

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE AND THE EVENTS IN BIZERTA

In order to give its support in the carrying out, within the framework of the Geneva Conventions, of all the humanitarian tasks which the circumstances demanded, the ICRC sent a delegate without delay to Tunis.

This delegate, Mr. J. J. Muralti, who left Geneva on July 22, was welcomed the same evening in Tunis by the principal private secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by the Vice-President of the Tunisian Red Crescent, who immediately explained the situation on the humanitarian level. The delegate of the ICRC was also received by the Tunisian Minister of Health, with whom he discussed matters connected with the transport of the wounded and with the burial of the dead.

On the following day, Mr. Muralti paid a visit to Admiral Amman, Commanding the French forces in Bizerta. The French authorities gave the delegate of the ICRC every facility and the necessary means of transport to enable him to accomplish his task successfully.

The work which the ICRC carried out in Tunisia during the events in Bizerta were limited to well defined activities, in particular, visits to prisoners. Furthermore, in response to an urgent request from the Tunisian Red Crescent, the ICRC despatched, on July 21, relief supplies consisting of 200 bottles of blood plasma and 200 bottles of albumin.

The questions of caring for the wounded and of burying the dead were treated as tasks of the greatest urgency. It was possible to evacuate the wounded on the Tunisian side to hospitals in Tunis, where they received the necessary treatment. Because of the heat and the danger of infection and epidemics, the burial of those who had been killed had to be carried out as soon as possible.

The delegate of the ICRC was able to visit places of detention in which French prisoners were held by the Tunisians and the Tunisian prisoners in French hands.

Special measures were taken by the Tunisian authorities to deal with the exodus of the civilian population from Bizerta. The majority of the refugees were able to be given shelter in Tunis by friends or relations and in reception centres which had been set up by the Tunisian authorities in co-operation with the Tunisian Red Crescent.

The delegate of the ICRC observed no shortage of either qualified medical personnel or of medicaments. The speed with which the plasma arrived from Geneva also contributed to the saving of a large number of lives.

On August 8, a delegate of the ICRC was in Tunisia in order to settle, in agreement with the authorities concerned, the various problems arising from the detention of a number of French and Tunisian prisoners and interned civilians.
