

Guinean Minister of Defence declared himself ready to ensure the dissemination of the essential Principles of the Geneva Conventions, amongst the Armed Forces of his country.

On its representative's return to Geneva, the International Committee noted with satisfaction the interest which the authorities of these four West African countries are showing in its work and in a widespread knowledge of the Principles of the Geneva Conventions. It also delighted at the forthcoming foundation of several National Societies and the promising development shown by those Societies already in existence which are carrying out a considerable humanitarian task.

ACTIVE CO-OPERATION WITH THE EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Continuing our general description of the activities of the Central Tracing Agency at the headquarters of the ICRC at Geneva, we would point out that requests for information concerning military personnel and civilians of East European origin, missing during the course of the Second World War continue to reach Geneva in fairly large numbers.

Thus, in particular the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR, as well as private individuals living in that country, appealed to the Central Agency to help them discover the fate of Soviet military missing during hostilities or in captivity, to trace civilians deported to Germany or persons who had emigrated many years before and whose families in the USSR wished to know their present whereabouts.

Private individuals of Russian origin established abroad also approach the ICRC in order to obtain news of members of their families remaining in the country or deported to Germany during the war.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

In a number of cases, information held in the Central Agency's card-indexes in Geneva or the International Tracing Service at Arolsen (administered by the ICRC and with whom it works closely) offers basic elements which facilitate searches. We have, in this connection, already mentioned the valuable support given by the National Societies to the ICRC for it to achieve satisfactory results in inquiries of this kind.

If the USSR Section of the Central Agency deals with 700 to 800 cases a month, the other sections in charge of various East European areas are no less active particularly the Polish Section. In fact, the Polish Red Cross as well as private individuals living in Poland or persons of Polish origin established abroad also address themselves to the Central Agency to discover traces of military missing, deported civilians, of families whose members had been dispersed as a result of events which took place during or shortly after the war, as well as to obtain attestations of captivity or certificates of decease.

We have already pointed out the difficulties involved in tracing dispersed civilians, some of whom have several times since the end of the war changed their address or even their country of residence. The long drawn out efforts of the Agency are amply rewarded, however, when it can finally give close relatives the joy of renewing ties which have been broken after so many years.
