

# Relations with Red Cross Institutions and National Societies

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## **IV. RELATIONS WITH RED CROSS INSTITUTIONS AND NATIONAL SOCIETIES**

### **Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross**

The Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross, with representatives of the National Societies, League and ICRC, met in Geneva on 24 and 25 October on the occasion of the thirty-third session of the League Board of Governors.

The Council elected as chairman Dr. Eric Martin, President of the ICRC, and as vice-chairman General Burca, President of the Romanian Red Cross.

The main themes discussed were the development of international humanitarian law, the re-appraisal of the role of the Red Cross, the Red Cross as a factor of peace, the struggle against racism and race discrimination, the development of the Henry Dunant Institute's activities, and ICRC operations in 1975.

Three resolutions adopted by the Council dealt with the development of the Henry Dunant Institute's activities, action to be taken on the World Red Cross Conference on Peace, and the re-appraisal of the role of the Red Cross (see the "International Review of the Red Cross", No. 177, December 1975).

The Council of Delegates asked the ICRC to study a proposal by Dr. Hans Haug, President of the Swiss Red Cross, that, in view of the complexity of the monumental corpus of law constituted by the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the additional Protocols, a single document should be prepared, summarizing their essential principles and thus facilitating their diffusion.

### **Standing Commission of the International Red Cross**

The re-appraisal of the role of the Red Cross, the possible revision of the statutes of the International Red Cross, the organization of the twenty-third International Conference of the Red Cross (Bucarest, 1977), the results of the World Red Cross Conference on Peace (Belgrade, 1975) and the action to be taken thereon, the award of the Henry Dunant Medal, and Red Cross activities in various countries were the main items discussed by

the International Red Cross Standing Commission at its sessions on 14 June at Belgrade and 23 October at Geneva.

The ICRC took part in the work of the Standing Commission, chaired by Sir Geoffrey Newman-Morris (Australia). The ICRC's representatives at Belgrade were its president, Dr. Eric Martin, and Mr. Pierre Gaillard, ICRC adviser, and at Geneva Dr. Martin and Mr. Roger Gallopin, President of the Executive Board.

### **Joint session: League-ICRC**

There were twelve regular monthly joint League-ICRC sessions during 1975 by a permanent liaison body of the two institutions. This joint body deals with problems common to both organizations in their respective activities. The minutes of these meetings are communicated to the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross.

### **Co-ordinating body**

This group, established to co-ordinate assistance activities in operations carried out jointly by the ICRC and the League, met eight times in 1975.

Assistance to the countries of Indo-China, especially to Vietnam, was dealt with at these meetings, presided over by Mr. Roger Gallopin, President of the ICRC Executive Board.

### **Riyadh: Seventh Regional Meeting of Arab National Societies**

Riyadh was the site of the Seventh Regional Meeting of Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies, from 27 to 31 January.

It brought together delegates from sixteen National Societies, those of Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Democratic Yemen, Sudan, Syria and Tunisia. Delegates of the "Palestinian Red Crescent" and of the Ministry of Health of the Arab Emirates took part in the meeting, which was chaired by Dr. Abdul Aziz Al-Mudarres, President of the Saudi Arabian Red Crescent Society.

The ICRC was represented by two of its directors and a delegate general, who gave an account of ICRC activities in the Middle East. They also raised the question of diffusion of the Geneva Conventions. A resolution was adopted by the participants on the latter subject, asking Arab National Societies to intervene with their respective Governments to ensure more extensive dissemination of the Conventions and requesting the ICRC to continue its activities in this field.

## Montreux: a symposium on the development of the Red Cross in Africa

A symposium on the development of the Red Cross in Africa, organized by the League of Red Cross Societies, took place in Montreux (Switzerland) from 24 February to 8 March. Dr. Eric Martin, President of the ICRC, and a number of ICRC officials, took part.

In his opening address, Dr. Martin voiced the International Committee's faith in the future of the National Societies in Africa.

On 7 March, an "ICRC Day" was the occasion for African delegates to get to know better the activities of the ICRC in general, and more particularly its work in Africa, especially in helping political detainees.

Food aid sent by the ICRC and distributed by the National Societies, and matters relating to the diffusion of humanitarian law and Red Cross principles were among the subjects of lectures and discussions.

## Belgrade: the Red Cross and peace

The World Conference of the Red Cross on Peace was held in Belgrade from 11 to 13 June 1975. Dr. Eric Martin, President of the ICRC, represented the institution, in the company of three delegates.

The ICRC presented two reports, one dealing with alleviation of the suffering of war victims as a contribution to peace, the other discussing the development of international humanitarian law and the dissemination of the Geneva Conventions.

A "programme of action of the Red Cross as a factor of peace" was drawn up by a drafting committee. Pursuant to suggestions in the ICRC reports, this programme provides for measures to strengthen the practical operations of Red Cross bodies, especially those to help victims of conflict and to encourage the development of international humanitarian law.

The Belgrade Conference provided the opportunity for constructive contacts with the National Societies represented.

## Missions by the President of the ICRC and other members of the Committee

The President of the ICRC, Professor Eric Martin, went on six missions in 1975, with the aim of strengthening the ties between National Societies and the ICRC:

- 4-9 May: Budapest (Hungary) — a visit to the National Society on the occasion of World Red Cross Day;
- 9-12 May: Paris (France) — National Congress of the French Red Cross;
- 25-31 May: Discussions with the President and the Foreign Minister of the French Republic (on ICRC activities and financing);
- 9-15 June: Belgrade (Yugoslavia) — Centenary of the Yugoslav Red Cross, World Peace Conference, Standing Commission of the International Red Cross;
- 19-25 June: Federal Republic of Germany — Congress of the National Red Cross and a visit to the International Tracing Service (ITS) at Arolsen;
- 25 November - 3 December: Nouakchott (Mauritania) — Visit to the Mauritanian Red Cross on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of national independence.

Professor Gilbert Etienne, who is a member of the International Committee of the Red Cross and of the ICRC Executive Board, went to Angola and the neighbouring countries from 30 August to 13 September. Professor Etienne had been directed by the Executive Board to discuss the details of ICRC activities in Angola with the various parties to the conflict and with the Portuguese authorities.

## Shôken Fund: fifty-fourth distribution

The Red Cross Societies of Burma, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Nepal, Panama and Paraguay received allocations—amounting altogether to 145,000 Swiss francs—from the fifty-fourth distribution of the income of the Empress Shôken Fund.

Applications for allocations were examined by a Joint Commission composed of representatives of the League and ICRC. (The 1974 balance sheet and statement of income and expenditure of the fund, with details of allocations, were published in the June 1975 issue—No. 171—of the "International Review of the Red Cross".)

## V. RELATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The ICRC delegate to the United Nations and their specialised agencies, especially those of a humanitarian nature (High Commissioner for Refugees, UNDRO, UNICEF, etc.), was put under considerable pressure in the spring by the events in Indo-China. In New York, he had to attend daily meetings convened by the Co-ordinator for United Nations Relief Operations in Indo-China, who had been appointed by the