

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Santo Domingo

The delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross brought its aid to civilian and political prisoners.

One of the ICRC representatives in Santo Domingo, Mr. Pierre Jequier, general delegate for Latin America, visited prisons of the "Constitutional Government" presided over by Colonel Francisco Caamano Deno and of the "Government of National Reconstruction" of General Antonio Imbert. There were no restrictions placed by either on visits.

On the Constitutionalist side, the ICRC delegate, accompanied by the President of the Women's Committee of the Dominican Red Cross, went on May 24 to the Palace of Justice, partially transformed into a place of detention, in which 15 officers and 3 non-commissioned officers of the National Police were interned.

He also visited the Salome Urena School, where the children had been replaced by 125 soldiers of the National Police. The detainees all receive news and are visited by their families.

In the districts of the town under the control of the Government of National Reconstruction, Mr. Jequier visited National Police Headquarters, where, in addition to the administrative services of that body there is a prison. The ICRC delegate requested that the 200 men detained there should be given regular permission to go out in groups in the yard.

In another place of detention, the penitentiary of La Victoria, police and the armed forces of the National Reconstruction Government have interned suspects arrested during the street fighting

which took place in the industrial quarter of the northern part of the town. General Imbert's forces having now occupied the whole of this area, separated from the southern districts by the neutral corridor held by the U.S. army, rigorous controls have been imposed on the population and most of the men were subjected to identity checks. As a result of these police operations, the penitentiary now holds 2,082 men and 25 women considered to be political prisoners. The ICRC delegate brought the attention of the Co-ordinating Commission of the OAS, which included all institutions and the Ministry of Health, to the prisoners' conditions, in order to obtain the necessary assistance in food and medicaments for them.

On completing these visits, Mr. Jequier at once made representations with the two governments concerned for detention conditions to be improved. These left much to be desired, especially at the overcrowded penitentiary of La Victoria.

As a result of representations made by the ICRC delegation, the cells of the Victoria were less full, numbers still remaining too high (800), in spite of the daily release of 60 to 80 persons by the Purging Commission. This number of detainees remaining constant can be explained by the fact that the police continues to make further arrests and that persons held at the Palace of Justice are transferred to La Victoria whenever shortage of space demands it.

Mr. Serge Nessi, assistant delegate of the ICRC, insisted on their being given more hygiene and medical facilities.

Mr. Jequier also visited the military camp of San Isidro, 12 miles from the capital. The prisoners, some fifty soldiers and forty civilians are held there by air force troops allied to General Imbert.

The ICRC delegate also visited not far from there a camp situated in a property called Hainamosa. The internees, all civilians, are released at intervals after examination of each particular case.

Mr. Jequier then went to the camp of San Francisco de Macoris and to Santiago. He continued to be given all the necessary facilities for his activity on behalf of the victims of the events.

Mr. Nessi visited the American camp at a place called Sans Souci, where 154 civilians and 12 military were interned. They were under canvas and could move freely inside the camp. They corresponded and received mail and visits were allowed three times a week. These internees have since been released.

The ICRC delegation, it should be pointed out, has warned the Dominican public and the forces opposed to each other against misuse of the red cross emblem. At its request, the national broadcasting station also warned listeners that all such misuse would be punished.

ICRC President in the Far East and Central America

Thailand. — Mr. Samuel A. Gonard, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, continued his Asian voyage accompanied by Mr. A. Durand, general delegate for Asia, and Mr. J.-P. Maunoir, head of the ICRC Far East Section in Geneva. The party, after leaving India, went to Thailand. It was joined by Mr. W. A. Trueb, delegate in Bangkok, and visited the various departments of the Thai Red Cross, accompanied by the National Society's Vice-President, Phra Tiranasarvisavakarm.

The ICRC President visited the Chulalongkorn Hospital, the institution for the preparation of snake poison sera and the serpentarium which is directed and administered by the National Red Cross Society.

The delegation of the International Committee was received by Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, Prime Minister, and the ICRC President and delegates were invited to lunch by Their Majesties King Phumiphol, Patron, and Queen Sirikit, President of the Thai Red Cross. The King himself made a point of showing the model village, in which he is personally interested, for research into ways and means of improving social and economic conditions for the Thai rural population, fishing communities and craftsmen.

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Philippines. — The ICRC President and delegates then proceeded to the Philippines, where they were welcomed by Mr. A. Abello and by Dr. T. Calasanz, respectively President and Secretary-General of the Philippine Red Cross, together with their senior staff and the ICRC delegate in Manila, Mr. J. W. Mittner.

The ICRC President visited the headquarters of the National Society in Manila and also went to several local sections where he

attended demonstrations of Red Cross activities, notably the collection of blood. He also took the opportunity to congratulate the nurses who had just been awarded the Florence Nightingale Medal. The President of the International Committee, at various meetings, and also on the radio, gave talks on the ICRC's activities in disturbed areas and on its efforts for the promotion of international humanitarian law. He had a discussion with the Vice-President of the Philippines, Mr. E. Pelaez, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. M. Mendez, Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, General Santos, and with General Romulo, Rector of the Philippines University and former President of the United Nations General Assembly. He also met Dr. Dy, Assistant Regional Director of the World Health Organization, Western Pacific region ; he visited the regional headquarters of the WHO with which the International Committee maintains the best of connections throughout the world.

The ICRC delegation, which left Manila on May 22 for Japan, was received both in Thailand and in the Philippines in the most cordial manner. The National Societies' leaders spared no pains to show their visitors as much as possible of the various local activities and clearly displayed their zeal to co-operate with the ICRC in the humanitarian work of the Red Cross. These numerous contacts served to strengthen bonds of long standing and provided opportunities for very useful discussions on the work of National Societies and of the International Committee.

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Japan. — The President of the ICRC stayed one week in Japan with Mr. Durand, general delegate for Asia, and Mr. Maunoir from headquarters in Geneva. He was accompanied by Mr. Angst and Mr. Testuz, ICRC delegates in Japan.

Mr. Gonard visited the head office of the Japanese Red Cross in Tokyo. He was present on the departure at the port of Niigata of 200 Koreans repatriated at their own request by the Japanese Red Cross with the help of the ICRC. He then went with the delegation to Hiroshima, where he visited the Red Cross hospital in which more than a hundred persons are still being treated for the after-effects of the first atomic explosion in 1945. He placed a wreath at

the foot of monuments erected in memory of the inhabitants and of the members of the Japanese Red Cross missing during the course of that tragic day. He then saw provincial branches of the Red Cross at Hiroshima, Kyoto and Nava.

The President and Mrs. Gonard were received in audience by Their Imperial Majesties the Emperor and Empress. Subsequently, Mr. Gonard had talks with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Health. He also had an interview with the President of the Supreme Court of Japan, with whom he discussed the teaching and dissemination of the Geneva Conventions.

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Korea. — The President and the delegation then spent several days in the Republic of Korea. After having met leading members of the Red Cross of the Republic of Korea at its headquarters in Seoul, they visited, near Inchon, a sanatorium for tubercular cases who are treated by up-to date methods. They then visited one of the hospitals in Seoul. Both these establishments are entirely run by the Red Cross. Medical and nursing personnel is also Red Cross, as are the female volunteers and members of the Junior Red Cross assisting it. Mr. Gonard and the delegates had talks with the Prime Minister, the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Mayor of Seoul and they were also received by the President of the Republic, Pak Chong Hi. They took the opportunity of expressing the ICRC's point of view as regards accession to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their dissemination. Taking part in the ceremony of the Korea Association of International Law, Mr. Gonard gave an account of present tendencies in the evolution and development of humanitarian international law, a subject which will be one of the principal themes of the forthcoming International Conference of the Red Cross which will be held in Vienna this autumn.

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Mexico. — The President of the ICRC, Mr. Samuel A. Gonard, accompanied by Mr. Pierre Jequier, general delegate for Latin America, stayed several days in Mexico. He visited the organiza-

tions of the Mexican Red Cross in the capital and in Guadalajara. Mr. Gonard and Mr. Jequier were warmly welcome by leading members of the Mexican Red Cross, with whom they had some useful talks, as well as with several members of the government. They were also received by the President of the Mexican Republic, Mr. Gustavo Diaz-Ordaz.

The President of the ICRC observed that under the impulse of the Board of Directors and especially of the National President, Mr. D. José Barroso Chavez, the Mexican Red Cross is most active in many different fields. It is in the process of building a new, large and modern hospital in Mexico City. It is also attempting to have the Geneva Conventions better known and benefits in this respect from effective support from the authorities.

Viet Nam

On April 28, four Japanese nationals, delegates on the UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, were captured by guerilla forces in South Viet Nam.

At the request of the Japanese Red Cross, the ICRC succeeded in obtaining the exchange of correspondence between the prisoners and their families, whilst it also took steps with a view to their being released. This has been accorded and they have now been set at liberty.

Yemen

Uqhd Hospital. — Although the International Committee of the Red Cross has in the past few months been able to make slight reductions in personnel working in the field hospital at Uqhd in North Yemen, which has resulted in a little less medical activity, the number of patients still remains considerable. If, during the first months, the number of persons hospitalized sometimes exceeded one hundred, even to reach a maximum of 130, it stands at present at about 70, amongst whom are still included the direct victims of military operations.



Freetown. — The general delegate of the ICRC for Africa presenting a Land Rover, gift of the Empress Shôken Fund, to the leading members of the Sierra Leone Red Cross.

South Yemen. — Distribution of relief to refugees by the ICRC delegation.



We have already published some figures on the ICRC's medical action in North Yemen¹. We would mention that mobile medical teams leaving Uqhd gave 10,200 consultations to about 5,600 persons. Thus in all, in North Yemen, around 18,600 persons received treatment from the ICRC doctors during the course of 54,700 consultations.

On behalf of refugees. — In the framework of its relief action for the victims of events in the Yemen, the International Committee of the Red Cross has had five tons of milk, two tons of cheese and one ton of soap despatched for refugees having come from Radfan and who have taken refuge in South Yemen. These are some thousands in number who lack food as well as medicaments². This relief action has been realized with the agreement of the two parties involved, the Yemen Republic and the Government of the Federation of South Arabia of which Radfan forms a part.

Furthermore, the ICRC has decided to deploy its medical team, already allocated to the Yemen Arab Republic, in areas in which the refugees are to be found.

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The travels of a medical team. — The mobile medical team of the ICRC, carrying out its activity in central Yemen, recently visited the territory of the Naham tribe, loyal to the Royalist cause. Before its departure the ICRC delegation in Sanaa accordingly officially informed the headquarters of the armed forces and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of the Yemen. The first stage to be reached was Gerbet-et-Talh in the highlands.

Dr. Rainer Siegenthaler and male nurse Josef-Hans Arnold at once set up an infirmary in a large cave. A sheikh, placed at their disposal by the Prince, the head of the tribe, guarded the entrance to prevent patients rushing in a disorderly manner to the morning consultation.

On the second day, the medical team had already saved the life of an Nahmi soldier who had received a bullet in the head. As soon as the wounded man was in a condition to accompany Dr. Siegenthaler, he was taken to Sanaa, capital of the Republic, where he

¹ See *International Review*, June 1965.

² *Plate*: In South Yemen, distribution of relief to refugees by the ICRC delegation.

was admitted to hospital. The projectile was extracted successfully and the doctor was then able to return to the Naham mountain area.

Since then, wounded and sick continued to pour in, often walking for many hours in order to be given treatment.

The afternoons were devoted to visiting homes in the villages neighbouring Gerbet-et-Talh.

The second stage of the medical team's journey was Beni Nass'as, where the doctor and his male nurse arrived with their medical equipment mounted on camels and donkeys lent by the Sheikh. A home was placed at their disposal in the village itself.

The third stage is Marab. In mid-July, the team will return to Sanaa whence, after a short spell of rest, it will leave for the Arhab tribal region, where medical needs are equally urgent.

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Medical relief. — The Minister of Health of the Yemen Republic has appealed to all diplomatic representatives at Sanaa, begging them to intervene with their respective governments so that medicaments be sent, as a matter of urgency, to the Yemen Republic.

The Swedish Red Cross had already anticipated this appeal, informing the ICRC delegation in Sanaa of a despatch of medical supplies. However, in view of the extent and urgency of the needs this relief will soon be exhausted, as the situation has become extremely difficult.

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Visits to prisoners of war. — In early June, Mr. Marcel Boisard and Mr. Edmond de Palézieux, delegates, visited prisoners of war held by the Naham tribe at Garbet-et-Talh.

Since their last visit, six months previously, they noted a considerable improvement in the conditions of detention. Small houses have been built to accommodate the detainees. Prince Abdallah Ibn Abbas assured the ICRC representatives that a further building would be arranged for them, thus releasing a cave which had become too small for the numbers contained. The delegates then effected an exchange of mail and distributed 137 letters from the

detainees' families. They received the assurance that each prisoner would be authorized to write at least four times a month to his family.

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Exchange of prisoners. — The two ICRC representatives brought a Royalist prisoner, who had been detained in Sanaa, to Gerbet-et-Talh in exchange for an Egyptian who had been wounded and evacuated. The delegates had themselves to decide upon the choice of a Royalist prisoner to make the exchange. They opted for one detainee whose health seemed to them to be precarious. This man was treated by Dr. Siegenthaler, before being handed over to the Prince at Gerbet-et-Talh. He then returned to his own village.

Southern Rhodesia

In the course of his recent tour in Southern Rhodesia, Mr. J. C. Senn, delegate of the International Committee, went on May 17 to the Marandellas prison where there are 171 political and penal law prisoners. He had interviews with several of them without any witnesses.

On May 20, he went to Gatooma prison, where there are at present a total of 157 women, considered to be political prisoners and who are undergoing sentences of from one to two years reclusion. They had been transferred to Gatooma from the Marandellas centre, which had become too small after the declaration of the state of emergency.

In accordance with the new regulation in force, mothers are allowed to keep their infants with them. They are allocated a daily supplementary ration.

The ICRC delegate, after visiting the buildings, huts and medical installations, then talked without witnesses with several of the detainees. He noted that they receive lessons in hygiene, education and dressmaking.

Mr. Senn then went to Wha Wha camp situated in an agricultural area on the Gwelo-Fort Victoria road. Mr. Georg Hoffmann, general delegate of the ICRC for Africa, had already visited it in

June 1964. The number of persons, known as "restrictees" (persons under assigned residence) reached a total of 71.

At the Gonakudzingwa centre (on the Bulawayo-Lourenço Marques railway), which Mr. Senn also visited, the restrictees who the same time last year numbered 8, exceeded 513 in June of this year.

The position of persons under assigned residence is extremely difficult, since a family rarely has other resources than those of the husband. It thus finds itself deprived from one day to the next of all livelihood and it generally possesses no reserves.

Mr. Senn discussed this problem with the Minister of Justice and he counts on bringing the matter up with the Minister of Social Welfare. He was also able to talk without witnesses with the representatives of these communities about the conditions in their residence.

Finally, we would add that he made contact in Salisbury with representatives of the local Red Cross.

Mission in Africa

Miss A. Pfirter, head of the medical personnel section of the ICRC, has now returned to Geneva after completing a mission lasting four months in West Africa. Her purpose was to study with the National Societies possibilities of organizing a voluntary medical Red Cross service in the countries which she visited. These were, Ghana, Togo, Dahomey, Nigeria, Upper Volta, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Mali and Guinea.

In six of the countries she visited she was accompanied by Miss Y. Hentsch, Directress of the Nursing Division of the League.

She was everywhere welcomed with great cordiality and was able to visit institutions operating under the red cross emblem: hospitals, day-nurseries, orphanages and mother and child protection centres. She attended first-aid demonstrations and meetings of the Junior Red Cross. In several capitals, she was received not only by Central Committees of National Societies, but also by the official authorities with whom she had many talks relating to the training of medical personnel, which represents one of the most topical problems to be studied by the newly independent African States.
