

Europe and North America

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EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

As in the past, the ICRC kept in constant touch with most of the European and North American National Societies and governments. It informed them of its activities throughout the world and often received their support, in the form of financial contributions (see Table V, pages 120-121), aid in kind, or the loan of qualified personnel. The ICRC also took part in several meetings of the Red Cross movement in these countries (see also the chapter on 'General Affairs'). These relations were maintained also through missions carried out by the ICRC President, several members of the Committee (see below), directors and other ICRC staff members.

In addition, Mr. George Bush, Vice-President of the United States, visited the ICRC on 4 February. He was received at headquarters by the ICRC President, Mr. Hay, the Vice-President, Mr. Richard Pestalozzi, and members of the Directorate.

The ICRC continued its activities in Poland in 1983 and carried out more visits to detention centres in Northern Ireland.

Finally, through the services of its Central Tracing Agency, it continued to process enquiries arising from the Second World War and later conflicts in Europe.

Missions by the ICRC President

From 16 to 19 March, the ICRC President, Mr. Alexandre Hay, visited the **USSR**. He was accompanied by the Director of Operational Activities. The delegate-general for Asia had already arrived there on 14 March. The ICRC President had talks with Mr. G. M. Kornienko, First Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, and several officials from this Ministry and the Ministry of Defence, on humanitarian subjects of mutual interest, especially in connection with the Afghan conflict. The ICRC representatives were also received by Mr. Valeri A. Baltiyski, President of the USSR Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and by its First Vice-President, Mr. Youri E. Danilov.

Mr. Hay stayed in the **German Democratic Republic** from 25 to 29 April and met, in Berlin, Mr. E. Honecker, President of the State Council, and Mr. Fischer, Minister for Foreign Affairs, with whom he spoke of the ICRC's activities throughout the world. Mr. Hay also reminded them of the importance of the 1977 Protocols to which the GDR is not yet a party. The ICRC President had talks in Dresden with leaders of the German Red Cross of the GDR, including Mr. S. Akkermann, its President. In addition, he took part in a meeting of the presidium of this National Society.

Accompanied by the ICRC Director of Operational Activities, Mr. Hay went to Paris, **France**, on 1 June to receive the medal awarded to the ICRC by the Strasbourg International Institute of Human Rights, as a tribute to its work throughout the world. In addition, he had talks with Mr. Cheysson, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, on the ICRC's main current activities. He also met Mr. Soutou, the President of the French Red Cross.

Invited by the **Liechtenstein** Red Cross to attend the Thirty-ninth session of its General Assembly, on 6 June, Mr. Hay gave an account of the principal ICRC activities and concerns and made an appeal to the Liechtenstein Government to ratify the 1977 Protocols. This matter was again taken up in the interviews which the ICRC President had with Princess Gina, President of the National Society, and Mr. H. Brunhart, Head of the Government.

The ICRC President, accompanied by the Chairman of the Standing Commission, the President of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Head of the ICRC Information Department, attended the opening of the Tenth International Festival of Red Cross and Health Films, which took place in Varna, **Bulgaria**, from 16 to 25 June.

While on a visit to The Hague, **Netherlands**, on 29 and 30 August, Mr. Hay spoke on the history of international humanitarian law, during a ceremony which took place at the Palace of Peace in the presence of Queen Beatrix to mark the issue by the Dutch post office of a series of four stamps in aid of the Red Cross. The Head of the Information Department gave an address on the importance of disseminating knowledge of international humanitarian law. During this trip, President Hay met Mr. Van den Broek, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and exchanged views with him on a few of the ICRC's operations in the world. He also spoke with leaders of the Dutch Red Cross, including its President, Jonkheer Kraijenhoff.

On 29 September, the ICRC President went to Bonn, **Federal Republic of Germany**, where he was received by the President of the National Society, the Prince of Sayn-Wittgenstein-Hohenstein. He also talked with Mr. Genscher, Minister for Foreign Affairs, about the ICRC's activities.

The ICRC President made an official visit to **Spain**, from 24 to 26 October. He was received in Madrid by Mr. Enrique de la Mata, President of the Spanish Red Cross and President of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Mr. Hay was

received in audience by King Juan Carlos. In addition, during talks with Mr. Fernando Mórán López, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Fernando Ledesma Bartret, Minister of Justice and other senior officials of these ministries, he gave an overall account of the ICRC's activities throughout the world and again raised the question of visits to persons imprisoned in Spain under the anti-terrorist laws (the previous series of ICRC visits dating back to 1981). The Spanish authorities confirmed their agreement in principle, given to the ICRC in 1982. The President's mission also gave him the opportunity of encouraging the Spanish Government to ratify the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions.

While in the **United States**, on 11 and 12 November, the ICRC President addressed the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues at its plenary session in New York, under the chairmanship of Prince Sadrudin Aga Khan and Prince Hassan of Jordan. His address was entitled 'The ICRC and International Humanitarian Issues'. The ICRC Director of Operational Activities spoke of the two aspects of ICRC humanitarian work, namely protection and assistance (the two speeches were published in the *International Review of the Red Cross* of January-February 1984).

Missions by Members of the Committee

Mr. Maurice Aubert went to **Bulgaria** to attend the Fifth Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the Balkan countries, which was held in Sofia, from 28 March to 1 April. He had talks with Mr. Van den Broek, Minister for Foreign Affairs, while in the **Netherlands**, on 16 June.

Mr. Thomas Fleiner gave several lectures on international humanitarian law to university circles in **Great Britain**, at the invitation of the British Red Cross.

While in the **United States**, Mr. Rudolf Jäckli attended a seminar on international humanitarian law, organized by the American Society of International Law, the United States Red Cross, the University of Hawai and the ICRC, and held from 16 to 18 February in Honolulu. He attended also a symposium on the protection of the individual in international humanitarian law and human rights, organized by the American Red Cross and held on 22 February, in San Francisco.

Mr. Olivier Long met officials of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, on 24 May, in **Great Britain**, to discuss financial matters.

Mr. Marcel Naville went to Lisbon, **Portugal**, on 8 May, to receive the great distinction of honorary member of the Order of Benemerencia, conferred on the ICRC by the President of the Republic.

Lastly, Miss Andrée Weitzel represented the ICRC at the Congress of the Red Cross of **Romania**, on 8 September.

Poland

In 1983, the ICRC's main concern in Poland was the welfare of persons detained on account of the events. However, it was not possible to carry out any protection work. The joint League-ICRC assistance programme for the civilian population continued, in close collaboration with the Polish Red Cross, but on a smaller scale than in 1982.

The ICRC's activities in Poland (including the joint assistance programme) made it necessary to launch an appeal for 5,086,000 Swiss francs, for the period 1 July to 31 December 1983 (the first half of 1983 being covered by the appeal launched in December 1982 for 18.3 million Swiss francs).

The ICRC delegation in Warsaw comprised twelve persons at the beginning of the year, but only four as from August. Several National Societies put personnel at the disposal of the joint assistance programme, who became integrated into the Warsaw delegation. In addition, the ICRC-League office, set up in Geneva to co-ordinate relief operations in Poland, was kept up in 1983.

The ICRC maintained the dialogue on its activities with the authorities in Poland. Mr. Henryk Jaroszek, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, was received at ICRC headquarters by President Hay, on 14 April. Not only was it possible to take stock of ICRC activities in Poland, during this meeting, but also to discuss the question of protection of the detainees. Likewise, two missions were carried out from Geneva, with the particular aim of discussing protection work with the Polish authorities. The Head of the Operations Department and the ICRC regional delegate for Eastern Europe went to Warsaw in June and December. Two interviews took place with Mr. Mieczyslaw F. Rakowski, Vice President of the Council of Ministers. The ICRC representatives also met Mr. Domeradzki, Minister of Justice and Mr. Szelachowski, Minister of Health.

These two missions, and another in February, also made it possible to take stock of the work of the International Red Cross in Poland, with leaders of the Polish Red Cross. Moreover, the ICRC kept in constant touch with them, both in Warsaw and Geneva, where the President of the National Society, Mr. R. Brzozowski, and his principal colleagues were received several times.

Protection

The ICRC had offered its services to the Polish authorities on 18 May 1982, in order to be able to visit persons arrested under martial law, but it did not receive authorization to carry out its protection work.

In 1983, therefore, it continued its approaches, both from Geneva and through its Warsaw delegation, in order to gain access to these persons, and those arrested more recently for politically motivated offences. Although many of those detained after the events of December 1981 had been released

when an amnesty was declared in July after the repeal of martial law, the ICRC did not relax its efforts. It asked to visit those who had only had their sentences reduced and who remained, therefore, in detention, as well as those arrested during the year. These steps had not yielded any result by the end of 1983.

Assistance

On the basis of the agreement signed on 23 December 1981, defining the ways and means of action by the International Red Cross in Poland, the ICRC and the League, in collaboration with the Polish Red Cross, continued their joint assistance programme on behalf of the most vulnerable categories of the civilian population.

During the winter months, food was supplied for the aged, handicapped, sick and young babies. Clothing and shoes were also distributed.

As in the previous summer, a food aid programme was organized for the Polish Red Cross holiday camps for poor children. Seven thousand children in 25 camps benefited from it.

In addition, diet food was distributed to 16,000 children suffering from digestive disorders, tuberculosis or diabetes. This programme, which was begun in November 1982, was kept up throughout the year.

Medical assistance consisted in:

- regularly supplying 411 hospitals with medicaments and medical equipment. This programme, which constituted the largest part of the medical assistance, was carried out by the ICRC and financed by the European Economic Community. The National Societies of the Federal Republic of Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands made up the stocks from specifications provided by the ICRC. In April, an ICRC medical delegate went to Warsaw to reassess this programme;
- making available to the three SOS pharmacies of the Polish Red Cross essential medicaments unobtainable in Poland; and
- sending medicaments, also unavailable on the local market, for the treatment of special cases.

Relief was distributed mainly by the Polish Red Cross, with the help of ICRC delegates and specialists placed at the disposal of the joint programme by the Red Cross Societies of the Federal Republic of Germany, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

The total value of relief (medical, food and other) distributed in Poland, in 1983, came to 18.9 million Swiss francs.

The medical assistance alone cost more than 11 million Swiss francs.

Tracing Agency

Through its Central Tracing Agency in Geneva, the ICRC was asked to reunite 719 persons with their families in other countries. As previously, it gave priority to children left alone in Poland. In 1983, 50 persons were able to join their families abroad.

At the request of their families, the ICRC also endeavoured to trace 335 Polish nationals who had left their country.

Dissemination and information

In order to make the Red Cross, its guiding principles and its activities better known, lectures were organized, illustrated by film, and at which documentation was distributed. These lectures were mainly for Polish Red Cross personnel, participants at the Polish Red Cross training courses, medical circles, schoolchildren and students, but also for lawyers, seminarists, workmen and members of the armed and police forces.

During the first half of 1983, a delegate, who was specially in charge of this work, gave 88 lectures in about forty places. Subsequently, it was the head of the Warsaw delegation who took on this task.

Northern Ireland

As in July 1981 (see *Annual Report 1981*), the ICRC carried out another series of visits to detention centres in Northern Ireland, from 25 to 29 April. Four ICRC delegates, including a medical delegate, visited the prisons of the Maze, Crumlin (Belfast), Armagh and Magilligan, which held a total of 2,223 detainees.

Turkey

In July 1983, the ICRC offered its services to the Turkish authorities. Exercising its right of initiative, it informed them that it wished to gain access to those detained on account of the events, but the Turkish authorities rejected its offer.

**ASSISTANCE PROVIDED OR FORWARDED
BY THE ICRC IN 1983 ***

EUROPE

Country	Beneficiaries	Relief		Medical Assistance	Total Sw. fr.
		Tonnage	Value in Sw. fr.	Value in Sw. fr.	
Poland*	Sick persons, civilian population through National Society	1,051	7,400,820	11,562,000	18,962,820
TOTAL		1,051	7,400,820	11,562,000	18,962,820

*Joint League-ICRC operation.

THE INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE IN AROlsen

The work of the International Tracing Service (ITS) based in Arolsen (Federal Republic of Germany), which has been run by the ICRC since 1955, consists in assembling, classifying, storing and making use of documentary material relating to and on behalf of civilian victims of the National Socialist regime. Its main task is to issue certificates of relevant data at the request of those concerned, their immediate relatives or assigns.

Each year, the ITS publishes its own reports on its activities, from which we have taken the following information:

— In 1983, the ITS received 33,788 requests from 39 countries. These requests concerned 24,000 persons wishing to obtain confirmation of their internment in labour or concentration camps, of their deportation as foreign labourers to the territory of the Third Reich during the war, or of time spent in refugee camps immediately after the war. Nearly 14,000 of the cases registered were first requests, while 10,000 others were persons concerning whom inquiries had already previously been initiated.

— During the year ITS staff carried out 214,532 data checks in 20 different card indexes, relating to 27,500 persons and bearing on more than 41,000 names (including maiden names and assumed names); in all, more than 51,100 replies were sent out.

— In 1983, the number of tracing requests rose to 2,283. A total of 403 cases was solved.

Since its foundation, in 1943, the ITS has given more than six million replies to some 1.7 million former victims of the National Socialist regime.