

Europe and North America

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EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

Besides continuing its work for certain victims of the 1974 conflict in Cyprus, the ICRC carried out several missions in most of the European countries and in North America to promote relations with National Societies and governments, particularly those participating in its operations all over the world, either directly, by providing personnel, or indirectly, by giving financial or material assistance. Representatives of the ICRC also took part in several seminars or meetings organized by the National Societies of these countries.

This policy of maintaining contact took the President of the ICRC twice to Great Britain—where he was received in audience by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II—to Poland, to the Federal Republic of Germany and to Belgium.

Members of the Committee also carried out other missions:

- in Poland, Dr. Jacques F. de Rougemont attended the inauguration of the hospital dedicated to child health, in memory of the young victims of the Second World War;
- in the USSR, Mrs. Marion Bovée-Rothenbach attended the primary health care seminar organized by the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the Soviet Union, in Frounze;
- in Czechoslovakia, Mr. Maurice Aubert took part in the 8th congress of the National Society;
- in Greece, Mr. Marcel A. Naville attended the 3rd meeting of the Balkan National Societies which was held in Athens.

The Vice-President, Mr. Pestalozzi, represented the ICRC at the Annual Assembly of Swiss Red Cross Delegates in St. Gallen.

On several such missions, the President of the ICRC and members of the Committee were accompanied by Mr. Melchior Borsinger, delegate-general for Europe and North America, or by the regional delegate for Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover the delegate-general visited Great

Britain, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, and the regional delegate for Central and Eastern Europe visited Yugoslavia (twice) and Romania.

Several personalities were received at the headquarters in Geneva by the President of the ICRC. Amongst them were the Spanish Monarchs on 21 June and the President of the French Republic, on 10 December, in the presence of Mr. Hans Hürlimann, President of the Swiss Confederation.

Finally, as in every Annual Report, mention must be made of the activities of the International Tracing Service (ITS) at Arolsen, in the Federal Republic of Germany, which is under the direction and management of the ICRC (see box below).

Cyprus

From 27 May to 7 June, the delegate-general for Europe and North America, accompanied by the delegate responsible for questions concerning Cyprus at ICRC headquarters in Geneva, visited some 1,600 Greek Cypriots remaining in the north of the island, under Turkish Cypriot control, and some 200 Turkish Cypriots remaining in the south of the island.

The aim of this mission was to ascertain the situation of these people in humanitarian terms and to make any necessary approaches to the responsible authorities. The ICRC delegation held talks with the representatives of the Cyprus Government and also with the Turkish Cypriot authorities regarding the problems encountered. The ICRC delegation also contacted the United Nations representatives in Cyprus.

INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE (ITS)

The ITS, from its founding in London in 1943 by the Allied military authorities, was under the responsibility of different military or civil bodies until 1955, when its management and administration was taken over by the ICRC. Its task is to gather, classify, store and use documents relating to Germans and non-Germans who were held in the National Socialist concentration or labour camps and to non-Germans displaced as a result of the Second World War. The ITS records, though incomplete, have information on some ten million victims of the National Socialist regime. Thanks to this information the ITS can issue certificates of internment or forced labour relating to that period. However, this information is often inadequate: year after year an ever-increasing number of enquiries, for which there are no documents, are made. It must be pointed out that most concentration camp records were destroyed at the end of the Second World War. In such cases the ITS has obviously no means of tracing the missing persons in its archives.

The ITS publishes its own annual report from which the following statistics were taken: in 1979, from its archives the ITS was able to furnish 65,448 replies, including 15,282 certificates or reports of imprisonment, 5,168 certificates of forced labour during the war, 2,564 reports and certificates on periods spent in DP camps after the war, etc.