

**UNDER THE PRESIDENCY OF MR. ALEXANDRE HAY:  
THE ICRC FROM 1976 TO 1987**

## Controlled expansion

*“The unity of the International Red Cross and Crescent Movement, humanitarian mobilization and contributing to peace are, in my opinion, the major issues we must face now and in the future”.*

**(Alexandre Hay, 6 May 1987).**

*On 6 May of this year, on the occasion of Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga's taking office as the ICRC's twelfth President, the ICRC General Assembly paid tribute to Mr. Alexandre Hay, who headed the institution from 1 July 1976 to 6 May 1987.*

*The members of the Committee and the Directorate recalled, in particular, the profound humanity and determination with which Mr. Hay had carried out his responsibilities throughout a decade marked by innumerable crises.*

*In presenting an appraisal of what may be referred to as “the Hay period”, the International Review of the Red Cross wishes to pay tribute, in its own way, to the outgoing President. This survey is not an inventory of the ICRC's activities, which are already quite familiar to our readers, but rather a look at the problems associated with its operations, its evolution in the face of changing circumstances, and the elements marking the continuity of its work.*

*It is also a testimony to the man who directed the ICRC's work over the past ten years and the team of highly motivated men and women who stood by his side. At the same time, it provides an*

opportunity for the Review to give its readers a glimpse of everyday life at the ICRC and acquaint them further with the institution's staff and organization.

Although far from exhaustive, this account reflects the development, work, expansion, choices and tendencies characteristic of a team united behind one man. It is also an expression of affection, respect and friendship for that man.

The tribute paid to the outgoing President by members of the ICRC and the Directorate during the Committee's General Assembly on 6 May 1987 was an eloquent one. Equally eloquent observations, quoted in the conclusion to this article, were made by President Hay and his successor, Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, concerning the future of the ICRC and the Movement.

\*  
\* \*

"We live in a world which becomes hardly more humane with time".<sup>1</sup> This bitter comment, made by President Hay in 1976 at the end of his first year in office, was an accurate reflection of the deterioration of the international situation and the difficulties the ICRC faced in carrying out its work.

Little improvement can be observed in 1987. For over the past ten years, the ICRC has had to take action in an era pervaded by negative forces "... in the family, at school, at work, in the community, in the country and finally in international relations...".<sup>2</sup> To say that the ICRC's humanitarian work was deeply affected during the entire period by a world situation in which "the national consensus is being eroded and the international consensus seriously undermined"<sup>3</sup> is an understatement.

The ICRC, which owing to its nature and mandate is particularly sensitive to the international situation, had to deal, during the period in question, with the effects of the proliferation of local wars and internal strife, as well as with increasing ideological extremism and the spread of violence.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report*, 1976, ICRC, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Modern wars: the humanitarian challenge*. A report for the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues, presented by Mohammed Bedjaoui, Zed Books Ltd., London and New Jersey, 1986, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

The strategies adopted by belligerents in the field plunged the institution into a world where traditional conflicts and guerrilla wars are waged side by side, terrorism and hostage-taking as “methods of warfare” are on the rise, and torture is becoming a routine practice that goes virtually unpunished.

Political and social crises were exacerbated by cultural and religious upheavals, with sometimes devastating consequences. These were instrumental in undermining certain fundamental humanitarian concepts by questioning their universality.

Finally, the international community, which is supposed to represent a kind of supranational conscience, continues to be dominated largely by the interplay of national and regional interests. Higher ethical considerations, so vital in view of the grave threats hanging over modern life, are relegated to second place.

## **1. The difficulties faced by the ICRC (1976-1987)**

The difficulties encountered by the ICRC in its operational activities obviously evolved as the institution had to face increasingly complex situations, negotiate with new elements in the international arena, such as national liberation movements and guerrilla forces, resolve a growing number of problems not covered by law and rally the legal and material support it needed to carry out its work.

However, more familiar factors also contributed to increasing the problems associated with humanitarian work.

The ICRC found that it was no longer alone in carrying out operations on behalf of conflict victims. It became increasingly obvious that many other organizations were active in situations resulting from man-made disasters: United Nations humanitarian, assistance and co-ordination agencies and non-governmental organizations. This situation constantly raised problems relating to the co-ordination of the operations and respective roles of these organizations and agencies, particularly in situations rendered explosive by political complications and security risks.

Moreover, the ICRC's activities in general were surrounded by far more extensive media coverage than ever before, whether on the initiative of the ICRC or of the media themselves. Although the reporting and filming of humanitarian work can contribute to its success, the ICRC was not always spared the effects of occasional distortions in the media's portrayal of events, which was not always

in step with the institution's own priorities. It must be borne in mind that the relationship between the ICRC and the media is characterized by an ambiguous blend of discretion and publicity.

Finally, the fact that the ICRC was almost invariably faced, over the past ten years, with the only too common gap between the intentions expressed by States and their actual behaviour in the field with respect to humanitarian principles, shows the importance of carefully analysing ICRC operation policy in relation to the critical aspects of the international situation.

During this period of "negative forces", the ICRC was not content merely to take stopgap measures. To carry out its international responsibilities in such an unstable context, it was compelled not only to expand its activities, but also to reflect on how to **guide and monitor** that expansion while **adapting itself** to circumstances, **planning ahead** and remaining true to its principles. The "Hay period" was also marked by increased ICRC **commitment** to ensuring respect for and promoting humanitarian law, and to a policy of more extensive dialogue with all parties concerned.

## 2. Controlled expansion

One of the major features of the "Hay period" was the expansion of ICRC operations worldwide, an inevitable consequence of the ever-increasing number of conflicts. Most of these operations, moreover, were particularly long-lasting, reflecting the magnitude of the problems encountered and the efforts undertaken to resolve them. For the sake of historical accuracy, it should be said that these operations had their ups and downs: the long waits followed by sudden spurts of progress in Angola, Uganda and Lebanon, the "miracles", large and small, wrought in Poland and Granada, in the South Atlantic conflict and, more recently, in South Africa and Afghanistan. Mention must also be made of the vast operations undertaken in Kampuchea and Thailand, Ethiopia and Angola, the patience and tenacity underlying the discreet but crucial operations in Pakistan, the Philippines, Timor and Nicaragua and, finally, all that is done on behalf of political detainees. Of course, there were also failures or partial failures in the Western Sahara, the Horn of Africa and Sri Lanka: but even here the ICRC has never given up, nor will it ever do so.

All these activities generated an unprecedented development in the ICRC's resources and structures. The figures speak for them-

selves: in 1976, the ICRC was active in 54 countries as compared with about 80 in 1986. The number of field delegates increased from 323 in 1978 to over 500 in 1986. In ten years, its staff grew from 350 to around 1,000. Its budget soared from 50 million Swiss francs in 1976 to 256 million in 1986 (equivalent to 187 million in 1976).

As ICRC Director General Jacques Moreillon told President Hay on 6 May last: "Your term of office will go down in history as a period of tremendous yet controlled expansion. This expansion, it should be stressed, has not been an endogenous phenomenon generated solely by the dynamic attitude of the President, the Committee and the institution's leaders. It has resulted primarily from an increase in the incidence and duration of conflicts throughout the world and the growing acceptance of the ICRC by a greater number of countries. This situation has required the capacity to adapt, react and plan ahead".

### ***DEFENDING HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES***

Controlling the ICRC's expansion required, above all, knowing how to prevent it from undermining the *principles* upon which the institution's work is based. It implied unconditional adherence to the Movement's *Fundamental Principles* and continuity in the institution's work. As stated by Mr. Maurice Aubert in his tribute to Mr. Hay on 6 May: "ICRC presidents, unlike most heads of State or company directors, do not adopt sectarian or expansionist policies. They carry and pass on a torch fueled by a steadfast ideal. The victims may change, but the ICRC's responsibilities remain unaltered".

In operational terms, controlling the ICRC's activities meant reaffirming that protection and assistance cannot be dissociated, wherever protection was necessary. When the simultaneous presence of the ICRC and other governmental or non-governmental humanitarian organizations became a source of concern to host and donor governments, it was necessary to redefine the ICRC's place among these other organizations by stressing the unique dual role of providing protection *and* assistance conferred on it by the international community.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> See Jean-Luc Blondel: "Assistance to protected persons". *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 260, September-October 1987, pp. 451-468.

## ADAPTING

Controlling expansion also meant **adapting** to fluctuating operational requirements and contexts. Emergency assistance had to be redefined in view of the prolongation of most operations. In recent years, the ICRC has launched several operations in Asia, Africa and Central America that go beyond emergency measures; they include rehabilitation programmes essentially designed to cover basic needs. Such programmes ultimately lead to a decrease in the need for humanitarian aid and therefore to a reduction in costs. The practice, which is based on experience and is now becoming standard policy, was initiated during the “Hay period”, and it will be interesting to follow developments over the coming years.

Adaptation of the ICRC’s protection and assistance policies led to a spectacular development of its activities in the medical sphere, in the domain of the Central Tracing Agency and in telecommunications.

The Medical Division was created in 1977. It provides, in particular, medical assistance for prisoners of war, political detainees and displaced populations.

Furthermore, in view of the great problem of war surgery and the need to prepare personnel from the National Societies to take part in ICRC medical operations, the Medical Division was given four new responsibilities in 1982: nutrition, sanitation, rehabilitation and medical training.

Owing to the considerable development of its medical activities over the past ten years, the ICRC has assumed the role of guide, both within the Movement and for other organizations.<sup>5</sup> President Hay played a key part in ensuring the integration of this new function within the ICRC.

The Central Tracing Agency, for its part, had to reassess its role and initiate a new development policy at the beginning of the “Hay period” as a result of the proliferation of non-conventional conflicts and wars of liberation.

The Agency has consequently stepped up its tracing activities on behalf of refugees and political detainees by decentralizing its programmes and increasing its presence in the field. It has developed its role as intermediary between National Societies, co-ordinator of their tracing services and technical adviser. Hence, the importance

---

<sup>5</sup> See Dr. Rémi Russbach: “The International Committee of the Red Cross and health”, *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 260, September-October 1987, pp. 513-522.

attached to the training of both National Society experts and ICRC delegates specialized in tracing activities.

The "Hay period" was also marked by a considerable development, both in quality and quantity, of the ICRC telecommunications sector.

### ***PLANNING AHEAD***

Finally, controlling expansion also meant **planning ahead**. In 1981, the ICRC began an in-depth study of its future prospects. It concluded, on the basis of the constant deterioration of the international situation, that its activities would continue to grow until the end of the century. But what resources, in personnel, cash and other forms of support would it need to sustain that growth? How far could it count on the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, governments, the media and public opinion? What new priorities would it need to set to handle these greater resources? What should be its target growth rate? Where should it concentrate its efforts? How far could it expand without losing its "soul"? Its priority tasks were therefore to anticipate the evolution of situations worldwide, plan the additional qualified staff and financial, material and logistical resources needed, and raise support (from National Societies, governments and public opinion). These tasks were systematically incorporated into a plan for the future based on a study of the ICRC's role up to the year 2000. The plan describes the ICRC's inevitable medium- and long-term expansion, the quality control it intends to apply to that expansion and, consequently, the means without which none of this would be possible. The plan was implemented at the operational level by devising new strategies to permit more precise identification of the victims' real needs. Within the institution, the growth of activities called for reassessment and adaptation of human resources. The ICRC thus modified its recruitment policy, stepped up its training programmes and developed methods of dealing with problems related to planning and management of human resources and evaluation of performance. The ICRC's internal structures were modified in their turn to correspond to its increased dimensions. President Hay not only paid special attention to the question of human resources, but also monitored personally all financial matters.

As a direct consequence of operational expansion, the ICRC's expenses (and personnel) increased three-fold in ten years. This growth naturally generated financial problems, since income failed

to keep pace with expenses. Over the period 1975-1977, the ICRC took steps to deal with its deficit, and from 1980 on the regular budget has been balanced. It should be mentioned that during this entire period the ICRC received regular contributions from the Swiss Confederation (which assumes responsibility for 50% of the regular budget). However, contributions by other governments did not entirely come up to expectations.

President Hay himself supported the ICRC's fund-raising efforts by taking part in missions in about 40 countries between 1976 and 1986.

### 3. Increased commitment

The decade under review will also be remembered as one of increased ICRC commitment to the promotion of humanitarian law and to the denunciation of breaches.

The ICRC demonstrated its commitment by taking position publicly on international humanitarian issues. Conscious of its worldwide responsibilities and strengthened by the confidence placed in it, the ICRC adopted a firmer stand against all forms of violence and transgression of humanitarian principles. This commitment was sometimes given a deliberately personal character.

Throughout his term, President Hay himself denounced the ever-widening gap between words and deeds, between the signing and proclamation of commitments and their often flagrant violation. Already in 1981, at the Twenty-fourth International Conference of the Red Cross in Manila, President Hay deplored repeated violations of the fundamental humanitarian principles in the following terms: "Any pretext is put forward to justify these unjustifiable actions: military imperatives, State security, and the last means resorted to by oppressed peoples. In all such cases the ICRC is aware of one element: contempt for the human race and violation of the fundamental rule of humanitarian law, that is respect for the non-combatant. What shreds of humanity can be left if our ideologies keep us from seeing the human being in our defenceless enemy, and even deform our vision so that we see an enemy in the innocent?"<sup>6</sup>

In 1984, he further declared: "Confronted with the present crises, governments are tempted to think only in the short term, to

---

<sup>6</sup> *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 226, January-February 1982, p. 13.



reject everything that does not suit their immediate interests and to relegate humanitarian considerations to the background, giving priority to what they consider to be the imperatives of politics and security. This refusal to implement humanitarian law defies the whole international community (States, the legal system, the organizations) and inflicts intolerable suffering on the victims of conflicts... This tendency appears to correspond to a fairly general decline in respect for the rule of law, internally and internationally".<sup>7</sup> More recently, at the Twenty-fifth International Conference of the Red Cross in 1986, he again underscored the ICRC's concern about the state of international relations: "The use of force takes pride of place over negotiation. Obligations under international law are too often neglected or scorned; humanitarian principles lag far behind other priorities—legitimate or not—set by States, such as what they conceive to be their immediate security and other strategic and military concerns. The fundamental rule prohibiting the use of threats and force in relations between States is thus frequently violated".<sup>8</sup>

These observations concerning the deterioration of the world situation and the attitude of States to the law underlay the development of the ICRC's policy of firm commitment to ensuring the implementation of and respect for the provisions of humanitarian law. The ICRC thus resorted more frequently and systematically to *external support*, repeatedly reminding States of their obligation to respect and ensure respect for the law. This insistence on ensuring respect may be considered one of the major features of President Hay's term of office.

The ICRC's commitment was first expressed in response to specific and blatant violations of the Geneva Conventions. One need only recall three appeals made by President Hay: the plea to the international community to ensure respect for humanitarian law in the armed conflict between Iran and Iraq; the repeated public and private approaches made by the ICRC to obtain recognition by Israel of the applicability of the Fourth Convention in the occupied territories and respect for that Convention in all spheres; and, finally, the ICRC's pressing entreaties to the belligerents in the conflicts in Afghanistan, the western Sahara and Kampuchea.

These efforts were matched only by the ICRC's determination

---

<sup>7</sup> *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 244, January-February 1985, p. 32.

<sup>8</sup> *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 256, January-February 1987, p. 61.

to obtain ratification by States of the 1977 Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions. President Hay played an active role in this sphere by personally supporting his colleagues' work.

In 1980, the ICRC launched a systematic campaign to promote ratification and accession by States. It established contacts with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations at national and regional levels, leading to many resolutions of support. It also approached the authorities of about 100 States; in two thirds of the cases, these approaches were made by Mr. Hay himself. Finally, the publication of a *Commentary on the Additional Protocols* showed the institution's determination to help the authorities concerned, both with the decision to ratify or accede to the Protocols and with their application.

The undeniable triumph for the humanitarian cause achieved in 1977 has faded, in ten years, to a somewhat bitter memory. The process of ratification is slow, held up by inertia, if not downright hostility, on the part of certain great powers.

This disquieting situation and the lack of political will shown by governments called for a sustained, long-term effort. This effort, known as *humanitarian mobilization*, was a cause with which President Hay identified himself fully.

The solemn appeal of the Twenty-fourth International Conference of the Red Cross, held in Manila in 1981, urging: "that the rules of international humanitarian law and the universally recognized humanitarian principles be safeguarded at all times and in all circumstances",<sup>9</sup> had little effect despite the ICRC's entreaties, warnings and demands. Four years later, the "*ICRC appeal for a humanitarian mobilization*" of 10 January 1985, one of the major achievements of the "Hay period", came as a true cry from the heart: "To cope with the increasing number, variety and duration of conflicts, with the inhumane treatment arising from the hardening of ideological, or even religious and racial attitudes, and with the declining respect for treaties and law in general, only a concerted action by all the forces of universal humanitarianism, a mobilization of States and peoples, might raise in any decisive manner the level of respect for humanitarian rules in conflicts—short of abolishing war altogether.

The main questions are: how are political leaders to be imbued with humanitarian values and politics leavened with the humani-

---

<sup>9</sup> *Resolutions and decisions of the International Conference and of the Council of Delegates*, Twenty-fourth International Conference of the Red Cross. ICRC, Manila, 1981, p. 8.

tarian spirit? How can it be shown that in every political situation there are humanitarian aspects which one ignores at one's peril?"<sup>10</sup>

President Hay again raised these questions in 1986, at the Twenty-fifth International Conference of the Red Cross, where he reiterated his appeal for a humanitarian mobilization. Consolidation, that is, acceptance, knowledge, implementation of and respect for existing laws, the ultimate and overall goal of humanitarian mobilization, will be the challenge of the coming decades.

The strength of the ICRC's commitment and the power of its initiatives to ensure that reason and humanitarian considerations prevail over passion and violence were unquestionably a result of its policies and their constant reassessment, adaptation and development. President Hay correctly perceived, from the very outset of his term, the vital importance of maintaining and developing the policies which inspire and guide the ICRC's work. The problems of today's world and the complexity of international relations were given in-depth and collective consideration by various ICRC commissions and departments which were able, as a result, to establish guidelines based on an historical analysis of precedents, a study of the applicable laws and an appreciation of the human aspects of the situation. This gave the ICRC an opportunity to discuss problems such as the integrity of its emblem, its contribution to respect for human rights, its policy in case of involuntary disappearances, protection and assistance, etc. Following the events of the Twenty-fifth International Conference of the Red Cross, further thought had to be given as to the best means of ensuring respect for the Movement's Fundamental Principles.

#### 4. Promoting dialogue

The ICRC's commitment to helping victims and upholding the law never led it to admonish or preach. This commitment entailed not only reminding States of their obligations, but also and above all initiating a **dialogue** with their representatives and all active members of the international community, including National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, governmental and non-governmental organizations and the media, to promote better knowledge

---

<sup>10</sup>*International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 244, January-February 1985, p. 33.

and understanding of the humanitarian message. This was a major concern of the ICRC and its President over the past ten years.

One of the key elements of this dialogue was dissemination to all sectors of the public, all over the world, of international humanitarian law and the Movement's principles and ideals.

The International Conference of the Red Cross held in Tehran in 1973 established a virtual charter for dissemination by requesting the ICRC to "support the efforts of governments and National Societies in their dissemination of and instruction in the Geneva Conventions",<sup>11</sup> and providing it with a list of means to do so. Subsequently, the first European Red Cross seminar on dissemination of knowledge of the Geneva Conventions held in Warsaw in 1977 constituted another milestone along the way to promoting humanitarian law and Red Cross principles and ideals. The seminar established the principles that dissemination should be the joint responsibility of the entire Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (together with governments), that it should be expanded to include the Movement's principles and ideals and be closely associated with the encouragement of a spirit of peace. The ICRC, followed by the League and the National Societies, implemented these ideas by setting up a series of dissemination programmes adapted to the various target groups and increasing the number of seminars and training courses at the international, regional and national levels.

These endeavours and the experience, beginning in the late seventies, of carrying out dissemination in emergency situations in countries affected by conflict or internal disturbances, created a "dissemination reflex". This entirely new factor raised the Movement's awareness of the close link between dissemination and humanitarian activities.

The ICRC therefore redoubled its efforts to organize dissemination-oriented missions, seminars and publications. Moreover, to further expand and monitor this dissemination effort initiated at headquarters, delegates with special responsibility for dissemination were appointed to delegations, both in situations of armed conflict and at the regional level.

In 1987, it can be said that the value of dissemination has been largely proven. It is now included automatically in all ICRC field operations as a means of promoting, in the short and medium term for crisis situations, and in the longer term where the situation is

---

<sup>11</sup> *Resolutions of the Twenty-second International Conference of the Red Cross*. ICRC, Tehran, 1973, p. 13.

normal, a better understanding of ICRC activities and ensuring access to present and future victims.

Dissemination activities have led to considerable development of the ICRC's information services, reflected in particular by regular contacts with the international media.

President Hay, in keeping with his image as a "communicator" that was established while he was Director-General of the Swiss National Bank (and for which he was awarded the first "CONTACT" prize shortly before his arrival at the ICRC), maintained particularly good relations with journalists, while limiting his public statements to cases in which the ICRC needed to be heard *urbi et orbi*. He seized these opportunities to introduce an undeniably new style in denouncing violations of humanitarian law and various obstacles hampering the ICRC's work.

President Hay's direct way of stating the facts came across both in his press conferences and in written reports, whether in regard to public stands the ICRC was compelled to take in certain special circumstances (public appeals concerning Rhodesia in 1979, Lebanon in 1982, Iran and Iraq in 1983 and 1984) or accounts given in periodical publications, particularly the *Annual Reports* presented at the International Conferences of the Red Cross in Manila in 1981 and Geneva in 1986.

In general, as underscored by Mr. Hay in his farewell address of 6 May 1987: "Information is an important, but difficult and sensitive issue. Substantial progress has been made in this area both within the institution and in relation to the National Societies, governments and public opinion. However, the humanitarian message of the Red Cross is not easy to convey. I am convinced that there is still much room for improvement in this area".

The strength and effectiveness of the Movement depend to a large extent on relations between its various components. In this respect, dialogue guarantees unity.

Mr. Hay became President of the ICRC exactly one year after the publication of the Tansley Report, a reappraisal of the Movement's role entitled *An Agenda for the Red Cross*.

The Report, which was accepted by the Movement, highlighted the latter's strengths, but also revealed conflicting schools of thought. Such disparities have been characteristic of the Red Cross since decolonization and have in fact guaranteed its universality and even its unity.

One of the major effects of the Tansley Report was the **process**

**of dynamic evolution** it set in motion, particularly within the ICRC.

Mr. Hay was an active participant in this process from its inception. In his efforts to implement various pertinent Tansley Report recommendations, he encouraged initiatives towards National Societies and increased co-operation with the League, culminating in the crucial meeting held in Manila in 1981.

The Twenty-fourth International Conference of the Red Cross demonstrated a spectacular *rapprochement* between the ICRC and the National Societies: it conferred on the ICRC the mandate to contribute to the development of National Societies in certain specific domains. The ICRC adapted its structures accordingly and sent specially trained delegates into the field to run programmes of co-operation with National Societies.

The ICRC concluded agreements in this regard with certain active National Societies, particularly in Africa and Central America. These mainly concerned the promotion of programmes for the dissemination of international humanitarian law and Red Cross principles and ideals and the training of National Society officials and personnel destined to carry out field missions for the ICRC and the League. Since 1984 the ICRC has been helping the League establish consortia to increase and co-ordinate the contributions of various Societies to the development of other Societies interested in strengthening their structures and widening the scope of their activities. It thus joined the consortium set up by the League on behalf of the National Societies of Benin, Ghana and Togo.

Dialogue with participant and donor Societies was also strengthened over the decade. Every year, meetings were held regularly with the National Societies of donor countries to discuss the ICRC's food and medical relief operations in Africa, Central America, Asia and the Middle East.

In recent years, the Societies have made generous contributions in cash, kind and services. In 1985 alone, for example, 24 National Societies (15 European, 2 American and 7 Asian) contributed a total of 42 million Swiss francs to the ICRC's activities.

Relations between the ICRC and the League suffered some strain over major operational and statutory questions facing the Movement, that is, ICRC assistance in situations of armed conflict, ICRC recognition of National Societies, the role of the Standing Commission and even the Fundamental Principles of the Movement.

However, the ICRC, the League and the National Societies succeeded in drawing up new Statutes for the Movement and having them adopted by the Twenty-fifth International Conference of the Red Cross in 1986.

Although that Conference was marked by the suspension of the government delegation of the Republic of South Africa, the adoption of the new Statutes constituted its most important and lasting feature as far as the Movement was concerned.

Apart from the 1977 Additional Protocols, the Statutes will undoubtedly remain the most significant and directly useful text produced during President Hay's term. The ICRC thereby achieved, under Alexandre Hay, what it had achieved in Toronto under Paul Ruegger in 1952 and in The Hague under Max Huber in 1928: it maintained and even developed its specific role within the Movement and throughout the world, preserved and strengthened its defence of the Fundamental Principles, increased the operational effectiveness of the Movement's components without extending their mandates, and adapted to change without sacrificing anything essential. It thus contributed to building an altogether stronger and more unified Movement.

Finally, the 1976-1987 period also saw considerable development of ICRC relations with the United Nations system in Geneva and New York, many regional and non-governmental organizations and the Swiss federal and cantonal authorities.

The expansion of the ICRC's operations over the past ten years led to a striking increase in the participation of its President and delegates in multilateral international relations. The ICRC's role in the international humanitarian system has grown steadily stronger and become more effective through closer co-operation with other international institutions in the field, more active participation in numerous international conferences dealing with humanitarian questions and the establishment of a complex network of bilateral contacts with government representatives at the highest political level.

This situation has enabled the ICRC to draw the attention of a growing number of regional (Organization of African Unity, Organization of American States, Council of Europe, etc.) and parliamentary organizations (Inter-Parliamentary Union, European Parliament, Andean Parliament, etc.) to the importance of respecting humanitarian law and supporting ICRC activities, with the drafting and adoption of resolutions making sustained action possible at the national level. Growing support for the ICRC by

other regional organizations, such as the European Economic Community, has also testified to the institution's ever-increasing influence within the international community.

Finally, the ICRC substantially increased its informal consultations with experts in public international law and with political figures who are both close to their governments and highly knowledgeable about ICRC activities. Several rounds of consultations held since 1984 have provided an opportunity to discuss ICRC problems, sharpen political leaders' awareness of humanitarian issues and establish a relationship of trust and dialogue between the ICRC and the experts consulted.

These consultations have also enabled the ICRC to draw the political experts' attention to its "humanitarian mobilization", one of the major aims of which is to introduce humanitarian considerations into political decision-making by impressing upon governments the fact that unresolved humanitarian problems eventually become political issues.

## **5. In conclusion: controlled development and a humanitarian outlook**

What will the annals of history retain of these ten years of ICRC activity and its presidency? In the tribute they paid to President Hay at the General Assembly meeting on 6 May 1987, the members of the Committee and the Directorate unanimously emphasized the ICRC's extraordinary development under his leadership. Mrs. Bindschedler, ICRC Vice-President, described Mr. Hay as a man who had: "set off in search of the Grail, on a quest for humanitarian action, undoubtedly, but who above all had striven to achieve the ideal of compassion and fraternity to which the Red Cross aspires". Addressing the President, she said: "For 11 years, you expressed your compassion for the victims, your abhorrence of the suffering and torture inflicted, your conviction of the moral obligation not only to *help* the victims, but also to *prevent* these evils. You left a deep impression on your audiences, you often convinced and motivated other men of goodwill through your **sincerity** ... The ICRC has considerably increased its activities during your term of office, yet you managed both to consolidate its past achievements and to lead it towards a *spectacular but controlled expansion* ... The close collaboration of extremely competent and dedicated colleagues undoubtedly influenced those choices, but



your characteristic energy, discernment, lucidity and realism played a determining role”.

Controlled expansion, as recalled by Jacques Moreillon, has taken place in two phases. The first, ending in 1981, was characterized by reaction and instinctive adaptation. The second, beginning in 1982, has been more foresighted. In view of the profound changes that occurred in the early 1980s and the growth of the ICRC staff to a total of 700, “the institution’s course had to be guided in a more deliberate, foresighted and systematic way, its future placed on a firmer footing and its expansion governed by clearly chosen priorities”.

Another characteristic of President Hay’s term is that the ICRC’s **human approach** was never affected by its growth. To quote ICRC Executive Vice-President Maurice Aubert: “Although this extraordinary expansion raised certain problems, you managed it with equanimity owing to your keen sense of moderation. We are grateful to you for your constant efforts, despite this expansion, to ensure that the ICRC remains on the human scale”. Jacques Moreillon added: “Although its spirit has evolved, the ICRC has not lost its soul. In its constant contact with victims—whom it is there to protect—the institution and its staff have maintained intact their most important feature: the spirit of service”.

In the words of Jean Pictet, this **spirit of service** owed its constancy to “President Hay’s profound sense of humanity and overwhelming generosity”. In describing Mr. Hay’s personality, the honorary Vice-President emphasized his inspiring sincerity, wisdom and courage: “You steadfastly held the banner high, never compromised on matters of principle and fought the good fight”. This fight was directed above all at ensuring respect for and promoting the law. Jean Pictet went on to say: “You gave to humanitarian law the eminent place it deserves among our concerns. It is possibly the one area in which world leaders, upon whom our fate depends, are still able to understand, agree with and, why not, even reach out to one another”.

President Hay himself spoke about this fight for greater humanity in terms not only of its positive results, but also of its disappointments and the lessons to be learned for the future. One major concern in coming years will be to safeguard the Movement’s unity after the blow it was dealt at the last International Conference. Another will be to pursue the **humanitarian mobilization**: “The efforts we have made, both to obtain ratification of the Additional Protocols and to promote the dissemination of human-

itarian law and the fundamental principles, must therefore be strenuously and relentlessly pursued". Finally, contributing to peace will be essential. Mr. Hay, who will continue to place his experience at the service of the ICRC and will also act as Chairman of the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace, attaches particular importance to this task: "How can the world be led to a better understanding of the contribution of the Red Cross to *peace*? This is a difficult task, for any incursion into politics must be avoided, but one which must be tackled since for many National Societies this fundamental issue constitutes the very motivation behind their participation in the Red Cross Movement".

These are the major priorities on which the Movement, and the ICRC in particular, will have to focus its attention in the future: "In this world riddled with every form of violence, unspeakable misery and perpetual tension and conflict, the work of the ICRC remains indispensable. Although this task is difficult and hampered by countless obstacles, it remains a noble one, well worth being pursued with courage and conviction".

These thoughts, expressed by Mr. Hay, were echoed by Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga when he took over the Presidency on 6 May 1987: "This great humanitarian mission of ours has been carried out with remarkable success by Mr. Alexandre Hay during his 11 years as ICRC President. His dedication, modesty and hard work have inspired the trust of governments, National Societies and all the ICRC staff... I am aware of the responsibility I am assuming of ensuring that the ICRC will continue to enjoy the trust that is indispensable, in today's politicized world, if it is to provide relief and assistance to the victims of international and non-international armed conflicts and internal disturbances and tension..."

Eager to maintain this tradition, with the help of the members of the Committee and ICRC staff, and to follow a course that has proved highly successful and enjoyed virtually universal recognition, Mr. Sommaruga concluded: "Let us never forget the humanitarian mandate that is ours and let us place everything at the service of the ICRC, its emblem and its motto *inter arma caritas*: our dedication to independence, impartiality, neutrality and humanity and all the mental and physical energy we have!"

*The Review*