

# Near and Middle East

Objekttyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **Annual report / International Committee of the Red Cross**

Band (Jahr): - **(1960)**

PDF erstellt am: **23.05.2024**

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in the Near East, Mr. D. de Traz, visited Tunis in order to obtain a satisfactory response from the GPRA to the general proposals set forth by the International Committee in May 1958 to "humanize" the Algerian conflict. At the same time, he backed a large number of requests for information from the Central Tracing Agency concerning French military and civilians who were missing or presumed captured by the ALN. None of these steps met with success.

On June 11, the GPRA notified the ICRC of its decision to accede to the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949. Without taking a stand on the legal aspect of this accession, the ICRC took note of this response as a positive answer to its memorandum of May 1958. It therefore renewed its approaches to the GPRA and to its representatives with a view to implementing the practical results which this accession would have for aiding prisoners in the hands of the ALN : dispatch of nominal lists of these prisoners as well as family messages, creation of an information agency, authorization for visits by ICRC delegates. By the end of 1960, the steps undertaken by the International Committee had unfortunately not yet led to any result. The ICRC greatly regrets the unfruitful nature of its efforts, but will nevertheless continue its endeavours.

## **NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST**

### **United Arab Republic**

The ICRC delegation in Cairo, headed by Mr. E. Muller, continued its activities on behalf of stateless persons wishing to leave the country. In 1960, thanks to the intervention of the delegation, about a thousand emigrants, for the most part Jews, were able to leave Egypt for different countries, principally France, Brazil and the United States.

As departures became fewer it was possible to reduce the effective strength of the delegation and two members returned to Geneva.

In May, during his mission to the Middle East, Mr. F. Siordet, a member of the ICRC, stayed in Cairo and Alexandria in order to

review the activities of the ICRC delegation with Mr. Muller. On this occasion, he had talks with several personalities of the U.A.R. Government.

## **Iran**

The ICRC was invited to take part in the XVIth International Congress of Military Medicine and Pharmacy, held in Teheran from 25th April to 1st May 1960, and was represented by one of its Vice-Presidents, Mr. F. Siordet, who attended the sessions as an observer. During his stay in the Iranian capital, the latter had talks with Dr. Naficy, Secretary-General of the Iranian Red Lion and Sun Society.

## **Israel**

In January 1960 the ICRC General Delegate in the Near East, Mr. de Traz, visited Israel for talks with Government representatives. During his stay he visited Ramleh prison where he saw Mustapha Farhat, the Arab detainee for whom the ICRC had previously had an artificial limb manufactured. The same prison was visited again in November by Dr. Bernath, ICRC honorary delegate in Israel.

Another Arab detainee Ahmed Ali Osman, was authorised to receive family parcels from Egypt and the ICRC undertook to send them to him. Finally a number of family messages were exchanged between Israel and the neighbouring Arab countries as a result of ICRC intervention.

## **General Delegation for the Near East**

On the 8th March 1960, Mr. David de Traz, ICRC General Delegate in the Near East since the end of 1956, had to return to Geneva for prolonged medical treatment. Shortly beforehand he had visited Baghdad, where he contacted a number of Iraqi personalities notably Mr. Hashim Jawad, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the Director of the Iraqi Red Crescent.

The ICRC finally came to the conclusion that it was no longer

necessary to maintain a permanent general delegation in the Near East and consequently the position of General Delegate was abolished.

## FAR EAST

### Japan

The repatriation of Koreans resident in Japan which began in December 1959<sup>1</sup> continued throughout 1960. The ICRC special mission, set up in Tokyo in 1959, has continued to lend its services to the Japanese Red Cross during the operations and preparations which preceded each embarkation for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

As in 1959, the ICRC delegates went to the registration offices of the Japanese Red Cross set up in prefectures or town-halls. They were present during the registration of Korean families which expressed the wish to leave Japan and they gave the Japanese officials concerned any advice which was requested of them on the application of the instructions issued by the National Red Cross Society. In fact, the repatriation of unaccompanied children of less than 16 years has frequently caused problems which the Japanese Red Cross and the ICRC special mission have endeavoured to resolve in the best interest of the child, taking into account Japanese legislation as well as the ways and customs of the Korean people. In addition, the ICRC delegates made sure that no pressure was put on candidates for repatriation, either to leave for North Korea or to stay in Japan. There were very few incidents. A small number of irregular registrations were cancelled.

Before each embarkation, the special mission closely examined the documents which were presented, principally to avoid minors under 16 years of age being parted from their parents or leaving unaccompanied.

At Niigata, the port of embarkation, the delegates also continued to be present each week at the final interrogation of Koreans, at which the latter were invited by a representative of the Japanese

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<sup>1</sup> See *Annual Report 1959*, pp. 16-22