

SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

News Items

Cyprus

By reason of the events in Cyprus, the International Committee of the Red Cross offered its services, according to its traditional rôle, to the Cyprus Government. This offer having been enthusiastically received, the ICRC delegated Mr. J. Ruff, who left Geneva for Nicosia, where he arrived on January 1.

Mr. Ruff was charged with a mission of protection and assistance on behalf of the victims of the conflict. He immediately set to work, in co-operation with the local Red Cross and the Cyprus authorities.

Because of the existing tense situation, which places the inhabitants, both Greeks as well as Turks in often distressing predicaments, a new delegate of the ICRC, Mr. A. de Cocatrix, Assistant Director of the International Tracing Service, left for Cyprus several days later. He has been charged with organizing a tracing bureau to identify persons missing or presumed detained during the recent events.

The ICRC delegation was then increased by two other delegates, Mr. J.-P. Schoenholzer and Mr. P. Vibert, in order to go to the aid of displaced persons and other victims of the events, in agreement with the authorities, representatives of the two communities and the local Red Cross, and generally speaking to obtain from all the application of the Geneva Conventions and of the humanitarian rules of the Red Cross. A tragic occurrence then befell the ICRC delegation, when Mr. Schoenholzer died suddenly from a stroke.

Its task in the island is proving to be particularly difficult with so many humanitarian problems involved. In addition to its tracing activity, it is also assisting the local Red Cross which is trying to come to the aid of all the victims of the conflict, which in spite of periods of calm, has not yet been regulated between the two communities.

On the other hand, Mr. M. Borsinger, Secretary to the ICRC Presidency, went to London for discussions with the British Red Cross and the authorities. He examined with them the humanitarian aspects of the situation in Cyprus and ways of co-ordinating relief for the victims.

By the end of January, the Delegation of the International Committee in Cyprus had already achieved positive results in its

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activity on behalf of persons deprived of their liberty by reason of the events. It had visited 27 detainees in various prisons and places of arrest on the island and also secured the release of 30 other detained persons. The ICRC is continuing its representations with a view to having more prisoners released and is thus attempting to assist both Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

Following a Frontier Conflict

Following the recent hostilities between Morocco and Algeria in the Sahara, the International Committee of the Red Cross sent one of its delegates, Mr. J. Muralti, to visit the prisoners detained in Morocco and to bring them relief. This delegate recently returned to Geneva, after completing his mission on behalf of the Algerians held prisoner and five Egyptian officers captured behind the lines on Moroccan territory, following their forced landing. They have since been repatriated.

In close co-operation with the Moroccan Red Crescent, Mr. Muralti was able to clarify certain questions connected with the application of the Geneva Conventions and he was also allowed to visit the Algerian prisoners in their detention camp. He distributed several forms of relief, such as underclothing, books, games and cigarettes. As usual, he delivered his report on his visit to the prison camp to the Moroccan authorities.

Mr. Muralti successfully intervened on behalf of the five Egyptian officers held in Morocco. He spent some time with them and also gave them relief supplies. He then discussed their situation with representatives of the Government of Morocco and shortly after, the latter decided to release the five Egyptian officers.

The ICRC also sent a delegate, Mr. J. de Heller, to Algeria, where, in co-operation with the Algerian Red Crescent, he carried out visits at the beginning of January to Moroccan prisoners captured during the hostilities in the western Sahara.

After these visits, Mr. de Heller went to Oujda, a Moroccan town near the Algerian frontier, where he met his colleague, Mr. Muralti. The two ICRC delegates exchanged lists of prisoners, capture cards, and correspondence which was subsequently transmitted to the families of the prisoners.

Repatriation of Koreans from Japan

The delegate of the ICRC in Japan, Mr. Michel Testuz, went to the port of Niigata to attend the 113th sailing of Koreans wishing to return to the place of their choice in their country of origin. On board the vessel there were 114 persons who were thus able to reach

the Democratic People's Republic of Korea before the end of the year. This transport has brought to 80,843 the total number of Koreans repatriated since December 1959, during the course of this action undertaken under the auspices of the Japanese Red Cross and in the presence of ICRC delegates.

Bolivia

At the time of the incidents in the tin mining area of Catavi in Bolivia, where the miners' trades-unions in conflict with the La Paz authorities had seized seventeen hostages, amongst whom were several foreigners, the ICRC had been requested to intervene. It had then proposed to the Bolivian Government to send a delegate to the spot, in order to ensure the prisoners' safety and negotiate their release. The ICRC immediately appointed as delegate Mr. Pierre Jequier who was about to leave, when a compromise was reached between the Government and the Catavi trades-unions. The Bolivian Government however made a point of thanking the ICRC for its good offices in this internal dispute of a social character.

Ruanda

The International Committee has received various communications drawing its attention to disturbances in the African Republic of Ruanda where, as the press has already revealed, the Watutsi tribe are said to be the victims of serious reprisals. Having had this matter laid before it, the ICRC decided to send Mr. G. C. Senn, delegate, to the spot. He has spent many years in Africa where he has accomplished numerous humanitarian missions. Mr. Senn is charged with examining the situation and with intervening so that the victims of these events may be assisted.

Jordan

The Jordan press has just announced that King Hussein's Council of Ministers in session in Amman has decided to adopt the staff of Aesculapius as the official emblem of the medical professions. This decision is in conformity with the recommendations made by the International Red Cross institutions, the World Medical Association and the International Committee of Military Medicine and Pharmacy. The sign of the staff of Aesculapius, red on a white ground, was chosen by the ICRC, in order to put an end to abuses of the red cross emblem whose use is strictly defined by the Geneva Conventions.