

# INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

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## SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

### News Items

#### Approaches to the Algerian authorities

Two representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Algeria were present on September 13 last at the release of twenty-five European nationals on whose behalf they had intervened energetically for the past few weeks. They had, in fact, already approached the Algerian authorities on a number of occasions with a view to obtaining the release of more than a thousand cases of missing persons which had been brought to their notice. The ICRC sent the following telegram from Geneva to Mr. Ben Bella, President of the Political Bureau :

“ Referring to the meeting which you accorded our delegate in Algiers on August 22, we have the honour to confirm the great anxiety caused to the International Committee of the Red Cross by the complete absence of news concerning 1065 persons abducted since the cease-fire in Algeria and about whom we have received urgent enquiries. We would very much wish to be able to reassure the numerous families which have communicated with us both in Algiers and in Geneva. We express the firm hope that the Political Bureau gives its earliest attention to this distressing problem for whose solution the ICRC here confirms its offer of service. We hope in particular that our delegation in Algiers rapidly receives family news concerning the fate of the missing. If the Algerian authorities consider that they have to keep these missing persons in detention, we would desire our delegate in Algiers to be able to visit them as soon as possible in their places of internment, notably at Maison-Carrée. If, as we hope, a release of these persons can shortly be

expected, the ICRC would be entirely disposed to assist in the repatriation or the eventual transfer outside Algeria of persons who would be released. We express our keen gratitude in advance to Your Excellency for the personal interest which you would be so good as to take in our request and for the reply which you would be able to transmit to us in Geneva.”

On September 17, two representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Jean-Jacques Muralti and Mr. Joseph Gasser, were authorised to visit the thirty-four Europeans detained in the Maison-Carrée prison near Algiers. They spoke freely and without witnesses with these prisoners, whose nominal roll was then transmitted to the French authorities by the ICRC. From their visit they brought messages destined for the families of the detainees.

### **Handing over of relief**

Mr. Muralti, delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, has handed over to Dr. Benbahmed, President of the Algerian Red Crescent, ten tons of unskimmed powdered milk, provided out of surplus dairy produce from the Swiss Confederation. These supplies were destined for the local Red Crescent committee at Souk Ahras which distributed them to persons repatriated from Tunisia, as well as to others in need, mainly women and children.

Furthermore, the ICRC has handed over a consignment of books in Arabic to a value of 3000 Sw.fr., to the Algerian Red Crescent. This material was originally intended for Algerian detainees in France.

### **European detainees in Algeria**

The Algerian authorities have handed a new list of recently arrested Europeans to the delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Algiers. This list comprises the names of fifteen persons at present detained in the Maison-Carrée prison. The ICRC delegates have just received authorisation to visit them.

On the other hand, the delegates of the ICRC were present on September 25, 1962 at the release of seven European detainees. They immediately informed their families.

### **Mobile teams of the French Red Cross**

Since the proclamation of Algerian independence, the International Committee continues to cooperate regularly with the mobile

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teams of the French Red Cross, which at all times perform most useful service to the population stricken by the events. In agreement with the new Algerian authorities, in particular the provisional Executive and the Algerian Red Crescent, the ICRC provides medicaments and food to these teams consisting of nurses and equipped with medical trucks. Five teams at present cover the Kabylie and four others the Constantine region.

### **Distributions of relief in Laos**

The International Committee is continuing its work on behalf of victims of the recent conflict. Much distress remains to be relieved and this is what Mr. Jacques Ruff the ICRC delegate is endeavouring to do in close co-operation with the Laotian Red Cross.

The delegate has been to the military camp of Chinaïmo, near Vientiane, where he distributed relief supplies, mainly foodstuffs, to the military patients and war wounded being looked after in the local hospital.

He then went to Thakhek, chief town of Khammouane province, to distribute relief supplies to groups of refugees who had come from the mountain regions to the Mekong Valley. Accompanied by several members of the Laotian Red Cross, among them Mrs. Noupbat Chounramany, chairman of the Women's Committee, as well as a representative of the State Insurance, Mr. Ruff handed over rice, condensed milk, salt and various relief supplies to the refugees in several camps and villages. The beneficiaries, who were frequently extremely poor, gave the Red Cross representative a good-humoured and warm welcome.

### **The ICRC in Ireland**

Invited to the fourth triennial Convention of the Irish Red Cross, held at Gormanston near Dublin, the International Committee was represented by Mr. Martin Bodmer, Vice-President. Welcomed by Mrs. Tom Barry, Chairman of the Irish Red Cross, by Major-General J. A. Sweeney, General Secretary, and by the other directors of the National Society, the ICRC representative followed with keen interest the Gormanston proceedings which bore witness to the plentiful and charitable work of the Irish Red Cross. Bringing the good wishes of the ICRC to the Assembly, Mr. Bodmer stressed the universal generality attained by the Red Cross movement since its foundation in Geneva, in 1863. He gave a brief description of the current activities of the ICRC, the founder body of the Red Cross, which is so frequently called

upon to exercise its functions as a neutral intermediary in the event of international and civil conflict.

Mr. Bodmer also had the opportunity of meeting members of the Irish Government, including the Prime Minister, Mr. Lemass.

### **Visit to Chile, Argentina and Brazil**

Mr. P. Jequier was delegated by the ICRC to take part in a journey organised by Swissair on the occasion of the inauguration of that air company's flight between Switzerland and Chile. This journey enabled him to visit the Red Cross Societies of Chile, Argentina and Brazil.

In Santiago de Chile he met leading personalities of the National Society and visited clinics in and around the capital.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, in Buenos Aires he had the opportunity of meeting members of the executive committee of the National Society and of visiting a hospital in which is installed one of the nursing colleges founded in that country under the Red Cross emblem. He described the tasks at present being undertaken by the ICRC to the committee. He then spoke at a conference, at which many student nurses were present, of the Red Cross ideal and of the greatness of the task which they were accomplishing.

On his return journey he stopped at Rio de Janeiro and visited the headquarters of the Brazilian Red Cross where he was received by the National Society's Secretary-General.

### **The ICRC and the Kurdish Problem**

The International Committee has received two new lists of Iraqi prisoners detained by the Kurdish forces fighting the Baghdad Government. These lists include 54 names. As done in August for the first list of 17 names, the ICRC has sent this further information to the Iraqi Red Crescent, to be forwarded to the Iraqi authorities and the prisoners' families.

### **UNO and the dissemination of the Geneva Conventions**

The United Nations have asked the International Committee to procure them 19,000 copies of the illustrated booklet in nine languages explaining the principal regulations of the Geneva Conventions, to distribute them in the Congo. The ICRC is in fact preparing the printing of a new edition of this booklet with texts in the four languages most in current use in the Congo, Swahili, Lingala, Tchiluba and Kikongo. The other languages used in this

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<sup>1</sup> *Plate.*

edition are French, English, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic. As soon as it is in print, the ICRC will place it at the disposal of UNO in the Congo.

### **The ICRC visits Mr. Gizenga**

Mr. G. C. Senn, delegate of the International Committee in the Congo, recently obtained permission to visit Mr. Antoine Gizenga, detained on the island of Bulambemba, near Leopoldville. At the request of the central Congolese Government, the visit took place in the presence of a medical commission. The ICRC delegate's findings as well as the results of the medical examination indicate that Mr. Gizenga is detained under satisfactory conditions and is in good health. Mr. Gizenga made no complaints in this connection. After his visit, Mr. Senn submitted suggestions to the detaining authorities with a view to improving the conditions of detention.

### **Missions of the ICRC in Berlin and Vienna**

Between July and September 1962, Mr. Beckh, delegate of the ICRC, carried out two missions to Berlin. As we have pointed out several times he regularly goes to West Berlin, where the Senate has always accorded him facilities for visiting penal establishments. There he talks freely and without witnesses with prisoners considered to be political detainees. On his two missions he again visited two penal establishments where he talked individually with fifteen convicted and fourteen accused persons. He was given every latitude to examine the conditions of detention and he dealt in particular with some cases.

He also occupied himself with the problems of the reuniting of families and of visits, which had become impossible since the middle of August, of members of the same family between West and East Berlin.

In Berlin and its suburbs, certain incidents led the International Committee to charge its delegate to make representations in East Berlin as well as in West Berlin in order to ensure the giving of immediate medical assistance to the wounded, in the event of a repetition of such cases. The negotiations during which the ICRC representative was also received by Mr. Willy Brandt, Mayor of West Berlin, resulted in talks with Dr. Ludwig, President of the German Red Cross in the German Democratic Republic, and with Dr. Blos, President of the "Landesverband" of the German Red Cross in the German Federal Republic in West Berlin.

Declarations giving the points of view of the authorities concerned were published in an ICRC press release.<sup>1</sup> It welcomed the

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<sup>1</sup> See *International Review*, September 1962, page 493.



*At Santiago de Chile, the ICRC delegate, Mr. Jequier with the directing staff of a polyclinic of the Chilean Red Cross.*

*At Buenos Aires, he explains the present tasks of the ICRC to members of the Argentine Red Cross.*





*Mr. Beckh, delegate of the ICRC, visiting an ambulance park in West Berlin (with Mr. Stamm, Secretary-General of the "Landesverband" of the German Red Cross in the German Federal Republic)...*

*... and in East Berlin (with Mrs. Hartmann of the German Red Cross in the German Democratic Republic, and the Deputy Director of the "Rettungsamt").*



declarations made by the two parties who have thus confirmed their intention to conform not only to the letter but also to the spirit of the Geneva Conventions of which they are signatories.

In East Berlin Mr. Beckh visited the Central Relief Service (Rettungsamt) of the municipality of Great Berlin and the " Landesverband " of the German Red Cross in West Berlin, both of which supplied him with circumstantial explanations on the possibilities of giving immediate medical relief.<sup>1</sup>

We would finally point out that in between these two missions to Berlin, Mr. Beckh went to Vienna with the object of examining the work of the ICRC delegation, and in order to deal with various cases of the reuniting of families. He met Mr. Sevcik, Secretary-General of the Austrian Red Cross, and was received by Mr. Afritsch, Minister of the Interior.

### Guests of the ICRC

From mid-August to September 15, the ICRC received several personalities at its headquarters, which, in particular, included the following : Mr. Louis Maire, President of the Council of the FAO ; Mgr. Costante Maltoni, Counsellor of the Apostolic Nunciature at Berne ; Mr. Saul Rae, new Permanent Representative of Canada in Geneva ; Mr. A. G. Jonker, first secretary of the Netherlands Embassy in London ; Miss Toshiko Suzuki, assistant to the Directress of the Junior Red Cross of Japan ; Mrs. S. Aurelia Hobson, President of the Hawkes Bay Centre of the New Zealand Red Cross ; Mrs. Fotoohi of Teheran and Miss Siomala of Athens, directresses of nursing schools ; Mr. Takayuki Nate of the Junior Red Cross of Tokyo.

Furthermore, the ICRC welcomed various groups of visitors amongst whom were professors of Japanese universities ; a group of members of the British Red Cross ; pupils of the Technical Institute of Treviglio (Italy) ; young people of different nationalities, returning from the United States, where they had been the guests of that country's Junior Red Cross ; members of the Fara Novarese branch of the Italian Red Cross ; students of the Nursing School of the Cantonal Hospital of Lausanne, and young members of the German Red Cross of the Federal Republic.

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<sup>1</sup> *Plate.*