

**INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE'S ACTION IN CYPRUS**

The ICRC started its activity in Cyprus on January 1, 1964 by sending a delegate to Nicosia. Two weeks later, owing to the spreading of the troubles, the ICRC decided to increase its representation and it now numbers two delegates and a secretary. Their mission is, in co-operation with the local Red Cross, to bring assistance and protection to the victims of the events, by basing themselves in particular on article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, relative to conflicts which are not of an international character.

The complete separation between the two Cypriot communities, added to the state of extreme tension which has continued to exist in the island, have resulted in a considerable number of tragic situations for the inhabitants and Red Cross action has had to overcome many very hard obstacles. However, whether it has been a question of missing or displaced persons, of prisoners or other cases, scarcely less pitiful, inevitably brought about by such circumstances, the ICRC delegation has patiently attempted to find a humanitarian solution to each problem raised.

The tracing of persons missing during the troubles continues to be its most exacting task. To this end, the ICRC has set up an information bureau where all enquiries are centralized. In addition to the numerous contacts it has made with the local authorities on the subject, representatives of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities, the delegates of the ICRC have made systematic searches in all villages in which transportation of the inhabitants has taken place. This has involved practically combing the island. In spite of tracing activities often encountering a conspiracy of silence, the delegates have obtained encouraging results.

On the other hand, the ICRC has attempted to get permission from both sides to visit official or clandestine places of detention. The delegates have thus been able to transmit news to the families of a certain number of detainees.

They have even, on several occasions, succeeded in having these released. This was the case in particular of some fifty persons reported missing.

The daily work of the ICRC delegates in Cyprus also consists of many duties for private individuals, created by abnormal and

## INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

unexpected situations resulting from a complete rupture between the two communities. It may be a question of giving a measure of protection or assistance to someone in special circumstances, such as, for example, making representations to the Greek Cypriot authorities with a view to ensuring that a Turkish Cypriot child rejoins his parents abroad. Or else it may involve coping with some break-down in postal communications or arranging for treatment to be given to an isolated group of people entirely lacking in medical aid.

Only a short time ago, the ICRC delegation in Cyprus gave its support to an important relief action, organized by the local branch of the British Red Cross, in liaison with several welfare organizations on behalf of stricken and displaced inhabitants. Its essential rôle was to make frequent interventions in order to ensure the smooth running of relief operations. Since June 10, this task has been assumed by the United Nations.