

A Job for the Red Cross

To the Editor:

The Attica prison events have focused attention on the objectives and management of our entire penal correction system. In the international field, where we deal with a different type of prisoner—the prisoner of war—we have established by international conventions that such prisoners are to be treated humanely, and the International Red Cross is the designated inspector or visitation agency to check whether the prescribed standards are complied with.

May I suggest that we affirmatively acknowledge that the domestic prisoner is entitled to a level of treatment not less than that established for international prisoners, and it is worth exploring whether the American Red Cross should not be asked to undertake the visitation function at all of our prisons.

This would be by far a better approach than a series of *ad hoc* committees of investigation. It would fur-

nish the prisoners accessibility to a nonpartisan agency that will hear their complaints. The prestige of the Red Cross is substantial enough to assure its freedom from local political pressures in reporting the facts and making meaningful recommendations for an enlightened corrective penal system.

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