

Information and public relations

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V. RELATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Contacts have been maintained with the United Nations, specialized agencies and other bodies especially concerned with humanitarian tasks, such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF and UNDRO. In New York the ICRC Delegate to International Organizations and members of his staff had frequent meetings with representatives of the UN Secretariat on operational programmes of the ICRC, especially in Lebanon.

On a visit to the United States in May, Mr. Roger Gallopin, President of the Executive Board, discussed the principal current activities of the ICRC with representatives of the United Nations Secretary-General. Later, during the extremely difficult days which preceded evacuation of the Tel al-Zaatar redoubt, in Lebanon, Mr. Waldheim had talks in Geneva about the situation with the President of the Executive Board and ICRC staff members responsible for carrying out this action.

As usual, the 31st session of the General Assembly was followed closely. The report on the Lugano Conference on the Use of certain Conventional Weapons (see page 37) was sub-

mitted to the First Committee for consideration in connection with its discussion of incendiary weapons and other conventional weapons which might be subject to banning or limitation for humanitarian reasons. Various talks took place on that occasion and also in the course of study by the Sixth Committee of the Secretary-General's Report on the third session of the Diplomatic Conference on Humanitarian Law.

The ICRC observers at the General Assembly were also concerned with the situations in the Middle East and Cyprus, human rights in Chile and in the territories occupied by Israel, problems in the Western Sahara and southern Africa, racial discrimination, torture, and protection of detainees and measures related to terrorism and the taking of hostages.

Other meetings followed by the ICRC included:

- the 32nd session of the Human Rights Commission,
- the 60th and 61st sessions of ECOSOC,
- the 29th session of the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities,
- the 29th World Health Assembly.

ICRC representatives also took part in numerous meetings of non-governmental organizations in Geneva, New York and Strasbourg (Council of Europe). These meetings dealt in particular with problems of disarmament, human rights and the Diplomatic Conference on Humanitarian Law.

VI. INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

THE ICRC AND DISCRETION

The ICRC's endeavours are directed primarily to the welfare of victims. This must be borne in mind if its traditional policy of discretion is to be understood.

For example, where visits to places of detention are concerned, the ICRC is convinced that, in the vast majority of cases, it is only by persuasion without publicity that best results may be obtained. Furthermore, if the ICRC were to publish its delegates' findings, it would run the risk of being denied access to prisons, not only in the countries directly concerned but in others too. The ICRC, therefore, generally restricts itself to publishing the place and date of its visits, and possibly the number of detainees visited and the conditions under which the visit was made (interviews with or without witnesses). Its reports are sent only to the detaining authorities and, in the case of prisoners of war, to the prisoners' own government.

These measures constitute a guarantee of the effectiveness of ICRC visits, allowing it to interview and, especially, to obtain direct access to the persons in need of protection when, very often, no other organization is able to do so.

Operational Information

The ICRC's action of protection and assistance in Lebanon in 1976 had a considerable effect on world public opinion. The international press, both through its correspondents in Geneva and special correspondents sent to Lebanon, devoted a great deal of attention to ICRC activities. In particular, it followed from hour to hour the efforts made by the ICRC delegates to evacuate the wounded and civilians from the Palestinian redoubt of Tel al-Zaatar. The Press and Information Division sent delegates and photographers to Lebanon several times both to gather information for donors and to provide information to representatives of the international press. The Nordic Red Cross Societies in charge of the ICRC field hospital in West Beirut sent several reporters to cover the activities of doctors and nurses from their countries. These missions were carried out in close co-operation with the ICRC Press and Information Division.

As a result of these missions it was possible for the ICRC to provide a great quantity of information, articles and photographs to National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and to various donors.

Radio and Television

The ICRC radio service (RCBS) continued to produce radio programmes in its studio. These were broadcast to five continents by the Swiss Short Wave Service in five languages (English, French, Spanish, German and Arabic). RCBS also produced news and features programmes for various national radio systems on such subjects as the Lugano Conference on Weapons, medical assistance by the Red Cross in Lebanon, the ICRC and Africa, etc. Accredited radio correspondents in Geneva conducted, in the ICRC studio, about a hundred interviews on Red Cross activities for their respective national radio systems.

To promote its programmes throughout the world the RCBS maintained close working relationships with regional radio federations, such as the Arab States Broadcasting Union in Cairo, the Asian Broadcasting Union in Tokyo, the Union of National Radio and Television Organizations of Africa in Dakar and the International Radio and Television Organization in Prague. Co-operation with the Swiss Short-Wave Service was especially productive; the latter service closely followed ICRC events throughout the year and broadcast numerous interviews by direct line from Berne.

The ICRC and the Television News Division of the European Broadcasting Union reached, in January 1976, an agreement defining procedures for collaboration between the two institutions in the field of news in times of crisis. The practical value of this agreement was first shown on the occasion of the conflicts in Angola and Lebanon.

Audio-Visual Service

The two photographers of the Press and Information Division during 1976 supplied about 11,000 photos in reply to 250 requests from ICRC services (files, reports, lectures, publications), National Red Cross Societies (publications, lectures), journalists, publishers and private individuals (students, researchers). A large number of these photos illustrated activities in the field covered by five news reporting assignments (2 in Viet Nam on the occasion of repatriation operations for foreigners and 3 in Lebanon).

The Audio-Visual Service carried out numerous searches of film archives at the request of various television companies and in most cases was able to supply the material requested. It also circulated throughout the world about forty 16 mm films which were lent to various National Societies and other institutions. In Geneva it organized 225 film projections for some 5,000 visitors.

In connection with its action in Lebanon, the ICRC engaged a British television producer to make a 16 mm film showing the various aspects of its work in that country.

Public relations in Switzerland

For a long time, the ICRC has been confronted with a rather special public relations problem: it appears to be less known in the country of its origin, Switzerland, than it is in the outside world. In 1976 therefore the Press and Information Division undertook a major effort at information and public relations among the Swiss people, especially in the German-speaking part of the country, to attempt to correct this situation. The public relations campaign took various forms: development of personal relations with all of the principal media in the country, intensive dissemination of information about the institution and its activities, the regular despatch to every Swiss newspaper and periodical of basic material about the ICRC. In September, a special public relations programme was launched in support of the campaign to collect funds from the Swiss public. This had positive results in two respects: first, about thirty publications devoted substantial space to the ICRC while the radio and television broadcast numerous reports and interviews about the institution; second, the amount of money collected from the public was 15% higher than in 1975.

Collaboration with National Societies

The ICRC Director of Information took part in the 3rd Inter-American meeting of Red Cross Information and Public Relations Directors of the National Societies of Latin America in Mexico City from 5-10 September. This regional meeting, convened on the initiative of the League, provided the opportunity for an extremely useful exchange of views and experience confirming clearly the extent to which the Red Cross world is united in its efforts to present its image to the world.

Publications

In February 1976, the first number of a new offset publication, the "ICRC Bulletin" was published. This succeeded the "ICRC in Action", which ceased publication at the end of 1975 after seven years of existence. Produced monthly in English, French, Spanish and German, the "ICRC Bulletin" is primarily designed for the press and for National Societies. As a link between the public and the ICRC this new monthly publication is written in a journalistic style and has no official character. Its purpose is to give its readers a variety of information about the many activities of the institution, to promote broader understanding of its principles and methods, and to contribute to clarification of a number of complex questions.

The Press and Information Division also produced four original pamphlets in 1976. The first of these dealt with ICRC operations in Angola and was produced in English, French and Portuguese. The second covered the action in Lebanon and was issued in four languages, English, French, Spanish and German. The third provided general information about the ICRC and, without referring to current events, explained in a few pages, with illustrations, the origins, principles, purposes and structure of the institution. This pamphlet, intended primarily for members of National Societies and for visitors to the ICRC, was produced in English, French, Spanish, German and Arabic. The fourth publication, "Origin and Development of International Humanitarian Law", was prepared jointly with the Press Service of the Diplomatic Conference on the occasion of the third session of the Conference. The original French version was translated into English, Spanish, Arabic, Russian and German.

International Review of the Red Cross

International Review of the Red Cross, the official organ of the ICRC, is the only regular publication in the world dealing fundamentally with the Red Cross movement. This monthly publication seeks to illustrate and clarify the past and the present of the humanitarian movement throughout the world.

As the successor to the *Bulletin international des Sociétés de Croix-Rouge*, established in 1869, *la Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge* started publication in French in 1919 and in English in 1961. A third edition, in Spanish, started in 1976 replacing the extracts and summaries in that language which had previously been published. A German language pamphlet reproduces the most important articles in the *International Review*.

Among the most important articles published in 1976 we may refer to three on "the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law applicable in Armed Conflicts" (May, July, September); two studies, one on "Humanitarian Law and Traditional African Law" and the other on "African Traditions and Humanitarian Law", written by Mrs. Yolande Diallo (February, August); legal contributions such as "Reservations to the Geneva Conventions of 1949" by Mr. Claude Pilloud (March, April), and "Guerrilla Warfare and Humanitarian Law" by Mr. Michel Veuthey (June);

theoretical articles on the Red Cross such as "Re-appraisal of the role of the Red Cross" (October), "The Red Cross and the Human Environment" (June), and "The International Red Cross" by Prof. Hans Haug (December).

Under the heading "International Committee of the Red Cross", articles were published on "The International Committee of the Red Cross and Torture" (December); several on the Conference of government experts on weapons (February, March, April), and on the use of certain weapons (May); information on international humanitarian law and methods for its dissemination (November), and on the ICRC travel document (March). Regular reports were published about the activities of ICRC delegations in all parts of the world. The *Review* also dealt with the Henry Dunant Institute (January, March, April, August, October), meetings of various institutions of the International Red Cross, the International Red Cross Museum, United Nations resolutions referring to the Red Cross, international covenants concerning human rights, health and human rights, and the teaching of the law of war.

At the end of 1976 Mr. J.-G. Lossier, who had written for the *International Review* since 1946 and had been its editor in chief since 1955, retired and was replaced by Mr. Michel Testuz.

VII. PERSONNEL

The ICRC staff at headquarters remained fairly stable in 1976, varying from 236 to 248, with a monthly average of 240 persons. Of those, about eighty performed work directly related to operations abroad. The duties of the remainder were in connection with the Central Tracing Agency, the Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law, the dissemination of knowledge of the Geneva Conventions, National Red Cross Society relations, information and press, fund-raising operations, administration, etc.

Personnel on mission

The number of ICRC staff on mission abroad did not vary appreciably in 1976. With the termination of the Angola action staff was reduced for a very short period in June, but very soon additional personnel was again engaged when the Lebanon conflict flared up.

In the field, 349 posts were filled at some time or other in 1976:

- 13 heads of delegation
- 15 regional delegates
- 88 delegates
- 50 doctors, including 30 supplied by National Societies
- 65 male and female nurses, including 59 (compared with 21 in 1975) from National Societies