

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Nigeria

As a result of the events of 10 and 11 January 1970 in Nigeria, with the cessation of the fighting, the ICRC at once took several emergency measures.

On 12 January 1970, the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies submitted a joint proposal of humanitarian aid in personnel, equipment and relief. The ICRC proposed in particular the sending to Nigeria of its stocks at present in warehouses at Cotonou, Dahomey (6,000 tons) and the distributing of 5,000 tons of food from the depots of the Nigerian Red Cross at Port Harcourt, Enugu, Aba, Uyo, Koko, Lagos and Calabar.

On 11 January, the ICRC sent out to West Africa Dr. Edwin Spirgi of Basel, responsible for taking initial decisions on the spot. Two days later, Mr. Georges Hoffmann, ICRC Delegate-General for Africa, and Mr. Enrico Bignami, the ICRC President's special envoy in Lagos, flew to Nigeria for contacts with the authorities in connection with the relief action envisaged. Mr. Jacques de Heller, ICRC delegate, left Switzerland for Nigeria, with Dr. Reinhold Wepf, who will take charge of the Swiss Red Cross medical team, working at Amaigbo.

The medical teams which had been working in the former secessionist zone were evacuated on 11 January to Libreville in Gabon. Eight doctors of the ICRC remained at the hospital of Awo-Omamma, continuing to care for the sick and were then repatriated to Europe at the end of January.

*

As mentioned above, the ICRC was greatly concerned about the problem of providing relief to the war victims: several mercy flights have taken place.

On 18 January an ICRC DC-6 left Geneva with a 7½ ton load of medical supplies, reaching Lagos the following day. Another aircraft took off from Zurich on 19 January, delivering its more than 9 tons of medical supplies in Lagos on 20 January. On 23 January two C-97's flew from Cotonou (Dahomey) to Lagos; one with 15 tons of medical supplies and the other with nearly three tons of medicines and over 12 tons of dried fish.

The ICRC's Transall picked up four tons of medicaments in Lagos on 24 January and delivered them to Enugu and Kaduna. On the return flight it brought to Lagos nine casualties. On 25 January it flew 9 tons of medical supplies to Enugu.

Middle East

Visit to Egyptian Prisoners of War.—On 29 and 30 December 1969 the ICRC delegates in Israel visited four members of the armed forces of the United Arab Republic who had been taken prisoner on the 27th of the same month.

Visit to Lebanese Civilians and POWs.—Ten soldiers and twelve civilian Lebanese were taken prisoner by the Israeli armed forces on the night of 2-3 January 1970. Four of the civilians were released and repatriated shortly after their capture.

On 8 January the ICRC delegation in Israel visited four of the eight interned civilians and the ten prisoners of war. The Committee representatives enquired about detention conditions and transmitted family messages for some of the detainees.

The Lebanese authorities have requested the ICRC to intervene with the Israeli government to obtain the release and repatriation of these people who are protected by the provisions of the IIIrd and IVth Geneva Conventions.

Family Reunion.—The ICRC delegates organized two operations to reunite families. On 22 December, 172 displaced Palestinians in the United Arab Republic passed through El Qantara on their way to join their families in the Gaza territory and 102 Egyptians crossed to the west bank of the Suez Canal. At the same time the bodies of two Egyptian soldiers were repatriated.

In addition, the mortal remains of nine Egyptian soldiers were handed over to the UAR authorities on the Suez Canal on 11 January 1970 under ICRC auspices.

At Kuneitra, on 7 January, 30 persons coming from Syria rejoined their families on the occupied Syrian territory of the Golan Plateau. The family reunion operations on this territory had been interrupted for the last few months.

A new Series of Prison Visits.—The fifth series of visits to places of detention in Israel and the occupied territories, which began on 8 October 1969, was completed towards the end of the year.

ICRC delegates went to the Israeli prisons of Ashkelon, Kfar Yona, Damun, Ramleh, Yagour-Jalamé and Atlit. In the occupied territories they went to the Gaza prison and, on the occupied west bank of the Jordan, to the prisons at Jenin, Tulkarem, Nablus, Ramallah, Jericho and Hebron.

In the course of this series the ICRC delegates visited more than 3,000 detained Arabs with whom they were allowed to talk in private. They transmitted family mail and distributed parcels to detainees who could not receive visits from their families. In addition, they organized the free transport once a month of about 1,300 relatives of prisoners who live far from the places of detention.

Distribution of parcels.—At the beginning of December 1969 the ICRC delegates in Israel and the occupied territories distributed comforts in the prisons of Ramleh, Kfar Yona, Tulkarem, Jenin, Nablus, Ashkelon, Hebron and Ramallah.

Standard parcels containing fruit, biscuits, cigarettes and clothing were distributed to 342 Arab prisoners.

Since September 1969 there have been four such distributions among detainees who are not visited by their families. More than 1,300 parcels in all have been distributed to Arab prisoners in Israeli prisons. This programme which is highly appreciated by detainees is continuing in 1970.

People's Republic of South Yemen

In November the ICRC delegation in Aden continued distributing relief to the civilian population. 1,100 families, making a total of

about 8,500 people, 4,000 of them young children, received milk. In addition 4,000 milk rations were distributed. The ICRC continues to help the families of some fifteen detainees.

*

Since May 1969, work in the republican hospital in Aden has been intense. The ICRC doctors performed 721 emergency operations, 68 child births and 1,341 anaesthetizations, 830 of which were for serious operations and 511 were local. In August, emergency surgery increased.

*

From mid-October to the end of 1969 the medical team delegated by the ICRC to the Mukallah hospital performed 135 surgical operations. Dr. Bachmann, in charge of the team, gave an average of forty consultations each day.

Since the end of December a team of Soviet doctors has taken over from the ICRC team at the Mukallah Hospital.

Arab Republic of the Yemen

The ICRC's medical team which was sent to the Sa'ada basin, following a request for assistance to the northern sector of the Arab Republic of the Yemen, has now arrived.

Since their arrival at the Sa'ada hospital, Dr. Jaggi, Miss Péclat, an anaesthetist-nurse, and Mr. Conus, a male nurse, have each day treated a considerable number of patients coming not only from the town itself but from all the region.

The ICRC team has been provided with a large quantity of surgical equipment and medical supplies.

Democratic Republic of Vietnam

Five members of the crew of the vessel "Valiente", outward from Singapore, and which had lost its way off Da Nang in March

1966 were released on 20 December 1969 by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

On board an aircraft of the International Control Commission (ICC), the seamen flew to Vientiane where they spent the night and were met by the ICRC delegate in Laos. On 21 December, the seamen left for Phnom Penh. On arrival in the Cambodian capital, they were handed over to the ICRC delegation by members of the Embassy staff and a representative of the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam during the course of a brief ceremony. The seamen then travelled in the same ICC aircraft to Saigon where they arrived safely.

Republic of Vietnam

Delegates of the ICRC in the Republic of Vietnam have recently visited several places of detention. They went to prisoner of war camps at Phu Quoc, Danang and Pleiku, all three administered by the armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam, collecting posts at Di An and Duc Pho in Quang Ngai Province under the US armed forces and two camps near Chu Lai, as well as those of Lai Khe, Quan Loi north of Saigon, An Hoa, An Khe, Baldy south-east of Danang and " Enari " near Pleiku. The delegates also went to the national interrogation centre of Saigon and of Phu Loi in Binh Duong Province. Finally, they visited detainees in the military hospital at Long Binh.

On each visit, the International Committee's representatives enquired into detention conditions. Their reports were duly handed, as is customary, to the authorities of the Detaining Power.

Greece

In December 1969 the International Committee continued the visits to political detainees which it started on 24 November, pursuant to the agreement concluded with the Greek Government.

During the month ICRC delegates went to the Leros-Lakki and Leros-Partheni camps (gendarmerie), the Averoff and Korydalos prisons (Athens police), the military police commissariats of Vassi-

lissis Sofias, the Egine prison (gendarmerie), the Aghios Ioannis Rentis commissariat (gendarmerie) and the prisons of Trikala (gendarmerie) and of Corfu (civil police).

In all these places of detention they were free to come and go as they pleased and to talk in private with detainees for as long as they wished and where they wished. The doctor-delegates examined all sick detainees submitted to them. Special reports were made to the Government on the more serious cases. Comforts were distributed in all the camps.

During the month families continued to make enquiries at the ICRC office about the welfare of their detained relatives.

At the beginning of January the ICRC launched an assistance programme for 3000 needy families whose breadwinners had for one reason or another been in detention for more than two years.

Medicines were provided free to the indigent who so requested and who had a doctor's prescription.

A general report on all visits since 24 November was submitted to the Greek authorities in January 1970.

Hungary

The Federal Republic of Germany having asked the ICRC to act as an intermediary in allocating the financial aid it had decided to grant to the victims of pseudo-medical experiments in concentration camps of the Third Reich, the International Committee continued its indemnity operations for the benefit of surviving victims in 1969.

Following a mission to Hungary in August 1969 by ICRC delegates Miss L. Simonius and Dr. Züst, the Neutral Commission met on December 6 at ICRC headquarters in Geneva. It was chaired by Mr. William Lenoir, Judge of the Geneva Court of Justice, the other members of the Commission being Dr. Sylvain Mutrux, Assistant Medical Director of the Geneva University Bel-Air Psychiatric Clinic, and Professor Pierre Magnenat of the Nestlé Hospital University Clinic in Lausanne.

The Commission's proceedings were attended by Hungarian and German observers. Mrs. Sandoz Böde, Dr. Pal Bacs and

Mr. Imre Pazstor represented the Hungarian Red Cross; Dr. E. Götz represented the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Of 28 cases examined, 14 were rejected. The remaining 14 were accepted for indemnity, the total amount of which was DM 440,000. These were the last Hungarian applications submitted to the Neutral Commission.

Federal Republic of Germany

Mr. H.-G. Beckh, then ICRC delegate for Europe, was in the Federal Republic of Germany from 15 to 17 December 1969 at the invitation of the Red Cross of that country.

Mr. Beckh had discussions with a representative of the WAST in West Berlin and with officials of the VDK, an organization concerned with the graves of German servicemen. He also visited the Bonn prison where he had talks in private with several political detainees.

Mr. Beckh was received by Mr. Bargatzky, President of the National Society, by Mr. Schlögel, Secretary-General and Mr. Wagner, Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the Tracing Service.

Poland

From 18 to 23 December 1969 Dr. de Rougement, Member of the ICRC, Mr. Pierre Gaillard and Mr. Jean-Pierre Maunoir, Assistant Directors of the ICRC, were in Poland where they took part in two Round Table meetings organized by the Polish Red Cross.

The first, in Gdansk, was held on 19 December. It was attended by some fifty people including representatives of the university and local Red Cross Committee officials. The second took place on 22 December in Warsaw and was attended by the National Society President, Mrs. Domanska, the Vice-Minister of Health and the Head Physician of the Polish army.

Two ICRC films, one on Nigeria and the other on the Yemen, were shown and the Committee delegates replied to questions on ICRC activities.

Latin America

Mr. Serge Nessi, Delegate-General of the ICRC for Latin America, continued his journey of which the *International Review* gave an account in its two previous issues. After attending in Montevideo the IIIrd Regional Conference of Red Cross Societies in southern Latin America, he then went to Paraguay.

At Asunción, Mr. Nessi had fruitful contacts with leading members of the Paraguayan Red Cross. He met the President of the National Society, with whom he brought up the question of extending the activities of the Paraguayan Red Cross by the creation of an ambulance service, a national blood bank and with the training of first-aiders.

The ICRC Delegate-General visited the maternity clinic run by Dr. V. Martinez, Secretary-General of the National Society and in which more than 50 doctors are working.

Contacts were also made by Mr. Nessi with the Paraguayan Minister of Defence with a view to promoting wider dissemination of the Geneva Conventions amongst the armed forces.