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II. — Relations with Red Cross and International Organizations ¹

THE LEAGUE OF RED CROSS SOCIETIES, AND NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETIES

The Committee remained in close contact with the General Secretariat of the League. Apart from the regular monthly meetings, several others were held to examine particular cases, and there were frequent discussions between members of both Secretariats, thus maintaining close liaison between the two international Red Cross agencies.

Thanks to conferences which brought many delegates from National Societies to Geneva, and frequent visits of members of the Societies, it was possible to maintain personal contacts with practically all National Societies. The presence of their representatives on several of the governmental Delegations to the Diplomatic Conference also allowed very useful contacts. These, together with discussions which the President and members of the Committee had during the course of special missions, and regular contacts which the Committee's Delegates have in countries abroad, allowed the solution of many problems which it would have been difficult to deal with rapidly by correspondence.

None the less, letters exchanged between the Committee and the National Societies amounted to some sixteen thousand—to which should be added more than fifty thousand replies made by the ICRC to inquiries from the Societies. These figures represent respectively a tenth of the mail dispatched by the Committee, and half that sent by the Central Prisoners of War Agency.

¹ For relations with the International Refugee Organization (IRO) see below, p. 52.

STANDING COMMISSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS CONFERENCE

The XVIIth International Red Cross Conference (Stockholm, 1948) had recommended

“ that the Standing Commission meet regularly at least twice a year, that its activities be not confined to arbitrating differences arising from interpretation of the Statutes and to making preparations for the next International Conference, but that, in order to carry out in the period between the Conferences the latter's functions of co-ordinating and harmonizing the work of the National Societies, of the International Committee of the Red Cross and of the League of Red Cross Societies, the Standing Commission examine, if necessary, all questions common to these two latter bodies and which demand their co-operation, and take such measures as the circumstances may demand, subject to their being subsequently referred to the next International Conference.

Two meetings of the three Presidents (MM. André François-Poncet, President of the Standing Commission, Paul Ruegger, President of the ICRC, and Bonabes de Rougé, representing Mr. Basil O'Connor, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the League) were held in Geneva, one in February, the other in August, 1949.

The Standing Commission itself met in plenary session in April and October, 1949, also in Geneva. The first meeting was occupied mainly with the question of Palestine Refugees, the second with the financing of the ICRC.

These four meetings were presided over by M. André François-Poncet. Apart from representatives of the League and the Committee, the following persons were also present : M. A. Rana Tarhan, Vice-President (Turkey), Lord Woolton, the Countess of Limerick and Miss Evelyn Bark (Great Britain), Messrs T. W. Sloper (Brazil), J. T. Nicholson, H. Starr, W. Gower (United States), H. Beer (Sweden), G. A. Bohny (Switzerland).

RELATIONS WITH OTHER WELFARE ORGANIZATIONS

Close relations were maintained with the representatives in Geneva of several welfare organizations, including the International Social Service, and the members of the “ Cartel ”.

The latter comprises : The World Federation of Young Men's Christian Associations (YMCA), the World Federation of Young Women's Christian Associations (YWCA), Caritas Catholica Internationalis, the International Centre for Relief to Civilian Populations, the World Council of Churches, the American Friends Service Committee, World Student Relief, the OSE Union for the Promotion of Health amongst Jewish Populations, the International Union for Child Welfare, and the ICRC. Monthly meetings of the "Cartel" are held.

In April 1949, the League of Red Cross Societies entered the "Cartel", and occupied itself particularly with the distribution of relief to impoverished refugees in Europe.

MISSIONS

Because of the range and complexity of problems dealt with, missions sent to examine them on the spot and to maintain the contacts which are indispensable for the work of the ICRC were particularly numerous.

MISSIONS OF THE PRESIDENT

The President went personally to Berlin at the beginning of January 1949, to reorganize the ICRC Delegation there.

From February 9 to March 8, 1949, he visited the Delegations in Palestine and the ICRC Commissariat for Relief to Palestine Refugees, and discussed refugee relief problems with the local authorities. He then visited Israel, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, the Lebanon and Turkey, making contact with the Heads of States, governmental authorities, and representatives of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Soon after his return to Geneva, he left for Rome to visit the President of the Italian Republic and the Government authorities competent in Red Cross matters. This visit was returned in Geneva, in September 1949, by Signor Luigi Meda,

Under-Secretary of State for Defence, who officially thanked the Committee for its aid to Italian citizens during the War.

While in Rome, in March, M. and M^{me} Ruegger were received by His Holiness Pope Pius XII.

The President was in London on official mission from March 28 to March 30.

In October, at the Hague, the Red Cross Medal, awarded by Her Majesty Queen Juliana to the Committee, was formally presented to him.

In November, accompanied by M. David de Traz, Deputy Executive Director, and M. Alfred Escher, Commissioner for Relief to Palestine Refugees, he took part in the Conference on Palestine Refugees, held by the United Nations Organization at Lake Success.

In the last days of December, M. Ruegger went on a further mission to Rome.

OTHER MISSIONS

M. M. Bodmer, Vice-President, went to Vienna and received from the Chancellor of Austria a document expressing the country's gratitude for the services rendered by the Committee to Austrian citizens during the War. (December.)

M^{lle} L. Odier, to Palestine, to visit the ICRC nurses and inspect their work in the refugee camp clinics, the milk distribution centres, and the hospitals for which they were responsible. (March 27 to April 11);

to Stockholm, to attend a meeting of the General Council of the Florence Nightingale Foundation and meetings of the International Nursing Council. (June.)

Dr. Vannotti, to Palestine—inspection and study of food and nutrition problems amongst the refugees. (December.)

M. Jean Duchosal, Secretary-General, and M. M. Wolf, Counsellor, to the United States. (January 11 to March 30.)

M. Roth, Paris Delegation, to Greece, to examine the question of repatriating Greek children. (February 10 to March 10.)

M. Beckh, from Geneva headquarters, and M. Ehrenhold, Delegate at Warsaw, to Hamburg, for a conference in connection with the problem of the "Volksdeutsche". (February 24 to March 5.)

M. Colombo, Head of Section, to Berlin, Frankfurt and Prague, in connection with the establishment of "Volksdeutsche" in Bohemia and in Germany.

M. Siordet, Counsellor, and M. Ehrenhold: missions in Central Europe and the Balkans to maintain contacts with the Governments and National Societies of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.

MM. Paul Kuhne, Deputy Head of Division, Pierre Gaillard and Max Wolf, from Geneva headquarters, to Palestine. (August and November.)

M. D. de Traz, to Athens to enquire about conditions for internees and political prisoners. (May);

to Germany to study the proposal that the ICRC take over the Arolsen International Tracing Service. (September);

to make contact with the Bonn Government. (October.)

M. R. Gallopin, Executive Director, to the United States, on special mission, at the invitation of the American Red Cross. (September.)

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF HENRY DUNANT

Through the courtesy of the Italian Government and the active co-operation of the Mantua Section of the Italian Red Cross, the ICRC, on June 25, 1949, placed two marble tablets, one at the Church at Castiglione and the other on the ossuary at Solferino, as a tribute to the memory of Henry Dunant in the actual place where he first conceived the idea of the Red Cross.

EMPRESS SHÔKEN FUND

The Joint Commission (ICRC and League) responsible for the distribution of revenues from the Empress Shôken Fund met in Geneva in March, 1949, and made the following allocations:

3,000 Swiss francs to the Indian Red Cross, to aid flood victims ;
4,000 Swiss francs to the Iran Red Lion and Sun, to set up crèches ;
5,000 Swiss francs to the Uruguayan Red Cross for its Blood
Transfusion Service.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE MEDAL

The Florence Nightingale Medal was awarded by the ICRC to thirty-five particularly meritorious nurses and voluntary auxiliaries from the Red Cross Societies of the following countries :

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Costa-Rica, Denmark, Finland, France, Great Britain, Greece, India, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, the United States of America.

All recipients of this honour had given exceptional service over many years, and taken an active part in their own countries, in organizing social assistance, and in the character training of nurses.