles at Aghios Efstratios in the Aegean, as well as several hospitals at which political detainees were receiving treatment. The ICRC also sent them relief through the Greek Red Cross.

Hungary

In April, two delegates went to Budapest where the ICRC is taking part in equipping a new factory for artificial limbs for invalids.

Furthermore, representations which have been made by the ICRC for the reuniting of dispersed Hungarian families were successful in certain cases, and several children were thus able to rejoin their parents abroad. It was also possible for some heads of families living abroad to transmit allowances for their children who had remained in Hungary.

Finally, the ICRC, through the intermediary of the Hungarian Red Cross, continued to despatch special pharmaceutical products to private individuals.