



REVUE INTERNATIONALE DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

SUPPLEMENT

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

THE ACTION OF THE ICRC IN HUNGARY

The International Committee's relief action on behalf of the Hungarian people is continuing. The following press releases have been issued by the International Committee's Delegation in Vienna :

March 8, 1957. — *A regular road convoy of the International Red Cross Committee, consisting of 11 lorries, which should have left Vienna on Friday morning with a load of clothing, margarine and coal, was unable to proceed to Budapest because the Hungarian authorities had not granted entry visas to the Swiss drivers and escorts.*

The General Delegation of the ICRC for the Hungarian relief action is making representations to the authorities to try to obtain reconsideration of the procedure for granting entry visas to the escorts of relief consignments for Budapest, which has recently been tightened up. Until these difficulties are overcome, the ICRC will use rail transport only for forwarding the relief supplies arriving in Vienna from numerous National Red Cross Societies and other relief organisations for people in need in Hungary.

March 15, 1957. — *Relief sent from many countries has enabled the International Committee of the Red Cross to undertake through the Hungarian Red Cross various large-scale actions in Budapest and partly also in the provinces, and thus to make an*

invaluable contribution towards alleviating distress among the Hungarian people. In Greater Budapest alone, up to March 9, about 198,000 families, representing a total of some 530,000 persons, have benefited from these relief actions. 98% of those persons listed as being in need have received food parcels, in some cases several times. Furthermore, up till now 35-40% of those in need have received clothing, about 300 tons of clothing and footwear supplied by the ICRC having been distributed through the HRC centres in Budapest and about 380 tons in the provinces.

Mention should also be made of the meals regularly provided for children, which benefit about 12,000 babies and infants in children's homes and nurseries in Budapest, of the daily distribution of 100 gr. of powdered milk to 140,000-150,000 pregnant women and small children, the action now in progress for distributing some 100,000 woollen blankets to hospitals and individuals in need in Budapest and in the provinces, the 70 tons or so of window glass supplied to the HRC for hospitals, schools and similar institutions, and numerous other actions on a smaller scale. The continuation of this action until the date laid down for the end of the programme is in no way prejudiced by the stoppage of ICRC road convoys.

Similarly the delivery of medicaments and medical supplies, which will be intensified in the weeks to come because of the particularly serious shortage of these goods, will be carried out by the ICRC in future by rail.

March 15, 1957. — *The great distress which befell the Hungarian people last autumn led in many countries to a surge of solidarity and eagerness to help. The appeals of the National Red Cross Societies did not remain unheard; in the relief centres warm clothing, blankets and foodstuffs of every kind started to pile up; innumerable cash donations reached a considerable total and many States threw open their frontiers to refugees seeking asylum.*

While the League of Red Cross Societies deals with the refugees coming from Hungary, the International Committee of the Red Cross has the task of assembling and sorting in Vienna the gifts received from all sides and despatching them, as rapidly as possible, to Hungary, where they are distributed to people in need by the

Hungarian Red Cross, under the supervision of the ICRC Delegation.

The ICRC, acting as agent of the Red Cross movement, is thus able to play its part in alleviating the distress to which part of the Hungarian people is exposed as a result of the bloody events of October and November 1956, and their repercussions. Many emergency relief actions were successfully organised. Foodstuffs and clothing were distributed to those who were found to be in the greatest need; gifts of coal and window-glass, in particular, enabled the inmates of hospitals and children's homes to be given some degree of protection from the cold during the winter months.

There are, however, many spheres in which poverty and distress continue to exist, and this can be seen particularly clearly in the case of persons in need of medical care and treatment. The unhappy events of last autumn made heavy demands on the stocks of dressings, medicaments and pharmaceutical products of all descriptions held by hospitals and pharmacies. To make matters worse, the majority of the Budapest clinics and hospitals are situated in the ninth district of the capital, where the most bitter street fighting took place, with the result that considerable quantities of essential medicaments, surgical instruments and hospital equipment were destroyed. The disorganisation of production, together with the scarcity of foreign currency and raw materials now prevalent in Hungary, have made it impossible, since then, to build up new stocks of medical and pharmaceutical products, or even to cover the most urgent needs. The reports of the ICRC Delegation in Budapest list the supply of medicaments, dressings, surgical instruments and hospital equipment among the most urgent needs which will have to be met by foreign help for Hungary.

Since the start of the relief action on behalf of Hungary, private donors, doctors and pharmacists, as well as medical and pharmaceutical associations and organisations in numerous countries have donated considerable quantities of all kinds of medicaments dressings and instruments which have been sent to the ICRC in Vienna through the National Red Cross Societies. In Vienna a team of Hungarian doctors and pharmacists and Swiss students in pharmacy (men and women) are working unceasingly, sorting and listing all the material brought to the Stiftskaserne warehouse

and despatching articles of which Hungary has the greatest need. In accordance with the agreements made, the consignments are taken over in Budapest by the Hungarian Red Cross for distribution to hospitals and clinics under the supervision of the ICRC delegate; part is sold to the Hungarian State, the proceeds of the sales being placed in a blocked account of the Hungarian Red Cross and used for the purchase of essential requirements.

Conservative estimates indicate that, up to February 28, as part of the ICRC relief action in Hungary, medical supplies have been distributed to a total value of 1,100,000 Swiss francs. This material includes 63,000 ampoules of insulin, 14,000 ampoules of penicillin, 4,000 ampoules of streptomycin, 30,000 surgical instruments of various descriptions, 18,000 packets of sutures, 210,000 rolls of gauze bandages, 55,000 gauze sponges, 2,000 kg cotton-wool, 1,600 blood transfusion instruments, 8,000 sheets of photographic paper and 17,000 films for X-ray tests, 44 beds, 5 VW ambulances, etc. Early in March a further donation was received of 22,000 X-ray films and best quality Swiss medicaments in great demand, valued at 100,000 francs.

On the whole, the articles supplied were those of which there is an imperative need, and will be of great help. Nevertheless, the quantities distributed are far from sufficient to meet, in any appreciable degree, the scarcity of these articles in hospitals and pharmacies in Hungary, which is becoming still worse. The numerous individual gifts of medicaments—from a great variety of sources and of most diverse formulae, packing and quality—which reach the ICRC in Vienna, and which it takes an extremely long time to sort, can only meet requirements to a very limited degree. This is due to the fact that, for the past few years, Hungarian doctors and pharmacists have been obliged to get used to official standard products manufactured in the country and, as they have been kept out of touch with scientific developments abroad, they often do not know how to use foreign products accompanied by instructions for use in a foreign language which they do not understand. If it is realised that there are on sale, in Switzerland alone, some thirty to forty thousand different medicaments and specialities, it will readily be understood that it is not possible to sort the multitude of medicaments arriving from all parts at the ICRC warehouses

in Vienna and use them to establish a depot adequate to meet Hungarian needs.

In view of these circumstances, the ICRC is now studying the possibility of organising the medical relief action on behalf of Hungary in such a way as to overcome these difficulties. On the basis of the lists of requirements submitted by the Hungarian Red Cross, and an estimate of actual needs established by Swiss experts, it is planned to ask National Red Cross Societies to organise the collection of articles urgently required and well-known in Hungary or, better still, the collection of funds to be used for the bulk purchase of the goods needed.

It is proposed to distribute pharmaceutical products and equipment where they are most needed. Among these products particular reference should be made to: Tuberculostatic drugs (streptomycin, isonicotinic acid hydrazide, PAS); Hormone preparations (insulin, Cortisone, etc.), Drugs for anaesthesia in the widest sense, Blood circulation preparations, Blood coagulants, Spasmolytics, Anti-histamine drugs, Dental equipment, Hospital linen, Cotton-wool, etc.

Medical relief for the Hungarian people can only be organised in an efficient manner if the efforts of the ICRC to reach better co-ordination and a more rational use of gifts in order to meet actual needs in Hungary are supported by the greatest possible number of national relief organisations.

March 19, 1957. — *The United States Ambassador in Vienna, Mr. Llewellyn E. Thompson, handed over on Monday afternoon to Mr. G. Rutishauser, General-Delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross in charge of the relief action in Hungary, the first delivery from the 500,000 parcels which the United States Government, through the ICRC, is donating to people in need in Hungary. The parcels were handed over in the presence of other representatives of the United States Embassy and the ICRC at the premises of one of the two Vienna firms entrusted with the packing of the standard parcels weighing about 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ kg each. The packing and distribution of these parcels, which contain 1 kg rice, 1 kg powdered milk, a 1 lb tin of meat or fish as well as cheese, fats, sugar, chocolate, coffee and cigarettes, will be*

finished before the end of June. The ICRC, which deals with the transport of the parcels to Budapest, will see that they are distributed by the Hungarian Red Cross in accordance with the donors' wishes.

On the International Committee's behalf, Mr. Rutishauser then thanked the Government and people of the United States for this generous gift. He said that in Budapest and the Hungarian provinces there were several hundred thousand persons in need; the relief parcel plan, in which the gift of the United States Government is included, therefore meets a very real and urgent need. So far there have been distributed to people in need in Hungary over 600,000 relief parcels; thanks to the United States' gift it will be possible to increase this figure to about two million.

March 27, 1957. — The International Committee of the Red Cross has received for its relief action in Hungary from the Netherlands Government and the Luxemburg Government 2,500 tons and 100 tons respectively of seed potatoes, now on their way to Hungary. This gift follows the report of the joint delegation to Hungary of the United Nations and FAO (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation) sent to the Governments of the neighbouring countries in January last.

The arrival of the seed potatoes will closely follow the distribution of 7,000 tons of barley and oats placed at the International Committee's disposal by the German Federal Republic. The distribution of this first consignment of seed cereals has taken place in accordance with the plan put forward by the ICRC and approved by the donor countries, under which they have been handed over directly to some 100,000 farmers in 20,000 Hungarian localities. The proceeds of this action amount to 15 million forints, which will be placed at the disposal of the Hungarian Red Cross to be used for other relief actions arranged in agreement with the ICRC. According to the wishes of the donor Governments, the seed potatoes to be delivered will be distributed in the same manner as the cereals. Two FAO officials have been appointed to assist the ICRC in the technical supervision of the distribution of the seed to Hungarian farmers.

April 3, 1957. — *As part of its action in Hungary, the International Committee of the Red Cross sent to Budapest during March a total of 3,432 tons of relief supplies of all descriptions for distribution to those in need. Foodstuffs made up an important part of these supplies, and included in particular 250,000 food-parcels sent from Denmark, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States. Further, in view of the persistent scarcity of textiles and medical supplies in Hungary, considerable quantities of clothing, blankets, bedding and medicaments were supplied. The distribution of clothing to needy persons in Budapest was carried out satisfactorily and rapidly. In addition, the consignments of relief supplies during the past month also included some 18,000 family-parcels, each containing 25 kg of coal supplied by the CARE organisation.*

Up to the end of March the ICRC had transported goods of all descriptions for this relief action totalling 20,487 tons. Other important consignments are anticipated which will enable the action to be carried on until the end of June. Among the 40 countries which have contributed towards the relief scheme for Hungary, several have already delivered over 1,000 tons of sundry commodities, i.e. Germany (11,600 tons), the United States (3,192 tons), France (1,454 tons), the Netherlands (1,397 tons), Switzerland (1,354 tons) and the United Kingdom (1,048 tons).

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

News Items

The work of the ICRC in the Near East. — *The assistance given by the ICRC to British nationals who had been interned in Egypt has met with favourable comment. In a message to the President of the ICRC, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom stated: "The services which these representatives (of the ICRC) have rendered to British subjects in distress in Egypt have been in accordance with the high humanitarian tradition of the Red Cross. Their efforts have done much to secure proper treatment for imprisoned or interned British nationals, and to facilitate their early release."*

*

When passing through Geneva, Dr. Gaillard, delegate of the International Committee, handed over to the Central Prisoners of War Agency packets containing personal belongings of Egyptian combatants, deceased or presumed to be deceased. These packages, with their contents, were forwarded on March 6, 1957, to the diplomatic representative of Egypt in Berne. The ICRC has also sent to the latter the lists of deceased Egyptian combatants received from the Israeli authorities.

*

Dr. Tschopp has been appointed ICRC delegate in Israel; Mr. de Traz, as we know, continues to fulfil his duties as General Delegate for the Middle East.

*

During February and March the Near East Section of the Central Prisoners of War Agency was, as in previous months, very busy. The mail figures amounted to 5,629 items (incoming 2,566, outgoing 3,063) including letters, telegrams, cards and index-cards, lists of prisoners, missing persons and refugees, requests for enquiries, replies to enquiries, messages on behalf of families, etc.

The ICRC has continued to place on record the names of persons repatriated from Egypt, and of refugees from that country, sent to it from various sources.

*

In its last issue the Revue internationale mentioned the relief action undertaken by the ICRC on behalf of inhabitants of Port Said in distress. As is known, thousands of persons left that area during the military operations on Egyptian soil to seek refuge in the Delta. Emergency relief supplies were purchased locally and distributed by the ICRC delegate in agreement with the authorities and the Egyptian Red Crescent; the supplies consisted of blankets, sewing machines and kitchen utensils.

Représentatives of the Hungarian Red Cross visit Geneva. — *A delegation of the Hungarian Red Cross recently visited Vienna, and then Geneva, where it stayed from March 11 to 14. It was composed of the well-known physicians, Dr. Gyorgy Killner, Executive Director of the Society, Professor Boldizsar Horwath, Professor Ferenc Pommersheim and Dr. Zoltan Csillag, and had discussions with the two international organisations of the Red Cross. Questions connected with the work of the League, and of the Junior Red Cross in particular, were discussed with Mr. de Rougé, Secretary-General of the League, and the League technical services.*

The delegations had meetings with the ICRC, which is fulfilling its traditional role of neutral intermediary in time of conflict or internal disturbances, by carrying out the distribution to the civilian population in Hungary of relief supplies sent by the Red Cross from all parts of the world. The Hungarian delegation made enquiries concerning the amount of relief supplies which Hungary may still expect to receive through the International Red Cross.

These meetings, in which Mr. Tamas, representative of the Ministry of Food took part, revealed that the food situation in Hungary had greatly improved during the past few weeks, although needs are still considerable.

It was stated on this occasion that the Hungarian Red Cross had mobilised in Budapest some 2,500 voluntary workers to assist its staff (500 members) and that of the ICRC Delegation in their task of administration and transport of relief supplies and supervision of their distribution.

*

American Relief to the Hungarian People. — *A mission of the International Committee of the Red Cross composed of Mr. W. Michel and Mr. W. Meyer, went to the United States in February in order to inform the United States authorities in Washington and the United Nations Secretariat in New York of the immediate requirements of relief for the Hungarian people.*

Following these discussions the United States Government stated that it was prepared to contribute by further gifts of food-parcels and flour to the International Committee's relief action in Hungary.

The International Committee's delegates also visited the American Red Cross, which has placed a further amount of 400,000 dollars at the Committee's disposal for this relief action. The CARE organisation is also considering the supply of several hundred thousand food-parcels.

Mr. Michel and Mr. Meyer also paid a visit to the Canadian Red Cross in Toronto, which has already given generous co-operation in the relief action undertaken in Hungary, and which

stated that it was prepared to consider contributing further relief supplies on behalf of the Hungarian people.

*

French Gift to Hungary. — *The French Interministerial Committee for the Coordination of Assistance to Persons in Distress has sent to the International Committee of the Red Cross organization for relief to Hungary 13 railway wagons loaded with hospital equipment to be shared between various hospitals in Budapest. This gift consists of operating tables, surgical instruments, bedding, an X-ray apparatus, an electrocardiograph and many other articles, all of which are urgently required and which are worth about sixty million French francs.*

*

Canadian visit to the ICRC in Vienna. — *The National Commissioner of the Canadian Red Cross, Dr. W. Stuart Stanbury, who arrived in Vienna on Tuesday to see for himself the part played by the Canadian Red Cross in the Hungarian relief action, paid a visit on Wednesday morning to the Vienna Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross. He was welcomed by Dr. Vollmar, the head of the Vienna delegation, and Mr. M. Borsinger, who gave him information concerning the ICRC relief action in Hungary.*

The Work of the Central Agency. — *During 1956 the Central Prisoners of War Agency received 75,013 postal items representing about 90,000 cases; it sent out 88,146 during the same period.*

This correspondence led to the opening of 19,432 enquiries with the institutions concerned: National Red Cross Societies, Ministries, Register Offices, etc.

On the whole, the correspondence figures of the Central Agency for 1956 were double those for 1955; a great effort on the part of the staff was therefore necessary, on account of the heavy mail received during the last three months of the year following the events in Hungary and Suez, and also because of the increase of the mail received and despatched by the Agency services dealing with the East European countries.

By the end of 1956, three new card-indexes had been set up by the Central Agency for Hungarian refugees (160,000 cards), prisoners of war and persons missing as a result of the events in Suez (10,550 cards representing about 5,000 cases) and stateless persons leaving Egypt (4,082 cards).

The card-index for Hungarian refugees has been supplemented by means of cards recently made out in Vienna; on an average the ICRC receives 100 requests for information concerning Hungarian refugees per day, and is in a position to reply immediately to 50% of those requests by means of the "tallies" established by the Agency's Hungarian Section. This Section now consists of 35 persons and is installed in spacious quarters where it carries out the complicated and varied operations of preliminary sorting, card-indexing, despatching of messages, opening of enquiries, etc.

Re-uniting of Families. — The work of re-uniting families, of which mention was made in the *Revue internationale* last month is being carried out in Poland and Czechoslovakia on an increasing scale. The ICRC is continuing its efforts in Rumania.

The ICRC is also dealing with the question of displaced persons in the Far East, particularly Hong Kong.

Relief Action in Algeria. — After having got in touch with the representative of the local Committee of the French Red Cross, the ICRC delegate in Algiers distributed relief supplies, on March 5 and 6, in the Bordj-Bou-Argeridj district to persons evacuated as a result of the events. Accompanied by an official of the civil authorities, he visited the douars at Bendaoud, Hannana, Harraza, Ouled-Taïr, Ouled-Ali and Sidi-Brahim, and distributed some hundreds of blankets, pullovers, lengths of cloth and layettes. He was warmly thanked by the recipients.

Other distributions of relief supplies to these people are being considered.

Progress of the Orthopaedic Centre in Saigon. — The *Revue internationale* has referred to the action undertaken by the International Committee—in full agreement with the Viet Nam Red Cross—on behalf of the war-disabled in Viet Nam.

The ICRC made a gift of the necessary tools for the manufacture of artificial limbs for leg amputees, as well as 200 artificial limbs to be fitted at the Centre, the Viet Nam Government co-operating in this action by supplying the premises for the workshop. Mr. Leuenberger, correspondent of the ICRC in Viet Nam, has sent various interesting reports on the present stage of the work and the progress of the Orthopaedic Centre founded in Saigon under the auspices of the ICRC; On his last visit to the Centre our correspondent saw that great progress had been made within a few months in the manufacture of artificial limbs, of which the output has now reached 30 items (legs) per month, and it is hoped that the figure of 50 limbs per month will shortly be attained. Invalid chairs, copied from models sent by the ICRC during 1956, are being manufactured in the Centre. Six metal chairs were being made at the time of Mr. Leuenberger's visit.

According to the information supplied to him at the time, it is anticipated that, in the near future, it will be possible to place artificial limbs at the disposal of civilians at a very low price. Further, the Viet Nam Government has just invited five Laotian disabled to Saigon where they will be provided with artificial limbs.

The new premises where the Centre is installed include, in addition to the carpenters and basket-work shops, etc., a small hall for rehabilitation exercises, a large dining-room and roomy sleeping quarters; there is even a hope of setting up an operation theatre in the near future.

We feel that our readers will be interested in these details which show that the action started in this connection by the ICRC, in 1955, has been successful, and that the Viet Nam authorities are carrying out the rehabilitation plan with great efficiency.

International Tracing Service. — *On March 1, at Bad Godesberg, Mr. R. Gallopin, Executive-Director of the ICRC, attended the eleventh meeting of the International Commission of the International Tracing Service.*

Broadcasting at the Service of the ICRC. — *During the recent events in the Near East and Central Europe, the Broadcasting Section of the ICRC sent out each day, and in all languages,*

instructions to its delegates and family messages, during the interruption of postal, telegraphic and telephone services.

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Two special broadcasts are being arranged for International Red Cross Day on May 8. An international broadcast will be made by the principal European transmitting stations, and a television film is being produced which will be sent on application to all Red Cross Societies which will arrange with their national television service for the film to be shown on the evening of May 8. The film will be based on recent and authentic documents showing the work of the Red Cross during the events in Central Europe and the Near East.

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The final results of the last test broadcasts over the wave-length allocated to the ICRC are now available. Over 3,000 reports have reached Geneva and 24 recordings of the broadcasts. They come from all parts of Europe and neighbouring countries. The National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies show ever increasing interest in the International Committee's efforts in this connection.

Relations with the Greek Red Cross. — *As we know, the ICRC has no longer a permanent delegation in Athens and its relations with the Central Committee of the Greek Red Cross Society are maintained by temporary missions sent from Geneva. The recent visits of Mr. Ammann and Mr. Colladon to Greece enabled direct contacts to be made with the heads of the Central Committee, and the ICRC delegates had recourse to the co-operation of the very active branches of the Greek Red Cross in Macedonia, Corfu and Crete.*

The Delegates of the ICRC. — *We will mention a few of the missions of the ICRC staff and delegates during the month of March; Mr. C. Pilloud, Assistant-Director, went to Morocco; his mission followed those sent by the ICRC for some time past to North Africa—Mr. G. C. Senn, ICRC delegate for Rhodesia and Nyasaland, is at present in Switzerland; he came to visit*

the ICRC in Geneva before returning to Rusape, his place of residence—Mr. E. Jaquet, who had been sent from Arolsen to Cairo to assist in tracing operations in Egypt on behalf of families, and who then visited Poland to attend the Annual Congress of the International Commission on Auschwitz, has now returned to the ICRC Delegation in Egypt—Mr. A. Guillermet, delegate of the ICRC, has left Geneva for Budapest where, in conjunction with Mr. Borsinger, he will deal with the work of re-uniting families who have been dispersed as a result of the events of October 1956.

AN ICRC MISSION
TO THE GERMAN FEDERAL REPUBLIC

As part of the activities of the ICRC on behalf of political detainees in various countries—which the *Revue internationale* has often described—various missions have been carried out on behalf of persons detained for reasons other than ordinary offences against the law.

These activities are usually carried out by ICRC delegates in co-operation with the national Red Cross Society of the country in which the persons are detained. Since it is concerned only with the material conditions of detention this type of action is alleviatory in effect and is intended to ensure that prisoners in all circumstances receive humane treatment and can take advantage of the aid given by the ICRC.

Thus, at the beginning of April, Mr. H. G. Beckh, ICRC delegate, visited the German Federal Republic. Accompanied by Mr. J. Leusch, representing the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic, he visited political detainees in five prisons and two other penal institutions. During his visits to these establishments, which are in general run on modern principles, the ICRC delegate was able to interview persons detained without witnesses and to investigate conditions of detention. He noted requests by those detained and immediately passed them on to the authorities concerned who have promised to give them favourable consideration.

A MISSION OF THE ICRC TO KENYA

Since February 20, thirty-eight detention centres in Kenya containing persons interned as a result of events, and eighteen "rehabilitation" villages, have been visited by the delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Dr. L. A. Gaillard and Mr. H. P. Junod.

After visiting the Fort Hall, Nyeri, Embu, Lamou, Hola and Manyani districts, a journey of some 3,500 kilometres, these delegates have just left on a visit to the north-west of the country.

In each camp the International Committee's representatives converse with the detained persons without witnesses, and are thus able to form an objective idea of the conditions of internment.

The mission of the ICRC has received every facility for carrying out its work from the authorities and the local Branch of the British Red Cross.

THE ICRC DELEGATE VISITS INTERNMENT CAMPS IN CYPRUS

The General Delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross for the Middle East, Mr. D. de Traz, has just left Cyprus after visiting the camps of Kokkino-Trimithia and Pyla and the central prison of Nicosia, where about 1,300 persons are detained.

In these three detention centres the ICRC delegate was able to have long interviews without witnesses with the internees' committees. He was not able, however, to obtain access to the police stations where suspects are interrogated before internment. He was able on this occasion to check on the use of relief supplies sent by the International Committee of the Red Cross and distributed in the two camps first mentioned.

Before leaving Cyprus, on March 25, Mr. de Traz had an interview with Mr. George Sinclair, acting for the Governor-General in his absence in Britain. He was able to give him his first impressions and to make some suggestions. As is the custom, the results of this mission will be contained in a detailed report which will be sent to the authorities concerned.

This visit, undertaken on the International Committee's initiative and with the agreement of the British Government, follows previous visits by Mr. de Traz to places of detention in Cyprus.

CHRONICLE

An episode of the Second World War

In this number, which will be reaching our readers just before May 8 at a time when the Red Cross will be unanimously celebrating the memory of its founder, we have pleasure in publishing the following interesting narrative. It is contributed by the Head of the Press Department of the General Secretariat of the German Red Cross of the Federal Republic, to whom we are most grateful.

He has chosen from his own experience an incident which proves the powerful influence of the Red Cross emblem on a white ground and shows how remarkable a prophet was Henry Dunant when he advocated the neutral status for the wounded and sick of armies in the field.

* * *

In the early hours of a morning which gave promise of a very hot day, a squadron of six medical aircraft took off. We were leaving an aerodrome near Athens heading in the direction of Marsa Matruh with the object of collecting on the African coast—as we were then doing several times each week—men who had been seriously wounded on the El Alamein front and whom we were to take back to Athens for admission to army hospitals.

As the special reporter of the German Army Medical Service, I was on board the first aircraft, piloted by the squadron leader, a medical officer. "I hope, he said to me, that we shall not be attacked during our flight; for the past week no enemy aircraft have been reported in the neighbourhood."

Our squadron flew, nevertheless, at about 10 metres above the sea, so as to escape the enemy's notice so far as possible. After flying for about an hour, we made a short stop in Crete, to take in fuel. Our aircraft soon took off again and, skimming the rocky cliffs of the island, continued flying just above the sea.

After a flight of about five hours we came in sight of the African coast where there could still be seen, at some distance from the shore, the remains of armoured cars and other vehicles knocked out during the fighting.

We came down without difficulty on a temporary airstrip, on the edge of which the ambulances containing the seriously wounded were waiting. Before we reached the ambulances we were already feeling the effects of the African climate, although we had already become accustomed to the heat to some extent during our stay in Athens.

Before the medical officer, whom I accompanied, could make any remark about the ambulances having to wait in the scorching heat, the quartermaster-sergeant in charge said that they had only left the shade of the tents as the aircraft were signalled and came into view.

I will refrain from describing the painful task of carrying the wounded from the ambulances and placing them on board the aircraft. When the ambulance doors were opened the unbearable heat, the stench of suppurating wounds and the swarms of flies made us recoil. None of us thought that there could be much hope of saving the lives of the men placed in our care in such a pitiful state. But whoever saw those same wounded men, a week later, in Sysmanoglion Hospital, Athens, in the care of Red Cross doctors and nurses, could believe in miracles.

Less than an hour later we took off again as we wished to be back in Athens before nightfall. Now and then I sat beside the medical officer who piloted the aircraft himself as far as Crete. "I know, he said, what seriously wounded men are in my care and I am adapting the flight to circumstances. Let us hope we shall not meet the enemy; we know from experience that we must expect anything to happen."

He was right; an hour later, just before we arrived at Crete and were expecting to see the escort which had been promised, a British fighter-plane bore down upon us from the rear. He swept round our formation at full speed and, after tracing a wide circle, again followed us but more slowly. "Get ready for an emergency, said the medical officer: I told you when we left what to do in case of trouble."

The British aircraft again drew near; it was at a distance of about ten metres and the pilot was examining our aircraft with a field-glass. He was certainly trying to see what was in the cabins. We had placed a wounded man at the front of each plane; his bandaged head, on a pillow, was near the window. Thus, on examining our aircraft the British pilot could see that we were, in fact, carrying the wounded.

The British aircraft circled round twice. The medical officer said "I think it is going to be all right". However, the British pilot swept round once more and approached us from the rear. We wondered what he was doing; was he not satisfied with what he had seen?

Then something quite unexpected occurred; passing alongside the pilot raised his hand to his helmet, saluted, flew off at full speed and we saw him no more.

I have a pleasant memory of that "enemy" for whom the Red Cross emblem was sacred.

WILLY HEUDTLASS.