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During the summer, when events led to a change of regime in the Argentine Republic, the ICRC approached the Red Cross of that country. It received the assurance that the Geneva Conventions were being respected and applied. At the same time the ICRC broadcast an appeal relative to the respect due by the parties in conflict to the victims of the disturbance ; the message, also sent to the National Societies of the neighbouring countries, was repeated at regular intervals. Incidentally, the Uruguayan Red Cross was able, in the circumstance, to give useful service by helping Argentine Navy Cadets to disembark from a belligerent vessel near the Uruguayan territorial waters, and by facilitating the exchange of family news with the Argentine Red Cross.

The resident delegates in the *Argentine Republic* (MM. de Chambrier and Roulet), *Bolivia* (M. Gacon), *Brazil* (M. Haegler), *Colombia* (M. Roethlisberger), *Mexico* (M. Behn), *Peru* (M. Reiser), and *Venezuela* (M. Moll), continued to do useful work, particularly in assisting refugees and stateless persons, and in the dissemination and ratification of the Geneva Conventions.

In the North American countries *Canada* and the *United States*, where the ICRC has no representatives, working contacts have been maintained in connection with former prisoners of war in Japanese hands, the missing of the Korean conflict, detained persons in China, and refugees. With regard to the latter, correspondence with National Red Cross Societies has increased since the ICRC took over the archives of the ITS, particularly for the issue of certificates to the families of persons interned in concentration camps in Europe during the Second World War.

ASIA¹

Since the outbreak of hostilities in *Viet Nam*, the ICRC has lent its traditional assistance to victims of events. After the ceasefire its delegates continued their activities on both sides of the demarcation line fixed by the Geneva Agreement of July 20, 1954.

¹ ICRC Delegations : Hong Kong, Japan, Malaya, the Philippines, Republic of Viet Nam, Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and Thailand.

In the *Northern Zone* (Democratic Republic of Viet Nam), M. J. de Reynier, who remained in Hanoi after the departure of the French troops, examined, in conjunction with the authorities and Red Cross, the possibilities for the ICRC to assist the civilian population affected by the events. In May 1955, he presented the North Viet Nam Red Cross with a gift of a ton of medicaments from the ICRC for the wounded and sick in the Hanoi hospitals. M. de Reynier left the Northern Zone on June 17, and his post was filled by M. A. Durand, former ICRC delegate in Saigon. M. Durand pursued, with the Red Cross, the study of various questions which made the presence of a delegate of the International Committee necessary, and opened negotiations for the sending to North Viet Nam of relief supplies generously donated by other National Red Cross Societies. Thus, a gift of quinine from Indonesia could be sent through the Southern Zone and Laos to Hanoi where it arrived on September 26. The delegate also handed over to the North Viet Nam Red Cross a surgical kit, and Braille watches for the war-blind, purchased with ICRC relief funds, as well as standard types of artificial legs for facilitating the setting up of an artificial limb centre for the war-disabled.

In the *Southern Zone* (Republic of Viet Nam), on the outbreak of hostilities between the government forces and those of the Binh-Xuyén and Hoa Hao religious sects, MM. A. Durand and N. Burckhardt, delegates of the ICRC in Saigon, gave their support to the action of the South Viet Nam Red Cross, which was faced with a particularly difficult situation.

On April 28 and 29 the International Committee's representatives visited on several occasions the hospital centres where wounded were undergoing operations, often in the most precarious conditions, and called for the assistance of the mutual aid associations represented in Saigon, with a view to obtaining relief supplies.

Early in May the fighting had spread to the Saigon-Cholon district containing over two million inhabitants ; at that time the South Viet Nam Red Cross set up a first-aid post, of which the first equipment, a surgical kit donated by the ICRC, was of great service. On May 3, M. Durand took part in the transport of wounded men of the Government forces who had been captured by the

rebels. The transfer took place through the fighting lines by means of two craft flying the Red Cross flag, and enabled 57 of the wounded to be sent to hospitals in Saïgon. As many men of the rebel forces had been captured by the Government troops, the delegate of the ICRC requested to be allowed to visit them.¹

Following this action in the field, the delegates of the ICRC called the attention of the Viet Nam Government, and the Commander of the Binh-Xuyén forces, to the protection to which the victims of the events were entitled.

On May 16, M. de Preux, member of the Legal Department of the ICRC, arrived in Saïgon to replace M. Durand—nominated for the post held in Hanoï by M. de Reynier—and M. Burckhardt (appointed to the directorship of the ITS).

The new delegate pursued the discussions with the Viet Nam authorities concerning visits to prisoners belonging to the rebel forces. He continued to give assistance to war disabled, on whose behalf the ICRC has donated the necessary equipment for setting up a complete workshop for the supplying of artificial limbs, where two technicians, engaged by the ICRC, have trained six Viet Nam apprentices who, under the supervision of a Saïgon orthopaedist, will carry on with the work of adjusting artificial limbs and teaching the disabled the exercises required to re-educate the muscles.

In conjunction with the authorities, and charitable organisations, M. de Preux gave assistance to refugees. The exodus, which reached a peak in the last months of 1954, continued in 1955; various gifts retransmitted by the ICRC served to assist refugees in the south and centre of the country.

The co-operation of the ICRC Delegation in Saïgon with the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was continued.² It may be mentioned, in this connection, that the International Committee's delegate has continued to supervise the use of emergency relief supplies (powdered milk, soap, clothing

¹ On the date of the issue of this publication no reply had been received.

² See Annual Report for 1954, Page 41.

materials) sent from the United States on behalf of refugee women and children ; he made several visits to resettlement camps for refugees, particularly in the South West provinces and the Baria region. Further, the organisation referred to above requested the delegate to supervise certain schemes (the building of a children's hospital, a child welfare centre, BCG vaccination campaign, etc.).

At the end of the year M. de Preux paid a brief visit to Cambodia. In Pnom-Penh he had several discussions with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health, and met a number of eminent persons. He made a special point of bringing to the government authorities' notice the desirability and necessity for the accession of Cambodia to the Geneva Conventions of 1949. Moreover, as his predecessor, M. N. Burckhardt, had already done in the previous year, he enquired how the movement in favour of a Khmer Red Cross had progressed.

The ICRC also made approaches on behalf of the victims of events, to the Red Cross Societies and Governments of China, Korea, India, Indonesia and Japan (enquiries and applications on behalf of the families of military personnel, civilians, missing persons and refugees).

Resident delegates in *Hong Kong* (M. Calderara), *Japan* (M. Angst), *Malaya* (M. Pfrunder), the *Philippines* (M. Mittner), *Thailand* (MM. Salzmann and Dickenmann), continued to remain in close contact with authorities and National Red Cross Societies on all questions of mutual interest to them and the ICRC, particularly in connection with the application of the provisions of Article 16 of the Peace Treaty with Japan in favour of former prisoners of war (See pp. 27-29).

Since the closing of its Middle East Delegation in 1952, the ICRC has remained in close contact, by sending temporary missions, with governments and National Societies which previously maintained regular relations with its representatives in Cairo.

The need having been felt for establishing closer contacts, M. de Traz, Deputy Executive Director of the ICRC, was entrusted with that duty. Early in November, he left Geneva and visited, in succession, *Lebanon*, *Jordan*, *Egypt*, *Israel* and *Syria*. During

the interviews he discussed with the authorities and National Societies all questions of interest to those countries and the ICRC.

In countries where a state of tension existed between Arab and Israeli populations, he visited prisoner-of-war camps and places of detention, and spoke with military prisoners and civilian internees. On December 23, he visited, in particular, a camp where 77 prisoners of war (including 3 officers and 16 non-commissioned officers) were interned. As is customary, the delegate of the ICRC was able to converse without a witness with the prisoners' representatives. In addition, he took with him on leaving family messages and photographs for transmission to the relatives of the captives in Egypt and Syria. The Israeli authorities also authorised M. de Traz to visit Egyptian civilian detainees.

From Israel the delegate of the ICRC returned to Egypt for the purpose of visiting, also, the Israeli prisoners held in that country. In every case he was courteously received by the authorities concerned.

The principle of the International Committee's bilateral activity in favour of Arab prisoners in Israeli hands, and Israeli held by Egypt and certain Arab States, would also appear to have been endorsed by the parties concerned.

During the year the ICRC made efforts to assist the victims of events in those regions; as is well known, prisoners of war and detained persons are allowed to communicate with their families by means of messages exchanged through Geneva. As a neutral intermediary, and with the assistance of the National Societies, it has thus been able to ensure, from both sides, the transmission of messages and, sometimes, family parcels, to military and civilian prisoners.

In some cases the ICRC was also authorised to assist political detainees, particularly in *Iraq* and *Iran*.

EUROPE¹

The fresh outbreak of political tension and disturbances in the island of *Cyprus* brought the Greek Red Cross to appeal for the

¹ ICRC Delegations : Austria, France, Greece, Italy and Spain.