

External Relations

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IV. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Relations with National Societies

Recognition of a new National Society

Following a study of the statutes and activities of the Gambia Red Cross, carried out in co-operation with the League of Red Cross Societies, the ICRC concluded that the Society met the conditions imposed by the International Red Cross. On 10 October 1974, the ICRC therefore announced its recognition of the Society, bringing the number of member Societies of the International Red Cross to 122.

Missions to National Societies and Governments

The dispatch of missions to many countries testified to the ICRC's constant concern to strengthen ties with National Societies and to establish direct relations with Governments. In particular, Dr. Eric Martin, President of the ICRC, made the following visits:

- Poland from 10 to 15 May;
- Bulgaria from 6 to 12 September;
- USSR from 12 to 21 September;
- Brazil from 12 to 17 November;
- Paraguay from 17 to 22 November;
- Peru from 22 to 28 November.

In addition, the President of the Executive Board, directors and general delegates made working visits to more than forty National Societies in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe.

Red Cross Seminars ¹

The ICRC took part in several Red Cross seminars and co-operated in the following meetings during 1974:

- 6th meeting of the Presidents and technical personnel of the National Societies of North America, Mexico, Central America

¹ Detailed reports on several of these meetings have been published in the International Review of the Red Cross (see page 88 of this Report).

and Panama, at Tegucigalpa, Honduras, organized by the Honduran Red Cross under the auspices of the League of Red Cross Societies, from 29 January to 1 February.

- 6th regional meeting of Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies at Kuwait, organized by the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, from 11 to 14 February.
- 5th seminar on the Red Cross and international humanitarian law, at Strobl-St. Wolfgang, Austria, organized by the Austrian Junior Red Cross, 5 and 6 April.
- Training course for disaster relief at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, organized by the Malaysian Red Cross in co-operation with the League of Red Cross Societies, from 22 to 28 April.
- 6th national congress of the Polish Red Cross, at Warsaw, Poland, from 10 to 15 May.
- World Red Cross Day in Belgium, on 8 May.
- Introductory seminar on international Red Cross affairs at Geneva, organized by the Henry Dunant Institute, from 8 to 13 September.
- 10th Inter-American Red Cross Conference at Asunción, Paraguay, organized by the Paraguayan Red Cross, from 18 to 23 November.
- Working group on the standardization of medicaments at Geneva, organized by the League of Red Cross Societies, from 11 to 16 November.

The ICRC also received at Headquarters nearly 1,500 directors, delegates and members of the National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies of 97 countries.

National Societies which have submitted their statutes to the ICRC for amendment

The last International Conference of the Red Cross, held at Teheran in November 1973, decided that any Society wishing to amend its statutes in respect of the conditions of recognition and admission should submit the proposed changes in advance to the ICRC and the League.

Pursuant to this decision, seven National Societies in Africa, Latin America and Europe sent draft amendments of their statutes to the ICRC. These proposals were examined by a joint ICRC-League Committee, which submitted its comments and recommendations to the Societies concerned.

Shôken Fund

The Joint Commission of the Empress Shôken Fund met in Geneva in April. Thanks to the Fund's income, the Commission was able to make grants to five National Societies in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East. Grants were made for setting up a blood bank, for a blood transfusion service and for the purchase of ambulances and medical equipment.

Relations with International Organizations

United Nations

Co-operation between the ICRC and the United Nations was continued in many spheres of common interest. To that end, contacts were maintained with the United Nations Secretariat at all levels; the deliberations of the General Assembly, of the Economic and Social Council, of several United Nations subsidiary organs, and also of the Security Council when called for by circumstances, were closely followed.

In 1974, the reaffirmation and development of international humanitarian law and the question of the use of certain conventional weapons continued to be the subject of co-operation with the United Nations, concerning which further details may be found on pages 75 and 76 of this report.

In the early stages of the Cyprus conflict, in July and August, there were almost daily meetings with the Secretary-General and high officials of his staff, while the ICRC delegation in the field began to carry out its tasks under the Conventions, co-operating with the United Nations Force in Cyprus in several spheres of activity.

Various questions touching upon disarmament, respect for human rights, humanitarian problems arising from decolonization,

and situations of racial and ethnic tension were also discussed with delegations from the countries concerned and with United Nations officials dealing with such questions.

A detailed account of co-operation at the operational level between the ICRC and the High Commissioner for Refugees, or UNICEF, will be found on pages 12, 36 and 56 of this Report.

A series of contacts and talks in which views were exchanged with the United Nations Office of Public Information took place on the occasion of the visit of the Head of the ICRC Press and Information Division to New York. The purpose of these meetings was to examine ways and means of promoting co-operation so as to inform the public more fully on the specific tasks which fall to the ICRC, especially when it has to operate in the field at the same time as the United Nations in situations of armed conflict.

United Nations specialized agencies

Official relations between the World Health Organization and the ICRC continued as in the past. The ICRC sent an observer to the World Health Assembly and to meetings of the WHO Executive Board, and a valuable contribution was brought by WHO to the work of the Conference of Government Experts on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons.

Although not on an official level, relations between the ICRC and other specialized agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization and World Food Programme, the International Labour Organisation and UNESCO, were also maintained on an *ad hoc* basis, regarding specific points connected with ICRC's juridical or operational activities.

Regional organizations

The main subject of contacts with the Council of Europe in 1974 concerned the situation arising out of the Cyprus conflict. The Committee of Ministers, by setting up a fund in aid of the victims, and the Population and Refugees Committee, by submitting in September 1974 a report to the Consultative Assembly, both demonstrated their particular interest in the activities of the ICRC in Cyprus.

Non-Governmental organizations

Several working groups—on disarmament, human rights and humanitarian law—periodically bring together in Geneva representatives of various non-governmental organizations having consultative status with ECOSOC. These meetings were followed by the ICRC and provided opportunities for a number of exchanges of views, more particularly on questions touching upon humanitarian law. Representatives of these working groups also took part, as observers, in the Conference of Government Experts on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, convened by the ICRC at Lucerne.

Similar contacts took place in New York with non-governmental organizations whose representatives were present as observers at United Nations Headquarters.

Press and Information

Operational activities

The ICRC's protection and assistance operations in 1974 in various parts of the world stricken by war or internal disturbances, particularly in the Middle East, Cyprus and Chile, were of continued interest to international public opinion. The ICRC kept the public regularly informed of its activities through press releases and the monthly news bulletin "The ICRC in Action", issued by the Press and Information Division in French, English, Spanish and German, with a circulation of over 4,000 copies. These publications were supplemented by the information and interviews given from day to day to press, radio and television correspondents accredited to the European Office of the United Nations in Geneva and to the special representatives of international press agencies in the field.

In addition, in order to satisfy the particularly important news needs of National Societies interested in the large-scale operations which took place during the summer in the Middle East and Cyprus, the Press and Information Division sent special representatives to gather first-hand information in the field in the form of articles, photographs and sound recordings. It should also be mentioned

here that the operation for the repatriation of prisoners of war in June between Israel and Syria, was the subject of a 16 mm film entitled "Vol RX 301 Tel Aviv-Damas", produced by the ICRC film unit. This film was broadcast by Eurovision to the television audiences of ten countries as part of its "news exchange" service.

In November, the ICRC published a report on its activities in Cyprus from August to October 1974. The report, which is well-illustrated, was sent to governments, National Red Cross Societies, international organizations and other charitable institutions which had contributed in cash or kind to the ICRC's operations on the island.

General information and public relations

Publications: To make the activities and concerns of the international institutions of the Red Cross better known, the League and ICRC information services in 1974 jointly launched a new quarterly publication intitled *Contact*. Each issue contains a half-dozen articles, with photographs, intended primarily for the editors of National Society publications. Apart from the fact that it gives effect to the oft-expressed wish for a joint League-ICRC effort to promote the Red Cross image in the world, this periodical was particularly well-received because of the type of information which it supplies (personal reports, features, eye-witness accounts and so forth).

Radio broadcasts: Co-operating with the Swiss Postal Administration and short-wave radio service, the ICRC broadcast:

- six 30-minute programmes in English, beamed to Asia and Oceania;
- six 30-minute programmes in English and French, beamed to Africa;
- six 30-minute programmes in Arabic, beamed to North Africa and the Middle East;
- six 55-minute programmes in Arabic, English, French, German and Spanish, beamed to Europe and North America.

Several of these broadcasts were transcribed and sent to various African broadcasting services, which included them in their national medium-wave programmes.

Photographs: The production and circulation of photographic material expanded considerably in 1974: 182 black-and-white and 110 colour films were used, about half of them in theatres of operations. Of the 10,000 black-and-white enlargements and 1,500 copies of colour slides processed in the ICRC laboratories, 7,000 of the former and 500 of the latter were sent out, three-quarters to National Societies and most of the rest to private addressees (schools, research workers, etc.). Only a small proportion was issued to the press, but although recourse to distribution agencies entailed a reduction in the number of photographs issued, wider circulation was ensured.

Press: While visiting the Canadian and American Red Cross Societies in October and November, the Head of the ICRC Information Service contacted representatives of several major daily papers and periodicals of the East Coast of the United States taking a special interest in international affairs and their humanitarian implications. In addition, he conferred with the officials responsible for the United Nations Office of Public Information in New York (see p. 84) with a view to developing co-operation with accredited correspondents by providing them with basic information affording a better insight into the role and position of the ICRC in matters of concern to the various UN authorities.

Public relations in Switzerland: During the fund-raising drive conducted throughout Switzerland from 25 August to 25 September 1974, the Press and Information Division distributed to the public at large a prospectus supplying, in a few sentences supported by some telling statistics, basic information on the role and work of the ICRC during the year. This information campaign was widely reported by the press, radio and television, which renewed the appeals for funds in the three national languages.

Ten editors of the main Swiss daily newspapers were invited in the spring to take part in an exchange of views with the institution's senior officials on various aspects of ICRC action throughout the world.

The International Review of the Red Cross

The *International Review of the Red Cross* is published monthly by the ICRC in French and English. A selection of the most important articles is also issued monthly in Spanish and German.

Articles and features in the Review deal with every kind of humanitarian problem, both those of the past—since it is one of the responsibilities of this journal to shed light on the history of the humanitarian movement throughout the world—and those of the present. The following articles deserve special mention:

Possibilities and Limits of the Red Cross — Anton Schlögel; Re-appraisal of the Role of the Red Cross — Donald D. Tansley; The Law of War in Serbia in 1887; Nurses and the Principles of the Red Cross — Helen G. McArthur; The Red Cross and New Developments in Blood Transfusion — Z.S. Hantchef; Henry Dunant — Pierre Boissier; The 25th Anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions — Jean Pictet; Red Cross Unity in the World — Walter Bargatzky; The Geneva Convention of 1864 and the Brussels Conference of 1874 — Danièle Bujard; Centenary of the Birth of Max Huber — Jean Pictet.

Features have been devoted to the development of international humanitarian law. The work of the Diplomatic Conference which opened in Geneva in February 1974, for example, was the subject of detailed analysis in the March issue of the review, as was, in the September and October issues, that of the Conference of Government Experts on Weapons which may cause unnecessary suffering or have indiscriminate effects. Other articles dealt with the ICRC's work throughout the world. The repatriation action undertaken by the ICRC in the Asian sub-continent, for example, was discussed extensively, as was the repatriation of prisoners of war in the Middle East. The activities of the ICRC in Cyprus from the beginning of hostilities, in matters of protection, relief and the search for missing persons, were described in several articles.

In addition, both through texts and frequently through illustrations the Review covers activities not only of the ICRC but also of many National Societies. It has reported on the most important Red Cross meetings, such as the XXIInd International Conference, and on meetings and seminars in several countries. It thus keeps

in constant touch with current developments and provides information on major events, national as well as international, in the Red Cross movement in all five continents. Subjects and dates include, for example: the ICRC President in Bulgaria and the USSR (October) and the Mission of the Delegate-General for Latin America (March and May).

The ICRC was represented at several Red Cross meetings in 1974 which were reported in the Review: Standing Commission of the International Red Cross, May and December; Sixth Regional Meeting of Red Cross Societies in Tegucigalpa, April; Sixth Conference of Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies, in Kuwait, April; Seminar on the Preparation of Relief in Case of Disaster, at Kuala Lumpur, June; Seminar on the International Affairs of the Red Cross, December; Symposium at the Henry Dunant Institute on the increased cost of health care, December.

ICRC delegates also took part in a number of international meetings which were reported in the Review: Conference for the Abolition of Torture, February; *Commission Medico-Juridique de Monaco*, June; Conference of Experts on the Reuniting of Dispersed Families, October; International Institute for Human Rights, November; Round Table on Present Problems of Humanitarian Law, November; Seventh International Seminar for Young Army Doctors, December.