

Relations of the CICR with Red Cross Organisations and International Organisations

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II. Relations of the ICRC with Red Cross Organisations and International Organisations

LEAGUE OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES AND NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETIES ¹

The ICRC maintained with the League of Red Cross Societies, principally by monthly meetings between the Secretariats, the close contact that had been mutually agreed upon.

The Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross having gone into liquidation at the close of 1946, the ICRC did its best to help the agencies appointed to carry on the work. The ICRC thus supported the efforts of the League to obtain free transport and various priorities. It granted the League storage in its warehouses and undertook to receive, store and forward goods on the League's account.

In countries where an intermediary was required, the ICRC Delegations took responsibility for the reception, transit or transmission of supplies entrusted to the League.

The Committee's representatives on the Council for the Liquidation of the Joint Relief Commission continued, in common with the League representatives, the work of winding-up.

UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The ICRC was admitted in 1946 to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, in an advisory capacity, as an International Organisation under Category B.

¹ See also p. 83.

A Conference of Non-Governmental Organisations attached to the Economic and Social Council was held in Geneva in May 1948. The ICRC was represented by a delegation of two members of the Bureau, two members of the Central Management and five deputies. The Conference enabled the ICRC to make contact with the Economic and Social Council, and with the General Secretariat of the United Nations. It also enabled the ICRC to renew relations with the International Organisations with which it had co-operated during the War in the same kind of welfare work.

Among these organisations should be mentioned :

The International Union for Child Welfare, whose suggestions were borne in mind in drafting the Articles referring to children in the Draft Convention for the Protection of Civilians.

The American Friends Service Committee.

The World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations (YMCA).

The World Alliance of Young Women's Christian Associations (YWCA).

The World Council of Churches.

Caritas Catholica Internationalis.

The OSE Union for Health and Hygiene among Jewish Populations.

World Student Relief.

Reference should also be made to the International Relief Union, the World Health Organisation, and the Preparatory Commission for the International Refugee Organisation.

At the end of 1945, the President of the *International Relief Union*, Senator Ciraolo, whom world relations enabled to resume his presidential functions, thanked the League and the ICRC for the *negotiorum gestio* of the IRU since 1943 by the two organisations¹. As soon as Signor Ciraolo had resumed as President, his

¹ See *General Report of the ICRC, 1939-1947*, Vol. I, pp. 181-183.

first concern was to summon a meeting of the General Council. After a first abortive attempt, the Council met on November 25 to 27, 1947; it decided in particular to get into touch with the United Nations, bearing in mind the Union's independence in scientific and technical matters. The IRU itself submitted its Report to the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference, which, in Resolution No. 42, expressed the opinion that in view of the setting up of relief organisations by the United Nations, the mission of the IRU could be considered as accomplished.

The first *World Health Assembly* opened in Geneva on June 24, 1948. The delegates of 70 countries, of many specialised agencies, of the World Health Organisation and of non-governmental organisations were present. The ICRC was also represented¹.

In co-operation with the *International Refugee Organisation* (IRO), the ICRC did certain work (to be discussed later) for Refugees and Displaced Persons².

In general, IRO supplied to the ICRC, any information necessary to answer queries from Refugees and Displaced Persons, and this information was passed on to the Delegations in Athens, Berlin, London, Vienna and Madrid.

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS COMMISSIONS

Taking advantage of the presence in Geneva of Delegates of many National Societies for meetings of the League Executive Committee, several Commissions of the International Red Cross held their sessions from September 11 to 16, 1947, at Geneva University.

The *Joint Commission of the ICRC and the League*, to examine the credentials of new National Red Cross Societies, met on September 11 and 12, 1947, with Dr. Bohny, President of the Swiss Red Cross, in the chair. The League was represented by the Red Cross Societies of Czechoslovakia, Denmark, India, Ireland, Italy, Switzerland and the Union of South Africa.

¹ On the Committee's Medical Relief, see below, p. 71.

² See below, p. 60.

The *Standing Committee of the International Red Cross Conference*. This body met on September 13, 1947, with Count Folke Bernadotte, President of the Swedish Red Cross, in the chair. It was attended by representatives of the National Societies of Argentina, Great Britain, Italy, Siam and Sweden, and by representatives of the League (Belgium and Greece) and of the ICRC. The Committee decided upon the agenda of the XVIIth International Red Cross Conference, having first considered suggestions put forward by several National Societies. The Swedish Red Cross provided valuable information about the organisation of the Stockholm Conference.

The *Special Committee for the Study of Draft New Conventions*. This Committee was set up by the Preliminary Conference of Red Cross Societies (1946), to maintain close contact with the ICRC and to study the Committee's texts before they were forwarded to the National Societies. It met on September 15 and 16 under the chairmanship of M. de Truchis de Varennes, Director of the French Red Cross. The following National Societies were represented : Australia, Belgium, China, France, Great Britain, Greece, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Sweden and United States. These Societies approved the ICRC's work, and made useful suggestions on several points; these were taken into account in working out the amended or new drafts of the Conventions for submission to the XVIIth Conference.

The *Standing International Commission on Highway First Aid (SICHFA)*, in which the League, the ICRC, and several National Societies take part, met on June 11 and 12, 1948, at the headquarters of the League. The chair was taken by Dr. P. Behague, Vice-President of the National Union of Tourist Associations, Paris.

Resolutions were passed on several subjects, including the advisability of training drivers in first aid, the notification of traumatology services, safety-first instruction, relief work by parachute, and so forth. The Commission considered its title incomplete and decided to adopt the following : " Standing International Commission for Transportation Safety and First Aid. "

The Commission made a certain number of recommendations and unanimously re-elected its officers.

RECOGNITION OF NEW NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETIES

In March 1948, the ICRC were glad to be able to inform the Central Committees of National Red Cross Societies of the official recognition of the *Monaco Red Cross Society*, founded on March 3, 1948.

ICRC MISSIONS

Mission in South East Europe¹

On the occasion of the Regional Conference of European Red Cross Societies, which opened in Belgrade on September 24, 1947, Dr. E. Gloor, Vice-President, accompanied by M. F. Siordet and Dr. R. Marti, visited Jugoslavia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Albania.

They made contact with the Governments and National Red Cross Societies of these countries and noted everywhere a friendly disposition towards the ICRC. This goodwill found expression not only in a courteous reception, but also in important talks on the work and future of the Red Cross.

In May 1948, M. F. Ehrenhold, ICRC Delegate at Warsaw, was given a mission in Jugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania, and M. Meyer-Moro, Delegate at Prague, visited Hungary.

Missions to Countries in North and North-West Europe

In May and June 1948, MM. Jean S. Pictet, Director-Delegate, Jean Duchosal, Secretary-General, and Claude Pilloud, Head of the Legal Division, visited the National Societies of Belgium, Denmark, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, countries in which the ICRC no longer had permanent Delegations. Interviews were arranged by the Red Cross Societies with

¹ See above, p. 14.

members of the Governments and their advisers, and devoted to discussion of the Geneva Conventions.

The ICRC Delegates were everywhere warmly welcomed; they were able to see for themselves the work of the National Societies, to witness their services in operation and, in particular, to visit several of their homes and hospitals.

In October 1948, MM. Martin Bodmer, Vice-President, and Jean Duchosal, Secretary-General, were asked to visit in Finland the Government and the National Red Cross Society. They were most courteously received by both.

Joint Mission of the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies to Trieste

Acting upon a suggestion by the ICRC, the League and the Committee sent a joint mission to Trieste. The members were M. Georges Dunand, Director-Delegate of the ICRC, and Mr. A. Sigerist, Director of the Information Service of the League.

The aim of the mission was to collect information for both organisations on the involved situation in Trieste. Several Red Cross Delegations were operating in the territory, each for its own Society; at the same time, there were also Societies not officially recognised. All, basing their claims on the nature of their activities, considered themselves entitled to the name and demanded recognition. This was not possible at the moment, as there was no National Red Cross at Trieste that could be recognised by the ICRC, even though two groups had already made such application. Before the ICRC could recognise a National Society in Trieste, the international status of a Free State of Trieste must first be definitely established; furthermore, this State should adhere to the Geneva Convention, and its Government should approve a single Red Cross Society as an auxiliary of the Army Medical Service; lastly, the Society's statutes should be in conformity with the conditions required for recognition.

Missions to the United States and to Canada

In response to an invitation of the American Red Cross, the ICRC sent MM. R. Gallopin, Director-Delegate, and D. de Traz,

Head of the Prisoners, Internees and Civilian Division, to Washington in January 1948. These representatives had numerous interviews, in particular with Mr. James T. Nicholson, Vice-President and General Manager of the American Red Cross, on Red Cross work in war and peace, and on the revision of the Geneva Conventions.

From Washington the Committee's representatives went on to Toronto to visit the Canadian Red Cross. They were warmly received by Dr. Fred W. Routley, National Commissioner of the Canadian Red Cross.

Their next call was at Lake Success, where they made contact with M. Laugier, Deputy Secretary-General of UN and with the Section for non-Governmental Organisations of the Liaison and Coordination Division, UN Secretariat.

In June, 1948, M. Paul Ruegger, accompanied by MM. J. Pictet and M. Wolf, went on a short visit to the United States. He was received by President Truman and spoke with him, as also with the Department of State and the American Red Cross, on various matters affecting the present and future activities of the ICRC, and in particular, the draft revised and new Conventions to be submitted to the Stockholm Conference.

M. Ruegger was gratified to observe at first hand the interest of the highest authorities in ICRC work.

XVIIITH INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS CONFERENCE

The XVIIth Conference was held in the Parliament House, Stockholm, from August 20 to 30, 1948, under the presidency of Count Folke Bernadotte, Chairman of the Swedish Red Cross.

The President of the ICRC, who was accompanied by several members and principal officers of the ICRC, placed before the Conference the four Drafts of the Revised or New Conventions for the Protection of War Victims. The texts were approved, with certain amendments.

The Drafts, which were established by the ICRC after two years of unbroken effort, and with the assistance of Government experts, National Red Cross Societies and other welfare organisa-

tions¹, were the object of Resolution No. 19 of the Conference. This Resolution “requests the International Committee of the Red Cross to take all necessary steps to ensure that the said draft, with the amendments which the Conference has made therein, be submitted to the Governments with a view to its adoption by a Diplomatic Conference”.

The Drafts covered :

- (1)—The revision of the Geneva Convention of July 27, 1929, for the Relief of the Wounded and Sick in Armies in the Field.
- (2)—The revision of the Xth Hague Convention of October 18, 1907, for the Adaptation to Maritime Warfare of the Principles of the Geneva Convention of 1906.
- (3)—The revision of the Convention of July 27, 1929, relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War.
- (4)—The new Convention for the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

When discussing the fourth Draft, the Conference emphasised the urgent need for ensuring the protection of civilians in time of war by a Convention, the absence of an agreement of this nature having been cruelly felt during the recent War.

Finally, without in any way altering the statutes of the Red Cross or interfering with the right of the ICRC to take initiatives, the Stockholm Conference introduced certain reforms into the system of co-operation between International Organisations and the International Red Cross.

THE LATE COUNT BERNADOTTE

It was with profound regret that the ICRC learned of the tragic death of Count Folke Bernadotte, the distinguished Chairman of the Swedish Red Cross and of the Standing Committee of the

¹ See below, p. 34.

International Red Cross Conference, who was assassinated in Palestine on September 17, 1948, while on a peace mission as Mediator for the United Nations¹.

When the aircraft carrying the remains of Count Bernadotte arrived in Geneva, a delegation from the ICRC, headed by M. Ruegger, went to the airfield to pay their last respects. The plane served as a mortuary chapel and a guard of honour was mounted.

MM. Bodmer, Vice-President, and Duchosal, Secretary-General, represented the ICRC at the funeral ceremony at Stockholm.

¹ This is dealt with in greater detail on p. 113.