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African Traditions and Humanitarian Law

by Yolande Diallo

Mrs Diallo went recently to Africa at the request of the ICRC for which she drew up a report, which it gives us pleasure to publish, in view of the interest of the Red Cross in demonstrating that the profound idea which inspired it, the idea of respect for human dignity and of unselfish help for those who suffer, is an inseparable part of man's heritage.¹

Introduction

The purpose of our mission was to show similarities and differences which might exist between African traditional humanism and the basic principles of humanitarian law as expressed in the Geneva Conventions.

This research consisted mainly in the study of rules governing:

- personal behaviour during armed conflicts;
- the treatment of defeated enemies;
- the means of settling conflicts.

The mission took place in February and March 1976. It involved contacting various African universities and, more particularly, seeking out in the field the custodians of tradition in order to interview them.

We accordingly went to Senegal, Ivory Coast, Togo, Upper Volta, Niger and Ghana; these are the only countries, therefore, to which this report relates.

The results of the mission are presented in four chapters:

- I. Main causes of conflict in traditional Africa;
- II. How conflict was waged;
- III. Cessation of conflict;
- IV. An attempt to compare with the principles of the Geneva Conventions.

¹ An article on this subject by the same author appeared in our February issue.

Most of the people interviewed related the history of wars in pre-colonial West Africa. However, in this report, we have preferred to ignore the historical aspect in favour of the humanitarian aspect, although the two are fairly closely linked.

Chapter I — Main causes of conflict in traditional Africa (West Africa)

In traditional Africa most conflicts arise from disputes about property, power and honour.

SENEGAL

The main causes of conflict in the region of Senegal resided in:

- the land (belonging to the community, problems related to usufruct);
- livestock (due to the traditional discord between nomads and settled peoples);
- slave trade (following exchange of slaves for goods);
- power: the kingdoms of Senegal have known many wars caused by opposition to power within kingdoms (e.g., in 1590, the Kayor refused to pay tribute to his sovereign);
- again, Lat Dior clashed with his father in claiming his rights over the Kayor in addition to Saloum, for although his name was Diop by his father, his mother's name was Fall, which gave him grounds to pretend to the throne of the Kayor.

MALI

In the Mali of today, covering only part of what was once the Mali Empire comprising in the XIIIth century the Mandingos territory between upper Senegal and upper Niger, the main causes of conflicts were: sex; honour or order of precedence; possession or fortune.

It is interesting at this point to mention a remark by one of the people interviewed: African tradition in Mandingos country does not recognize the idea of "holy war".

According to Hampaté Bâ, nothing justifies resort to violence. In this respect, he underlined the fact that throughout Africa, from north to south, greetings are always words of peace. A Toucouleur proverb says:

« war does not kill grass », which means that it does kill man: anybody intending to declare war, therefore, must think about it twice.

TOGO

In Togo, where there were never well structured kingdoms as had been the case in neighbouring Benin, the main disputes between various races took place when the slave trade appeared on the west coast of Africa. Traffic in slaves was to South America and many foreign slavers did business from Anecho (47 km. from Lomé).

In 1860 such a conflict broke out in the old city of Agnadjiko (50 km. east of Lomé) between the Ewés and the people of Anecho, descendants of the Mina royal family (north of Ghana) who came to Anecho in the XVIIIth century and founded a chieftainery.

The cause of the conflict was a dispute concerning the sale of slaves on credit from one locality to the other.

UPPER VOLTA

In Upper Volta, the Mossis were in former times warlike and waged war for nothing. Foreigners in the country that they now occupy, the Mossis had to conquer it by force. The Tarik el Sudan relates that the Mossis of Yatenga, in the XIVth century, seized Tombouctou, and even pushed their invasion as far as Oualata (the Algeria of today). The final wars preceding the French conquest of Koupela were civil wars either between Tenkodogo and Koupela or between Mossis and Gourmantché or Gourounsi (the true autochtones of Upper Volta).

Civil wars between Mossis used generally to follow the death of a "Naba" whose succession was claimed by several pretenders. But the usual theatre of war was the Bousanga areas. If any Bousanga women enslaved by the Naba of Koupela escaped he claimed her back. If his demand was not met he waged war.

When the Mossis did not have enough millet, when their herds were reduced by an epidemic, or when they merely wanted to take slaves, the Naba called his ministers together and compelled them to attack neighbouring races. This form of conflict was more in the nature of isolated raiding than that of an expedition which would generally arise from a dispute about livestock, territory, or the death of a member of a royal family owing to action by someone of another race.

NIGER

As mentioned earlier, the Upper Niger used to be part of the Mali Empire. Its traditions are inseparable from those of the Peulh, who, coming from the west, spread throughout the whole region of Macina and, in the course of the centuries, clashed with the Sonhraï, Bambara and Tuareg empires.

The Djerma people, in the south of Niger, coming from Mandingos (now Guinea) mixed with the Sonhraïs to constitute the Djermas-Sonhraïs and to oppose especially the Peulhs. Here, due to the traditional relations with North Africa across the Sahara, war often took the form of raids, the most frequent of them by the Tuaregs who, to obtain food, regularly looted from the Sonhraïs. Oral tradition in this region contains many narratives of such aggression.

Among the Peulhs and the Djermas we again find that pasture and watering points were the traditional causes of conflict between nomads and settled tribes. As we were told by a group of elders in Kunari (140 km. from Niamey): "we used to make war for two reasons—to prevent others waging it on us, and so that our name would be spoken and heard; for prestige".

GHANA

In Ghana our research was mainly among the Ashantis in the Kumasi region. Their warlike traditions are very well known in West Africa. In the Gold Coast they had a powerful and feared empire which reached the height of its power towards the end of the XVIIIth and the beginning of the XIXth centuries. In this part of Africa war was essentially for conquest and it was in that way that the Ashantis carved out for themselves a kingdom far more extensive than the Ghana of today.

To maintain the kingdom intact, the Ashantis waged war against the Gans and the Fantis. In the XIXth century, the Fantis allied themselves with the English to fight against the Ashanti Kingdom whose defeat marked the beginning of the English occupation of the Gold Coast.

It should be pointed out here that, as everywhere in Africa, war is the final resort. An Ashanti aphorism was often quoted by persons interviewed: "one should never 'take an oath' while there is hope for negotiation" (to "take an oath" is the prelude to war).

Chapter II — How conflict was waged

(1) ATTEMPTED CONCILIATION AND DECLARATION OF WAR

(a) *Attempted conciliation*

Before resorting to force the parties negotiated for a long time to seek a peaceful solution. In *Senegal*, a group of elders from the two villages would meet to try to settle the problem. Discussions might last for days. In *Mali*, recourse would be had to persons related by marriage to the other group because, in Africa, "One does not war against one's in-laws".

If these attempts failed, "the Sanankous" were sent. The Sanankouya is a sacred bond between two individuals, two families or two peoples in such a manner that they never war against each other. In *Togo*, the notabilities of the two groups would meet to try to avoid war by reasoning with the chiefs in both camps. In *Upper Volta*, where most Mossi wars were family feuds, the imperial guards of the Moro Naba intervened to reason with the adversaries.

(b) *Declaration of war*

There is an important rule common to all Africa, except, it must be stated, to the Djermas of Niger whose wars were most frequently plundering forays: attacks should not be without warning. It should be underlined here that the raid type of war is not confined to Black Africa. It was imported from the North. In Black Africa, to attack without warning is considered an act of cowardice.

In all the countries visited, emissaries used to be sent to warn the adversary and to say:

On such and such a month I shall declare war. Get ready. Wherever we meet, there will be war even if there are only two of us.

Or they might say:

Starting from the onset of next winter, or from the next harvest, there will be no peace between our people and yours.

Or Tomorrow, we shall come to eat your village.

The responsibility for conveying the declaration of war was assigned to different persons depending on the races involved.

In *Senegal*, the "griot" (witchdoctor-cum-minstrel) went on a bedizened horse to the adversary's camp; he announced himself, stating

his titles and his genealogy. In *Mali*, it was the notables; they might or might not be “griots”, i.e. of high caste. In *Upper Volta*, the person chosen was either a “griot” or a blacksmith. In *Niger*, the function was assigned to “griots” or “maba”. The griot was chosen for his eloquence.

These various envoys were *inviolable*, because throughout Africa, the “envoy is never insulted or struck”, as he is not considered to be involved in the dispute but merely the messenger. He is neutral. Moreover, to attack an envoy is to attack his principal. An envoy, whatever differences exist between groups, is on the same footing as a stranger to whom full consideration is due, a concept to which many proverbs testify:

- *Everything which comes goes.*
- *The stranger is like the dew, if he does not leave in the morning, he leaves in the evening.*
- *Your stranger is your griot.*
- *Your stranger is your god: if he does not make rain fall, he will bring you the dew.*

There seems to be no exception. To act otherwise could not only spark off an immediate attack by the opponent; it could bring down the wrath of the gods. For the Ashantis, the envoy came with two objects, and the choice of one or the other signified a choice of either negotiation or war.

(2) COMBATANTS AND PROTECTED PERSONS

(a) *Who were the combatants ?*

In nearly every country of West Africa, only the nobles fought, for to fight, either to defend the kingdom or to make a name for oneself, was the domain of the higher strata of society because fighting was honourable. In Senegal, there was a class of professional warriors, the “Tiedos”, recruited among former slaves. They were always led by “diarafs”, princes of the blood.

The idea was that responsibility for defending the kingdom rested, in the first place, on the shoulders of those who constituted the nobility. This explains the existence in the whole sahelian zone of certain codes of honour dictating the behaviour of individuals in war. In Africa, the strong are clement. “If you are strong, you forgive”, says a Mossi proverb. A Djerma proverb illustrates particularly well the nobleman’s

responsibility to defend his group: "One does not lend royalty, one does not lend one's gun, one does not lend one's right to die for the land".

(b) *The protection of non-belligerents*

History gives few examples of participation of women in war. The Amazons of Dahomey are an exception. On the other hand, women were often responsible for supplying fighters with water or for singing to encourage them.

Generally, they remained in the village and as fighting was always outside the village the combatants, in this way, protected the village and the children and old people, or they removed the children and old people to a safe place so that they would not be harmed during the fighting.

In *Senegal*, in the region of Cape Verde, the children and old people were put aboard canoes and taken out to sea. In *Togo*, it is interesting to note, when men were preparing for war, the women used to leave the village shouting: "Do not fight, we are all brothers" or again "If you kill someone, you kill him for yourself". In *Niger*, women and children who remained in the village were protected by a group of warriors. As we were told: "To attack a village where there are only women and children is not war; it is theft—we were not thieves... »

Among the Ashantis of *Ghana*, it was not only the women, the children and the old people who took no part in fighting; the serfs did not either. The serfs bore markings or facial scars to make them recognizable. They too were protected and inviolable as were the women and children. Similarly, in *Upper Volta*, custom forbade the killing of people taking no part in the fighting, including workers in the fields, that is to say the slaves. Morals and rules of honour prohibited attack against someone considered to be weaker, and hence defenceless. The penalty for violating such rules was public opprobrium; in Upper Volta it could be banishment or even death.

Among other races, such as the Peulhs and the Sonhraï's, any such violation, if known, practically always entailed the suicide of the perpetrator, who preferred death to shame. There were also economic reasons for not killing workers, women and children. After the war, life had to go on, and who would have cultivated the land since the nobles did not work?

(3) THE CONDUCT OF WAR

(a) *The law of war*

In addition to rules protecting non-combatants, there were others, equally strict, which combatants had to observe. This was a sort of law of war which limited the exactions which could be inflicted.

In *Senegal*, there was a genuine ethics of war which was taught to any young nobleman for his future calling as a warrior. He was taught never to kill an enemy on the ground, for, having fallen, the enemy admitted his inferiority; a prince should never fall from his horse for otherwise his enemy would spare him, which would be a profound humiliation. To be killed it was necessary to be mounted. In *Mali*, no one would strike a disarmed enemy. The enemy would be captured. This was so in *Upper Volta* too and, in general, all the countries of the Sahelian zone.

On the other hand, in the forest countries, e.g. *Ghana*, there was not this tradition of mercy. In conflict, the enemy was generally massacred. The country of the Ashanti was the theatre of many massacres of population.

In the Gulf of *Benin* and the *Gold Coast* human sacrifice was made of an enemy not killed in fighting; this was to thank the Ashanti gods for the victory. "The chicken and his intestines", says an Ashanti proverb, "all belong to the hawk."

Another rule of conduct in the Sahelian zone was that it was forbidden to strike an enemy from behind. Fighting had always to be face to face.

(b) *Truces*

Truces were recognized in pre-colonial wars. Even wars which had been waged for generations between two ethnic groups would cease during the harvest and the sowing. Similarly, the winter everywhere in the Sahelian zone was a period of truce. Some races, such as the Mossi of *Upper Volta*, had other periods of truce, such as the "Tinsé", the anniversary of the funeral of the mother of the first emperor and founder of the Mossi empire. On the other hand, the Peulhs never stopped war even for an important celebration. It may be said, in general, that fighting took place only during the dry season.

(c) *Asylum*

There were many places of asylum in West Africa. The nature of these places varied depending on the peoples visited, but their respect and

inviolability during conflict was the same everywhere. No doubt superstitious fears were greater than the fear of an enemy. For instance, in *Senegal*, the sacred baobab, the sacred wood in which the protective fetishes were kept, was used for the construction of the chief's hut, to enter which was equivalent to seeking the shelter of its protection. In *Togo*, asylum could be sought in the hut containing the fetishes, in the places used for initiation, and at the tombs of ancestors. In *Mali*, apart from cemeteries, there were numerous places which, by tradition, were considered to be places of asylum. At Koulikoro for example there is a place named "Nianan", with twin hills called Ninankoulou, or the hills of Nianan. Nianan is the name attributed to the ancestor of all the peoples of the Macina. In the event of conflict, any person in Nianan's domain could not be touched, and even any prisoner who escaped from his master and reached Nianan could become a free man, a "Nianaman". When the French occupied the former Sudan, they set up their camp in the Nianan domain and the alarm never sounded, for, it used to be said: "No one must disturb Nianan". Similarly in the mountain Bandiagara there is the Nando sanctuary. Nando was considered to have come down from heaven. No person entering the sanctuary had need to fear that he might be caught, for no one could go into it without the best of intentions. These places, even today, may still be visited in Mali.

In *Upper Volta*, in every Mossi village there is a Peulh district called « Bagarré ». The chief of the district is the "Bagarré Naba". Any person going to his home is in safety, even if he has committed a crime. The tombs of Nabas (round thatch-covered huts) are places of asylum. In *Niger*, there are other zones which may not be violated, for example the areas for initiation, places held sacred and places where some blood pacts are sealed. In *Ghana*, sacred places are essentially those where certain oaths are taken by reason of the special importance which the Ashanti attach to the taking of an oath in the name of certain ancestors.

These places of asylum were not violated even during religious wars when Islam was introduced south of the Sahara.

Chapter III — Cessation of conflict

The tendency for conflicts to be accompanied by formalities is reflected also in the cessation of hostilities. War in Africa, like everywhere else,

can be stopped in two ways: either by the total defeat of one of the parties, or by negotiation when the two parties are of equal strength.

(1) PEACE NEGOTIATORS

Those who negotiate the peace are those who announced the war: the “griots”, the blacksmiths, the notables or perhaps a warrior in his costume of war *but without weapons*. It may also be some individual who is the issue of a marriage between persons of the two villages or two ethnic groups in conflict. The idea is that the blood linking the two races through that individual must serve peace. There is a Djerma proverb: « War pleases neither the strong nor the weak.”

These emissaries of peace were easily recognized for they always carried some object belonging to the chief who had sent them. It could be a ring among the Djerma, a bonnet, a lance or a shoe among the Mossis. For Peulhs, the “Findé” intervened. A Findé was a means of identifying an emissary by recalling some fact or detail known solely to the two parties. For example, the two chiefs in conflict might have met some other time, when certain events known only to them happened. If one of them wishes to send a message to the other he will say to his emissary: “Go and see so-and-so and tell him that on such-and-such a day, at such-a-time, such-a-thing occurred. If he recognizes that to be true, it is proof that it is I who sent you.”

Among the Mossi, the emissary, generally a member of the imperial guard, presented himself in fighting kit but without weapons. Similarly, among the Sonhrai: “If an individual without weapons left one group to go to the other, the reason was known”. So this emissary came to announce that the other camp wished to negotiate and he would return to convey the reply. His role stopped there, for a distinction was made between the emissary and the negotiator. The emissary belonged to the group, whereas the negotiator was somebody independent of both parties.

In *Senegal*, the negotiator was the “Grand Farbah”, that is to say the chief slave (and hence a member of a third ethnic group). Specially dressed (generally a turban and boots), mounted on a horse with a “grigri” hanging at its chest, he went to the other camp to negotiate. He would stop at the entrance of the village waiting for someone to come to meet him. He had full immunity. He had to be treated with the greatest

respect; he had to be given food and drink and then he would be asked to speak. He always began with the words of peace: "The road to peace is never long", thereby indicating that a solution should be found however long it might take.

In *Mali*, we find the same distinction between emissary and negotiator. Emissaries were always people of caste ("griots", blacksmiths, shoemakers) or slaves of the kingdom, that is to say assimilated ("hut slaves"). On the other hand, a negotiator could be an individual who was the issue of marriage between persons of the two groups in conflict, i.e. a "nephew", or some party who was of neither group. We spoke earlier of "Sanankous", i.e. persons or groups united by a sacred alliance. When one group wished to negotiate it would assign the negotiation to a person chosen in a "sanankou" group belonging to the enemy camp, for one sanankou could not refuse another anything. For instance, to negotiate peace between Peulhs and Bambaras, a Marka would be sent for they were Sanankou of the Peulhs. Between Markas and Bozos a Dogon would be sent for they were Sanankou of the Bozos.

In *Upper Volta*, the distinction between emissary and negotiator did not exist. Those who announced the war negotiated peace, i.e. "griots", blacksmiths or "nephews".

In *Niger*, the Djermas entrusted negotiation to the "Sandis", the first occupants of the country. When conflict broke out between Peulhs and Djermas, relentless enemies until 1890, the date of the French conquest, the Sandis, who were of neither party, went to the victor to recover the wounded and the dead against a ransom and he fixed the conditions for peace.

Togo, and more generally the countries of the Benin Gulf, sent as their negotiators witchdoctors who were feared and respected everywhere because of their powers. No one would have dared to incur their displeasure or to be too intransigent. Consequently, they soon reached agreement. Emissaries, on the other hand, were notables respected for their wisdom and knowledge.

The Ashantis of *Ghana* used as negotiator the "Okyeame", whose function was hereditary. The Okyeame knew all the families and all the traditions and consequently could persuade the victor that because of his birth he should be merciful. "The strong forgive", says an Ashanti proverb.

(2) THE PLIGHT OF THE LOSERS

The negotiators tried to arrange an honourable and fair peace. They were entrusted with arranging the ransom of prisoners and dead and especially of people who could not be taken into captivity.

In *Senegal* for instance, the "griot", the blacksmith and members of the royal family, were either killed or ransomed. The ransom consisted of a number of slaves, beasts or the transfer of land. The wounded and the dead were generally returned; for "After death there is no hate". To wreak vengeance on a dead body would have been frowned upon by everybody.

In *Mali*, there is a sense of honour in tradition which encourages mercy after war. For instance, a legend says of one of the sons of El Hadj Omar, Ahmadou, King of Segou (beginning of 18th century), known for his cruelty, that he was covered by human skin but was not a man. To be pitiless with a party seeking to negotiate was deprecated because, as the saying had it, "If God did not kill, the chief should not kill either."

Upper Volta. For the Mossis, whose main objective was to acquire an empire as populated as possible by forcing neighbouring peoples to submit to them, custom demanded that they show mercy. "If the shepherd is too ready with the knife, his flock will not thrive" says a Mossis proverb illustrating particularly well the remarks made by Mr. Balima (annex No. 9, see transcript of his interview), who said that, more than pity, it was practical sense after war not to exterminate the vanquished. This attitude cannot be found in the Gulf of Benin where slaughter of the population, the burning of villages and total destruction was generally the price paid by the losers. Anyone not slaughtered in the fighting was killed as a sacrifice. It should be mentioned here that slavery was infrequent in this part of Africa whereas it was widespread in the Sahelian societies. Many wars were merely to obtain slaves for working in the field to support the essentially warrior societies.

This study would not be complete without a mention of the slavery practiced throughout the Sahelian zone.

The captives, who constituted from one to two-thirds of the entire population had a social function similar to that of "perpetual minors". Most of the time they worked for their masters, but this did not exclude personal relationships and participation in community, family and social life, a situation apparently without its equal in the slavery of ancient

times in the western world. There was a difference between “hut captives” and the manumitted captives. Hut slaves of a single family for three generations could no longer be sold. Often the master would marry the women and the children born of such unions were free and could even reign if the master had no male issue of a free woman. Manumitted captives lived in villages and worked for themselves, but they paid heavy rent in kind or services to the village chief or to the group and were frequently the victims of requisitions; their social status was inferior and was that of a dependent.

Although the status of slaves was hereditary, many groups were reduced to slavery after defeat in war. In that case, they were frequently sold by the victor in the slave markets which were common in Africa. Sometimes, after new wars or relaxation of the authority of the prevailing master, entire groups migrated to new zones of influence or achieved their freedom by conquest.

The slaves of Peulhs of Macina used to sing a lament against their masters:

*If all shares are yours
if my share is yours
if your share is yours
then where is my share ?*

Chapter IV — Comparison with Geneva Conventions

This study has enabled us to adduce a number of rules which are common in West Africa and we note that these rules, which take the form of proverbs or popular aphorisms, are nothing more than the expression of the same humanitarian principles which inspired the authors of the Geneva Conventions.

It should be borne in mind that West Africa is divisible into two regions: the Sahelian region and the forest region, and the same behaviour is not necessarily found in the two.

- Except for the special case of raids, conflict was always started by an official declaration of war;
- an attack was never launched without warning. Ambush could take place in the course of a conflict. This restricted the means of harming an enemy and is similar to the principle that belligerents have not an unlimited choice in the means of harming an enemy;

- fighting was subject to a genuine code of conduct. For instance, it was forbidden to kill women, children or old people; to strike an enemy from behind; to profane certain places or to kill a disarmed enemy;
- one did not wreak vengeance on the enemy dead who generally were entitled to a decent burial;
- the wounded of both camps were cared for in order that they could be assigned later to work in the fields.

All this is to be found in the Geneva Conventions. Only the wording is different.

It should be pointed out, however, that there is an important difference: depending on their social status or functions in a group, prisoners were reduced to slavery, ransomed or killed. The change to “hut slavery” was only a makeshift evolution, for nothing will ever justify slavery.

As can be seen, many principles expressed in the Geneva Conventions are to be found in the law of war in pre-colonial Africa. It was only after the introduction of slavery and the inroads of colonialism into Africa south of the Sahara that traditional societies began to disintegrate, causing the code of honour to fall into disuse in war. However, the memory of this code of honour is kept alive in the narratives of the storytellers, and the code perhaps could be revived as a means of humanizing present-day conflicts.

Perhaps Africa will remember, now that it is reviving its own cultural values, that this sense of humanity is one of its permanent values and that it must accept the obligation not to let those values be forgotten.

Results and prospects

Transcending the differences observed, there are many common features from which we can deduce humanitarian prospects. In Africa there are many traditions which a brief mission cannot reveal to the full. A more thorough study by groups of research workers in each country would be necessary. In the various countries visited we always found keen interest among those we interviewed; they themselves suggested forming their own research groups on a novel subject such as the law of war. Such research would require considerable knowledge of local languages and customs.

But this mission was not without its use. It has given guidance in the direction to be followed, that is to say, the constitution of teams of research workers to assemble information, and then compile a synopsis of the information, and draw conclusions which might carry on from the initial results achieved by the present mission.

Nevertheless, the whole concept of the work must be considered from a less restricted angle. Due to lack of time, we had to set ourselves limits and narrow the scope of our interviews, a serious impediment when discussing oral traditions. This undoubtedly caused us to overlook interesting information. What we have gathered could therefore be the point of departure for further research, and what was not obtained could be sought if we are to have a complete picture of the law of war in Africa.

What we were unfortunately not able to obtain is what we may call "the reverse side of the coin". The better known aspects of oral tradition consist merely of popular versions (epic events, ancestral adventures) of official history relating to local heroes and powerful groups. Such narratives are related by the "griots", chiefs, and court attendants who may almost be considered as semi-professionals of folklore.

But it must not be forgotten that the past is not only the history of the conquering races, the tribes in power and the privileged classes. It is also the history of the people, of women, of slaves, of peasants. The past is not only a succession of famous events or actions: it is the warp and weft of daily life. That implies that there is not one history but several; a history of official tradition but a history, too, of unfamiliar, underground tradition. Of course, it is not easy to obtain direct access to this other kind of history, to this other past. Ready-made narratives, the most easily revealed, generally prevent an approach to the deeper realities. That is what we must try to record.

Yolande DIALLO

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

ICRC FIELD HOSPITAL IN BEIRUT

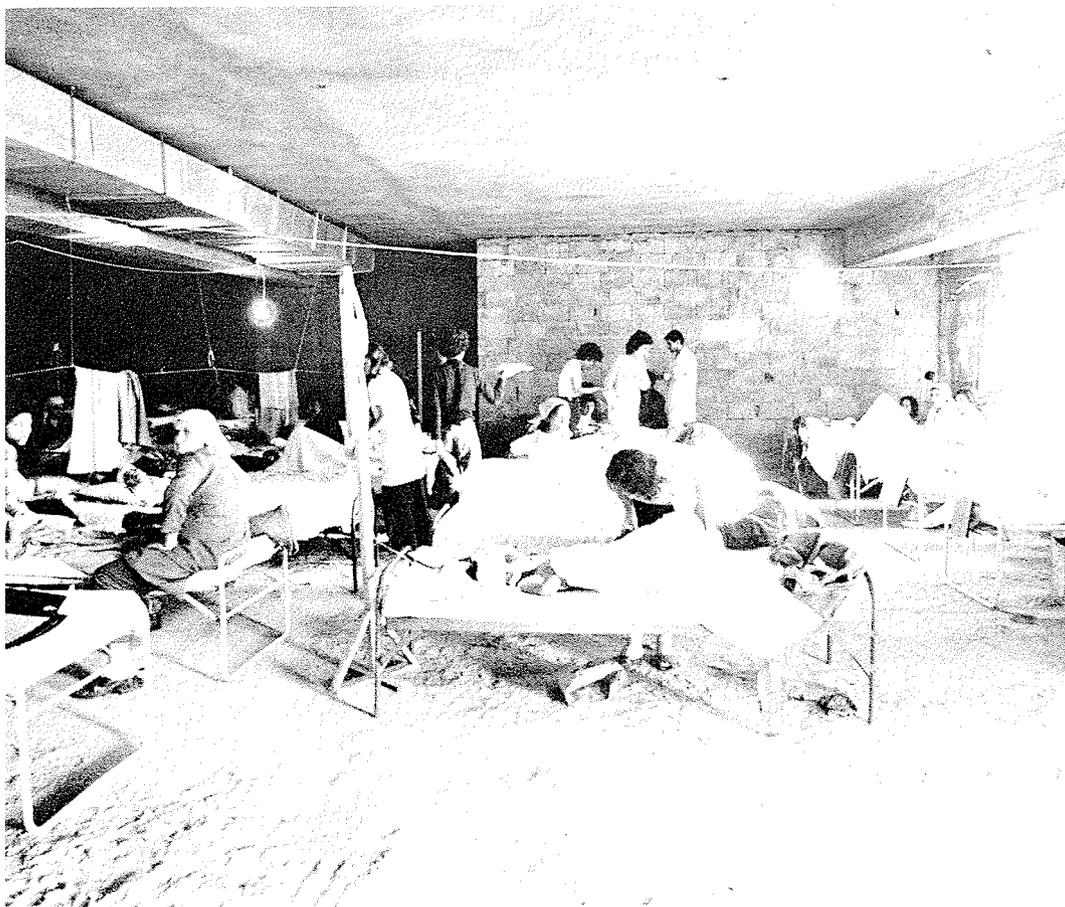
In previous numbers, International Review published several news items about the field hospital set up by the ICRC in Beirut. The article printed below, written in July 1976, gives an idea of the serious tasks carried out, quite often under the most difficult conditions, by the men and women who, under the sign of the red cross, seek to bring relief to the victims.

The building is glaring white under the blazing sun, with a huge red cross in stark outline against the wall. An old minibus of nondescript colour, covered with inscriptions in Arabic, hurtles along, its siren blaring, and comes grinding to a halt. One side of the bus is riddled with holes; obviously machine-gun fire. Four soldiers in torn uniforms, armed to the teeth, alight and take out a stretcher bearing an inert body covered with blood stains. They scuttle across the concrete yard in the oppressive heat and disappear into the door of the building. Within, a man seated at a table confiscates their weapons. These four are compliant but it is not always so. Whenever possible, weapons are not allowed in this ICRC field hospital in Beirut.

The hospital is beside the ICRC delegation in the "progressive" zone of the Lebanese capital and is something of a barometer indicating the intensity of the fighting. In less than a week, the number of casualties brought in, military and civilian in about equal proportion, has increased in geometrical progression. Arrival of wounded has now become routine. Cars come rushing up and unload the maimed and wounded, perhaps a chest or skull split open, bloody stumps where once was an arm or a leg; it has become commonplace...

There is a bustle of efficient activity within. At the emergency service on the ground floor the wounded man is immediately examined and, if

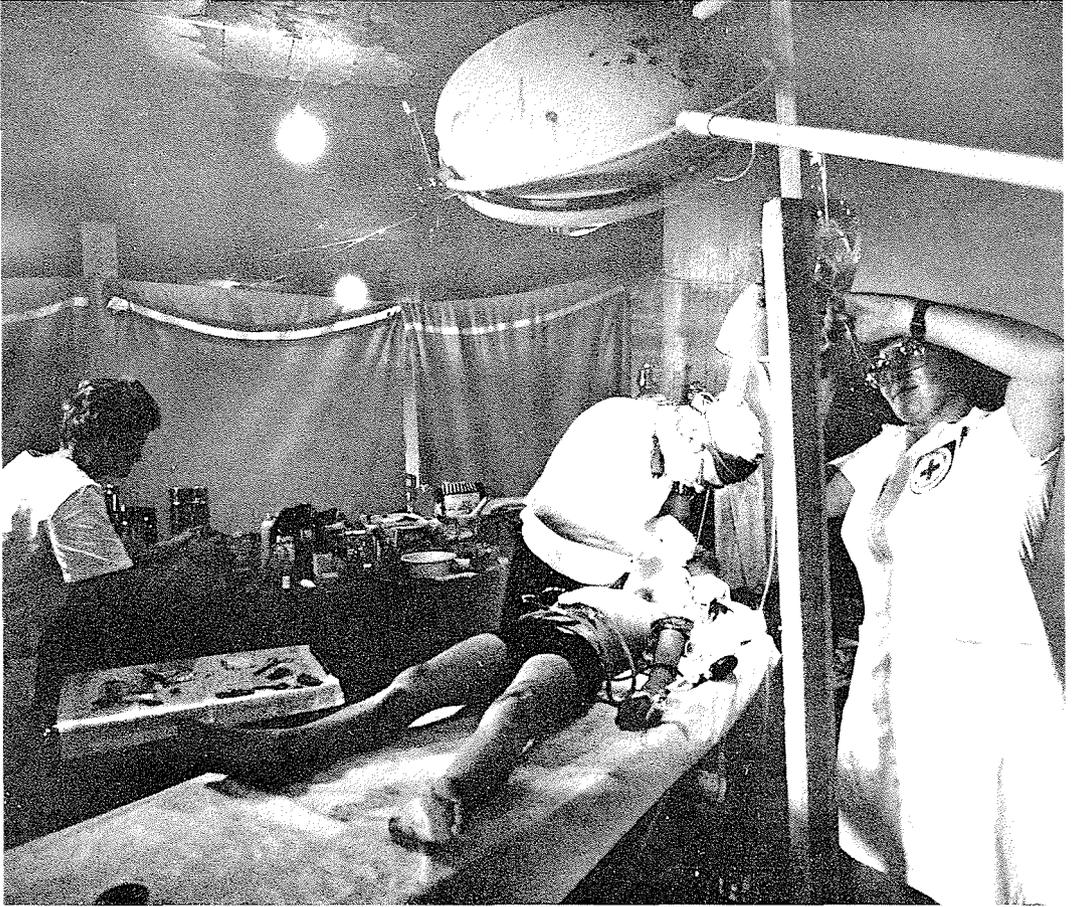
BEIRUT



ICRC field hospital.

Photo Vaterlaus/ICRC

BEIRUT



Surgery in the field hospital.

Photo Vaterlaus ICRC

necessary, taken to the adjoining operating theatre—unless both operating tables are already in use!¹.

There is a strange atmosphere, a mixture of ingenuity, uncertainty and proficiency. A blanket stretched across the room screens the operating tables. Three surgeons work in the theatre, removing shrapnel from lacerated bodies, tending bullet wounds, and so forth. Time is of the essence; so much so that frequently the only part of the body uncovered is where the operation has to be performed. The man with a frightful wound in the chest is still wearing his uniform trousers and belt. An incongruous sight is the radio transmitter installed between two packing cases at one end of the room.

There is a makeshift stairway to the first floor. In fact the building housing the field hospital is unfinished. It was to have been a hotel. Initially the field hospital was under canvas, but at the beginning of June fighting was so heavy between the left wing forces and the Syrian army in the Jnah region—formerly a residential quarter on the sea front—that the tents were abandoned and overnight the hospital, lock, stock, barrel and patients—were removed for safety into this unfinished hotel a few hundred yards away.

The tents are still standing but some are badly torn by shot and shell, eloquent testimony to what the patients and medical staff had to go through. “It was a miracle that we had no one hit”, said Mr. Jean Hoefliger, Head of the delegation, “but there were some very near misses.”

The present hospital capacity is some 60 beds, and the upper floors leave room for expansion.

But any increase in the size of the hospital will need a corresponding increase in the medical staff, which cannot do more than it is already doing. The members of the team are mostly from the Nordic countries, lent to the ICRC by their own National Red Cross Societies; one more example of the co-operation of long standing between the International Committee and these National Societies which are among the best organized in the world.

In charge of the hospital is Dr. Arild Stang, a Norwegian. “This is my first mission for the ICRC”, he said, “and I have never worked during war before, and although 15 hours a day is the norm here, I am bearing up fairly well because, first of all, we all have a real team spirit and because our organization and material makes for maximum efficiency.” Dr. Stang is assisted by a Danish surgeon and a Finnish anesthetist, both,

¹ *Plate.*

like him, seasoned in traumatic surgery, and one Lebanese doctor. A Danish technician takes care of all the scientific equipment. Six female nurses from the Nordic countries work side by side with eleven of their local colleagues.

The ICRC field hospital is now fully integrated into the hospital system of the west zone of the capital. It is included in the recently formed pool of the main hospitals; the American University Hospital of Beirut, the Makhassed and Barbir Hospitals.

“You cannot realize”, said Dr. Stang, “how mistrustful people are here, especially since the war heated up. The lower classes are particularly mistrustful and they constitute the major part of our patients. To begin with they did not trust our emblem, the cross, which they look upon as a Christian emblem. Then, when they heard that our medical attention was given free, they could not believe it was any good; they preferred to pay dearly for attention by a private doctor even if that doctor was incompetent; and then again it was believed—even by doctors in the town—that we were not able to carry out complicated operations under canvas. In fact, the patients had no faith in us. However, at length, we convinced them.”

In fact so convinced is the population that the problem is now reversed; the patients at the “field hospital” do not wish to leave. “We don’t blame them”, said Dr. Stang. “Some of them have lost everything, or their houses are in an extremely dangerous area, or they have been traumatized and they want to hang on in a place of safety where there are people to look after them and feed them.” In fact the hospital plays an important part in social welfare, but that in itself is a problem; patients who are cured but have nowhere to go can hardly be put out on the streets, and yet neither can fresh casualties be refused admission.

So far there has been a precarious degree of balance but this will not be maintained if wounded come to the hospital in greater numbers than they have been doing. In the last week of June, for instance, the doctors carried out 93 operations—22 of them involving major surgery. As one of the doctors said, “When I am on duty, I sleep on the operating table because there is not a single bed empty”.

So far the hospital has been supplied as well as possible, thanks to appeals launched from Geneva to governments and National Societies, but according to Dr. Stang it sometimes happens that the hospital runs short of some essential material such as dressings or the means of doing a blood type. “We are in the best place to know what we need and for that

reason the most useful gift is cash to enable the ICRC to buy exactly what we order.”

The “field hospital” also runs a clinic for general medicine. This is in the hands of a Lebanese doctor, Dr. Hamzi. “I too have more than my hands full”, he said, “with the escalation of the fighting and the communication difficulties. This hospital serves a potential population of 100,000 people between Jnah and Hamra.” This is quite true. While the wounded are rushed in by car every day, there is always a long line of people patiently waiting to see the general practitioner; men, women and especially children who will perhaps tomorrow fall victim to a shell or a sniper; they too have the vacant stare of despair.

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES***Africa***Delegate general's mission*

After taking part in recent visits to places of detention in South Africa and Rhodesia,¹ Mr. F. Schmidt, ICRC delegate general for Africa, visited Tanzania, Benin, Togo and Angola in May and June.

In *Tanzania*, where he was accompanied by Mr. Bédert, regional delegate for East Africa, Mr. Schmidt was received by the President of the National Red Cross, Mr. Sarakikya, and its Vice-President, Mr. Rupia. He also had talks with the Tanzanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, a high official of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Executive Secretary of the Liberation Committee of the OAU and with various representatives in Dar-es-Salaam of liberation movements in southern Africa. These talks dealt with ICRC activities in Africa and humanitarian problems resulting from conflicts in southern Africa.

In his visits to Benin and Togo, the delegate general was accompanied by Mr. D. Dufour and Mr. M. Schroeder, regional delegates for West Africa.

In *Benin*, Mr. Schmidt was received by the Head of State, Lieutenant Colonel Mathieu Kérékou, in the presence of Mme Ahouanmenou, President of the Red Cross of Benin. He also met the Minister of Health and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, with their principal aides. These talks dealt in particular with the organization in Benin of a national seminar for army and police officials and Red Cross leaders, on the diffusion of international humanitarian law and Red Cross principles.

In *Togo*, the delegate general had talks with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of the Interior on ICRC activities in Africa. He visited the headquarters of the Togolese Red Cross Society, in Lomé, where he was welcomed by the President, Mme Adjoa Miredor, and also a National Red Cross first aid centre at Atti-Atovou. Mr. Schmidt took the opportu-

¹ See the two preceding issues of *International Review*.

nity of his visit to express the thanks of the ICRC to the authorities and to the Togolese Red Cross for the facilities granted to its regional delegation for West Africa, whose headquarters are in Lomé.

In *Angola*, the delegate general had discussions with authorities, in particular the Minister of Health and the Director General of the Ministry of Information, on pending problems concerning prisoners. He also discussed with them the procedures for termination of the ICRC's assistance action and studied the question of continuing certain ICRC activities, jointly with the Angolan Red Cross Society now being organized, especially those of the Central Tracing Agency.

Latin America

Colombia

From 7 to 23 June, Mr. E. Leemann and Mr. L. Isler carried out a mission in Colombia. The mission had two objectives: to visit places of detention in Bogota and in two northern provinces and to present to the Colombian authorities Mr. Isler, who is replacing Mr. Leemann as regional delegate for the Andean countries. The ICRC delegates met the leaders of the National Society, in particular its President, Professor Dr. Jorge E. Cavalier, the Vice-Minister of Justice, the Director General and the Technical Director of the Prisons Service—the latter in connection with ICRC activities in places of detention and the programme of assistance to detainees. They also met several representatives of the armed forces and the Defence Ministry, in connection with the diffusion of the Geneva Conventions among the armed forces, and professors at the University of Santo Tomas, to discuss the teaching of international humanitarian law.

During their talks at the Ministry of Justice, the delegates obtained renewed permission to visit the places of detention which are under the authority of the ministry. They visited two such places in Bogota, the "Carcel nacional modelo" and "La Picota", after which they visited prisons in Bucaramanga, San Gil, Socorro, Barrancabermeja and Tunja, with a total of about 8,450 detainees, of whom some 60 were held for reasons or offences of a political nature.

Chile

In June, the ICRC delegation in Santiago visited 22 places of detention with a total of 720 detainees. They distributed to them relief supplies

worth \$5,600. In addition, they provided 22 parcels of medicaments, weighing a total of 460 kg.

The ICRC continued its assistance to the families of detainees, providing them with foodstuffs, clothing, medicaments, blankets and toilet articles valued at \$20,000. Recipients were 1,300 families in the provinces and 483 in Santiago.

Uruguay

With reference to the information published in our June number, the International Committee issued on 16 July the following press release:

“Several Uruguayan news media in June mentioned the visits which two ICRC delegates made in April to several places of detention in Uruguay. They attributed to the ICRC statements which it has never made, such as “the prisons in Uruguay are models”.

The ICRC wishes it to be clearly understood that its delegates were permitted to visit four places of detention and a hospital under military control during their mission in Uruguay. Moreover, contrary to established practice, the delegates were not allowed to interview detainees of their choice without witnesses. This departure from the normal standard was a concession which the ICRC made, with a view to facilitating the resumption of its visits to places of detention in Uruguay, after their interruption in 1974.

In view of the restriction on the number of places visited and the conditions under which the visits were carried out, the ICRC was unable to make an objective and complete assessment of conditions in places of detention in Uruguay; a fact which the ICRC drew to the attention of the authorities.

The ICRC adds that it never issues any comment on the material or psychological conditions observed by its delegates during visits to places of detention.”

Middle East

Lebanon

Intensification of ICRC action

In recent weeks, the fighting in Lebanon became even more extensive and intensive. The ICRC received urgent appeals from the parties to the conflict, calling for aid to the wounded and sick, to civilian populations

directly affected by the events, and to prisoners. To respond to these appeals, the ICRC had to take new measures, reinforcing its organization and setting up an airlift between Larnaca, in Cyprus, and the Beirut airport.

Airlift between Larnaca and Beirut

In our last issue, we reported the chartering by the ICRC on 21 June of a DC-8 and a DC-6 which took off for Larnaca with 42 tons of relief for the victims in Lebanon. This shipment included medicaments, of which 11.7 tons were donated by the Emirate of Qatar, medical equipment and powdered milk. Some of this was sent from Larnaca by sea to Jounieh and the rest by the DC-6, which made four trips between Larnaca and Beirut. The fourth flight carried 8.5 tons of relief material collected by mayors in territories occupied by Israel.

By the end of June, the ICRC had distributed in Lebanon about 313 tons of relief, worth 4.4 million Swiss francs.

After the closing of Beirut airport to civilian traffic, the ICRC obtained special landing rights and resumed its flights between Larnaca and Beirut at the beginning of July. On 6 July, the DC-6 left Switzerland with 10 tons of relief, including 5 tons of medicaments and 5 tons of powdered milk. Between 7 and 12 July, this plane, which will remain at the disposal of the ICRC, made seven trips to Beirut, carrying 74 tons of relief, consisting of medical material and foodstuffs from the ICRC, various governments and National Societies, the UNHCR and other international organizations. On 6 July, it also landed at Tel Aviv where it took on 11 tons of powdered milk donated by the populations of territories occupied by Israel.

During the same period, three shipments of medical material—much of it donated by the Federal Republic of Germany—went by sea from Limassol to Jounieh. On 9 and 12 July, two airplanes chartered by the ICRC in Switzerland carried 53 tons of relief to Cyprus.

As of mid-July, the ICRC had a stock in Cyprus of 340 tons of foodstuffs, provided by the UNHCR, and some 15 tons of medicaments, purchased by the ICRC. In addition, in co-operation with National Societies, the ICRC was preparing to make further shipments to Cyprus and Lebanon.

Medical activities

Dr. Spirgi, sent to Lebanon by the ICRC, made an assessment of medical needs at Beirut from 15 June to 8 July. In addition to his study

of the needs, Dr. Spirgi arranged with medical authorities in each zone of Beirut a “pooling” system among hospitals for medicaments, medical material and beds.

The ICRC field hospital, integrated into the hospital system of western Beirut, continued to work at full capacity. In terms of the frequency of operations, it corresponded to the functioning of a 150-bed surgical service. Statistics for the week of 3 to 9 July listed 678 patients treated, 309 hospital nights and 101 surgical operations.

Following Dr. Spirgi’s return, a meeting was held at the ICRC with representatives of the Nordic National Societies. This was attended by Dr. Stang, of Norway, who had been in charge of the field hospital for the past two months and who was concluding his mission. It was agreed at this meeting that the Nordic Societies would continue to supply the necessary medical personnel for the hospital and, if necessary, would defray the expenses entailed.

Effort to evacuate the wounded at Beirut

At the request of the parties concerned, the ICRC had arranged, for 5 July, an operation involving 83 persons, including 33 Lebanese Red Cross first aid workers. Their mission was to attempt to evacuate the wounded from the Tel al-Zaatar camp in Beirut. The convoy, consisting of 26 vehicles, was unfortunately compelled to return without being able to reach the camp—due to failure to respect the truce which had been arranged, despite the assurance of a cease-fire given by all parties.

Central Tracing Agency

During June, in response to appeals from families, the Beirut delegation undertook 1,570 inquiries. It was able to supply 675 replies, while the other 895 cases remained pending, mostly because of the many breaks in telephone lines.

The Central Tracing Agency in Geneva made 234 inquiries and obtained 57 replies. It also transmitted 112 family messages.

Prisoners

After visits on 14 and 16 June to five prisoners belonging to the Syrian army and to 41 members of the Saïqa, held by the Arab Army of Lebanon, the delegates gained access to 45 Syrian prisoners in the

hands of the Organization for the Liberation of Palestine (OLP). The ICRC was informed that these prisoners were subsequently liberated.

The ICRC continued its interventions with other parties in an effort to visit prisoners in their hands.

Personnel

As of mid-July, the ICRC personnel engaged in the action in Lebanon consisted of the following: Beirut, 19 persons, including eleven medical personnel in the field hospital; Jounieh, 6 persons; Tripoli, 4 persons including a doctor and a nurse; Larnaca, 3 persons.

*IN GENEVA***ICRC visitors**

The ICRC Visitors Service is always quite busy and the following figures give some idea of the volume of its activities. During the first six months of 1976, the Service received nearly 2,100 persons, some singly and some in groups. The visitors included more than 500 members of National Societies from 37 countries: Algeria, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Mauritania, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Somalia, Spain, Surinam, Sweden, Switzerland, USSR, United Kingdom, United States and Uruguay.

Where visits are announced beforehand, a full programme is arranged:

- (a) a film show comprising two feature films, one on the history of the Red Cross in which a number of events and activities going back over a hundred years are portrayed, and the other on the tasks accomplished by an ICRC delegation in a country at war;
- (b) a visit to the Central Tracing Agency or, in the case of very large groups, a viewing of colour slides illustrating the Agency's work;
- (c) a talk, followed by a discussion, on current ICRC activities throughout the world; sometimes, a visit to the radio station at Versoix is also arranged;
- (d) each visitor is presented with a sizeable amount of documentary material.

In this way, Red Cross members and other visitors interested in the ICRC and its work are received at its Geneva headquarters and are introduced, as described above, to its organization and tasks, thus giving them an opportunity to get a more accurate idea of the ICRC and its duties in the world of today.¹

¹ The Visitors Service would be grateful if persons and groups of visitors wishing to obtain fuller documentation on the ICRC would kindly communicate in advance the nature of the information in which they are more particularly interested.

New posters of the Geneva Conventions

The ICRC has just published four new colour posters illustrating the application of the Geneva Conventions. The first shows the Red Crescent delivering relief supplies in the desert; the second shows a tracing service office in a country at war; the third shows people alighting from an ICRC aircraft to join their families, thanks to Red Cross intervention; the fourth illustrates ICRC assistance to prisoners. The captions are: To act throughout the world; To search for the missing; To reunite families; To protect prisoners.

These posters, intended to support efforts by National Societies and governments to disseminate knowledge of the Geneva Conventions, have been printed in Arabic, English, French, German and Spanish. For National Societies which do not use any of these languages a number of posters have been printed without captions so that the National Societies may add them in the language of the country concerned. The full set is available from the ICRC (Documentation and Dissemination Division) at the price of Sw.frs. 20.—. Individual posters may be obtained for Sw.frs. 5.00 each.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1975

Each year the International Committee publishes an account of its work during the previous year. But this year, the *Annual Report for 1975* appears in a completely new form; though there are only 71 pages, the layout is different, and there are more illustrations.

The sections are as follows: Operations—Central Tracing Agency—Department of Principles and Law—Relations with Red Cross institutions and National Societies—Relations with international organizations—Information and public relations—Personnel—Finance. In the short, succinctly written chapters, the Report describes the many activities carried on by the ICRC in the five continents. This will give an idea of the wide scope and great diversity of the work performed, the difficulties encountered, the pressing nature of the decisions to be made and the responsibilities to be undertaken by the International Committee, whose President wrote in the foreword:

“... We have to be constantly on our toes and in the year under review conflicts and political tension have not been lacking. Sometimes the ICRC is accused of shrouding its activities in mystery, but its discretion is in the interest of victims. This Report should satisfy anyone who wishes to have an overall idea of what our activities involve.

Every conflict followed by a flood of refugees makes great demands of our Central Tracing Agency. This department of the ICRC plays an essential role wherever there are refugees, dispersed families, messages to be delivered or missing persons to be found. It has a card index containing 50 million entries which bear witness to more than a century of activity.

We are doing more and more to help political detainees; but as our experience in this sector grows, so do the difficulties. Governments do not always provide us with the facilities that we are entitled to expect if we are to work effectively. Nonetheless, the results obtained encourage us to continue even if we cannot be on hand wherever there are political

prisoners. The living conditions of those that we do see frequently improve once we have handed our reports to the detaining authorities who take note of our comments.

The ICRC methodically tries to draw closer to the National Societies and to understand their problems. Through these Societies, it is able to disseminate the principles of humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions. This is essential, for if these principles are not made known through schools, universities and armies, the Red Cross message will go no further than the limbo of government archives.

The development of humanitarian law is one of our prime concerns. Our high hopes for the third session of the Diplomatic Conference which is to examine the Protocols additional to the 1949 Conventions are justified by the results obtained last year.

In its work, the ICRC has to count on the moral and material support of the international community, governments and the Red Cross Societies. Any new activity raises financial problems and, until they have been solved, until the budget has been covered, the activity hangs in the balance or cannot develop as it should. We hope that current fund-raising will be favourably received so that our activities may continue.”

Several tables at the end of the Report show the financial situation of the ICRC and of the Special Funds which it administers. The Report is published in English, French, German and Spanish and may be obtained from the ICRC, price 12 Swiss francs.

IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

HENRY DUNANT INSTITUTE

The Assembly and the Board of the Henry Dunant Institute held a joint meeting on 5 July 1976, for the first time under the chairmanship of M. Walter Bargatzky, President of the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany. As a representative of the League of Red Cross Societies, Mr. Bargatzky assumes the office of President of the Henry Dunant Institute for a two-year term.

After reviewing the Institute's activities since its previous meeting, the Assembly adopted a broad outline of the Institute's programme of action, pursuant to mandates received from the three member organizations, namely the International Committee, the League and the Swiss Red Cross. The new activities will be carried out in spheres such as the principles governing the movement, the Red Cross emblem, the problem of peace and the promotion of the Red Cross image.

In order to help the Institute successfully carry out such diverse tasks, the Assembly decided to seek the co-operation of a Scientific Council to be presided over by Professor Bernard Gagnebin, former Dean of the Arts Faculty in the University of Geneva, renowned for his work in the field of history.

THE RED CROSS AND SOCIAL WELFARE

In July 1975 the League announced its intention of organizing, in collaboration with the French Red Cross, a meeting of officers of European National Red Cross Societies responsible for Social Welfare. The aim was twofold: to analyse from the social welfare aspect the Final Report on the Re-appraisal of the Role of the Red Cross, entitled *An Agenda for Red Cross*, and to examine the place and role of the Red Cross in present-day social welfare policy. Twenty-one National Societies accepted the invitation and sent thirty-two representatives to the meeting held in March 1976 at Lamorlaye in France.

The participants were divided into three groups. A report was submitted by each group at the closing plenary session.

A 20-page account of the deliberations has now been issued by the League, under the title *Meeting of Officers Responsible for Social Welfare of European National Red Cross Societies*.

We shall not quote the League's report *in extenso* but shall give here a passage in which one of the groups attempted to define the types of Red Cross social welfare needed in the future.

It would seem that the majority of tasks for the Red Cross should fall under the following four points:

1. influencing public opinion and people's attitudes in order to make them more aware of their responsibility towards each other;
2. acting as humanitarian bridge between the social welfare services of the State and the people;
3. functioning in a pioneer role to bring about new services through setting up pilot projects or by influencing the authorities;
4. filling gaps where governments or other agencies are not able to or do not provide services.

The criteria for starting new Red Cross social welfare activities or for keeping up old forms of service should be the following:

1. emergency help in a suddenly arising social welfare situation is asked of the Red Cross either by a representative group of people or by the authorities;
2. the government authorities on any level request the help of the Red Cross; also providing the necessary funds,
3. assistance is needed by marginal groups in society that do not get sufficient help from the government or from any other agency;
4. there are pressing reasons for the sake of the clients to keep up a service that could be performed by the government as well.

HONDURAS

In its issue of August 1976, *International Review* mentioned that the Honduran Red Cross was continuing to distribute milk every day to under-nourished children. The powdered milk for this operation had been made available by the Swiss Government to the ICRC which was pleased to contribute to the National Society's campaign to continue its milk distribution programme in Tegucigalpa and elsewhere.¹

In May this year, during a mission to Central America, Mr. C. Du Plessis, ICRC regional delegate, went to a poor quarter of the capital where he attended a distribution being carried out with great dedication by the women's voluntary service of the Red Cross. The ICRC has just send a further consignment of milk powder to the National Society so that it may continue this good work.

¹ *Plate.*



Mexico: An ICRC delegate visits a workshop in the women's prison.

Tegucigalpa: The Honduran Red Cross continues its milk campaign for poor children.





San Remo : Some of the participants attending a Course on the law of war.

Photo Giene' San Remo

Lisbon : At the Portuguese Red Cross Tracing Service.



THE TEACHING OF THE LAW OF WAR

*The teaching of the law of war is an important task, one of great interest to the Red Cross. We are therefore publishing an article on the first international course which recently took place. It was directed by Mr. F. de Mulinen, Lieutenant-Colonel EMG (Switzerland). In the introduction to the article, reproduced hereafter, Mr. de Mulinen describes the need for teaching the law of war.*¹

Army men are apt to shrug their shoulders at the very mention of "the law of war". There is no belief in the law of war, which at best is regarded as a fine but hardly practical theory. The method of teaching in the armed forces is largely to blame for this sorry state of affairs.

There are numerous military regulations and handbooks, often designed for specific levels. There are illustrated booklets for the lower ranks. But it is not enough merely to distribute such documents: they should be used for teaching purposes.

The actual teaching of the law of war is only too often marginal, the exception. One single, isolated lesson or theory, divorced from practical teaching in a school or training course over a period of several weeks or months, can produce no enduring results. Admittedly, it may have a positive effect at the time if the lesson is given in a fairly lively manner. Yet teaching must go still further. It must not be confined to those who hear the lesson. It must have widespread and lasting effects.

The law of war is most often violated in a time of crisis. The teaching of the law of war should therefore apply to critical rather than normal situations. A man who in combat is left entirely or almost alone, who sees his comrades-in-arms, his close friends struck down, who witnesses the sufferings of the wounded and the dying; a man who has fallen into an ambush and who suspects the civilian population or at least some of them of supporting the enemy, may be inclined to act in a way he would not dream of acting at any other time. He may have a desire for revenge,

¹ See *Revue militaire suisse*, Lausanne, 1976, No. 3.

MISCELLANEOUS

and more than one army has gone through that bitter experience in the not so distant past.

It is to meet such contingencies that everyone must be acquainted with the elementary principles of the law of war. This is particularly important as the enemy may appear anywhere now that parachuting and subversion provide the contending forces with opportunities as well in the allegedly secure rear as near the front.

A knowledge of the elementary principles of the law of war does not imply familiarity with all 429 articles—let alone the annexes—of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, or with the equally numerous articles of the Hague Conventions, which have annexes of their own. Most of the provisions of the Conventions refer to rear units, to civilians. They relate to care for the wounded in hospital, the repatriation of those seriously injured, the status of medical personnel, the regulations in prisoner-of-war or civilian detention camps, the status of occupied territories, protecting powers, relief for the needy war-stricken population, and so forth. There are also a number of provisions concerning preparatory work in peace time, in order to be prepared in case of war: for example, dissemination and teaching of the law of war, administrative measures regarding medical personnel or cultural property, the use of distinctive signs, and the choice of hospital sites far away from any military objective.

This briefly sums up the elementary principles which every soldier should know.

Apart from a reminder about the basic principle that only opponents and no civilians may be attacked, the purpose is to determine what is the correct behaviour in face of new unexpected situations calling for swift decision: treatment of enemy combatants captured in action, of wounded, and of enemy military medical personnel and equipment. It is also necessary to coordinate the rules governing such cases, which appear in different conventions, concerning the attitude to protected places (medical installations or cultural property), the use of the distinctive signs, etc.

* * *

The first international course on the law of war was organized by the International Institute of Humanitarian Law of San Remo, Italy, with ICRC support. The course, which was for officers only and conducted in French, was held at San Remo from 16 to 23 June 1976. It consisted of thirty hours of lessons, seminars, practical exercises and general conclusions, under the leadership of the director, with lectures by Avocat général B. Bosly (Belgium), Médecin général R. Kaeser (Switzerland), Professor

P. de la Pradelle (France), Professor J. Patrnoic, Vice-President of the Institute, General P. Verri (Italy) and Mr. M. Veuthey (ICRC), The trainees included officers from Belgium, Congo, Iran, Italy, Switzerland and Zaire.

At the opening ceremony, Mr. Eric Martin, then President of the ICRC, wished the course every success. He stressed the importance of disseminating humanitarian law among the armed forces, and congratulated the Institute on its initiative in organizing the course.

In the following, Mr. de Mulinen refers to the need for courses on the law of war and describes the first international course directed by himself, and which was very well received, and draws the following conclusion from this initial experiment, which will be repeated at an early date.

First, an army man will regard the law of war as hardly plausible and in fact a hindrance in the proper fulfilment of his duties. This must be borne in mind in establishing the right approach and atmosphere for teaching this discipline.

In view of the wide range of international treaties concerning the law of war (the Hague and Geneva Conventions), which will extend even further with the future Protocols additional to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, a simple brief system of tuition should be devised. Each army man should be given only what he needs to accomplish his task.

It is for this purpose that the International Institute of Humanitarian Law, San Remo, started international courses for officers in 1976 on the law of war. Each course is conducted in one language.

The teaching is designed for military people and deals with the conduct of hostilities (essentially the Hague Law) and the protection of victims of armed conflicts (essentially the Geneva Law).

The courses are concerned with the subject matter rather than a systematic study of each Convention. Work is carried out in small groups, with few lectures and plenty of time for seminars and exercises. The purpose of the seminars and exercises is to demonstrate the role of the different hierarchical levels in the law of war, to show the importance of inter-service relations, to find solutions to problems that arise in combat, and to devise the best means of ensuring that the armed forces acquire the essential principles of the law of war.

The courses are intended for senior officers, who are able to ensure dissemination of the law of war among the armed forces, and for a wide range of specialists, in order that in seminars and exercises provision may be made for the specific features of the different arms and services.

*

The number of trainees attending the first international course (seventeen, plus one observer during part of the time) was relatively small, but because they came from three continents and belonged to different arms and services it is possible to draw some general conclusions which may hold good in the future. Besides, the limited number of those present at the first course made for direct contact between lecturers and trainees and made it possible to deal more effectively with the trainees' problems and needs.

Teaching by subject rather than going through the Conventions proved a wise choice, as was the method of providing an initial lecture on each subject for all participants followed by in-depth study in seminar classes of not more than ten trainees, on the basis of tactical situations, and some brief practical exercises calling for prompt decision; and finally general conclusions on the more important subjects, for all participants.

The practical exercises in which each trainee carries out a specific function (as a commander or as staff officer), makes it possible to recognize the problems that arise at the different levels and in the different services. The repercussions of a given decision, at whatever level, must be analysed. Thus a link can be seen between the international rules and the precise data relating to the organization and terminology of each State and its armed forces.

In the last exercise, the problems of the law of war are considered from different angles, and dialogue is started between neutrals and belligerents, on the one hand, and between the belligerents, on the other. In the latter case, the dialogue may be direct or through a third party (Protecting Powers, the ICRC, the United Nations and UN forces, or Unesco).

Experience has shown that each trainee's "speciality" is known only at the beginning of the course when he completes his registration form. To ensure that every trainee, whatever his assignment or occupation (e.g. airman, seaman, army law officer, or doctor), derives the greatest possible benefit, instruction should be adapted to training for specific functions. Without altering the plan of work or the timetable, participants active in different fields should be assembled in ad hoc groups throughout or during part of the seminar. In the study of practical cases, whether in the seminars or during the exercises, stress may be laid on a given subject. An event may be replaced by some incident more likely to arise in the case of a specific activity or hierarchical level.

Staffing must be international because of the nature of the course, but would of course vary according to the spot, the language in which

tuition is given and the lecturers available. It is desirable to make arrangements for preparatory meetings to be held between the teachers and the director several weeks or months ahead, although that is only rarely possible. The staff meeting immediately preceding the course is therefore particularly important.

In the circumstances, there should not be an unduly large number of teachers. This means that they should be polyvalent, both in the legal and the military sphere, able to present an introductory statement, to direct the seminar and to grasp essentials for the general conclusions. Again, polyvalence is an absolute necessity where a lecturer cannot attend and must be replaced at the last moment, as happened at the first course.

To sum up, teaching by subject calls for strict organization and a precise definition of the subjects to be dealt with in the lessons or lectures, seminars or exercises. Moreover, it is necessary to bear in mind the various activities which the trainees may carry out in their national armed forces, and teaching should be adapted to requirements. That is why the course should be so organized as to allow flexibility, in order that the director may be able to adapt the work to circumstances and needs.

BOOKS AND REVIEWS

JACQUES FREYMOND: « GUERRES, RÉVOLUTIONS, CROIX-ROUGE, RÉFLEXIONS SUR LE RÔLE DU COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE. »¹

This book, full of restrained passion, aggressive, fervid, and at the same time lucid, on which I express here only my own personal views, differs from most books dealing with the Red Cross in that it is concerned solely with the body that founded the Red Cross, namely, the International Committee of the Red Cross. Right from the beginning, Jacques Freymond dismisses nearly all the fields of assistance and « charity » where the International Committee works in concert with the National Societies, the League, and indeed with many aid and relief associations. Instead, he probes in depth only what is unique and specific to the ICRC and which at times isolates it in spite of itself, within the Red Cross movement,² that is to say, its action in protecting the rights of victims of armed conflicts and collective disturbances, an action most delicate to undertake and of which it is often dangerous to speak. Jacques Freymond is well aware of the dangers involved and is well-placed to speak of them; but he believes it is still more hazardous for action to be shrouded in silence or secretiveness, denying it the support of public opinion, which may be apathetic, ignorant, or distrustful of anything arcane and therefore obscure.

Whether the book is timely is not something we shall discuss here: but it has been written with discernment and published, and will be read. The author carefully weighed his responsibility. Those seeking revelations will find some, although they may not be quite of the kind they were looking for: they will find a clear and gripping account of a combination of complex issues at times impossible to unravel, although expounded on tirelessly in more legalistic or more « neutral » treatises, publications or news reports issued by the ICRC itself, but which they may find « heavy going ».

This book, whose tone is critical and at times trenchant, could greatly serve the cause of the Red Cross movement in general and of the ICRC in particular. Its author is highly qualified and writes in a brilliant and penetrating style. He has a very full knowledge of the

¹ Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, 1976.

² It is of course understood that the term « Red Cross » includes also the « Red Crescent » and the « Red Lion and Sun ».

subject on which he freely speaks his mind, observing it from the outside, writing for critically minded readers who, through him, will understand the true dimensions of the ICRC's tasks and difficulties.

For it is a fact that even the knowledgeable public does not fully realize how, by the multiplicity of new types of conflicts subject to no rules — and which have become the rule — the ICRC was lead step by step to act close to the very limits prescribed by the 1949 Geneva Conventions on which its operations are based. Often it can invoke no more than article 3 of those Conventions which is common to all four and requires parties to a “conflict not of an international character” to observe humanitarian rules. Unfortunately, in such conflicts at least one of the parties will not have signed these Conventions and both must be induced to agree to the provisions that “an impartial humanitarian body, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, may offer its services to the parties to the conflict.” The woolly terminology matches the vagueness of positive law which, in a quarter of a century, has failed to define “non-international conflict” (which is often an internal conflict or civil war with a concealed international character) and hence cases in which article 3 should be applied. These are conflicts in which the stakes are national sovereignty and legitimacy of government, concepts on which all positive international law is based. They are conflicts between a government — claiming sole and lawful sovereignty — and political, social, ethnic or religious parties or groups which, contesting that claim, resort to violence and, more often than not, are supported from outside.

Whereas belligerents who recognize each other as states can conclude a peace treaty, an established government and a revolutionary movement in conflict seldom have or seek an alternative to eliminating one another. Moreover, between “internal” armed conflict and repression or “silent terror”, the kinds of conflicts in which the adversaries' human dignity is trampled underfoot range from bad to worse.

The ICRC has been drawn in such situations into the defence of human rights on all continents, and this is what characterizes it today in the international Red Cross movement.

Freymond, in chapters III, IV and V, analyzes a number of experiences in Nigeria, Greece, the Middle East — apart from the short but fierce open wars — Vietnam, Bangladesh, (and later Angola and Lebanon to mention only the worst cases). These were experiences of non-international conflict, of that ill-defined category of war which has so far defied attempts to bring it within the scope of law; they were examples of action anticipating law, as often before in Red Cross history.

The ICRC has not chosen to act alone in these “non-international conflicts”, so called because they elude the rule of international law. It enlists the co-operation of National Societies if they are able to operate and it yields to the temptation to boast of its role as a precursor of law less if that role calls for commitments which are not only legal. Its unique status as an international institution representing no state or group of states led to its assumption of this role which no other organization could undertake. For in these conflicts which might be called “conflicts of sovereignty”, the National Society of the country concerned is tied to the government whose overthrow is sought by the subversive forces and therefore is or appears to be a party to the conflict, despite itself; it cannot therefore intervene on both sides, or deal with the government’s adversary as if that adversary had legal status. Consequently, the initiative must be taken by an “impartial humanitarian body such as the ICRC”, and so far no alternative has been forthcoming. Its initiative could fail for, persist as it may, its offer of services can be rejected, and, not infrequently, for reasons which they refuse to divulge or discuss, governments will not allow foreigners of any sort to observe a conflict which they are bent on settling unwitnessed.

These facts are well known. There are also functions which the ICRC may never undertake, because they are incompatible with the conditions to which its action is subject: it may not publicly accuse; it may not bear witness “for the prosecution”. Jacques Freymond knows and says this. The ICRC is grateful to him for saying so, for this is one of the lesser known aspects. “In the interest of the people whom it is required to protect, the ICRC, while doing so or attempting to do so, must say nothing which may be a barrier to contact or cause doors to be closed to it... It must avoid taking a stand which might cause its neutrality, impartiality and independence... to be called into question... Otherwise, it must surely meet with failure.”

This is the dilemma of “secret diplomacy and public support”, a permanent one for the ICRC. Freymond rightly points out the constant need to hold the interest of the public where public feeling has not been deadened by daily exposure to pictures of horror; a need to be met through painstaking explanation and documentation, through personal accounts, pictures and films of actual experience. But this cannot be done by the organization in the front line, where touchy parties to a conflict may interpret as interference, public accusation or reproach anything intended to mobilize public opinion during a crisis or to appeal to popular emotion and indignation. There are organizations which do this; there are books like Freymond’s; there are news-

papers, radio and television. Nothing would be more dangerous than the idea that the ICRC could or should use these media to bring pressure to bear, for by doing so it would be acting contrary to the conditions to which its action is subject. Its work may be carried out only by keeping faith with those who accept its offers of service. There is no other basis, in law or in practice, to intervene in the conflicts which recognize no law and which have succeeded "legal wars."

The unsatisfactory adaptation of positive humanitarian law to typical contemporary conflicts is recognized by everyone who has in any way dealt with the concrete problems of humanitarian action. In the course of a century, States managed to codify humanitarian standards applicable in the conventional warfare they waged among themselves, recognizing one another as legitimate participants, with equal sovereignty, in a state of war. Total warfare and apocalyptic weapons, however, have put an end to conventional warfare and have cast doubt on the customs and usages of war. It might seem utopian to expect sovereign States to accord comparable recognition as legitimate participants to adversaries within their territory who are in a state of rebellion against their authority. In such a situation opinions on humanitarian tactics and strategy may well differ. We must certainly avoid excess legalism, but it would also be inexcusable to neglect the least possibility for strengthening the legal basis for humanitarian action. While we must avoid falling into the routines of opportunist diplomacy which smooths off the rough edges and undermines the principles, hard negotiations are essential in every case to assure the application, even incomplete, of these principles...

If we set side by side the book by Jacques Freymond and the newly published work by Michel Veuthey, *Guerilla et droit humanitaire*, we find that the tones differ; the starting points and approaches are not the same—yet the convergence of aims is striking. Among those devoted to the Red Cross cause, there can be no disagreement about the purpose, even if there are divergent views about the most suitable means for achieving that purpose, just as there are differences between militant and conciliatory temperaments. Should we attack an obstacle direct or go around it? Should we move patiently through the channels provided by States and other established institutions, or, if need be, throw down the gauntlet and battle openly against every denial of justice and humanity? In this struggle for humanity, as in every great cause, there are the temperaments of the stoics and the millenarians; of the Franciscans and Dominicans; of Loyola, Talleyrand or Lenin. Perhaps we need them all, for there are too many well-meaning and peaceful people who lack

determination, and people with fanatic determination and fiery devotion who, depending on the situation, may either achieve miracles or destroy everything.

The word "utopia" has no pejorative connotations for the ICRC, a utopian enterprise from its inception, dedicated to accomplishing the impossible and yet, despite unsparing efforts to do so, forced to remain within the limits of the feasible. Herein lies the fundamental contradiction which from the outset has been flung in the faces of Red Cross workers: if suffering and death are to be opposed, then surely the first thing is to abolish war, to create peace! This is self-evident. Nevertheless, in spite of innumerable solemn international agreements to outlaw war and ostracize those who resort to it, the absence of an international order able to establish peace has meant that war in defiance of the law has been replaced by war which recognizes no law, which assumes many names, which forever spreads and shifts to the areas of tension on the surface of the globe. Peace-making has continued to be an effort to make a particular *kind* of peace, a striving after a world order which will impose its *own* peace, in the tradition of the *Pax Romana*, with its own name and particular ideology.

Among the various factions confronting each other around the world, each attempting to impose its *own* kind of peace, its *own* concept of world order which will base peace on the triumph of its *own* cause, people fighting for peace find it difficult to avoid being partisans of their own cause and denouncing as enemies of peace those who do not subscribe to that cause. In this lethal dialectic between rival causes regarded as just and sacred, which in the name of the highest principles turns the adversary or dissident into a war criminal, hostile to the human race, an opponent of established order, an enemy of the people, refused even the title of human being, the rightness of each cause is invoked to justify hatred, terrorism and butchery. Thus humane principles are in perpetual danger of being turned against themselves, of being appropriated for partisan ends and prostituted by those who lay claim to them for their own advantage, only to betray them once they are victorious. This pattern of behaviour has been encountered by the ICRC in its work for the development of humanitarian law and in its activities to aid and protect the victims of war, activities which those who requested them are eager to terminate as soon as they gain power. That is where the deepest malaise lies, and Freymond does well to bring it into the open.

It is at such times, in the face of ever-recurring obstacles, that messianic solutions are proposed. The Red Cross, and particularly the

ICRC, we are told, cannot continue to steer between the shoals—cannot continue to negotiate, patiently and stubbornly for the right of a man to be treated as a man. It cannot go on being content to grant its protection everywhere it is possible to do so—it is no longer a question of saving human lives, but of saving the human race. All the ICRC can do is go forward, putting itself into a state of moral belligerence, leading a vast crusade over the heads of the nation states, and if necessary against them; in short, to turn itself into a movement for reawakening humanity and turning it against violence in all its forms, which are always complementary and interchangeable, whether war or civil disturbance, police action or revolution, oppression or liberation, terrorism or anti-terrorism. At a time when humanitarian law is trodden underfoot or sabotaged, the author concludes rather abruptly (p. 141) that “it is no longer possible to humanize war, and therefore the ICRC has no choice but to draw up, with and beyond the Red Cross organizations, a global humanitarian strategy mobilizing world opinion in a long-term struggle against the use of force to solve internal problems or to settle relations between States”.

That passage exemplifies the passion and the anguish that imbue this fine book. The ICRC must hope that it will find a wider readership than its own publications achieve. These more weighty works, as Freymond confirms, provide all the facts without emotionalizing questions which are already too burning. How, and how far, the ICRC may commit itself publicly without betraying or compromising the very basis of its existence are questions as old as the Red Cross itself and remain unanswered, for the institution cannot live and work in a climate of indifference or mistrust. Perhaps this unusual book, which is not a treatise on the Red Cross or even on all aspects of the ICRC, but on the political dimensions of its most intractable problems, will stimulate its readers to make further studies of the subject and to look more closely at the spheres in which the institution undertakes its responsibilities. Freymond provides abundant accounts and analyses of the major crisis operations over the past twenty years. It is impossible to sum them up here, or to enter into detailed discussion of the cases he analyses. But these remarkable descriptions of experiences will give the reader a vivid insight into actual conditions of operations that are always having to be repeated, so complex that they are difficult to convey to the general public. The ICRC will heed Freymond, the historian and political scientist, when he exhorts it to keep its own history up to date, to draw up a precise account of every experience and analyse it with care, to draw all possible lessons from it, in order constantly to adapt its tech-

niques, approaches, tactics and strategy to future requirements, bearing in mind that each new operation may raise doubts about everything it does: for “it is from its operations in the field that the ICRC draws its legitimacy”.

In his brief description of the institution which is officially entitled and called by the public the “International Committee”, Jacques Freymond speaks, first of all, not about the “Committee” or even about the central administration, but about the delegates in the field, who undertake, organize and co-ordinate emergency action at moments of crisis, when confusion usually reigns supreme, when communications are difficult or non-existent, supply lines unreliable and operational bases extremely precarious. He does so because the ICRC is far from being merely a committee, or even a group of committees and permanent specialized services. Some of these services operate so silently and smoothly that they receive almost no attention or comment from the public. One of them is the Central Tracing Agency, which is unique, compiling and keeping records of the victims, prisoners and missing persons of all the conflicts or disturbances in which the Red Cross has been involved. The ICRC itself is only a more or less stable nucleus, a limited number of people and resources around which, at critical times, rally numerous and occasionally heterogeneous teams placed at its disposal for a particular emergency operation by National Societies from their own experts, equipment and resources.

The reader of *Guerres, Révolutions, Croix-Rouge* is thus given a picture of the difficulties of that very singular organization, the ICRC, which, in a way, is perpetually inflating, deflating and reflatting itself in response to alerts and crises, endemic conflicts and sudden outbreaks of fighting. In fact, in the spheres of operations covered by this book, the ICRC often commits itself and undertakes responsibilities to an extent far in excess of its own human, material or financial resources—and then appeals through all possible channels for the solidarity which it must have to carry on operations that are becoming more extensive in scope and duration. Whatever experience has been acquired, whatever the more or less firmly established contacts, however good the preparation, the planning and the state of constant readiness, there is always a large measure of improvisation. This should be reduced to a minimum by the “staff work” which Freymond recommends to the ICRC, but it can never be completely eliminated. The ICRC should certainly do more to evaluate situations likely to produce crises; but it cannot programme in advance of outbreaks of fighting, their violence or their extent. The permanent, or semi-permanent, organization has become larger, wider

in scope and more varied, but at the same time more ponderous. The author speaks with knowledge when he deplores the widening gulfs between the "Committee", the "headquarters" and the "field", and when he describes the increasing difficulties of communication between the levels of decision and of action, the occasional lack of comprehension, the responsibilities in danger of being eroded. Because of the changes in the nature of conflicts and because of their regional and global contexts, the demands of a world in crisis, and the unending shifts in international relationships, the organization of the ICRC is always having to remould itself, to readjust to circumstances, from top to bottom. As to the reforms introduced, sometimes in haste, they have not always turned out to be beneficial in the long run. The proposals made by Freymond—not all of them new, some of them far-reaching, but none of them casting doubt on the essential nature, the basic tenets or the "un-nationality" of the institution—are prompted by a desire for effectiveness and lucidity. Inspired by the same desire, the ICRC will welcome this book and its proposals. In an agenda mostly filled with items of great urgency, a place, and a sizeable place, must be found for reflection on the whole basis and conception of the institution.

In closing this book, the reader cannot help but feel that the continuing existence of the ICRC is something of a paradox or a miracle. Is it the result of a historical incongruity or, to express it more realistically, is it because it meets a need not yet filled and unlikely to be filled in the foreseeable future by any of the proliferating international bodies and intergovernmental organizations?

Even in his foreword, Freymond asks the fundamental question: "Does the Red Cross still have a role to play?". That is exactly the same question put by Max Huber to a dictator forty years ago in a world in full disintegration. The tentative answer by the author, and the answer given by human history still enmeshed in violence, is that the more impossible it appears, the greater the role of the Red Cross will have to be. However we may look at it, Sisyphus, pushing his rock towards a summit never reached, had few reasons and few opportunities to be pleased with himself. In the context of continual reorganization, of unending improvisation, of unremitting inadequacy, this role, which the author lauds as both idealistic and necessary, is that of effort which too often appears to be doomed to fail. The ICRC must continue and intensify this effort as long as it hears the call of man's distress, arising from man-made violence.

HERBERT LÜTHY

EXTRACT FROM THE STATUTES OF
THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

ADOPTED 21 JUNE 1973

ART. 1. — *International Committee of the Red Cross*

1. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), founded in Geneva in 1863 and formally recognized in the Geneva Conventions and by International Conferences of the Red Cross, shall be an independent organization having its own Statutes.

2. It shall be a constituent part of the International Red Cross.¹

ART. 2. — *Legal Status*

As an association governed by Articles 60 and following of the Swiss Civil Code, the ICRC shall have legal personality.

ART. 3. — *Headquarters and Emblem*

The headquarters of the ICRC shall be in Geneva.

Its emblem shall be a red cross on a white ground. Its motto shall be *Inter arma caritas*.

ART. 4. — *Role*

1. The special role of the ICRC shall be :

- (a) to maintain the fundamental principles of the Red Cross as proclaimed by the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross ;
- (b) to recognize any newly established or reconstituted National Red Cross Society which fulfils the conditions for recognition in force, and to notify other National Societies of such recognition ;
- (c) to undertake the tasks incumbent on it under the Geneva Conventions, to work for the faithful application of these Conventions and to take cognizance of any complaints regarding alleged breaches of the humanitarian Conventions ;

¹ The International Red Cross comprises the National Red Cross Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies. The term "National Red Cross Societies" includes the Red Crescent Societies and the Red Lion and Sun Society.

- (d) to take action in its capacity as a neutral institution, especially in case of war, civil war or internal strife ; to endeavour to ensure at all times that the military and civilian victims of such conflicts and of their direct results receive protection and assistance, and to serve in humanitarian matters, as an intermediary between the parties ;
- (e) to ensure the operation of the Central Information Agencies provided for in the Geneva Conventions ;
- (f) to contribute, in view of such conflicts, to the preparation and development of medical personnel and medical equipment, in co-operation with the Red Cross organizations, the medical services of the armed forces, and other competent authorities ;
- (g) to work for the continual improvement of humanitarian international law and for the better understanding and diffusion of the Geneva Conventions and to prepare for their possible extension ;
- (h) to accept the mandates entrusted to it by the International Conferences of the Red Cross.

2. The ICRC may also take any humanitarian initiative which comes within its role as a specifically neutral and independent institution and consider any question requiring examination by such an institution.

ART. 6 (first paragraph). — *Membership of the ICRC*

The ICRC shall co-opt its members from among Swiss citizens. It shall comprise fifteen to twenty-five members.

FIVE RECENT ICRC PUBLICATIONS
ISSUED FOR THE DIPLOMATIC
CONFERENCE
ON THE REAFFIRMATION AND
DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL
HUMANITARIAN LAW
APPLICABLE IN ARMED CONFLICTS

	Sw. Fr.
Draft Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949 , Geneva, 1973; 8vo, 46 pp.	10.—
Draft Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, Commentary , Geneva, 1973; 8vo, 176 pp. . .	20.—
Conference of Government Experts on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons , Geneva, (<i>first session</i>) 1975, 106 pp.	15.—
Conference of Government Experts on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons , Geneva, (<i>second session</i>) 1976, 231 pp.	22.—
Reservations to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 , (C. Pilloud) ^a Geneva 1976, 44 pp.	4.—

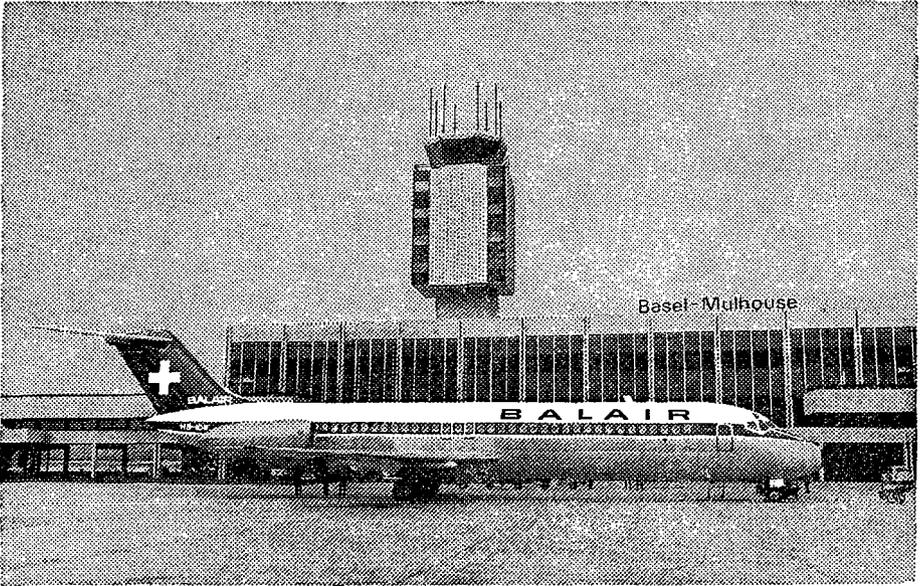


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ADDRESSES OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES

- AFGHANISTAN — Afghan Red Crescent, Puli Artan, *Kabul*.
- ALBANIA — Albanian Red Cross, 35, Rruga e Barrikadavet, *Tirana*.
- ALGERIA — Algerian Red Crescent Society, 15 bis, Boulevard Mohamed V, *Algiers*.
- ARGENTINA — Argentine Red Cross, H. Yrigoyen 2068, 1089 *Buenos Aires*.
- AUSTRALIA — Australian Red Cross, 122 Flinders Street, *Melbourne 3000*.
- AUSTRIA — Austrian Red Cross, 3 Gusshausstrasse, Postfach 39, *Vienna 4*.
- BAHRAIN — Bahrain Red Crescent Society, P.O. Box 882, *Manama*.
- BANGLADESH — Bangladesh Red Cross Society, 34, Bangabandhu Avenue, *Dacca 2*.
- PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN — Red Cross of Benin, B. P. 1, *Porto Novo*.
- BELGIUM — Belgian Red Cross, 98 Chaussée de Vleurgat, 1050 *Brussels*.
- BOLIVIA — Bolivian Red Cross, Avenida Simón Bolívar, 1515, *La Paz*.
- BOTSWANA — Botswana Red Cross Society, Independence Avenue, P.O. Box 485, *Gaborone*.
- BRAZIL — Brazilian Red Cross, Praça Cruz Vermelha 10-12, *Rio de Janeiro*.
- BULGARIA — Bulgarian Red Cross, 1, Boul. Biruzov, *Sofia 27*.
- BURMA (Socialist Republic of the Union of) — Burma Red Cross, 42 Strand Road, Red Cross Building, *Rangoon*.
- BURUNDI — Red Cross Society of Burundi, rue du Marché 3, P.O. Box 324, *Bujumbura*.
- CAMBODIA — The new address of the Red Cross Society is not yet known.
- CAMEROON — Cameroon Red Cross Society, rue Henry-Dunant, P.O.B. 631, *Yaoundé*.
- CANADA — Canadian Red Cross, 95 Wellesley Street East, *Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 1H6*.
- CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC — Central African Red Cross, B.P. 1428, *Bangui*.
- CHILE — Chilean Red Cross, Avenida Santa María 0150, Correo 21, Casilla 246V., *Santiago de Chile*.
- CHINA — Red Cross Society of China, 22 Kanmien Hutung, *Peking, E.*
- COLOMBIA — Colombian Red Cross, Carrera 7a, 34-65, Apartado nacional 1110, *Bogotá D.E.*
- COSTA RICA — Costa Rican Red Cross, Calle 14, Avenida 8, Apartado 1025, *San José*.
- CUBA — Cuban Red Cross, Calle 23 201 esq. N. Vedado, *Havana*.
- CZECHOSLOVAKIA — Czechoslovak Red Cross, Thunovska 18, 118 04 *Prague I*.
- DENMARK — Danish Red Cross, Ny Vestergade 17, DK-1471 *Copenhagen K*.
- DOMINICAN REPUBLIC — Dominican Red Cross, Apartado Postal 1293, *Santo Domingo*.
- ECUADOR — Ecuadorian Red Cross, Calle de la Cruz Roja y Avenida Colombia, 118, *Quito*.
- EGYPT (Arab Republic of) — Egyptian Red Crescent Society, 34 rue Ramses, *Cairo*.
- EL SALVADOR — El Salvador Red Cross, 3a Avenida Norte y 3a Calle Poniente, *San Salvador, C.A.*
- ETHIOPIA — Ethiopian Red Cross, Ras Desta Damtew Avenue, *Addis Ababa*.
- FIJI — Fiji Red Cross Society, 193 Rodwell Road, P.O. Box 569, *Suva*.
- FINLAND — Finnish Red Cross, Tehtaankatu 1 A, Box 168, 00141 *Helsinki 14/15*.
- FRANCE — French Red Cross, 17 rue Quentin Bauchart, F-75384 *Paris CEDEX 08*.
- GAMBIA — The Gambia Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 472, *Banjul*.
- GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC — German Red Cross in the German Democratic Republic, Kaitzerstrasse 2, DDR 801 *Dresden 1*.
- GERMANY, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF — German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany, Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 71, 5300, *Bonn 1*, Postfach (D.B.R.).
- GHANA — Ghana Red Cross, National Headquarters, Ministries Annex A3, P.O. Box 835, *Accra*.
- GREECE — Hellenic Red Cross, rue Lycavittou 1, *Athens 135*.
- GUATEMALA — Guatemalan Red Cross, 3a Calle 8-40, Zona 1, *Ciudad de Guatemala*.
- GUYANA — Guyana Red Cross, P.O. Box 351, Eve Leary, *Georgetown*.
- HAITI — Haiti Red Cross, Place des Nations Unies, B.P. 1337, *Port-au-Prince*.
- HONDURAS — Honduran Red Cross, 1a Avenida entre 3a y 4a Calles, N° 313, *Comayagüela, D.C.*
- HUNGARY — Hungarian Red Cross, V. Arany János utca 31, *Budapest V*. Mail Add.: 1367 *Budapest 5*, Pf. 249.
- ICELAND — Icelandic Red Cross, Nóatúni 21, *Reykjavik*.
- INDIA — Indian Red Cross, 1 Red Cross Road, *New Delhi 110001*.
- INDONESIA — Indonesian Red Cross, Jalan Abdul Muis 66, P.O. Box 2009, *Djakarta*.
- IRAN — Iranian Red Lion and Sun Society, Av. Villa, Carrefour Takhté Djamchid, *Teheran*.
- IRAQ — Iraqi Red Crescent, Al-Mansour, *Baghdad*.
- IRELAND — Irish Red Cross, 16 Merrion Square, *Dublin 2*.
- ITALY — Italian Red Cross, 12 via Toscana, *Rome*.
- IVORY COAST — Ivory Coast Red Cross Society, B.P. 1244, *Abidjan*.
- JAMAICA — Jamaica Red Cross Society, 76 Arnold Road, *Kingston 5*.
- JAPAN — Japanese Red Cross, 29-12 Shiba 5-chome, Minato-Ku, *Tokyo 108*.
- JORDAN — Jordan National Red Crescent Society, P.O. Box 10 001, *Amman*.
- KENYA — Kenya Red Cross Society, St. John's Gate, P.O. Box 40712, *Nairobi*.
- KOREA, DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF — Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, *Pyongyang*.
- KOREA, REPUBLIC OF — The Republic of Korea National Red Cross, 32-3Ka Nam San-Dong, *Seoul*.
- KUWAIT — Kuwait Red Crescent Society, P.O. Box 1350, *Kuwait*.
- LAO PEOPLES' DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC — Lao Red Cross, P.B. 650, *Vientiane*.
- LEBANON — Lebanese Red Cross, rue Général Spears, *Beirut*.
- LESOTHO — Lesotho Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 366, *Maseru*.

- LIBERIA — Liberian National Red Cross, National Headquarters, 107 Lynch Street, P.O. Box 226, *Monrovia*.
- LIBYAN ARAB REPUBLIC — Libyan Arab Red Crescent, P.O. Box 541, *Benghazi*.
- LIECHTENSTEIN — Liechtenstein Red Cross, *Vaduz*.
- LUXEMBOURG — Luxembourg Red Cross, Parc de la Ville, C.P. 1806, *Luxembourg*.
- DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR Red Cross Society of the Malagasy Republic, rue Clémenceau, P.O. Box 1168, *Tananarive*.
- MALAWI — Malawi Red Cross, Hall Road, *Blantyre* (P.O. Box 30080, Chichiri, *Blantyre* 3).
- MALAYSIA — Malaysian Red Crescent Society, 519 Jalan Belfield, *Kuala Lumpur* 08-03.
- MALI — Mali Red Cross, B.P. 280, route de Koulikora, *Bamako*.
- MAURITANIA — Mauritanian Red Crescent Society, B.P. 344, Avenue Gamal Abdel Nasser, *Nouakchott*.
- MEXICO — Mexican Red Cross, Avenida Ejército Nacional nº 1032, *México 10 D.F.*
- MONACO — Red Cross of Monaco, 27 boul. de Suisse, *Monte Carlo*.
- MONGOLIA — Red Cross Society of the Mongolian People's Republic, Central Post Office, Post Box 537, *Ulan Bator*.
- MOROCCO — Moroccan Red Crescent, B.P. 189, *Rabat*.
- NEPAL — Nepal Red Cross Society, Tahachal, P.B. 217, *Kathmandu*.
- NETHERLANDS — Netherlands Red Cross, 27 Prinsessegracht, *The Hague*.
- NEW ZEALAND — New Zealand Red Cross, Red Cross House, 14 Hill Street, *Wellington 1*. (P.O. Box 12-140, *Wellington North*.)
- NICARAGUA — Nicaraguan Red Cross, *Managua, D.N.*
- NIGER — Red Cross Society of Niger, B.P. 386, *Niamey*.
- NIGERIA — Nigerian Red Cross Society, Eko Aketa Close, off St. Gregory Rd., P.O. Box 764, *Lagos*.
- NORWAY — Norwegian Red Cross, Parkveien 33b, *Oslo*. Mail Add.: *Postboks 7034 H-Oslo 3*.
- PAKISTAN — Pakistan Red Crescent Society, National Headquarters, 169, Sarwar Road, *Rawalpindi*.
- PANAMA — Panamanian Red Cross, Apartado Postal 668, Zona 1, *Panamá*.
- PARAGUAY — Paraguayan Red Cross, Brasil 216, *Asunción*.
- PERU — Peruvian Red Cross, Jirón Chancay 881, *Lima*.
- PHILIPPINES — Philippine National Red Cross, 860 United Nations Avenue, P.O.B. 280, *Manila D-408*.
- POLAND — Polish Red Cross, Mokotowska 14, *Warsaw*.
- PORTUGAL — Portuguese Red Cross, Jardim 9 Abril, 1 a 5, *Lisbon 3*.
- ROMANIA — Red Cross of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Strada Biserica Amzei 29, *Bucarest*.
- SAN MARINO — San Marino Red Cross, Palais gouvernemental, *San Marino*.
- SAUDI ARABIA — Saudi Arabian Red Crescent, *Riyadh*.
- SENEGAL — Senegalese Red Cross Society, Bd Franklin-Roosevelt, P.O.B. 299, *Dakar*.
- SIERRA LEONE — Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, 6A Liverpool Street, P.O.B. 427, *Freetown*.
- SINGAPORE — Singapore Red Cross Society, 15 Penang Lane, *Singapore 9*.
- SOMALI REPUBLIC — Somali Red Crescent Society, P.O. Box 937, *Mogadishu*.
- SOUTH AFRICA — South African Red Cross, Cor. Kruis & Market Streets, P.O.B. 8726, *Johannesburg 2000*.
- SPAIN — Spanish Red Cross, Eduardo Dato 16, *Madrid 10*.
- SRI LANKA — Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, 106 Dharmapala Mawatha, *Colombo 7*.
- SUDAN — Sudanese Red Crescent, P.O. Box 235, *Khartoum*.
- SWEDEN — Swedish Red Cross, Fack, S-104 40 *Stockholm 14*.
- SWITZERLAND — Swiss Red Cross, Taubenstrasse 8, B.P. 2699, *3001 Berne*.
- SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC — Syrian Red Crescent, Bd Mahdi Ben Barake, *Damascus*.
- TANZANIA — Tanzania Red Cross Society, Upanga Road, P.O.B. 1133, *Dar es Salaam*.
- THAILAND — Thai Red Cross Society, Paribatra Building, Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital, *Bangkok*.
- TOGO — Togolese Red Cross Society, 51 rue Boko Soga, P.O. Box 655, *Lomé*.
- TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO — Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society, Wrightson Road West, P.O. Box 357, *Port of Spain*, Trinidad, West Indies.
- TUNISIA — Tunisian Red Crescent, 19 rue d'Angleterre, *Tunis*.
- TURKEY — Turkish Red Crescent, Yenisehir, *Ankara*.
- UGANDA — Uganda Red Cross, Nabunya Road, P.O. Box 494, *Kampala*.
- UNITED KINGDOM — British Red Cross, 9 Grosvenor Crescent, *London, SW1X 7EJ*.
- UPPER VOLTA — Upper Volta Red Cross, P.O.B. 340, *Ouagadougou*.
- URUGUAY — Uruguayan Red Cross, Avenida 8 de Octubre 2990, *Montevideo*.
- U.S.A. — American National Red Cross, 17th and D Streets, N.W., *Washington, D.C. 20006*.
- U.S.S.R. — Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Tcheremushki, I. Tcheremushkinskii proezd 5, *Moscow 117 036*.
- VENEZUELA — Venezuelan Red Cross, Avenida Andrés Bello No. 4, Apart. 3185, *Caracas*.
- VIET NAM, SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF — Red Cross of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, 68 rue Bà-Triêu, *Hanoi*.
- YUGOSLAVIA — Red Cross of Yugoslavia, Simina ulica broj 19, *Belgrade*.
- ZAIRE (Republic of) — Red Cross of the Republic of Zaire, 41 av. de la Justice, B.P. 1712, *Kinshasa*.
- ZAMBIA — Zambia Red Cross, P.O. Box R.W.1, 2837 Brentwood Drive, *Lusaka*.