

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Visit of ICRC President to Hungary

At the invitation of the Hungarian Red Cross, Mr. Marcel A. Naville, President of the ICRC, accompanied by Mr. Melchior Borsinger, ICRC Delegate-General for Europe and North America, visited Hungary from 26 June to 2 July 1972.

In Budapest, the President of the ICRC was granted an audience by Mr. Losonczy, Chairman of the Presidium of the Hungarian People's Republic. In the absence of the Prime Minister, Mr. Naville conferred with Dr. Miklos Ajtai, Deputy Prime Minister, with Dr. Karoly Csator dai, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, and with Dr. Bela Toth, Deputy Minister of Health. The President of the ICRC made a statement before representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice, the Interior and Health. On behalf of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross, he conferred the Henry Dunant Medal on Miss Katalin Durgo, whom he commended for her essentially humanitarian career and great merit.¹ Miss Durgo has been a nurse in the Hungarian Red Cross for more than fifty years.

Hungarian Red Cross leaders, including Professor P. Gegesi-Kiss, President, and H.E. Ambassador I. Rostas, Secretary-General, welcomed the President of the ICRC and the Delegate-

¹ It will be recalled that, as stated in our December 1971 and June 1972 issues, the Standing Commission awarded the Henry Dunant Medal, which is the highest Red Cross distinction, to Miss Katalin Durgo, Mrs. Sachiko Hashimoto and Mr. André François-Poncet, last October. Mrs. Hashimoto was presented with the medal in Geneva in April.

General and showed them the Society's installations in Budapest, Eger, Esztergom, Balatonfüred and Föt, the children's town where more than a thousand orphans are living. In Budapest, the President of the ICRC, in an address to the members of the Council of the National Assembly, who were gathered in their quarterly plenary assembly, outlined the activities of the ICRC. He was then presented with the gold medal of the Hungarian Red Cross.

All those who heard the President of the ICRC expressed genuine interest in the problems confronting the ICRC, particularly in regard to international humanitarian law and its development.

Asian sub-continent

Repatriation operations

On 24 and 25 June 1972, ICRC delegates in India and Pakistan conducted a further repatriation of wounded or sick prisoners of war. The ICRC's two DC-6 aircraft repatriated 200 Pakistani prisoners of war, nine Indian prisoners of war and nineteen Indian civilians. In addition, the planes carried mail and 900 parcels for Pakistani prisoners of war in India.

Another repatriation operation, this time between Bangladesh and Afghanistan, was carried out under the auspices of the ICRC on 10 July 1972. It enabled fifty-five Afghan citizens who had been held up at Chittagong at the time of the hostilities to return home.

Visits to prisoners of war

ICRC delegates in India and Pakistan are regularly visiting prisoner-of-war camps.

India: during June the delegates went to the camps at Faizabad, Gaya, Dhana, Roorkee, Meerut and Allahabad. On 14 June, parcels for Pakistani prisoners in the Bareilly, Ramgarh, Gwalior and Agra camps were handed to the ICRC delegates at the Wagah frontier post. The parcels had been prepared by the Pakistan Red Cross.

Pakistan: the Indian pilots interned at Rawalpindi were visited by the ICRC on 29 June. From 2 to 6 July, the delegates visited four repatriation centres for Bengali members of the Pakistan army, who were interned without their families. They saw more than 9,000 men, including members of the naval and air forces.

They also visited army men—mainly officers—living with their families in Quetta camp, which holds a total of about 200 families. In June, the delegates also went to the Bengali settlement in Karachi (approximately 120,000 persons) and to the settlement in Hyderabad (about 6,000) to ascertain living conditions.

Shelter against the monsoon

Bangladesh: the operation designed to provide shelter (bamboo huts) for some 100,000 non-Bengalis is practically completed.¹ The main work was done just before the first monsoon showers.

Laos

During the second fortnight in June, the ICRC delegate in Laos went to the Paksane area, where he distributed relief supplies in co-operation with the Lao Red Cross. About 4,500 persons stricken by the recent floods were supplied with seed (a total of 30 tons) while the refugees of the Borikhane village, of whom there were 3,500, received 2.5 tons of rice and 5.6 tons of salted fish.¹ Lastly, a Land-Rover was presented to the local authorities, and medical supplies to the Red Cross.

Khmer Republic

A trip up-country

An ICRC delegate and doctor, with members of the Khmer Red Cross, recently went to Pailin, in the Sangkum Meanchey district, near the Thai border. They were welcomed by the local Red Cross committee, who accompanied them to the health centre and the military infirmary. They also visited a camp sheltering about a

¹ *Plate.*

hundred displaced families and supplied the local Red Cross with some 300 kg of medicaments.

On their way back, the delegates stopped at Battambang, where they visited several Vietnamese resettlement centres sheltering more than 4,000 persons, the civilian hospital, and the " Hospice catholique de la Providence ".

Visit to a refugee camp

The Pochentong refugee camp, near Phnom-Penh, was constructed a few months ago with funds and material supplied by the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and the Japanese Red Cross. The ICRC delegate recently visited it and noted a marked increase in the camp population, especially since the arrival of refugees from the province of Kompong Cham, and reported that it held more than 600 persons or 113 families.

We might add that the ICRC doctor-delegate and his mobile team provided by the Khmer authorities visit the Pochentong camp every week for consultations, under the programme covering the various refugee centres around Phnom-Penh.

Republic of Vietnam

From 6 to 13 June the ICRC delegates and doctors visited the military hospital of the Vietnamese armed forces at Vung Tau (Nguyen Van Nhut institution), at Danang (Duy Tan) and at Saigon (Cong Hoa). From 15 to 17 June they visited a prisoner-of-war camp at Can Thô, and from 2 to 8 July one at Phu Quoc.

Near East

Prisoners of war

ICRC delegates in Israel and in the Arab countries have made several visits to prisoners of war over the past few weeks. Talks have been held without witnesses and, as is customary, the ICRC reports are being sent to the detaining authorities and the prisoners' own governments.

Israel: On 28 June, ICRC delegates visited the sixty-one Egyptian prisoners of war and the forty Syrian prisoners of war

interned in the Sarafand military camp. On 30 June, they visited ten new prisoners—five Syrian officers and five Lebanese soldiers. These men were captured by the Israeli armed forces in southern Lebanon on 21 June. One of the prisoners of war, who was wounded, was seen in hospital where he is receiving treatment.

Arab Republic of Egypt: The ten Israeli prisoners of war held in the Abassieh military prison were visited by the ICRC on 21 June and 4 July 1972.

Syria: The ICRC delegate visited the three Israeli prisoners of war on 22 June and 12 July 1972.

Student travel

As it did last year, the ICRC arranged for Palestinian students attending Cairo University to travel to Gaza, there to spend the summer holidays with their families. In four operations between 3 and 6 July 1972, 1,274 students crossed the Suez Canal from west to east to return to Gaza.

Repatriation of a dead soldier

The mortal remains of a Lebanese soldier who died on 21 June 1972, shortly after being captured by the Israeli armed forces, was repatriated on 22 June, under the auspices of the ICRC.

Jordan

With the agreement of the Jordanian authorities, the ICRC delegation in Amman provided free bus transport for the families of Jordanian civilian detainees held in the Jafr prison, some 150 km from the capital. This action took place on 9 June 1972 and enabled about sixty persons to visit detained relatives.

We might add that the ICRC delegate in Jordan visited the Jafr prison in April 1972 with the President of the Jordan Red Crescent.

Botswana

The ICRC Regional Delegate for East Africa recently spent seven days in Botswana, where he was received by Sir Seretse Khama, President of the Republic, and several Ministers. He also met Lady Khama, President of the Botswana Red Cross Society, and the members of the Society's Executive Committee. He visited camps sheltering the victims of floods which devastated part of the country last February, and then proceeded to Francistown, where he visited the local chapter of the Red Cross.

Burundi

A relief team comprising a doctor, a transport expert and an administrator, left Geneva for Burundi on 5 July. At Bujumbura it joined the two ICRC delegates who were already there and who, on 29 and 30 June, had visited Bururi province, in the southern area, to make a preliminary estimate of requirements. These delegates took part in several meetings of the "national relief committee" to finalize with the Red Cross Society of Burundi the ways and means of ICRC co-operation.

Cameroon

The ICRC Regional Delegate for West Africa recently went on a fact-finding tour throughout Cameroon. He visited a great many towns and villages, each time being welcomed by the local authorities and Red Cross representatives, and gave a number of lectures illustrated by films. His audience showed keen interest and asked a number of questions during the discussion which followed each talk.

Sudan

The ICRC Regional Delegate for East Africa proceeded to the Sudan on the occasion of the delivery of 306 tons of powdered milk offered by the European Economic Community (EEC). In accordance with a pre-determined plan, about 20 tons of milk will be distributed in the Baraka Delta and Red Sea Hills areas, while the

remainder will be assigned to the southern provinces (Upper Nile, Equatoria and Bahr El Ghazal). The Sudanese Red Crescent will supervise distribution to displaced persons.

During his stay, the ICRC representative met Mr. Sayed Abel Alier, Vice-President of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan and President of the Executive Council for the area of southern Sudan. He also saw the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the Interior, Health, Education and Defence. Lastly, he conferred with National Society leaders.

Chile

Some months ago the ICRC sent 200 tons of skimmed powdered milk to the Chilean Red Cross. On receipt of this gift from the EEC, the National Society set up a school distribution programme with the assistance of the "Junta Nacional de Auxilio Escolar y Becas" and the National Health Services.

The first distribution, which took place in a district of Valparaiso, was to 7,774 pupils, in ten municipal schools and two private schools. The programme was launched with a small ceremony attended by the President of the Chilean Red Cross, a delegation of the Central Committee of the Chilean Red Cross, local authorities and representatives of the Ministry of Education.

The milk was prepared and distributed in all schools by Red Cross volunteers.
