

INTRODUCTION

This guide is issued to aid those charged with responsibility for administration of Assembly Centers and displaced persons problems generally. Part I sets forth general principles and procedures, and Part II sets forth policy and suggestions on specific aspects.

This guide cannot answer all of the practical questions which a variety of conditions in the field will raise; the principles outlined, therefore, should be interpreted with flexibility, as they only seek to present an ideal at which to aim. Speedy repatriation remains the chief objective.

During the combat period it will, as a general rule, be found necessary to evacuate all displaced persons to rear areas through the usual machinery of Collecting Points and Transit Points, set up in Division and Corps areas. These Points can provide nothing more than bare accommodation, food and first aid for limited periods while the displaced person is awaiting transportation to the rear. The only kind of processing that might be performed at this stage is the "dusting" described in Part II, Section 5.

It is in the Assembly Center that more complete steps may be taken, in the registration and care of displaced persons, to prepare them for their repatriation. The experiences which they have undergone during the past few years may make them difficult to control; they may have little initiative their desire to take revenge may result in looting and general lawlessness and their pent-up feelings against their former oppressors may express themselves in resentment of any type of discipline or authority.

Difficulties may be minimized by careful administration, maintaining national groups together in one center, keeping families together, arranging for the displaced persons to carry with them their personal baggage and the effects which they prize so highly, giving the displaced persons as much information as possible regarding their status, making it possible for them to speak freely to Center representatives and Allied Liaison Officers, and by numerous programs and activities which an imaginative Center Director may be able to develop.

Displaced persons should be encouraged to organize themselves as much as is administratively possible. National group leaders should be selected and small national committees be formed to speak for their nationals, make suggestions and enquiries, and to act as a channel for disseminating instructions and information from the Center Staff. These leaders should always be persons who command the respect and confidence of their compatriots: the advice of the appropriate Liaison Officer should be sought on this point and the opinions of the displaced persons as far as possible be taken into account. Advisory committees on specific questions e.g. accommodation or Center regulations and discipline, may prove useful; and the gradual introduction of the administration by displaced persons themselves of some Center activities will not only help to restore self-respect and initiative but will make the task of administration immeasurably easier for the Center Staff. It should be noted however that, as the process of self-administration

develops, the position of minority groups in the Center may need careful watching.

This Center Staff will have as its core a Center Team drawn either from military sources or from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. The Supreme Commander has signed an agreement with the Director General of UNRRA to facilitate UNRRA's contribution, which will be a growing one.

The task is enormous, its political and humanitarian implications far-reaching. It will strain to the utmost the resources, the energy and the good will of the United Nations. The individual military officer or UNRRA official who does his job successfully may well feel that he has contributed in no small way to solving one of the biggest problems of welfare and reconstruction facing the United Nations.