



April 1970: Mr. Leemann, ICRC delegate, with prisoners in Nicaragua.

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES***Middle East**

*Prison Visits.*—From 5 February to 3 March 1970, ICRC delegates carried out the seventh series of visits to places of detention in Israel and the occupied territories.

In addition, 720 Arab detainees received standard ICRC parcels of fruit, biscuits and cigarettes.

*Release of Egyptian Fishermen.*—Following the ICRC delegation's intervention, the Israeli authorities on 11 and 13 March released nine Egyptian fishermen whose vessels were captured on 31 December 1960 and 13 January 1970.

During their captivity in Israel, these seamen were visited by ICRC delegates with whom they were able to talk in private.

*Release of Lebanese Civilians.*—Four Lebanese civilians who had been taken prisoner on 27 February 1970 were released by the Israeli authorities on 2 and 3 March at the Lebanese frontier. They returned to the Lebanon under ICRC protection.

*Repatriation of the Dead.*—On 12 March 1970 the ICRC delegations in Jordan and Israel repatriated the body of an Israeli civilian killed on 9 March during a skirmish in the Aqaba region.

At El Kantara the body of an Egyptian pilot whose aircraft was shot down on 12 March was repatriated on 22 March by the International Committee delegations in Israel and the United Arab Republic.

## **United Arab Republic**

The ICRC delegate in the United Arab Republic visited four Israeli prisoners of war on 29 March 1970. These men, an officer taken prisoner on 14 December 1969, a pilot captured on 9 February 1970 and two civilian auxiliary members of the Israeli Armed Forces also entitled to prisoner of war status under article 4 A (4) of the IIIrd Geneva Convention and who were captured on 10 February.

The International Committee representative enquired into detention conditions and interviewed the prisoners without witnesses. As customary, reports on these visits have been sent to the detaining power and to the prisoners' own government.

## **Arab Republic of the Yemen**

Towards the end of last year the situation in the North of the Arab Republic of the Yemen had seriously deteriorated due to fighting between tribes and government troops, and also due to drought.

The ICRC therefore despatched on 22 November 1969 fourteen tons of foodstuffs, medical supplies, blankets etc., to a value of more than 82,000 Swiss Francs. At the same time it recruited a medical team to man the Saada hospital, the only one for the northern region of the country, but without doctors to run it.

The team of one doctor, one anaesthetist and a male nurse began its work at Saada on 8 January 1970. Hardly had it arrived, than the wounded and sick began to flock to the hospital which, from then onwards, treated from 90 to 150 cases each day.

In view of the increasing danger to which it was exposed, the ICRC team left Saada on 13 February just before the town fell to the Royalist forces. It was then decided to install the team in the little township of Khamer, about half-way between Sanaa and Saada, and where there was a recently constructed hospital in which the wounded could be cared for.

Two members of the ICRC medical team having completed their tours of duty, the team's establishment at Khamer coincided with the arrival on 9 March of Dr. R. Jakob—to replace Dr. U. Jaggi—and a nurse, Mr. J. Gauthey—taking over from Mr. B. Conus. The anaesthetist, Miss G. Péclat, will stay on for a few months longer.

## **The ICRC in four Arab States**

From 17 March to 8 April, Mr. André RoCHAT, delegate general, undertook a mission taking him through Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Republic.

In Amman, he met the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Abdel Monheim Rifai, the Minister of Defence, Mr. Ahmed Toukan and the chairman of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Refugees of the Kingdom of Jordan and Minister of Development and Reconstruction, Mr. Subhi Amer. The ICRC delegate also saw the director of UNWRA, Mr. Owren as well as the President of the Jordanian Red Crescent, Mr. Abu-Goura. On 21 March, Mr. RoCHAT was granted an audience by H. M. King Hussein.

In Iraq, the delegate-general had discussions with the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Nema-al-Nema and the director-general of the international organization department, Mr. Alwan.

In Saudi Arabia, Mr. RoCHAT made various contacts in government and Red Crescent circles. He then travelled to the United Arab Republic where from 4 to 8 April he exchanged views with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Mahmoud Riad, the Minister of Health and President of the Egyptian Red Crescent, Mr. Abdou Salam, the Secretary of State, Mr. Salah Gohar and the Secretary-General of the Arab League, Dr. Khalek Hassouna. On 7 April, Mr. RoCHAT accompanied by the head of the ICRC delegation in Cairo, visited four Israeli prisoners of war.

## **Republic of Vietnam**

In January and February 1970, the ICRC delegates in the Republic of Vietnam visited several places of detention. They went to the interrogation centres at Hué, Bac Lieu and Bien Hoa, and to similar establishments in Saigon. They also saw prisoners of war under common law sentences and civilian detainees in the Nha Trang military prison, the re-educational centre at Tan Hiep and the penitentiary on Con Son island. Their visits included the Chi Hoa national prison of Saigon and the prisoner-of-war camp at Phu Quoc.

In the Bien-Hoa prisoner-of-war camp (administered by the Vietnamese armed forces), they visited some paraplegic and other, healthy, prisoners. They also visited the hospital of the American armed forces at Cu-Chi and the Vietnamese hospital at Qui-Nhon.

The representatives of the International Committee also entered the Qui-Nhon prisoner-of-war camp and the interrogation centre at Pleiku, both administered by the Vietnamese armed forces.

In all these places of detention, the ICRC delegates inquired into the living conditions of the prisoners. The reports of these visits will, as usual, be transmitted to the Detaining Authorities.

## **Cambodia**

Following the events of 18 March, Mr. André Durand, delegate general of the ICRC for Asia, approached the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to request authorization to carry out those duties entrusted to the International Committee by the 1949 Geneva Conventions. The Cambodian authorities replied that the representative of the ICRC would be granted all the facilities needed to carry out his humanitarian mission.

Mr. Durand was then recalled to Geneva to report to the Committee and to advise as to the steps to be taken to strengthen ICRC action in the light of the new situation. Mr. Michel Testuz, ICRC delegate, who had remained at Phnom-Penh, was instructed to take steps to protect all the non-combatant civilians. At the request of the ICRC Central Tracing Agency, he made a particular effort to obtain news of the missing journalists.

Mr. Testuz has transmitted to Geneva a request from the Cambodian Red Cross, for 200 units of blood plasma, which were flown to Phnom-Penh on 15 April.

## **Democratic People's Republic of Korea**

After the skyjacking of a South Korean aircraft on 11 December 1969 to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the ICRC intervened for the repatriation of the 51 passengers of the aircraft at Pyongyang. Several telegrams were exchanged between the ICRC and the North Korean Red Cross.

Under date of 3 February, the ICRC received the announcement that these passengers would be released by the authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. On 14 February, 39 of these were conducted to Panmunjom from where they returned to the Republic of Korea. The authorities and Red Cross of that country thanked the ICRC for its intervention and asked it to continue its representations for the return of the seven passengers and four crew members held at Pyongyang. On 10 March, the ICRC sent a further message to the Red Cross of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea concerning these eleven persons and demanding their repatriation.

Ten days later the ICRC President received a letter from the President of the Republic of Korea, expressing his thanks to the International Committee and asking it to continue its efforts.

In addition, the families of the eleven persons held at Pyongyang have sent petitions to the ICRC which it forwarded to the Red Cross of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 25 March 1970.

## Greece

The International Committee continued the mission started on 24 November 1969, in accordance with the agreement concluded with the Greek Government.

Its delegates successively visited the central police station at Nea Ionia (gendarmerie, 3 March), the Korydallos and Averof prisons, men's section, as well as the penal wing of the Athens General Hospital (Athens police, on 4, 5 and 6 March), the ESA Vassilissis Sophias military police station (military police, on 10 March), the central police station and transfer centre of Piraeus (Athens police and gendarmerie, on 11 March), the Oropos camp (gendarmerie, on 13 and 14 March), Egine prison (gendarmerie, on 17 March), Averof prison, women's section, and the central police station in Bou Boulinas Street (Athens police, on 18 and 19 March), Chalkis prison in Euboea (gendarmerie, on 23 March), the Drossia and Varibopi hotels (military police, on 14, 24 and 28 March).

In all these places of detention, the ICRC delegates were able to move about freely. They were able to talk without witnesses with detainees of their own choosing, except in the Korydallos prison.

Moreover, they spoke, exceptionally, in the presence of a police officer with accused persons whose interrogation was in process at the central police station in Bouboulinas Street in Athens.

The visit to the ESA Vassilissis Sophias central military police station arranged for 2 March had to be postponed to 10 March.

In March, 185 persons presented themselves at the ICRC delegation in Athens with requests of a family character. 1,800 needy families benefited from ICRC aid.

The delegation, led since 14 March by Mr. Max Stalder, consists of two delegates and one doctor-delegate, all of Swiss nationality.

## Central America

**Guatemala.**—In the first fortnight in March, Mr. Leemann, ICRC delegate, who was on a three months' mission in Central America, was given permission by the Guatemalan authorities to visit several places of detention, such as the Santa Teresa Women's Prison, the Salamá Penitentiary, the "Granjas penales" of Quetzaltenango and Pavón, as well as various central police stations.

During these visits the delegate of the ICRC met some fifty persons detained for political reasons.

These visits following on a first series carried out in 1969 were, as usual, of a strictly humanitarian character, the ICRC never making any pronouncement on the reasons for detention.

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Following the kidnapping of the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Guatemala, by Guatemalan guerrilleros, the ICRC, with the agreement of the German Red Cross, offered to act as a neutral intermediary.

When this offer was accepted by the Guatemalan authorities, the International Committee without delay sent one of its delegates, Mr. E. Leemann, then in Nicaragua<sup>1</sup>, to Guatemala. He reached Guatemala City on 4 April.

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<sup>1</sup> *Plate.*—An ICRC delegate visiting prisoners in Nicaragua.

In spite of several appeals made over the Guatemalan radio pleading on behalf of the ICRC that the life of the Ambassador be spared, at the same time offering ICRC mediation, Count von Spreti was found murdered on 6 April.

It should be recalled that during his previous visit to Guatemala, last March, the delegate of the International Committee was able to visit the guerrilleros whose release was requested in exchange for that of the German diplomat.

After this tragic episode, the International Committee launched the following appeal for the respect of fundamental humanitarian principles:

*Sharing the general emotion provoked by the tragic fate of a German diplomat in Guatemala, the International Committee of the Red Cross would like to reaffirm that respect for the fundamental humanitarian principles safeguarding man is a duty not only for established authorities but also for opposition movements, legal or not.*

*After a century of efforts, the international community has achieved, in the Geneva Conventions, that the taking of hostages, summary executions, torture, inhuman treatment in general be strictly forbidden.*

*Everything must be done to ensure that those principles, consistent with human laws and the dictates of the conscience of all peoples, are not placed in jeopardy by acts which are a disturbing return to barbarity.*

Furthermore, the President of the ICRC, in a telegram to the President of the Republic of Guatemala, stated that he deeply deplored the disappearance of the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany and the lack of success of the steps taken by the ICRC delegate to avoid this tragic outcome.

“Sharing the indignation aroused by that event, the International Committee”, Mr. Naville stated, “made a point of reminding the Government of Guatemala of the obligations it had assumed by adhering to the Geneva Conventions which, inter alia, forbid reprisals.”

“That rule is applicable to all persons at present detained by the Guatemalan authorities”, the ICRC President concluded.

**El Salvador.**—Continuing his mission, Mr. Leemann returned to Salvador, where he went at the beginning of his tour, in the first half of February. The Delegate of the ICRC had talks with Mr. Fran-

cisco J. Guerrero, Minister for Foreign Affairs. He then went on to Nicaragua to have meetings with the authorities and Red Cross of that country.

**Relief in Latin America.**—The ICRC has despatched medicine and surgical equipment to a total value of 35,000 Swiss francs: 500 kgs. of medical supplies (antibiotics in particular) were sent by air, and bandaging material, tents and one surgical kit by boat to Bolivia.

Guatemala received 15 kits of emergency relief for the first-aid corps of the National Red Cross. A similar consignment was sent out to the Honduran Red Cross, whose first-aiders did outstanding work during the recent conflict as auxiliaries of the armed forces' health services.

The ICRC also donated two tons of milk powder to Haiti. This relief will be distributed by the National Red Cross Society in some quarters of Port-au-Prince.

## **Brazil**

The International Committee of the Red Cross, in agreement with the Brazilian Ministry of the Interior and in close co-operation with the League of Red Cross Societies and the Brazilian Red Cross, has sent to Brazil, at the beginning of May, a team to carry out a survey of the conditions and needs of the Indian population of the Amazonas region.

The team, which will be in Brazil for several months, comprises three doctors made available to the International Red Cross by the German Federal Republic, Netherlands and Swedish Red Cross Societies, which have agreed to meet the cost of the operation. The three doctors are accompanied by an ICRC representative.

## **Canada**

The Canadian Government having expressed the wish to discuss with the ICRC the overall problems relating to humanitarian law development, Mr. Claude Pilloud, Director, was in Ottawa for that purpose from 15 to 17 March 1970.

In the course of a meeting with representatives of the various Ministries concerned, Mr. Pilloud was able to explain the work programme undertaken by the ICRC pursuant to Resolution XIII of the XXIst International Conference of the Red Cross at Istanbul in September 1969. The Ministry representatives informed Mr. Pilloud of the Canadian Government's views in this connection.

The ICRC representative was also received by Mr. Mitchell Sharp, Minister of Foreign Affairs, who confirmed the Canadian Government's interest in the ICRC's work for the reaffirmation and development of the laws and customs applicable in armed conflicts, and he gave an assurance of Canadian support for that undertaking.

### **United States of America**

From 19 to 22 March the US Veterans' Committee held its national convention in Washington. The theme of the meeting was Human Rights of the Man in Uniform.

In time of armed conflict, the status of "The Man in Uniform" is to a great extent dependent on the laws and customs of war, and particularly on the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

Various problems relating to the application of those Conventions were discussed at the meeting, at which the ICRC was represented by Mr. C. Pilloud, Director, in an advisory capacity. Mr. Pilloud was able to inform participants of the ICRC's experiences throughout its long career. Shortly afterwards, he again attended the U.N. Human Rights Commission which, on 23 March, adopted an important resolution on the territories occupied by Israel and on the application to the inhabitants of those territories of the IVth Geneva Convention of 1949 relating to the protection of civilians.