

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

Death of Mr. Roger Gallopin

The ICRC learnt with very deep sorrow of the death on 18 March 1986 of Mr. Roger Gallopin, *honorary member and former President of the Executive Board of the institution*. In him the International Committee has lost one of its most faithful and lifelong servants.

He was 27 years old when he joined the ICRC in 1936. A young Doctor of Laws and author of a thesis on the Anglo-Irish conflict, he seemed destined for a brilliant career in law. And indeed his main activity consisted initially in making preparations, with one of his colleagues, for the Diplomatic Conference for the Revision of the Geneva Conventions which was due to be held in 1940 and which the outbreak of hostilities then postponed. His subsequent career revealed his talents as an organizer and diplomat.

It was during the cataclysm of World War II that he displayed his full merit. After one year of military service, he devoted himself to the ICRC's work for the protection of victims of the war. In 1942, he was put in charge of the important division for prisoners, internees and civilians.

In 1944 he was appointed Deputy Secretary-General and in 1946 was placed at the head of the ICRC's operations with the title of Director-Delegate. In the aftermath of the war the tasks which fell to the Committee were considerable. Both in Asia and in Europe millions of prisoners were still waiting to be repatriated, millions of refugees and displaced persons were seeking homes, while new armed conflicts—often with brother fighting brother—flared up in Greece, Palestine, Indo-China and so many other places.

From 1950 to 1969, in his duties as Executive Director, Director General and then member of the Committee, he remained as ever at the hub of activities and was one of the institution's most dynamic members in Geneva, leaving his decisive mark upon it. His wisdom counted a great deal in the choices the ICRC had to make at the various turning points in its history.

In 1969, Roger Gallopin felt the need to take some rest and be less intensively involved and resigned his post of Director General, without giving up his place on the Committee. But in 1972 the President of the ICRC invited him to sit on the Presidential Council and when the ICRC was restructured he accepted the eminently active post of President of the Executive Council from 1973 onwards. This period coincided with large-scale ICRC operations in the field. At the end of 1976, after forty years of service at the highest level, he went into well-deserved retirement but continued to be a member of the Committee.

Thanks to his command of affairs and his dynamic temperament Roger Gallopin had the ability to be on hand whenever needed, to unerringly perceive essentials, to be close to his fellow staff members and delegates in the field, to encourage them, to back them and, when necessary, to restore their confidence. His forceful personality, keen sense of duty, his ability to organize and give orders enabled him to plan and accomplish great things as part of the work to which he had dedicated his strength and his ideals. All those who had the privilege of working with him or under his direction pay tribute to the loyalty, clarity of judgement and objectivity of a chief and colleague who knew how to listen to them even when he did not share their views.

With his organizational talents, he combined a great feeling for politics and a fine sense of diplomacy, evidenced by his numerous discussions and negotiations which rarely proved without avail. The post-war years were characterized by a serious re-appraisal of the Red Cross. Roger Gallopin participated to a large extent in the critical examination of the ICRC's activities during the world war and in the conferences convened to analyse them. He evaded no problems, no insinuations or attacks and knew how to defend, with greatly admired courage, the institution which was so dear to him.

A convinced internationalist, he maintained excellent contacts with various leading members of the Red Cross throughout the world, with the most diverse institutions and with the diplomatic representatives of all political persuasions. But he remained the unwavering advocate of a strictly unnational ICRC, for fear of seeing political pressure brought to bear on a purely humanitarian institution that is constantly called upon to operate amongst antagonists little inclined towards mutual understanding. It was in this spirit that he made his practical and enlightened contribution at the

International Red Cross Conference, held in Stockholm in 1948, and at all the others which followed, where he was always appreciated and respected.

A charismatic leader, an organizer and a diplomat, this warm-hearted man was one of the most effective exponents of the ICRC's humanitarian work, setting it with so much discernment on its new courses of action in the modern world.

Alexandre Hay

*President of the International Committee
of the Red Cross*

Assembly of the ICRC: Appointments and departures

The Assembly of the International Committee of the Red Cross has welcomed three new members: Mrs. Renée Guisan, Mr. Daniel Frei and Mr. Alain Rossier, while taking leave of four active members: Mr. Olivier Long and Mr. Victor Umbricht (both of whom have retired for reasons of age), Mrs. Marion Bovée-Rothenbach and Mr. Gilbert Etienne.

The Assembly also granted leave of absence to Mr. Peter Arbenz in view of his new duties as the Swiss Government's delegate on refugee matters.

Mrs. Renée Guisan was born in 1933 and is a citizen of the canton of Vaud, where she received her entire education. After graduating from the Fine Arts School in Lausanne, she worked in graphic arts before going to the United States, where she lived for four years and did volunteer public health and social welfare work. From 1971 onwards, on her return to Switzerland, she became very actively engaged in activities on behalf of the elderly, in particular with the Pro Senectute Foundation. Her commitment to social work deepened with her participation in organizations such as the volunteer services association of the canton of Vaud, Pro Juventute, and, since 1977, the *Institut de la Vie* which appointed her as its international General Secretary.

Mr. Daniel Frei was born in 1940 in St Gallen. After obtaining a doctorate in history from Zurich University at the age of 24, he pursued his studies in England, at the London School of Economics and Political Science, and in Geneva, at the Graduate Institute of