

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

People's Republic of South Yemen

A medical team, consisting of two surgeons and an anaesthetist placed at the ICRC's disposal by the Alliance of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR arrived in Aden on 18 November 1969.

This team, comprising Dr. Anatoliy Akimov and Dr. Aleksei Glogolev, surgeons, and Dr. Evgueniy Janov, anaesthetist, relieved the Bulgarian team which had, during the last six months, taken on the continuation of the ICRC's surgical action in the Aden Republic hospital.

It was a result of an appeal made by the ICRC that a certain number of National Red Cross Societies such as those of Bulgaria, Rumania and now the USSR have provided medical teams. These have successively relieved the Swiss teams sent as an emergency measure on the independence of the Yemen People's Republic.

The three doctors of the Bulgarian team, Dr. Ivantchev, Dr. Markov and Dr. Ivanov, carried out their heavy task with zeal and remarkable competence. They paid an official visit to the ICRC before returning to their own country¹.

Middle East

Suez.—An exchange of prisoners of war took place on 6 December between Israel and the United Arab Republic under the auspices of the International Committee. Two Israeli pilots and 58 Egyptians—six soldiers and 52 civilians—were thereby able to cross the Suez Canal at El Qantara to return to their own countries. The operation, the result of several weeks of negotiation by the

¹ *Plate : Geneva :* the Bulgarian medical team which co-operated in the ICRC mission at the Aden hospital, at ICRC headquarters.

ICRC, was supervised by Mr. Marcel Boisard, head of the ICRC delegation in Cairo and Mr. Jacques Moreillon, in charge of the ICRC Israel delegation.

At the same time the Israeli authorities handed over to the United Arab Republic the bodies of three Egyptian soldiers who had been killed east of the Suez Canal.

Damascus.—On 5 December 1969, the authorities of the Syrian Arab Republic handed over to the delegate of the International Committee the two Israeli civilians detained in Damascus since the skyjacking of the TWA aircraft. The two civilians left Damascus for Athens where they were met by a delegate of the ICRC.

Kuneitra.—The Israeli authorities have handed over to the delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Israel thirteen Syrian prisoners of war and civilians for their return home.

The repatriation operation took place at Kuneitra on 5 December, under the auspices of the ICRC delegations in Israel and Syria.

Vietnam

In October and November 1969 the ICRC delegates in the Republic of Vietnam visited several places of detention administered by the Vietnamese armed forces.

They went to the interrogation centres of Quang Ngai, Bien Hoa and Cantho, the re-educational centres at Cao Lanh, Chau Doc, Tay-Ninh and Tan Hiep. They also visited the penitentiary on the island of Côn Sơn where they saw prisoners of war undergoing sentences for common law offences.

The delegates also visited the " Cong Hoa " Hospital in Saigon and the Bien Hoa POW camp.

Reports on these visits are, as usual, passed on to the Detaining Authorities.

The delegates of the ICRC in the Republic of Vietnam were present at the release of ten North Vietnamese fishermen who had been held by the American armed forces since the end of July 1969.

These persons had been interned in Danang where the ICRC delegates had been allowed to visit them several times.

On 13 October, the fishermen were released by the American armed forces, after they had expressed their wish to the ICRC representatives to return to their own country. They were also examined by Dr. K. Rhyner, ICRC doctor-delegate. They then returned to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam by sea.

Rumania

After attending the VI Congress of the Bulgarian Red Cross in Sofia, Mr. Herbert G. Beckh, ICRC delegate, went to Bucharest. He discussed questions of common interest with the leaders of the Rumanian Red Cross, particularly in relation to resolutions adopted at the XX International Conference of the Red Cross at Vienna in 1965 and concerning the reuniting of families. This is a field in which the Rumanian National Society is very active.

German Federal Republic

Continuing the programme of visits to places of detention in the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. H.-G. Beckh, ICRC delegate for Europe went to Munich at the beginning of November 1969. Accompanied by Mr. Heinrich, director of the German Red Cross tracing service (Munich section), he visited the Stadelheim prison.

He interviewed two political detainees in private and enquired into their conditions of detention.

Mexico

Mr. Serge Nessi, International Committee delegate general for Latin America, went to Mexico to attend the IVth Meeting of Presidents and Technical Personnel of the Red Cross Societies of Central and North America. He also visited and talked in private with political detainees in the prison for women in Mexico City and in the Santa Marta Acatitla prison.

Over the past year ICRC delegates have visited political detainees in Panama, Guatemala, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru and



Agadir: Inauguration of a commemorative plaque at the Hassan II Hospital.

Geneva: Drs. Ivanov, Markov and Ivantchev, the Bulgarian medical team which co-operated in the ICRC work at the Aden hospital, at ICRC headquarters (*left, Mr. Naville, President*).



Venezuela. They also visited interned civilians in Salvador and Honduras during the conflict which broke out between these two countries last summer.

Chad

Mr. Georges Hoffmann, ICRC delegate-general for Africa, went to Chad for a meeting with the authorities.

Mr. Hoffmann was received at Fort Lamy by the President of the Republic of Chad, Mr. Tomalbaye and several of his ministers. During these discussions the question of Chad's possible accession to the Geneva Conventions and the setting up of a National Red Cross Society was examined. The delegate-general met with considerable understanding and goodwill from the authorities, and the ICRC hopes that a concrete decision will soon bear witness to the success of the talks.

The authorities permitted Mr. Hoffmann to visit a group of prisoners who, arrested for their part in events, are held in Fort Lamy. The ICRC representative observed important shortages, particularly of food and pharmaceutical supplies, among the population. Wishing to contribute to solving this problem, the ICRC will air-freight ten tons of milk powder to Fort Lamy for distribution in schools and hospitals.

Greece

In our December issue we gave the text of the agreement, recently concluded by the International Committee with the Greek Government, which entitles ICRC delegates to visit political detainees in Greece and to increase assistance for detainees families.

From 24 November to 3 December, ICRC delegates visited the Varibobi and Drossia hotels run by the military police, the Oropos and Halikarnassos camps (national police force), the general hospital and the Haghios Pavlos hospital (national police force), the commissariat of the Criminal Investigation Department in Bouboulinas Street (Athens police) and the police commissariats of Nea Ionia, Nea Philadelphia, Petroupolis, Peski, Haghia Paraskevi and Cholargos.

In every place of detention they were free to inspect wherever they wished and to interview detainees of their own choosing without witnesses or time limit.

Comforts were distributed in the Oropos and Halikarnassos camps in Crete.

During the same period, 398 persons went to the ICRC's Athens office to enquire about their kin.

The delegation was headed by Mr. Laurent Marti and included three delegates and two doctor-delegates, all of Swiss nationality.

General reports on these visits, as customary, are sent to the Greek authorities.

Visits continue and will be mentioned in our next issue.

Latin America

Following the visit by its delegate general for Latin America, Mr. S. Nessi, some time ago to the Cárcel Modelo de Panama, the ICRC sent the Panamanian Red Cross in November various medicines including antibiotics and vitamins. In doing so it contributed to the efforts undertaken by the Panamanian authorities to improve the medical situation in this penitentiary. These medical supplies will be stored with the Panamanian Red Cross to which a plan has been suggested for the storage, distribution and supervision to ensure effective use of these medical supplies.

A similar consignment was sent to the Guatemala Red Cross. These medicines are for persons in places of detention visited by Mr. Nessi in April and May 1969, particularly the prisons of Pavón and Salamá, and at the two Police Stations in Guatemala City.

At the end of November two cases of medical supplies were sent by the ICRC to places of detention in Colombia and Peru. They contained antibiotics and vitamins, and the case for Peru included also syringes, hypodermic needles and dressing material. We would mention that in May and June 1969 Mr. Nessi visited nine places of detention for political detainees in Colombia and six in Peru.