

CONFLICT BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR*

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The International Committee of the Red Cross from Geneva and its activities in the circumstances of the Second World War has been exclusively humanitarian, and the ICRC based it on the then applicable provisions and regulations of the International Law of War (the *Law of Armed Conflict*). In the aftermath of the Second World War, sporadic allegations began to arise on the ICRC's activities in the war's circumstances, from 1939 to 1945. These allegations focused in particular on the ICRC's relations with the Authorities of the German Reich, and on the ICRC's activities in favor of the Jews during the war. Initially, the ICRC and its leadership has been facing sporadic accusations from various organizations or individuals, as well as accusations from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), that had no official relations with the ICRC, and shown open hostilities towards the ICRC in the aftermath of the Second World War. In mid-1946, the representatives of Yugoslav authorities accused the ICRC of protecting collaborators and war criminals and further aggravated the situation. The reason for the outbreak of the conflict was the issue of displaced persons, among other. The Yugoslav Red Cross started the conflict that continued through the official Yugoslav press, with the support of the Yugoslav authorities. Soon, both the Yugoslav Red Cross and the Yugoslav authorities extended their allegations towards the ICRC to the entire ICRC's activities carried out during the war. Based on original archival sources, published sources and literature, the author presents the genesis of the conflict.

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Introductory remarks

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) from Geneva carried out its activities in the circumstances of the Second World War (1939-1945) in accordance with the fundamental provisions of the *International Law of Armed Conflict*, adopted between 1863 and 1929.¹ Despite the existence of numerous documents, the basis for ICRC activities during the Second World War were the two *Geneva Conventions* adopted in 1929.² However, not all the belligerent parties ratified the 1929 *Geneva Conventions*, so the previously adopted and ratified *Geneva* and *Hague Conventions* remained in force.³ The ICRC based its activities on several principles of work. One of the most important principles had been avoiding conflict with belligerent parties. In an effort to provide relief to all the people in need, the ICRC tried to develop close relations with the National Red Cross Societies, no matter if their states and governments had acquired the official status of a recognized belligerent

¹ Briefly, see Mario Kevo and Vijoleta Herman Kaurić “Ženevske i Haaške konvencije u teoriji i praksi,” in: *1914. – Prva godina rata u Trojnoj Kraljevini i Austro-Ugarskoj Monarhiji. Zbornik radova*. Vijoleta Herman Kaurić (ed.) (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2018), pp. 311-320. For systematic introduction (historical and jurist) to the *International Law of Armed Conflict* until now days, see Robert Kolb and Richard Hyde, *An Introduction to the International Law of Armed Conflicts* (Oxford–Portland Oregon: Hart Publishing, 2008), and there cited sources and literature. See also Nils Melzer, *International Humanitarian Law: A Comprehensive Introduction*, Geneva: International (Committee of the Red Cross, 2016). For a brief historical context, see David P. Forsythe, “The ICRC: a unique humanitarian protagonist,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 89 (2007), No. 865: 63-96.

² “Convention Relating to the Treatment of Prisoners of War”, *The American Journal of International Law* 27 (1933), No. 2, Supplement: Official Documents: 59-91; “Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War,” *The American Journal of International Law* 47 (1953), No. 4, Supplement: Official Documents: 119-177. *Geneva Conventions for the Protection of War Victims. Report of the Committee of the Foreign Relations: Executive Report No. 9*. (Washington D.C.: Senate, United States Government Printing Office, 1955). *Les Conventions de Genève de 1929*. Extrait du Manuel de la Croix-Rouge internationale (Genève: Comité International de la Croix-Rouge, s. a.)

³ James Brown Scott (ed.), *The Geneva Convention of 1906 for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field* (Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Division of International Law, 1916). James Brown Scott (ed.), *The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907 accompanied by Tables of Signatures, Ratifications and Adhesions of the Various Powers, and Texts of Reservations* (New York – Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Division of International Law, 1915).

party.⁴ During the Second World War, the ICRC established official relations with the authorities and the National Red Cross Society of the Independent State of Croatia, and with the members of the National Liberation Movement in Yugoslavia, for example, however, at the same time had no success in the same process towards the USSR or Japan.⁵ Although the Second World War ended in the summer of 1945, the ICRC continued its post-war activities in favor of the people in need until the end of 1946. That work has been carried out through the *Joint Relief Commission (Commission Mixte de Secours)* of the ICRC and the League of the Red Cross Societies (LRCS). During that period, the ICRC continued the work to the people in need by providing various types of humanitarian aid, in the process of repatriation, securing aid to the displaced persons (DPs), and special attention was paid to the process of connecting members of dispersed families.⁶ However, the proclaimed neutrality and the already mentioned fundamental principle of conflict avoidance, which underpinned the work of the ICRC during the Second World War, later became the basis of numerous allegations towards the ICRC and its activities.⁷ Thus, sporadic allegations quickly began to emerge, and they were primarily concerned with the ICRC's relations with the authorities of the German Reich and the ICRC's attitude towards the Jews, which later became the subject of questions, doubts and objections. The ICRC and the Swiss Confederation were

⁴ For basic information, see Max Huber. *Principles and Foundations of the Work of the International Committee of the Red Cross, 1939-1946*. (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, 1947).

⁵ See Mario Kevo, "Imenovanje stalnog predstavnika Međunarodnog odbora Crvenog križa u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj (1943.)," *Croatica Christiana Periodica* XL (2016), no. 78: 209-234; see also Mario Kevo, "Uspostava veza Međunarodnoga odbora Crvenoga križa i Narodnooslobodilačke vojske i partizanskih odreda Jugoslavije za vrijeme Drugoga svjetskog rata," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 53 (2021), no. 2: 571-609.

⁶ When the ICRC began its post-war activities for reuniting dispersed families, its position was clear and was founded on the following points: 1. The unity of the family being one of the loftiest and most generally accepted of mankind's fundamental rights, an international aid program for the reuniting of many hundred thousand dispersed families was an imperative humanitarian obligation. Herbert G. Beckh, "The Reuniting of Families in Europe during and after the Second World War," *International Review of the Red Cross* 19 (1979), no. 211: 177. Briefly, on reuniting of dispersed families, see Herbert G. Beckh, "The Reuniting of Families in Europe during and after the Second World War," *International Review of the Red Cross* 19 (1979), no. 211: 171-183; Herbert G. Beckh, "The Reuniting of Families in Europe during and after the Second World War: Part two," *International Review of the Red Cross* 20 (1980), no. 216: 115-128; Herbert G. Beckh, "The Reuniting of Families in Europe during and after the Second World War. Part Three," *International Review of the Red Cross* 26 (1986), no. 252: 71-85.

⁷ A few years ago, the ICRC published an excellent book on the History of the ICRC in the post-war period (1945-1955) and its activities all over the world. See Catherine Rey-Schyr, *From Yalta to Dien Bien Phu: History of the International Committee of the Red Cross 1945 to 1955* (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, 2017).

sharply criticized for what they failed to do on behalf of the victims of the conflict.⁸ These allegations put Swiss neutrality during the Second World War under the spotlight, and the ICRC was put on the path to confronting its past. Additionally to the above-mentioned allegations, the ICRC “was held responsible for the fate of Soviet prisoners of war in the German hands (...); it was accused of having done nothing to protect the partisans and resistance fighters held by the Axis powers; and, finally, it was criticized for having remained silent about the concentration camps and the genocide.”⁹ The discussions have continued until now days.¹⁰ In 1996, a group of researchers published allegations against the ICRC containing serious allegations that ICRC delegates during the Second World War were involved in “illicit dealings in funds or valuables looted from victims of Nazi persecutions (currency smuggling, export of currency) and espionage, and even infiltration of the ICRC by agents of Nazi Germany,” for example.¹¹ At the same time, after the ICRC confronted

⁸ Jean-Claude Favez, *The Red Cross and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. XII.

In mid-1980s, the ICRC granted unrestricted access to the Swiss Historian who entered the ICRC Archives to research how the ICRC helped the Jews during the war. Based on unpublished archival sources, the author evoked the work of the ICRC during the war done on behalf of the Jews, deported and interned in concentration camps all over Europe. See, the author's preface “A past that return to haunt us,” pp. IX-XII, 8-10. According to the Author, the text in the book is essentially the same that it was in the original book published in 1988: Jean-Claude Favez, *Une mission impossible?* (Lausanne: Payot, 1988).

⁹ See François Bugnion, “The International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent: challenges, key issues and achievement,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 91 (2009), no. 876: 699. The ICRC has been pragmatically approaching to the belligerent parties based on the second principle of its work, which emphasized readiness to compromise. The basis was a cooperative approach to the governments of belligerent parties, followed by the avoidance of any kind of confrontation. The ICRC has been acting as a neutral intermediary. David P. Forsythe, “The Red Cross as Transnational Movement: Conserving and Changing the Nation-State System,” *International Organization* 30 (1976), no. 4: 612-613, 620.

¹⁰ See Isabelle Vonèche Cardia, “Les Raisons du Silence du Comité International de la Croix-Rouge (CICR) Face aux Déportations”, *Mémorial de la Shoah/Revue d'Histoire de la Shoah* 2015/2 (2015), No. 203: 87-122. See also Gerald Steinacher, *Humanitarians at War: The Red Cross in the Shadow of the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

¹¹ “A group of researchers in the United States who have set themselves the task of locating the fortunes deposited in Swiss banks by victims — mostly Jewish — of Nazi persecution have laid their hands on a series of documents originating from the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the American intelligence service which was the predecessor of the CIA. These documents, bearing dates in 1944 and 1945, contain allegations concerning individuals who worked for the ICRC during the Second World War.” See the ICRC Press Division. “ICRC activities during the Second World War,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 36 (1996), no. 314: 562-567. For the answer of the ICRC to these allegations, based on facts and unpublished archival sources, see François Bugnion. “ICRC action during the Second World War,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 37 (1997), no 317: 156-177.

to sporadic allegations by international organizations or individuals concerning its activities conducted during the war, the issue of the travel documents of the ICRC issued in the aftermath of the Second World War also became a great issue, and the subject of many questions and doubts. The document known as a *Titre de voyage du CICR* and the ICRC has been often accused of lack of control over the issuance of these documents, or of malpractice with documents that had been issued by permanent delegations of the ICRC.¹² Very often, these documents have been mixed up with the *Nansen passport* (known as the *Certificate of Identity*) of the League of Nations, which ceased to be issued several years before the creation of the ICRC travel documents.¹³ According to the American historian David P. Forsythe, the travel document of the ICRC had been often used by Vatican officials in securing a runaway path to South America, to Nazi officials, and to the members of defeated forces of the Axis-Powers and their satellites.¹⁴

¹² Briefly, on the issue, see Irène Herrmann and Daniel Palmieri, “Refugees on the Run: ICRC Travel Documents in the Aftermath of the Second World War,” *Contemporanea* 16 (2013), no. 1: 91-109.

¹³ The *Nansen passport* was the first travel document issued to the stateless persons, initially to the Russian refugees after the First World War. According to James C. Hathaway, the document also known as *Certificate of Identity* was issued on July 5, 1922. The ICRC appealed to the Council of the League of Nations in February 1921 to take action on behalf of the “Russian refugees scattered throughout Europe without legal protection or representation.” The Certificates were adopted at Conference held at Geneva at the beginning of July 1922. See, James C. Hathaway, “The Evolution of Refugee Status in International Law: 1920-1950,” *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 33 (1984), no. 2: 351-352. According to Laura Barnett, the High Commissioner for Refugees was established in 1921 under the direction of Fridtjof Nansen, the initiator of the interstate agreement of July 5, 1922, and it intended to be a temporary agency for dealing with the problem created by Russian refugees. The High Commissioner created ‘Nansen passports’ for refugees, a legal document that gave refugees a recognizable status and allowed them to travel more freely. Although no state was obliged to receive refugees who held ‘Nansen passports’, all agreed to recognize the documents as valid identity papers. See Laura Barnett, “Global Governance and the Evolution of the International Refugee Regime”, *International Journal of Refugee Law* 14 (2002), no. 2-3: 242-243. See also Otto Hieronymi, “The Nansen Passport: a Tool of Freedom of Movement and of Protection,” *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 22 (2003), no. 1: 36-47. Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill, “Rejecting ‘Misfits’: Canada and the Nansen Passport,” *The International Migration Review* 28 (1994), no. 2: 281-306. The *Nansen passport* was a model for similar travel documents issued in the aftermath of the Second World War, according to the provisions of the *London agreement*, adopted on October 15, 1946.

¹⁴ D. P. Forsythe, “The Red Cross as Transnational Movement”: 617. On the matter, see I. Herrmann and D. Palmieri, “Refugees on the Run”: 91-95, 100-105, 107-108. See also Jure Krišto, “Bishop Hudal, the ‘Rat-line’, and the ‘Croatian Connection,’” *Review of Croatian History* 9 (2013), no. 1: 189-208. American historian Gerald Steinacher also discussed the role of the ICRC, American authorities, and the Catholic Church on the matter. See Gerald Steinacher,

The Origin of the Conflict

The ICRC established official relations with the members of the Partisan movement of Yugoslavia, in late 1944. After unifying the National Red Cross Society of Yugoslavia and designation of a Permanent Delegation of the ICRC at Belgrade, the ICRC delegates carried out activities in providing various types of assistance and in particular, they paid great attention to the issue of prisoners of war (POW). Moreover, the ICRC paid great attention to the issue of the applicability of the provisions of the *International Law of Armed Conflict* to all victims of the Second World War and insisted that the Yugoslav government adhere to the prescribed and signed provisions of the international law.¹⁵

One of the most important consequences of the Second World War was the unresolved refugee crisis, and it was in the focus of the ICRC, the Allies, individuals, and many international organizations.¹⁶ According to historian Laura Barnett, due to the change of borders, more than 40 million soldiers and refugees could not or did not want to be returned to their country of origin.¹⁷ Among all of those people were a significant number of refugees, stateless individuals, and displaced persons of Yugoslav origin who escaped to other countries. The number of these people was significant. According to records of the ICRC, in late 1945, in Italy and Austria were placed several hundred thousand refugees from Yugoslavia, of whom more than 200,000 in Italy.¹⁸ However, before I give some explanation on the issue of refugees

Nazis on the Run: How Hitler's Henchmen Fled Justice (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). Likewise, works by Mark Aarons, John Loftus, Uki Goñi, and Philippe Sands.

¹⁵ M. Kevo, "Uspostava veza Međunarodnoga odbora Crvenoga križa i Narodnooslobodilačke vojske i partizanskih odreda Jugoslavije za vrijeme Drugoga svjetskog rata": 585 ff.

¹⁶ For more on the issue of refugees in Europe, see Michael R. Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees from the First World War Through the Cold War (Politics, History, & Social Change)* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002); Michael R. Marrus, *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). Briefly, on the matter of relations among the ICRC and organizations responsible for the issue of refugees and displaced persons in the aftermath of the war, including some criticism towards the ICRC, see Daniel Palmieri, "Le Comité international de la Croix-Rouge et les organisations pour les réfugiés, 1943-1948", *Relations internationales* 2012/4 (2012), no. 152: 17-28.

¹⁷ L. Barnett, "Global Governance and the Evolution of the International Refugee Regime": 243.

¹⁸ Confédération Helvétique (CH), Archives du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge (ACICR), Genève, Archives générales 1918-1950 (G.), G. 68/139, Réfugiés yougoslaves, 1939-1950., Fasc. Yougoslaves en Italie. Letter by Dr. Gustavo Boringhieri, Deputy Delegate of the ICRC from Turin, sent to the ICRC in Geneva, October 11, 1945. On the matter of the Allied camps in Italy, see Berislav Jandrić, "Saveznički izbjeglički logori počeci otpora hrvatske

that had a great impact on relations between the ICRC and Yugoslavia, I shall point out other important issues at the time of the conflict. In the immediate post-war period, important issues were the process of the revision of the *International Law of Armed Conflict*, and the process of revision of the statutes of the *International Red Cross Movement*.¹⁹ In these activities, the Yugoslav Red Cross as an internationally recognized National Red Cross Society, as well as a full member of the *International Red Cross Movement*, had a significant role.

Following the Board of Governors of the LRCS meeting, held at Oxford, the ICRC convened the conference of the Red Cross Societies, to be held at Geneva in the summer of 1946 (July 26 to August 3), where Yugoslavia was represented with a significant delegation of the Yugoslav Red Cross.²⁰ The main task of the then gathered delegates was the process of the revision of the *Geneva conventions* adopted in 1929. The Conference was described as the "Preliminary Conference of National Red Cross Societies for the Study of the Conventions and of Various Problems relative to the Red Cross."²¹ Regardless of the main object, national representatives had been discussing many other issues.²² Among issues discussed at the Conference, the Yugoslav delegates implemented issues concerning the work of the ICRC, and they used meetings to make allegations towards the ICRC and its activities carried out during the war. Jaroslava Ribnikar, Secretary-General of the Yugoslav Red Cross, emphasized the issue of ICRC visits to the concentration camps during

političke emigracije komunističkom režimu u Domovini /Logor Fermo/“, in: 1945. – *Razdjelnica hrvatske povijesti: zbornik radova sa znanstvenog skupa*, Nada Kisić-Kolanović; Mario Jareb, and Katarina Spehnjak (eds.) (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2006), pp. 305-322.

¹⁹ For more, see C. Rey-Schyr, *From Yalta to Dien Bien Phu*, pp. 48 ff.

²⁰ The Delegation led by Dr. Nikola Nikolić. The other members were Prof. Petar Guberina, Delegate; Jaroslava Ribnikar, Secretary-General; Dr. Olga Milošević; Hélène Kosanovic, Delegate of the Yugoslav Red Cross in Switzerland, and Ive Kisić, Secretary to the Delegation. *International Committee of the Red Cross. Report on the Work of the Preliminary Conference of National Red Cross Societies for the study of the Conventions and of various Problems relative to the Red Cross Geneva, July 26 – August 3, 1946* (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, 1947), pp. 2, 7. See also *Conférence préliminaire des Sociétés nationales de la Croix-Rouge pour l'étude des Conventions et de divers problèmes ayant trait à la Croix-Rouge (Genève, 26 juillet – 3 août 1946): procès-verbaux: Vol. I-VII* (Genève: Comité International de la Croix-Rouge, 1946), vol. I, p. 19.

²¹ *International Committee of the Red Cross. Report on the Work of the Preliminary Conference of National Red Cross Societies for the study of the Conventions and of various Problems relative to the Red Cross Geneva*, p. 2.

²² For the minutes of the sessions held at the Conference, see *Conférence préliminaire des Sociétés nationales de la Croix-Rouge pour l'étude des Conventions et de divers problèmes ayant trait à la Croix-Rouge (Genève, 26 juillet – 3 août 1946): procès-verbaux: Vol. I-VII* (Genève: Comité International de la Croix-Rouge, 1946).

the war, accusing the ICRC for not helping at all to the Yugoslavs during the war, for example.²³ Dr. Nikola Nikolić, Head of the Yugoslav Delegation, and Prof. Petar Guberina, the delegate of the Yugoslav Red Cross, also expressed various allegations towards the work of the ICRC.²⁴ Although, the ICRC have expressed the desire to the members of the Yugoslav Delegation to arrange a meeting with the intention to examine various issues raised at the Conference, the Secretary-General of Yugoslav Red Cross Jaroslava Ribnikar, avoided all proposals of the ICRC and left Switzerland.²⁵

The conflict that started during the sessions at the Conference continued through the official Yugoslav press. The allegations introduced at the Conference were published in the first two issues of the periodical, the *Yugoslav Red Cross*. Thus, in September 1946, Jaroslava Ribnikar, the Secretary-General of the Yugoslav Red Cross, published an article in the first issue of the *Yugoslav Red Cross*, in which she expressed allegations towards the ICRC and its activities carried out during the war, and she emphasized “questionable impartiality” of the ICRC.²⁶ The Secretary-General expressed an attitude of “favoring some belligerent parties” by the ICRC during the war, and pointed out that the ICRC had been covering Nazi atrocities, and the LRCS has finally become an independent institution.²⁷ Following these allegations, in the next issue of the *Yugoslav Red Cross*, Jaroslava Ribnikar has been sharply criticizing the ICRC in relation with the provisions of the *International Law of Armed Conflict*. In “International conventions,” she emphasized the work of the ICRC in favor of interned prisoners and civilians during the war, and expressed concerns towards the fate of the prisoners because the ICRC has been covering Nazi atrocities, and has been spreading false information on the conditions in the camps.²⁸ These allegations were almost similar to previous Soviet allegations,

²³ *Conférence préliminaire des Sociétés nationales de la Croix-Rouge pour l'étude des Conventions et de divers problèmes ayant trait à la Croix-Rouge*, vol. III, p. 38.

²⁴ For more on the matter of Yugoslav attitudes towards the ICRC and its activities carried out during the Second World War, see C. Rey-Schyr, *From Yalta to Dien Bien Phu*, pp. 48–65.

²⁵ CH-ACICR, G.23/CR yougoslave (21.03.1944-02.03.1950). Letter of David de Traz, Deputy Executive Director of the ICRC, sent to Petar Guberina, the Delegate of the Yugoslav Red Cross in Geneva, August 14, 1946.

²⁶ Confédération Helvétique (CH), Archives du Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge (AFISCR), Genève, CH-AFISCR, 16751–Yugoslavia: Periodicals, 1946-1954. “O postanku i razvitku Crvenog krsta.” [“On the origin and development of the Red Cross“], *Jugoslovenski Crveni krst*, no. 1, September 1946, p. 8. For more, see C. Rey-Schyr, *From Yalta to Dien Bien Phu*, pp. 51-52, 61-65.

²⁷ CH-AFISCR, 16751. “O postanku i razvitku Crvenog krsta“, p. 9.

²⁸ CH-AFISCR, 16751. “Међународне конвенције.“ [“International Conventions“], *Jugoslovenski Crveni krst*, no. 2, October–November 1946, pp. 6-8. See C. Rey-Schyr, *From Yalta to Dien Bien Phu*, pp. 61-65.

and delegates of the USSR were not represented at the Conference, because the USSR had no relations with the ICRC.²⁹ Actually, since 1944, the Soviet Government has no longer allowed the representatives of the Alliance of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR to maintain relations with the ICRC.³⁰ The USSR was not a signatory to any of the *Geneva conventions* of 1929; therefore, it was not obliged to adhere to the provisions of the *International Law of Armed Conflict*. At the Conference, the Yugoslav delegates became the Soviet speakers and attackers on the ICRC and its activities carried out during the war. They generated accusations against the entire work of the ICRC. However, on the first agenda was, obviously, the issue of refugees and displaced persons settled in the Allied camps in Italy and Austria. That is evident from the proceedings of the Conference. At a meeting held on July 27, 1946, Petar Guberina, the delegate of the Yugoslav Red Cross, had declared there are, in fact, two types of refugees, and had expressed a negative attitude about the interpretation of the term of the “refugee,” adopted by the United Nations.³¹ So, the issue of refugees from the Second World War should be examined what is in correlation to the conventions; however, refugees who managed to escape to other countries after the war should not have been the focus of the Red Cross.³²

Titre de voyage du CICR—a stumbling block

Among thousands and thousands of refugees in the aftermath of the Second World War, were a significant number of the people of Yugoslav origin. At the end of the war and in the immediate post-war period (1943-1946), the issue

²⁹ Among 141 delegates who represented 45 National Red Cross (Red Crescent, Red Lion and Sun) Societies, were not representatives of the USSR. See *International Committee of the Red Cross. Report on the Work of the Preliminary Conference of National Red Cross Societies for the study of the Conventions and of various Problems relative to the Red Cross Geneva, July 26 – August 3, 1946*, pp. 1-13. See *Conférence préliminaire des Sociétés nationales de la Croix-Rouge pour l'étude des Conventions et de divers problèmes ayant trait à la Croix-Rouge*, vol. I, pp. 14-20. For the first time, Soviet representatives participated in the work of the 18th International Conference of the Red Cross, held at Toronto in 1952.

³⁰ Isabelle Vonèche Cardia, *Hungarian October: Between Red Cross and Red Flag: The 1956 Action of the International Committee of the Red Cross* (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, 1999), pp. 7-8. On the matter of hostilities between the USSR and the ICRC, see C. Rey-Schyr, *From Yalta to Dien Bien Phu.*, pp. 24-29, 72-142, and there cited archival sources and literature.

³¹ See *Conférence préliminaire des Sociétés nationales de la Croix-Rouge pour l'étude des Conventions et de divers problèmes ayant trait à la Croix-Rouge*, vol. IV, p. 28.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 28.

of refugees had been the responsibility of the United Nations. The decisive role in providing care for displaced persons (refugees, stateless persons, and displaced persons) has been given to the *United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (UNRRA). However, large number of people had been seeking for the aid, which resulted in internationalization of the issue, and an important role has been given to the ICRC with the possibility of issuing travel documents. The document was designed to help displaced persons to immigrate to a country of their choice, to facilitate their repatriation, or to explain their presence in places where they happened to be following the events of the war. The large number of displaced persons appealed to the ICRC, mostly to enlist support for their applications to various authorities for permission to emigrate. However, the most important contribution of the ICRC in this domain was the Travel Document of the ICRC, which the ICRC planned to cease the issue of this document as soon as the local authorities could provide their refugees with official travel document or passports.³³ The issuance of travel documents was an obstacle that burdened relations between Yugoslavia and the ICRC. The Yugoslav authorities have made allegations towards the ICRC for assistance provided to officials of the Independent State of Croatia, in evading justice and allowing them to flee to overseas countries, for example.

In 1945, the ICRC created its own travel document (*Titre de voyage du CICR*; it was also known as the *Travel Document 10.100*, followed by the *Travel Document 10.100 bis*) and, in fact, intended to issue it to the people registered as displaced persons by the Allied military authorities.³⁴ Many refugees and displaced persons had used these documents to reach the destination of their choice. The travel documents could easily have been misused because every *Titre de voyage du CICR* had been achieving full validity in international frameworks by fulfilling several very simple conditions, and it was used for traveling to the desired destination noted in the document. Every ICRC

³³ See *International Committee of the Red Cross: Report on General Activities (July 1, 1947 – December 31, 1948)* (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, 1949), p. 60. The ICRC intended the right for issuing these documents transfer to the *Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees* from London. See D. Palmieri, “Le Comité international de la Croix-Rouge et les organisations pour les réfugiés, 1943-1948” : 22.

³⁴ *Le Titre de voyage du CICR* was granted free of charge to displaced persons, stateless persons or refugees who, for lack of adequate papers, cannot return to their country of origin or habitual residence, or go to a country willing to receive them. Briefly, see I. Herrmann and D. Palmieri. “Refugees on the Run”: pp. 91-109, and Comité International, „Un document humanitaire: le titre de voyage du CICR“, *International Review of the Red Cross* 58 (1976), no. 687: 162-163. For more, see François Bugnion, *The International Committee of the Red Cross and the Protection of War Victims* (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross & Macmillan Publishers, 2003), p. 569 ff. See also Gradimir Djurović, *The Central Tracing Agency of the International Committee of the Red Cross* (Geneva: Henry Dunant Institute, 1986), pp. 210-216.

travel document contained a personal photo, an affixed visa of the desired state, stamps, and signature of the person authorized for the issuance of the document. Additionally, the document contained personal info (Name and Surname, Place and Date of Birth, Names of Parents, Nationality, and Occupation).³⁵ However, the most important data noted in the travel document was the statement of the applicant on its own status. The applicant should have confirmed that he or she was a prisoner of war, an interned person, a deported person, or forced (involuntary) laborer, and without that statement, the travel document could not have been issued. The travel document of the ICRC was not an identity document, and once the journey has been completed, the travel document should have been returned to the ICRC.³⁶ Therefore, these documents could not be transmissible.

Given the fact that the documents have been issued because the applicant did not hold a valid passport, it becomes much clearer how the travel documents could have been misused. When submitting the request, the applicant was able to falsify the data because their authenticity could not have been checked. The applicant could present himself or herself under a false name and surname, as well as with a false status, and it has been happening in many cases.³⁷ When necessary criteria have been fulfilled and the delegates of the ICRC their *bona fide* work have been completed, still by issuing the travel documents they unknowingly have permitted departure to the South America, Australia, or Canada, to the people who may have been registered on the war criminals lists. That is why the issuance of these documents subsequently has triggered a development of new Yugoslav allegations towards the ICRC. The fact that the Yugoslav allegations were not without any grounds is shown by recent research on the issue of war criminals fleeing in the immediate post-war period to other countries. Actually, in the aftermath of the Second World War, the Permanent Delegations of the ICRC from Rome and Naples have issued more than 7,500 ICRC travel documents to persons of Yugoslav origin settled in refugee and DP camps in Italy.³⁸ Ljubomir Dinko Bilanovic-Sakic

³⁵ A Photocopy of the Travel Document in the possession of the Author.

³⁶ However, Irène Herrmann and Daniel Palmieri suggest that the ICRC Archives contain, mostly, the forms requesting the travel documents and no travel documents themselves, which were kept by the recipients. See I. Herrmann and D. Palmieri, "Refugees on the Run": 92.

³⁷ The first application forms included a section giving the identity of those who provided supporting testimony. The subsequent forms maintained this section, which expanded to include the written material, submitted by the applicant as proof of his/her identity. See I. Herrmann and D. Palmieri, "Refugees on the Run": 96.

³⁸ CH-ACICR, G. 17/00-I., Généralités PG, Questions yougoslaves (janvier 46-juin juillet 47). The Report by Dr. Hans Wolf de Salis, the permanent delegate of the ICRC in Italy, Rome, August 12, 1946, p. 4.

was a false identity of Dinko Šakić, the former commander of the concentration camp of Jasenovac, and a bearer of the ICRC travel document (No. 36373) that allowed him to escape to South America, for example.³⁹ Therefore, the Yugoslav Government repeatedly gave special instructions to the Yugoslav delegation at the allied *Advisory Council of Italy* on the various paths for preventing the departure of displaced persons to South America. Even Josip Smodlaka, as the acting Head of the Delegation, requested that ambassadors of Chile and Peru reject entering visas to the “Yugoslavs” without a valid Yugoslav passport.⁴⁰ All of those requests were rejected, because the provisions of the *International Law of Armed Conflict* and the basic principle of the work of the ICRC strictly prohibited involuntary repatriation. Moreover, by the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on the Reports of its Third Committee, on February 12, 1946, a displaced person with a valid reason should not have been forced to repatriate.⁴¹ However, in April 1947, the ICRC received some disturbing information on the allied action for repatriation of 12,000 persons of Yugoslav origin, settled in UNRRA camps in the British occupation zone of Germany.⁴² Obviously, it was an attempt to resolve the issue of these refugees because the UNRRA should have been

³⁹ *Titre de voyage* No. 36 373, December 20, 1946, from Rome to France, Belgium, Spain, North and South America. Under false identity, Josef Mengele, Adolf Eichmann, Klaus Barbie, Erich Priebe, Gerhardt Bohne, Erich Müller, Friedrich Schwend, obtained ICRC travel documents for departure to South America, among other. There is no evidence that ICRC delegates knowingly issued these documents. Prior to applying for the document, all people already obtained false identities with the aid of various accomplices who were sometimes found even among the allied authorities, as it happened in the case of Klaus Barbie. See I. Herrmann and D. Palmieri, “Refugees on the Run”: 103-104. On the matter of allied authorities, a growing number of Gestapo personnel released from US captivity in 1946, and 1947, and regarding the American use of Gestapo officers based on declassified federal records (of the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Army Intelligence Command), see Richard Breitman and Norman J. W. Goda, *Hitler's Shadow: Nazi War Criminals, U.S. Intelligence, and the Cold War* (Washington, D. C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2010), pp. 35-52.

⁴⁰ CH-ACICR, G. 17/00-I., Généralités PG, Questions yougoslaves (janvier 46-juin juillet 47). The Report by Dr. Hans Wolf de Salis, permanent delegate of the ICRC in Italy, Rome, August 12, 1946, p. 4.

⁴¹ Joseph P. Chamberlain, “The Fate of Refugees and Displaced Persons,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 22, No. 2 (*Developing a Working International Order: Political, Economic and Social*, 1947): 84 [192]. For the Resolution, see “8(I). Question of Refugees,” *United Nations. Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during the First Part of its First Session from 10 January to 14 February 1946* (Westminster London: Church House, 1946), p. 12.

⁴² CH-ACICR, G. 68/00/155, Réfugiés diverse en Autriche. The Report (No. 549) of the Permanent Delegation of the ICRC in Austria, April 14, 1947. CH-ACICR, G. 68/139, Réfugiés yougoslaves, Fasc. Yougoslaves en Italie. Note (No. 1407) by Paul Kuhne, an official of the ICRC Secretariat, sent to the Delegation of the ICRC in Vlotho (Germany), May 5, 1947. According to the information provided by the Delegation of the ICRC from Vienna, the trans-

concluding its work in favor of displaced persons by June 30, 1947, and it was uncertain if any international organization would take care of these people.⁴³ Therefore, some commanders of UNRRA camps asked these people to repatriate to their country of origin. All the people who rejected the proposal, and in fact they had been constantly rejecting repatriation to their country of origin, were expelled from the camp, and some of them were even imprisoned to be involuntary repatriated.⁴⁴ Consequently, the ICRC delegate from Vienna emphasized the importance of the ICRC travel documents, especially in the future, and asked for further instructions, including attitudes of the ICRC and the *Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees* in this matter.⁴⁵ What was happening it was disturbing, because since May or June 1945, when about 300,000 refugees who had tried to find refuge in Italy were massacred, the Allies had not put pressure on refugees to repatriate to their country of origin.⁴⁶ In order to resolve the issue of these persons, the ICRC Delegate announced a meeting with the representatives of the “UNRRA Mission” at Austria, and he requested an information on the point of view of the *Intergovernmental*

fer of Yugoslav displaced persons from Italy to Germany was the prelude to repatriation to Yugoslavia.

⁴³ CH-ACICR, G. 68/00/155, Réfugiés diverse en Autriche. Allied action for the repatriation of DPs, pp. 1-2. An annex attached to the Report (No. 549) of the Permanent Delegation of the ICRC in Austria, April 14, 1947. On the matter, see J. P. Chamberlain. “The Fate of Refugees and Displaced Persons.” pp. 86[194], 88[196]. Briefly, on UNRRA assistance in repatriation of Yugoslav citizens, see Branko Petranović, “Pomoć UNRE Jugoslaviji”, *Istorija XX. veka: Zbornik radova* II (1961): 206-209.

⁴⁴ CH-ACICR, G. 68/00/155, Réfugiés diverse en Autriche. Report (No. 549) of the Permanent Delegation of the ICRC in Austria, April 14, 1947.

⁴⁵ Ibidem. *Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees* (ICR), from London (1938-1947), was a refugee aid organization, established in July 1938, sought to facilitate the involuntary emigration from Germany and Austria of persons fleeing Nazi persecutions. It was the first international body to recognize that persons still in their countries of origin might qualify as refugees worthy of protection and assistance, and fleeing of their homelands because of political opinions, religious beliefs or racial origin. The protective functions of the ICR were enlarged in July 1946 to include those persons who are unwilling or unable to return to their country or of former habitual residence. See J. C. Hathaway. “The Evolution of Refugee Status in International Law: 1920-1950,”: 370-371

⁴⁶ CH-ACICR, G. 68/139, Réfugiés yougoslaves, Fasc : Réfugiés slovènes en Autriche et en Italie. Note (No. 6815/1314) by Dr. Hans Wolf de Salis, Head of the ICRC Directorate-General of Delegations in Italy, sent to the ICRC Division for prisoners, interned civilians and civilians, December 12, 1945, in which he emphasized “Aucune pression n’est plus exercée sur les réfugiés pour les à rapatrier. (Au début de l’émigration, c’est-à-dire au cours des mois de May et de juin 1945, 300.000 ressortissants Yougoslaves qui avaient tenté de se réfugier en Italie auraient été massacres.)”

Committee on Refugees from London concerning the issue.⁴⁷ That was in accordance with the provisions of the *London agreement* on the issue of refugees, adopted several months ago at the Conference held at London, on October 15, 1946, and the jurisdiction over the issue of refugees has been given to the states whose representatives have signed the Treaty.⁴⁸ According to the articles 1, 2, 8, and 16 of the Treaty, contracting governments should have been issuing travel documents for refugees, a document which would serve as a substitute for a national passport, and would be recognized by the countries of transit and the countries of resettlement.⁴⁹

On June 30, 1947, the UNRRA mandate ended as it was expected. However, many displaced persons still waited for their fate to be resolved. In early July 1947, about 6,000 Slovenian refugees settled in Carinthia, mostly in DP camps, and scattered around the country, approached the ICRC with a request for the issuance of the travel documents so they could be resettled to Argentina, for example.⁵⁰ Actually, Slovenian representatives in Rome and Buenos Aires have received approval of the Argentinian government for accepting and settling 10,000 Slovenes, and 3,500 entry visas have already been issued, and Slovenians needed travel documents with affixed Italian visa to leave Austria and to be registered at Argentinian Legation in Rome.⁵¹ On July 22, 1947, the ICRC expressed its good will to issue the travel documents, if these people fulfill the conditions required for this purpose.⁵² However, it was a difficult situation. The British military authorities in Austria had been op-

⁴⁷ CH-ACICR, G. 68/00/155, Réfugiés diverse en Autriche. Allied action for the repatriation of DPs. An annex attached to the Report (No. 549) of the Permanent Delegation of the ICRC in Austria, April 14, 1947.

⁴⁸ "Having examined a Resolution adopted by the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees at its Plenary Session on August 17, 1944, relating to the establishment of an identity and travel document for refugees who are the concern of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, (...) provided that the said refugees are stateless and or do not in fact enjoy the protection of any Government." See "Agreement Relating to the Issue of a Travel Document to Refugees Who Are the Concern of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees," *The International Law Quarterly* 1 (summer 1947): no. 2: 283.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 284-285. See also Otto Hieronymi, "The Nansen Passport: a Tool of Freedom of Movement and of Protection": 40-41.

⁵⁰ CH-ACICR, G.68/139, Réfugiés yougoslaves. Note by Dr. Franc Blatnik from DP camp Spittal sent to the ICRC Division of prisoners, interned civilians and civilians, July 4, 1947. CH-ACICR, G.68/139, Réfugiés yougoslaves. Note (No. 5490) by Paul Kuhne, an official of the ICRC Secretariat, sent to the ICRC Delegation at Rome, July 3, 1947.

⁵¹ CH-ACICR, G.68/139, Réfugiés yougoslaves. Note by Dr. Franc Blatnik from DP camp Spittal sent to the Division of prisoners and interned civilians of the ICRC, July 4, 1947.

⁵² CH-ACICR, G.68/139, Réfugiés yougoslaves. Note of the ICRC sent to Dr. Franc Blatnik, July 22, 1947.

posed to the idea of resettling these people in Argentina, and they wanted to encourage their repatriation to the country of origin.⁵³ Besides, the ICRC should have investigated and to find out the possibilities of temporarily receiving these people in Italy. According to the ICRC note sent to Slovenian representative, it was uncertain if the Italian authorities would declare their readiness to facilitate this transit, because they wanted to reduce the number of foreign refugees living in Italy, but if this will happen the ICRC shall proceed to the distribution of travel documents to these refugees.⁵⁴ However, it was questionable if this will happen because the Italian authorities, who should have granted entry visa to Slovenians to reach Rome, had been doing everything utmost to reduce the number of foreign refugees living on their territory, and it was certain they would oppose receiving an additional contingent of refugees.⁵⁵ Following these attitudes of the British authorities and Italian officials, even the Argentinian Consulate at Rome had received instructions prohibiting it from issuing visas to persons other than those residing in its consular district. That's why the ICRC decided to send a memorandum to the IRO in which it insisted on urgency of resolving that issue, and to send both to Italy and to Austria an Argentinian Commission which alone could be able to smooth out all the difficulties arising in this affair.⁵⁶ The situation has worsened after an agreement concluded on August 3, 1947, between the Commander-in-Chief of the English troops in Austria, General James Steele, and Marshal J. B. Tito, and according to its provisions, all the refugees from Yugoslavia found in the British occupation zone of Austria would have to be examined by a joint Anglo-Yugoslav political commission.⁵⁷ Due to the constant increase of the task in favor of refugees, Dr. Hans Wolf de Salis, the Head of the ICRC Directorate-General of Delegations in Italy, had asked its headquarters in Geneva for another stock of the 10.100 bis travel documents. Especially after the Preparatory Commission of the IRO came into operation, and the Allies conducted decisive activity to encourage the emigration of refugees

⁵³ CH-ACICR, G.68/139, Réfugiés yougoslaves. Note (No. 5490) by Paul Kuhne, an official of the ICRC Secretariat, sent to the ICRC Delegation at Rome, July 3, 1947.

⁵⁴ CH-ACICR, G.68/139, Réfugiés yougoslaves. Note of the ICRC sent to Dr. Franc Blatnik, July 22, 1947.

⁵⁵ CH-ACICR, G.68/139, Réfugiés yougoslaves. Note (No. 5490) by Paul Kuhne, an official of the ICRC Secretariat, sent to the ICRC Delegation at Rome, July 3, 1947.

⁵⁶ CH-ACICR, G. 68/139, Réfugiés yougoslaves, Fasc : Slovènes d'Autriche. Note (No. 5325) of the ICRC sent to the ICRC Delegation at Rome, December 12, 1947, in which the ICRC emphasized the data received from the ICRC Delegation from Austria (Salzburg, No. 15289, October 27, 1947).

⁵⁷ CH-ACICR, G. 68/139, Réfugiés yougoslaves, Fasc : Slovènes d'Autriche. Note (No. 955) of the ICRC Delegation from Salzburg to the ICRC Division for prisoners, interned civilians and civilians, October 18, 1947.

who found themselves in the Allied camps in Italy.⁵⁸ At the same time, de Salis proposed that the ICRC might take necessary steps with the Argentinian Government via its delegate in Buenos Aires to resolve the issue of high taxes for the issuing of entry visas, and the problem of inactivity of the Argentinian Consulate at Rome.⁵⁹ The ICRC was surprised with his requests, especially the proposal to give them the travel documents without further delay, because the exit authorization depended only on the British authorities in Carinthia, and the documents could not be given before this exit authorization has been granted. On the other hand, the ICRC suggested that IRO should intervene within the Argentinian authorities to fasten the procedures at the Argentinian Consulate at Rome.⁶⁰ However, still at the end of 1948, there was a significant number of refugees in the IRO camps in Austria who wanted to receive ICRC travel documents to be resettled to Argentina.⁶¹ The ICRC has shown good will in preparing the necessary documents to be forwarded to the IRO, and the transfer of refugees from Austria to Italy should not have been an issue, as it was the responsibility of the IRO. However, instead asking a collective visa for these people, the IRO has requested the occupation authorities in Austria grant their visas.⁶²

The ICRC travel document as a temporary document has not been governed by international convention. It was not an identity document, and certainly, it was not an official passport. However, numerous states acknowledged the document and gave it the status of an official travel document that the ICRC had never wanted it to have and the ICRC firmly rejected the proposal to give its travel document «a legal value it does not and should not have».⁶³ Moreover, the Argentine Consulates in Paris, Rome, and Shanghai recognized, apart from official passports, only the ICRC travel documents as a valid identity paper, for example.⁶⁴ Due to the large number of refugees who had been approaching the ICRC, the Apennine Peninsula became the most important place for the issuing of travel documents, and the ICRC estimated

⁵⁸ CH-ACICR, G. 68/139, Réfugiés yougoslaves, Fasc : Slovènes d'Autriche. Notes (No. 10513/2065 of July 17, and No. 10581/2069 of July 23, 1947) sent to the ICRC Division for prisoners, interned civilians and civilians.

⁵⁹ Ibidem.

⁶⁰ CH-ACICR, G. 68/139, Réfugiés yougoslaves, Fasc : Slovènes d'Autriche. Note (No. 5243) of the ICRC sent to the ICRC Delegation at Rome, August 18, 1947.

⁶¹ CH-ACICR, G. 68/00/155, Réfugiés divers en Autriche. Note (No. I./37/17639/2607) of the ICRC Directorate-General of Delegations in Italy sent to the ICRC Division for prisoners, interned civilians and civilians, November 11, 1948.

⁶² Ibidem.

⁶³ See I. Herrmann and D. Palmieri, "Refugees on the Run": 95.

⁶⁴ See *International Committee of the Red Cross. Report on General Activities (July 1, 1947 – December 31, 1948)*, p. 62.

its activities should have lasted until the end of September 1946.⁶⁵ However, due to the large number of refugees, the *London Agreement* (October 15, 1946) had placed the onus of issuance of travel documents on the Italian Government. This regulation had not been implemented, and instructions for its. Notes of application were drawn up in October 1947 among the International Refugee Organization (IRO), the Department of Legal Assistance to Aliens of the Italian Red Cross (AGIUS), and the ICRC Delegation. The intent of regulation was a permission to the ICRC to close its Delegation in Rome, however, in late 1947 the IRO representatives requested the ICRC to keep its Delegation in Italy open until further notice, and the delegates in Rome in collaboration with the IRO and the AGIUS continued to issue ICRC travel document.⁶⁶

Due to the fact that the UNRRA, as a specialized United Nations Agency, was not created in order to assist refugees, and it should have concluded its activities in favor of refugees and displaced persons in mid-1947; the necessity was the creation of a special agency responsible for the issue of the refugees (and stateless individuals, and displaced persons). Therefore, during 1946, in fact, before and after the Preliminary Conference of Red Cross Societies held in Geneva in mid-1946, there were discussions at the United Nations on the issue of refugees. Priority was the founding of a specialized agency for the protection of refugees, known as the *International Refugee Organization* (IRO).⁶⁷ At sessions held in early 1946, the British representatives proposed that all persons who refused repatriation to their country of origin be removed to one of the South American countries (Argentina, Chile, and Peru). Yugoslav representatives reacted sharply to the British proposals, claiming that there were war criminals hiding in those groups. The British attitude had strained tensions between Yugoslavia and Great Britain.⁶⁸ The Yugoslav attitude to-

⁶⁵ See D. Palmieri. "Le Comité international de la Croix-Rouge et les organisations pour les réfugiés": 22.

⁶⁶ See *International Committee of the Red Cross. Report on General Activities (July 1, 1947 – December 31, 1948)*, pp. 60-61.

⁶⁷ The UNRRA mandate ended in 1947 when the IRO was established to deal with those left in European camps and still arriving from Eastern Europe. The IRO was a temporary, inter-governmental United Nations Agency created to regularize the issue of Second World War's refugees. See L. Barnett, "Global Governance and the Evolution of the International Refugee Regime": 242-243. The Constitution of the IRO, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1946, contained the most detailed definition of a refugee. The IRO could assist only to persons who could not be repatriated, or who in complete freedom, and after receiving full knowledge of the facts (...) expressed valid objections to returning to [their countries of origin]. See J. C. Hathaway, "The Evolution of Refugee Status in International Law: 1920-1950": 374.

⁶⁸ For more, see Berislav Jandrić, "Prijepori saveznika oko zahtjeva Jugoslavije za izručenjem osumnjičenih za ratne zločine iz savezničkih izbjegličkih logora u Italiji 1945. – 1947." *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 38 (2006), no. 2: 462-466.

wards the issue of refugees got the support of the Soviet delegates, and the official Yugoslav newspaper the *Borba* (Belgrade) reminded on it in early November 1946.⁶⁹ However, by the Resolution enacted in the summer of 1945, and with the Directive of December 1945, the United Nations dispersed the meaning of the term “refugee” under its own care.⁷⁰ In mid-1946, the Yugoslav delegates at the Preliminary Conference of the Red Cross Societies held at Geneva rejected the interpretation of the term “refugee” adopted by the United Nations.⁷¹ Actually, when it became obvious that displaced persons would not have been extradited to Yugoslavia, the communist propaganda reinforced negative campaign towards the displaced persons of Yugoslav origin settled in the camps in Italy and Austria, also pointing out what kind of people the British are trying to protect. According to the Yugoslav press, the displaced persons in Austria were “fascist refugees” who terrorized and plundered the local population in Styria.⁷²

In the immediate post-war period, the number of Yugoslav refugees was large; however, by the end of 1946 and at the beginning of 1947, the number of these persons had been significantly reduced.⁷³ At the beginning of April 1946, in British, American, and French occupation zone of Austria were about 27,000 Croats, Slovenes and Serbs, of whom about 20,000 were settled in the British occupation zone of Austria, for example.⁷⁴ According to the data provided by the Permanent Delegation of the ICRC in Austria (Vienna), in the British occupation zone in Germany, in American occupation zones in Austria (Salzburg, and Upper Austria), and in the British DP camps in Italy, in

⁶⁹ “Veliki govor A. Višinskog o problemu izbjeglica i raseljenih lica“ [“The Great Speech of A. Višinskij on the Issue of the Refugees and Displaced Persons”], *Borba*, no. 270, November 11, 1946, p. 4.

⁷⁰ J. C. Hathaway, “The Evolution of Refugee Status in International Law: 1920-1950”: 372-373.

⁷¹ See *Conférence préliminaire des Sociétés nationales de la Croix-Rouge pour l'étude des Conventions et de divers problèmes ayant trait à la Croix-Rouge*, vol. IV, p. 28.

⁷² “Zločinačka djelatnost ‘raseljenih lica’ u Austriji” [“The Criminal Activity of ‘Displaced Persons’ in Austria”], *Borba*, no. 265, November 5, 1946, p. 1. Briefly, on the issue of displaced persons in Austria, see Dušan Nećak, “O problemu ‘razseljenih oseb’ (D. P.) in jugoslovanskih ‘Volksdeutscherjev’ v Avstriji ter o britanski ideji njihove zamenjave s koroškimi Slovenci (1945–1947),” *Zgodovinski časopis* 50 (1996): no. 4 (105): 561-571.

⁷³ CH-ACICR, G. 68/139, Réfugiés yougoslaves, 1939-1950., Fasc : Réfugiés slovènes en Autriche et en Italie. Note (No. 6815/1314) by Dr. Hans Wolf de Salis, Head of the ICRC Directorate-General of the Delegations in Italy, sent to the ICRC Division for prisoners, interned civilians and civilians, December 12, 1945, in which he stated that the number of Yugoslav refugees in Italy were reduced to 35,000 people.

⁷⁴ CH-ACICR, G. 68/139, Réfugiés yougoslaves, Fasc : Réfugiés slovènes en Autriche et en Italie. Note (No. 250) of the ICRC Delegation from Austria (Salzburg), accompanied by annex, sent to Paul Kühne, an official of the ICRC Secretariat, April 9, 1946.

early 1947, were about 29,500 displaced persons, who have been constantly refusing repatriation to Yugoslavia.⁷⁵ Those data coincide with the data provided by various—official and unofficial—informers (the ICRC, the Allies, individuals, the Church). In early 1946, according to the records and estimations of Krunoslav Draganović, Karlo Balić, and British military sources in Italy were among 10,000 and 25,000 Croats, while the Americans estimated the number of Croats in southern Austria and Italy among 10,000 and 12,000, which number Karlo Balić estimated even up to 35,000, maybe, in Rome only.⁷⁶ Therefore, data on the number of Yugoslav refugees and displaced persons provided by the ICRC Permanent Delegation of Vienna could be accurate. For all issues related to the issue of displaced persons, the Yugoslav authorities had been accusing the Allies, and they had the support of the USSR.⁷⁷ An extensive article published in the *Borba* clearly testifies on it. The Yugoslav press paraphrased the speech of Andrej J. Vyšinskij, Deputy Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, and permanent delegate of the USSR at United Nations, held at the session of the Third Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations within the discussion on the *International Refugee Organization* (IRO).⁷⁸ In early November 1946, the Deputy Vyšinskij emphasized that among displaced persons were about 10% of war criminals.⁷⁹ According to data on the number of displaced persons, it could be estimated that the Yugo-

⁷⁵ CH-ACICR, G. 68/00/155, Réfugiés diverse en Autriche. The Report (No. 549) of the Permanent Delegation of the ICRC in Austria, April 14, 1947, and the Annex on the allied activities for repatriation of displaced persons.

⁷⁶ Ivan Tepeš. “Croatian Peasant Party in Italy from 1945 to 1947.” *Review of Croatian History* 17 (2021), no. 1: 448-449.

⁷⁷ “Predstavnici Sjedinjenih Američkih Država i Engleske na vještački način otežavaju rješenje pitanja izbjeglica i raseljenih lica” [“Representatives of the United States of America and England in artificial way making it difficult to resolve the Issue of Refugees and Displaced Persons”], *Borba*, no. 272, November 13, 1946, p. 1. According to L. Barnett, the USSR never became a member of the IRO, as the Soviets felt that the IRO was merely protecting traitors and serving US policy. See L. Barnett, “Global Governance and the Evolution of the International Refugee Regime”: 244.

⁷⁸ SOCHUM or *The Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee* of the United Nations General Assembly, also known as *The United Nations General Assembly Third Committee*. It is one of six main committees at the General Assembly of the United Nations, and it deals with human rights, humanitarian affairs, and social matters. *United Nations/Nations Unies. Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during the First Part of its First Session from 10 January to 14 February 1946 / Résolutions adoptées par l'assemblée générale pendant la première partie de sa première session du 10 janvier au 14 février 1946* (Westminster London: Church House, 1946), pp. 4-7.

⁷⁹ “Veliki govor A. Višinskog o problemu izbjeglica i raseljenih lica” [“The Great Speech of A. Višinskij on the Issue of the Refugees and Displaced Persons”], *Borba*, no. 270, November 11, 1946, p. 4.

slav authorities requested an extradition of 3,000 persons. The Allies intended to concentrate them in refugee and DPs camps in Germany, and very soon, the British military authorities have started the dissolution of Yugoslav DP camps in Italy.⁸⁰ The Deputy Vyšinskij especially pointed out the *Yugoslav case*, and added that the Soviet delegation, still in February 1946, has requested the extradition of these persons to Yugoslavia, so they could be punished for war crimes. Vyšinskij emphasized they were “bandit organizations and mercenaries” collected in reservoirs for Yugoslav and Polish refugees in Austria by the Allied military forces.⁸¹

However, all Yugoslav proposals on the resolving of the issue of displaced persons, the American representatives characterized as interfering in the internal affairs of neighbors, and that additionally strained already strained relations between Yugoslavia and the Allies.⁸² In fact, the issues of the founding of the United Nations specialized Agency for refugees, process of repatriation, resettlement of the displaced persons, and extradition of war criminals were the main reasons for the strained relations between Yugoslavia, Great Britain and the United States. Following the involuntary repatriation of Yugoslav citizens from Austria in Mid-May of 1945 (Bleiburg), the Allied military authorities began to hesitate in complying with the Yugoslav requests for the repatriation of displaced persons.⁸³ According to the American historian Amy K. Schmidt, the decisive role in consolidation of such an attitude was played by *show trials*, especially the *show trial* to the Archbishop of Zagreb,

⁸⁰ CH-ACICR, G. 68/00/155, Réfugiés diverse en Autriche. Annex on the allied activities for repatriation of displaced persons attached to the Report (No. 549) of the Permanent Delegation of the ICRC from Vienna, April 14, 1947. This information was confirmed to the ICRC on the one hand by a radio communication of April 20, 1947, emanating from the BBC, and on the other hand, by the ICRC Delegation from Vienna, which informed the ICRC of the forthcoming transfer of some 12,000 Yugoslav Displaced Persons to Germany. CH-ACICR, G. 68/139, Réfugiés yougoslaves, Fasc. Yougoslaves en Italie. Note (No. 6306, April 17) of the ICRC Delegation from Rome sent to the ICRC, and paraphrased by Paul Kuhne, an official of the ICRC Secretariat, in his Note (No. 1407) sent to the Delegation of the ICRC in Vlotho (Germany). May 5, 1947.

⁸¹ “Veliki govor A. Višinskog o problemu izbjeglica i raseljenih lica.” [“The Great Speech of A. Vyšinskij on the Issue of the Refugees and Displaced Persons”], *Borba*, no. 270, November 11, 1946, p. 4.

⁸² “Komitet za socijalna, humanitarna i kulturna pitanja raspravljao je o nacrtu statuta Međunarodne organizacije za izbjeglice i raseljena lica” [“The Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs Committee discussed the Draft Statute of the International Organization for Refugees and Displaced Persons”], *Borba*, No. 274, November 16, 1946, p. 2.

⁸³ See Martina Grahek Ravančić, “Izručjenja zarobljenika s bleiburškog polja i okolice u svibnju 1945,” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 39 (2007), no. 3: 531-550; Martina Grahek Ravančić, “Izručjenja i sudbine zarobljenika smještenih u savezničkim logorima u svibnju 1945,” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 41 (2009), no. 2: 391-416.

Alojzije Stepinac, and the negative attitude towards Tito's courts slowed down the extradition of displaced persons.⁸⁴ Later events have shown, in fact that *show trial* to the Archbishop of Zagreb had an extremely strong impact and directly influenced the official policy of the Allies regarding the issue of Yugoslav refugees and displaced persons in the immediate post-war period. After the first extraditions, the Allied authorities began accepting displaced persons from Yugoslavia, and settling them in refugee camps. Moreover, the Allies expanded the same attitude on the Yugoslav requests for an extradition of the war-crime suspects, and the issue of war criminals additionally aggravated already strained relations with Yugoslavia.⁸⁵ Almost at the same time, and due to the shooting down of an American transport aircraft over Slovenia on August 19, 1946, Yugoslavia had been exposed to diplomatic pressure, followed by allegations that the Yugoslav authorities were violating provisions of the international law. Yugoslav press, what was an official point of view of the Yugoslav authorities, rejected all allegations and concluded there is a "tendency to show Yugoslavia as one of the states where the provisions of the international law were not applied (...) ruled by some Balkan, semi-wild and irresponsible governments who do not want a peace."⁸⁶ With their attitude at the end of the Second World War and in the aftermath of it, the Yugoslav authorities showed they had not adhered to the prescribed, signed, and ratified provisions of the *International Law of Armed Conflict*.⁸⁷ However, the shooting down of an American transport aircraft confirmed these opinions because the pilot and the crewmembers had no treatment according to the international customs. All of that had been sharpening extremely important issue of the refugees and displaced persons of Yugoslav origin settled in the allied camps in Austria and

⁸⁴ Amy K. Schmidt, "Drugi svjetski rat na prostoru bivše Jugoslavije u dokumentima Državnog arhiva u Washingtonu," *Arhivski vjesnik* 42 (1999): 306, 310. On the matter of show trial to the Archbishop, and to the officials of the Independent State of Croatia see Zdenko Radelić, *Hrvatska u Jugoslaviji 1945.-1991.: od zajedništva do razlaza* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga and Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2006), p. 107 ff.

⁸⁵ Briefly, on the aggravation of Yugoslav-American-British relations during 1945 and 1946 because of the issue of refugees and displaced persons, see Berislav Jandrić, "Prijeponi saveznika oko zahtjeva Jugoslavije za izručenjem osumnjičenih za ratne zločine iz savezničkih izbjegličkih logora u Italiji 1945. - 1947.": 457.-498. See Katarina Spehnjak, *Britanski pogled na Hrvatsku 1945. - 1948.* (Zagreb: Golden marketing - Tehnička knjiga, 2006), pp. 140-166.

⁸⁶ Tvrtko Jakovina, *Američki komunistički saveznik: Hrvati, Titova Jugoslavija i Sjedinjene Američke Države* (Zagreb: Profil and Srednja Europa, 2003), pp. 66-67.

⁸⁷ Briefly, see M. Kevo, "Uspostava veza Međunarodnoga odbora Crvenoga križa i Narodnooslobodilačke vojske i partizanskih odreda Jugoslavije za vrijeme Drugoga svjetskog rata": 592-601 and there cited bibliography.

Italy, and their repatriation—involuntary if necessary—had been constantly requesting by the Yugoslav authorities.⁸⁸

Following unsuccessful requests on the return of displaced persons from the occupied Austria, and the issue of the ICRC travel documents, the Yugoslav allegations towards the ICRC have arisen. The Yugoslav authorities have used already known and common methods of attack via articles published in the *Borba*, an official newspaper of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. On November 26, 1946, it was published an extensive and unsigned article with an extremely negative attitude towards the ICRC. Under the disguise of unresolved issues of the Red Cross, the anonymous author attacked the ICRC for covering Nazi atrocities during the Second World War, and as he stated „it is known that the International Committee denuded itself as one pro-fascist Organization who helped to Hitler’s executioners in hiding their atrocities.”⁸⁹ “The ICRC and its leadership were very well aware of the *modus operandi* of the Yugoslav authorities, and articles published in the *Borba* and in the *Yugoslav Red Cross* were interpreted as an official attitude of the Yugoslav authorities. The Head of the Permanent Delegation of the ICRC at Belgrade, Dr. François Jaeggy, expressed the same opinion. In a memorandum of December 26, 1946, he had reported on an attack entitling it as “The attitude of the Yugoslav authorities towards the ICRC and its activities.”⁹⁰ Dr. Jaeggy sent a translation of an article published in the *Borba*. He had also included two articles published in the first two issues of the newly launched the *Yugoslav Red Cross*, in which the Yugoslav Red Cross Secretary-General Jaroslava Ribnikar wrote serious allegations towards the ICRC and its activities carried on during the Second World War, and asked for further instructions concerning the specified press campaign.⁹¹

Several weeks after the article in *Borba* was published, the first annual General Assembly of the Yugoslav Red Cross took place in Belgrade. The convoked representatives of the Yugoslav Red Cross have been discussing allega-

⁸⁸ Involuntary (forced) repatriation is the return of refugees, POWs, and civilian detainees to their country of origin under circumstances that leave no other viable alternatives, as did happened at Bleiburg in mid-May 1945.

⁸⁹ “Međunarodni Komitet Crvenog Križa u Švicarskoj, koji je u ratu pokrivao hitlerovske zločine, pokušava da omete međunarodnu situaciju u pitanjima Crvenog križa” [“The International Committee of the Red Cross from Switzerland, which covered Hitler’s Crimes during the War, is trying to obstruct the international situation in Red Cross matters”], *Borba*, no. 283, November 26, 1946, p. 3.

⁹⁰ CH-ACICR, CR 00/52-196, Croix-Rouge yougoslave (201-397, 20.03.1934-06.11.1950), No. 335, Brief notice (No. 618/1946) of Dr. François Jaeggy, Head of the Delegation of the ICRC in Belgrade, sent to the ICRC in Geneva, December 26, 1946.

⁹¹ *Ibidem*.

tions towards the ICRC, and they adopted the Resolution of the first annual General Assembly of the Yugoslav Red Cross with guidelines for the strengthening of the National Red Cross Society. The Yugoslav Red Cross supported overall activities of the LRCS, as well as continued cooperation with the LRCS and with the other National Red Cross Societies in strengthening of the *International Red Cross Movement*. However, there was no mention of the ICRC, as if it did not exist at all.⁹² For better understanding, I shall explain guidelines adopted by the Yugoslav Red Cross. It was almost impossible to be a part of the *Red Cross Movement* and not to maintain any relations with the ICRC. The ICRC has been the founder of the entire *Red Cross Movement*, the key element in the process of recognizing new National Red Cross Societies, and the guardian of the fundamental principles of the work. Accordingly, the work of the Yugoslav Red Cross, as well as the work of any other internationally recognized National Red Cross Society, could not be carried on without the participation of the ICRC. However, the Yugoslav Red Cross attitude in the above-mentioned form with keeping silent and ignoring the existence of the ICRC was actually the expression of the official point of view of the Yugoslav authorities concerning the work of the ICRC. Although these points of view published in the newspapers could have been considered the points of view of some individuals or the newspaper's Editorial Board, the conclusions implemented in the Yugoslav Red Cross Resolution had confirmed that it was the official position of the Yugoslav authorities. The ICRC had become an undesirable Organization that opposed the Yugoslav interests, and the specified Yugoslav path was already evident even earlier, at the beginning of the Preliminary Conference of the National Red Cross Societies, held at Geneva. In opening speech on July 26, 1946, the Head of the Yugoslav Delegation, Dr. Nikola Nikolić, asserted Yugoslav's desire to strengthen the Power and Authority of the LRCS. The Yugoslav Delegation declared that it considers that the LRCS is the only body competent to examine and to make decisions with regard to all questions of the Red Cross. Therefore, the Yugoslav Delegation considered that the Conference convened by the ICRC did not have the competence to take decisions concerning all the problems of the Red Cross and consequently it considered it as private and informative.⁹³

Over here, as a reflection of the mentioned Yugoslav attitude, it is interesting to mention the issue of the funding of the ICRC and its activities. In

⁹² "Rezolucija prve glavne godišnje skupštine Jugoslavenskog Crvenog križa" ["The Resolution of the first annual General Assembly of the Yugoslav Red Cross"], *Borba*, no. 302, December 18, 1946, p. 2.

⁹³ *Conférence préliminaire des Sociétés nationales de la Croix-Rouge pour l'étude des Conventions et de divers problèmes ayant trait à la Croix-Rouge (Genève, 26 juillet - 3 août 1946)*, vol. I, pp. 23-24.

the immediate post-war period, the ICRC has found itself in an almost catastrophic financial situation. Therefore, during the Preliminary Conference, held at Geneva from July 26 to August 3, 1946, the National Red Cross Societies had been voted the Extraordinary Contribution to the ICRC to cover its expenses, and to be paid by Governments and National Red Cross Societies.⁹⁴ The National Red Cross Societies of Bulgaria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia paid their shares of the Contribution for years 1947 and 1948, for example. However, as the reflection of an attitude that the ICRC has loosed on its importance, nor the Yugoslav Red Cross, nor the Yugoslav Government had not paid their shares of the Contribution (nor Albania, Poland, and Romania), and that was identical to the attitude of the USSR, which did not maintained relations with the ICRC.⁹⁵

The conflict continued with the participation of representatives of the Yugoslav authorities. Actually, on December 18, 1946, the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent an extensive Note to the Permanent Delegation of the ICRC in Belgrade, in which it asked for an explanation on several issues. It was very much interested in an explanation why did the ICRC transfer all the warranties of the *Joint Relief Commission (Commission Mixte Secours)*, the joint commission of the ICRC and the LRCS, to the *Centre d'entraide Internationale aux populations civiles*. However, for the Yugoslav authorities, it was much more important an explanation why did the ICRC express its negative attitude towards the issue of repatriation of displaced persons from the Allied countries. The Minister especially emphasized that the issue of repatriation of displaced persons at the time was purely political, and that the ICRC, as an apolitical organization, should not have to interfere.⁹⁶ In addition, he protested against the Memorandum of July 2, 1946, sent to Yugoslavia by the ICRC, in which was requested the repatriation of German POWs, and requested an explanation why did the ICRC requested the provisions of the *Geneva conventions* to be applied on war criminals.⁹⁷ Concerning the last issue, the Minister expressed serious allegations towards the work of the ICRC, and for covering the Nazi atrocities during the war.⁹⁸ The ICRC prepared an extensive answer to all Yugoslav allegations.⁹⁹ On the matter of cooperation with

⁹⁴ See *International Committee of the Red Cross. Report on General Activities (July 1, 1947 – December 31, 1948)*, pp. 15-20.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁶ CH-ACICR, G. 17/00 III, Généralité, Yougoslavie (1946-1947). The Memorandum (No. 14.706) of the Yugoslav Minister of Foreign Affairs, December 18, 1946, p. 1.

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 2.

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

⁹⁹ CH-ACICR, G. 17/00/139, Généralités concernant Yougoslaves, Fasc. G. 17/00-6.1 = G. 17/00 III. "Accustations de Gouvernement yougoslave", Confidential note by Georges Dunand,

the *International Centre for Relief to Civilian Populations (Centre d'entraide Internationale aux populations civiles)*, the ICRC emphasized that the *Joint Relief Commission* concludes its work on December 31, 1946. Therefore, the ICRC had greatly reduced the scale of its relief work for civilian populations, because the wishes of the donors made it increasingly difficult to distribute supplies in conformity with the ICRC's principle of impartiality.¹⁰⁰ The negative attitude of the ICRC towards the repatriation of displaced persons was coordinated with the Resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations of February 12, 1946, according to which provisions not even one refugee or displaced person shall not be forced to repatriate to the country of origin.¹⁰¹ Meanwhile, on October 15, 1946, it was signed the *London Agreement*, which provisions regularized the issuance of travel documents for refugees under the responsibility of the *Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees*. However, Yugoslavia was not one of the signing parties.¹⁰²

Answer of the ICRC and Closure of the Conflict

During the confrontation with the Yugoslav Red Cross and Yugoslav authorities, the ICRC began collecting materials on its activities carried out in favor of victims of Yugoslav origin during the war. To the end of July 1946, the ICRC prepared extensive documentation, which was the basis for an answer to the Yugoslav allegations.¹⁰³ In preparing materials, the ICRC included all

delegate of the ICRC, sent to Roger Gallopin, Head of the ICRC Division of prisoners, interned civilians and civilians, Deputy Secretary-General, and Chief of Operations, January 15, 1947, accompanied by several annexes.

¹⁰⁰ Later the ICRC proposed to Governments and Occupation Authorities in Europe that they should grant the *Centre d'entraide* the right of acting directly and independently. For more, see *International Committee of the Red Cross: Report on General Activities (July 1, 1947 – December 31, 1948)*, pp. 83-84.

¹⁰¹ CH-ACICR, G. 17/00/139, Généralités concernant Yougoslaves, Fasc. G. 17/00-6.1 = G. 17/00 III. Mémoire au Gouvernement Yougoslave (août 46-mars 48). Projet de la réponse au Yougoslavie, January 24, 1947, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰² "Agreement Relating to the Issue of a Travel Document to Refugees Who Are the Concern of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees," *The International Law Quarterly* 1 (summer 1947), no. 1: 283-286. See also *Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, Final Act of the Intergovernmental Conference on the adoption of a travel document for Refugees and Agreement relating to the issue of a travel document to refugees who are the concern of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, 15 October 1946. United Nations – Treaty Series (UNTS)*, XI, No. 150 (1947): 73-105.

¹⁰³ CH-ACICR, G. 17/00-I., Généralités PG, Questions yougoslaves (janvier 46 – juillet 47). Note to the Division of Delegations of the ICRC, July 25, 1946.

divisions, departments and services of the ICRC. That documentation was the basis for several memorandums followed with a series of notes, documents, and letters concerning the work of the ICRC in favor of Yugoslav partisans during the war, previously sent to Dr. Nikola Nikolić, former representative of the Yugoslav Red Cross in Geneva.¹⁰⁴

From 1941 to March 31, 1946, according to the preliminary data of the Special Relief Division (*Division de Secours*), the ICRC has delivered over 26 thousand tons of relief to 123,000 Yugoslav prisoners of war (partisans included), who has been imprisoned in the concentration camps all over the Europe during the war (Table 1).¹⁰⁵ Following the instructions of the Yugoslav Committee of the Red Cross in London, Yugoslav POWs have been receiving two standard food parcels of 5 kg and 50 to 100 cigarettes per man per month.¹⁰⁶

Table No. 1. Aid shipments sent to the Yugoslav POWs by the Relief Division of the International Committee of the Red Cross (1941–March 31, 1946)

Type of aid	Kg	In total (%)
Food	23,757,869	88,04
Clothes	2,226,179	8,25
Toiletries	461,423	1,71
Tobacco	421,569	1,56
Medicines	106,558	0,40
Miscellaneous items	10,959	0,04
In total	26,984,557.-	100,00

Source: “Envois de Secours aux prisonniers de guerre yougoslaves détenus dans des camps en Europe (1941-1946)”, Report of the ICRC Relief Division sent to its Secretariat, July 24, 1946. CH-ACICR, G. 17, Camps-Listes des effectifs-courrier des délégations CICR 1939.-1950., G. 17/00-II, Généralités PG, Questions yougoslaves (janvier 46 – juillet 47).

The most important Memorandum of the ICRC to the Yugoslav Government contains 45 closely printed pages, divided into 5 basic chapters with

¹⁰⁴ CH-ACICR, G. 17/00-I., Généralités PG, Questions yougoslaves (janvier 46 – juillet 47). List of the documents on the most important activities in favor of Yugoslav citizens during the Second World War, July 25, 1946.

¹⁰⁵ CH-ACICR., G. 17/00-II., Généralités PG, Questions yougoslaves (janvier 46 – juillet 47). Report of the ICRC Relief Division entitled “Envois de Secours aux prisonniers de guerre yougoslaves détenus dans des camps en Europe (1941-1946)” sent to the ICRC Secretariat, July 24, 1946.

¹⁰⁶ Ibidem.

subchapters, and it was finished at the beginning of March 1947.¹⁰⁷ The first part of the Memorandum summarizes the most important activities of the ICRC delegates in visits to Yugoslav POWs, and general activities on behalf of the Yugoslav POWs and to all other victims of the war. In particular, the ICRC presented the most important data on visits to concentration camps in the German Reich and Norway. The ICRC's activities in Italy are divided into three smaller subchapters summarizing its activities before and after the capitulation of Italy in early September 1943, and outlined an overview of its activities carried on after June 1946, after Allied forces liberated most of Italy.¹⁰⁸ The second part of the Memorandum contains two chapters with the overview of activities of the ICRC delegations in Belgrade and Zagreb.¹⁰⁹ The third part of the Memorandum contains the most important data on delivering aid to the Yugoslav POWs, also an overview on material and intellectual aid, and most important data of the work of the *Yugoslav service (Service yougoslave)* of the ICRC's *Central Agency of Prisoners of War*.¹¹⁰ An overview of the most important activities concerning the repatriation of severely wounded and sick Yugoslav POWs and medical staff describes the fourth part of the Memorandum.¹¹¹ The fifth part contains three basic subchapters with an overview of the special issues resolved by the ICRC.¹¹² Some of these important issues were the establishing of official relations with the members of the Yugoslav Partisan Movement, and the efforts of the ICRC to expand provisions of the *International Law of Armed Conflict* to the members of the Yugoslav Partisan Movement. In the fifth and final part of the Memorandum, the ICRC also showed legal assistance provided to the Yugoslav POWs during the previous period (1941-1945).¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ CH-ACICR, G. 17/00/139, Généralités concernant Yougoslaves, Fasc. G. 17/00-6.2 = G. 17/00 III. Généralité, Mémorandum au Gouvernement Yougoslave, March 4, 1947. For some aspects of the work of the ICRC, see Mario Kevo, "Neki aspekti rada Središnje agencije za ratne zarobljenike Međunarodnog odbora Crvenog križa u korist ratnih stradalnika s područja Nezavisne Države Hrvatske," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 44 (2012), no. 3: 651-678.

¹⁰⁸ CH-ACICR, G. 17/00 III, Généralité, Mémorandum au Gouvernement Yougoslave, 4. III. 1947., pp. 2-12.

¹⁰⁹ Ibidem, pp. 12-26.

¹¹⁰ Ibidem, pp. 26-31.

¹¹¹ Ibidem, pp. 31-34.

¹¹² Ibidem, pp. 34-44.

¹¹³ In addition to the memorandum, the ICRC attached several annexes:

a) List of visits of the ICRC's delegates to the Yugoslav POWs in concentration camps on the territory of the German Reich and Norway (April 1941 to May 7, 1945. The list contains 13 pages, and the ICRC made it on August 2, 1946). b) Summarized list of aid delivered to the Yugoslav POWs and interned civilians in concentration camps in Italy and Albania (August 27, 1941 to June 30, 1945. The list contains one page, and the ICRC made it on August

The ICRC made great efforts in distributing aid to Yugoslav citizens during the Second World War, and some of these efforts were mentioned in previous Memorandum. However, numerical indicators show much easier the scale of activities in favor of Yugoslav citizens. Thus, the following table (No. 2) shows part of the aid provided from May 1, 1941 to June 30, 1946, by the *Joint Relief Commission* of the ICRC and the LRCS, delivered to the territory of then occupied Yugoslavia. The calculation was made as a part of the preparation of material by which the ICRC responded to the Yugoslav allegations regarding its activities during the war.

Table No. 2 Aid shipments' value sent to Yugoslavia by the Joint Relief Commission of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies (1941-1946)–in CHF

Year	Food and clothing	Pharmaceuticals	Total	%
1941.	0,00	44.420,95	44.420,95	0,22
1942.	308.063,00	254.759,15	562.822,15	2,79
1943.	5,663.527,00	942.121,60	6,605.648,60	32,70
1944.	5,902.328,00	1,403.849,30	7,306.177,30	36,17
1945.	1,337.554,00	863.675,20	2,201.229,20	10,90
1946.	3,250.026,00	228.403,40	3,478.429,40	17,22
Total	16,461.498,00	3,737.229,60	20,198.727,60	100,00
%	81,50	18,50	100,00	%

Source: *Report of the Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross 1941-1946* (Geneva: Joint Relief Commission of the International Red Cross Committee and League of Red Cross Societies, International Committee of the Red Cross and League of Red Cross Societies, 1948), p. 352.

According to the data presented in the table, almost a quarter of the aid sent to the Yugoslavia, the *Joint Relief Commission* delivered to the members of the Partisan Movement of Yugoslavia and to the new authorities in the immediate post-war period. In accordance with the fact that some amount of the aid has been delivered to the members of the Partisan Movement since late 1943, it could be assumed that the aid delivered to the Yugoslav partisans and to the new Yugoslav authorities has been even bigger (up to 30 or even 40% of

10, 1943). c) Confirmations on receiving humanitarian aid sent by the ICRC, issued in concentration camps of Jasenovac and Stara Gradiška. d) Summarized calculation of provided aid. e) Brochure of the *Joint Relief Commission* of the ICRC and LRCS on delivering aid to Yugoslavia (1941 to June 30, 1945) – *Envois de secours en Yougoslavie de 1941 au 30 juin 1945* (Genève: Commission mixte de Secours de la Croix-Rouge internationale, January 1946), pp. 1-16. CH-ACICR, G. 3/48s – Mission de MMs. Gloor-Marti et Siordet aux Balkans, 1947-1949, Correspondance diverse 1947-1949 et Dossier préparatoire constitué aux archives 1947. Le dossier concernant l'activité du CICR pour les Yougoslaves, Annexe No. 4.

all the aid). The results of the inquiry the ICRC sent to the National Red Cross Society of Yugoslavia.

On February 14, 1947, the Vice-President of the ICRC Dr. Ernest Gloor sent a letter to the President of the Yugoslav Red Cross, Dr. Vojislav Kecmanović, concerning the Yugoslav allegations published in the first two issues of the periodical *the Yugoslav Red Cross*. To the letter, Dr. Gloor had attached the response of the ICRC emphasizing basic principles of the work of the ICRC carried out during the war, and he requested that the answer be integrally published in French in the next issue of the *Yugoslav Red Cross*.¹¹⁴ The Yugoslav Red Cross complied with the request and distributed the Memorandum of the ICRC to all National Red Cross Societies; accompanied with the first two issues of the periodical *the Yugoslav Red Cross*, containing allegations towards the ICRC.¹¹⁵ However, to the answer of the ICRC, it was attached an open letter of the Vice-President of the Yugoslav Red Cross Dr. Drago Marušić and a member of the central political authorities of Yugoslavia, in which he emphasized allegations over the ICRC (covering Nazi crimes, hiding the real situation in Nazi-camps to the entire world).¹¹⁶ In the letter, Dr. Marušić emphasized the new allegations. He has drawn a parallel with the Jasenovac concentration camp (founded by the authorities of the Independent State of Croatia; the state recognized by the Axis powers, and their satellites), and the issue of aid for inmates that the ICRC forwarded to the war criminals.¹¹⁷ Dr. Marušić also emphasized the fact that the ICRC recognized the Independent State of Croatia that was included in a Memorandum of the Ustasha authorities, carried to the Allies by the Ustasha official, Vjekoslav Vrančić.¹¹⁸ Following the new allegations of the Yugoslav Red Cross, the Vice-Presidents of the ICRC, Dr. Ernest Gloor and Martin Bodmer, sent an extensive open letter

¹¹⁴ CH-ACICR, CR 00/52-196, Croix-Rouge yougoslave (201-397, 20.03.1934-06.11.1950), No. 337. Letter of Dr. Ernest Gloor. February 14, 1947. Including the annex No. 1 (8 pages) – Réponse du CICR aux accusations de la CR yougoslave, Genève, le 14 février 1947.

¹¹⁵ CH-ACICR, CR 00/52-196, Croix-Rouge yougoslave (201-397, 20.03.1934-06.11.1950), No. 340 bis. Note of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Red Cross sent to the ICRC, May 5, 1945.

¹¹⁶ CH-ACICR, CR 00/52-196, Croix-Rouge yougoslave (201-397, 20.03.1934-06.11.1950), No. 340. Letter (No, 2357) of the Vice-President of the Yugoslav Red Cross, Dr. Drago Marušić, sent to the Vice-President of the ICRC, Dr. Ernest Gloor. April 26, 1947. For more, see C. Reyschryr, *From Yalta to Dien Bien Phu*, pp. 61 ff.

¹¹⁷ “De plus les personnes tels que Ivica Brkljacic, Josip Mataja, Mirko Runjas, Dinko Sakic et d’autres, auxquels le Comité International de la Croix-Rouge remettait les médicaments, les vêtements et les vivres pour les prisonniers, sont connues comme les criminels oustaches les plus cruels et les plus sanglants.” CH-ACICR, G. 17/00 III, Généralité, Yougoslavie (1946-1947). The letter of Dr. Drago Marušić sent to Dr. Ernest Gloor, April 26, 1947, pp. 3-4.

¹¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 3.

on the issue to the Yugoslav Red Cross, and forwarded it to the central committees of all National Red Cross Societies.¹¹⁹ In the letter, they emphasized the explanations already given on previous allegations, and a well-known fact that the ICRC, as a private organization of Swiss citizens, recognizes new national Red Cross societies, and therefore, the ICRC has not recognized the Independent State of Croatia. To avoid possible confusion, they stressed out, the ICRC has not recognized nor even the Red Cross Society of the “Independent Croat State.”¹²⁰ Almost at the same time, the ICRC has closed its Permanent Delegation in Belgrade, and had been maintaining further contacts by sending temporary delegations to resolve important issues of the Red Cross, as it was, for instance, the Mission of the Vice-President Dr. Gloor sent to Belgrade, in September 1947.¹²¹ Following all of these events, further discussion has been stopped.

The conflict between Yugoslavia (the Yugoslav Red Cross supported by the Yugoslav authorities) and the ICRC should have culminated at the 17th International Red Cross Conference convened for late August 1948, to be held at Stockholm (Sweden). However, the Yugoslav Red Cross concluded its confrontation with the ICRC in mid-1947. In the meantime, the USSR refused to participate in the work of the 17th International Red Cross Conference, because one of the organizers was the ICRC with which the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR did not maintain relations.¹²² At the same time, the Government of the USSR protested against the ICRC and its activities carried on during the Second World War, for covering of Nazi-crimes and

¹¹⁹ CH-ACICR, CR00/52 – 196, s. n. Letter of the Vice-Presidents of the ICRC Dr. Ernest Gloor and Martin Bodmer sent to the Central Committees of National Red Cross Societies, July 9, 1947.

¹²⁰ CH-ACICR, CR00/52 – 196, s. n. An open letter of the Vice-Presidents of the ICRC Dr. Ernest Gloor and Martin Bodmer sent to the Vice-President of the Yugoslav Red Cross Dr. Drago Marušič, July 9, 1947, p. 4.

¹²¹ CH-ACICR, G. 3/48s, Balkans-Europe Centrale – Gloor-Marti-Sjordet, septembre 1947. The ICRC closed its Permanent Delegation in Belgrade in the spring of 1947, and it was represented in the Balkans by the Delegation in Bucharest, which in turn was wound up in the fall of 1947. At that time, in September 1947, at the Regional Conference of European Red Cross Societies held at Belgrade, the ICRC representatives made contacts with the Governments and National Red Cross Societies in Belgrade, Bucharest, Sofia, Tirana, and Budapest. These delegates advised the ICRC to maintain representation in South-East Europe through periodic missions. See *International Committee of the Red Cross. Report on General Activities (July 1, 1947 – December 31, 1948)*, pp. 14, 29.

¹²² *Seventeenth International Red Cross Conference of the Red Cross, Stockholm, 20-30 August 1948. Report* (Stockholm: Swedish Red Cross Society, 1948), pp. 30, 32.

against the ICRC's "hostile attitude towards the USSR."¹²³ Dr. Paul Ruegger, the President of the ICRC, rejected all of those allegations, but Eastern-bloc States followed USSR's decision, supported the Soviet allegations, and the Conference had no representatives of Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia and even Yugoslavia, whose representatives sent letters to the Count Folke Bernadotte, the President of the Conference and the President of the Swedish Red Cross.¹²⁴ In parallel to the preparations of the Conference, some other events happened, and they had an impact on the conflict. The ICRC prepared extensive documentation towards the Yugoslav allegations, and at the same time prepared voluminous reports on overall activities conducted during the war (presented and adopted at the Conference).¹²⁵ Additionally, it was a time of serious misunderstandings among Yugoslavia, Great Britain and the USA, but the most important event was the conflict between Yugoslavia and the USSR. After the Resolution adopted on June 28, 1948, Yugoslavia was expelled from the Cominform, and it was isolated from the international community.

That the Yugoslav attitude towards the ICRC had changed was quite apparent at the 18th International Red Cross Conference, held at Toronto during July and August 1952, at which Yugoslavia were represented by a significant delegation of governmental and National Red Cross Society's representatives.¹²⁶ At the same event, the second encounter between the ICRC and the

¹²³ "During the war the International Committee of the Red Cross did not protest against the fascist crimes and against the gravest violations of the International Conventions concerning the sick, wounded and prisoners of war committed by Hitler Germany. It is also a known fact that the International Committee of the Red Cross took up an unfriendly attitude towards the Soviet Union", *Seventeenth International Red Cross Conference of the Red Cross, Stockholm*, p. 31.

¹²⁴ *Seventeenth International Red Cross Conference of the Red Cross, Stockholm*, pp. 8-17 (List of delegates), 32. F. Bugnion, "The International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent: challenges, key issues and achievement": 699.

¹²⁵ The ICRC submitted reports on its activities during the Second World War to the 17th International Red Cross Conference. The then approved reports were adopted by resolutions. *Seventeenth International Red Cross Conference of the Red Cross, Stockholm*, pp. 87, 96, 107. These reports are *Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross on its activities during the Second World War (September 1, 1939 – June 30, 1947)*, vol. I: *General Activities* (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, May 1948); *Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross on its activities during the Second World War (September 1, 1939 – June 30, 1947)*, vol. II: *The Central Agency for Prisoners of War* (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, May 1948); *Rapport du Comité International de la Croix-Rouge sur son activité pendant la seconde guerre mondiale (1^{er} septembre 1939 – 30 juin 1947)*, vol. III: *Actions de Secours* (Genève: Comité International de la Croix-Rouge, Juin 1948), and *Inter Arma Caritas: The Work of the International Committee of the Red Cross during the Second World War* (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, 1947).

¹²⁶ The delegation led by Dr. Pavle Gregorić who was, at the then time, Minister of Health, Social Welfare and Labor (Actually the President of the Committee, later Council of the

USSR took place, i.e., as it is noted – “During the Conference, the Soviet Delegation launched numerous attacks against the ICRC on the subject of revising Statutes of the International Red Cross. The Head of the Soviet Delegation declared that his delegation recognized “neither the Statutes nor the Rules of Procedure incorporating articles which grant the so-called I.C.R.C. the functions and rights of an international organization. That Committee is not an impartial international organization because it had definitely taken sides. The Soviet delegation also accused the ICRC of perpetrating crimes against humanity and of violating the international conventions.”¹²⁷ At the Conference, the ICRC replied via its President, Dr. Paul Ruegger, and rejected all those allegations, and subsequently the ICRC has published the answer in its annual report for the year 1952.¹²⁸ The Yugoslav delegates have not supported Soviet allegations. Contrary, during the discussion on Junior (Youth) Red Cross Resolution proposed by the Yugoslav delegates, they asked USSR’s representatives to plead on several accusations concerned of Yugoslav boys sent to the USSR in 1945.¹²⁹ According to Dr. Pavle Gregorić, those boys were indoctrinated, and as a proof, he stated, “In the year 1948, the parents of one of the Yugoslav boys received a letter from the Soviet Union in which the boy wrote that he would not return to his country until Marshal Tito had been killed.”¹³⁰ He also requested that those children be returned to Yugoslavia. It was obvious how Yugoslav attitude towards the ICRC had changed, and contrary to all Soviet proposals, Yugoslav delegates did not take part in discussions over the work and role of the ICRC.¹³¹

Government) of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia. He was also the President of the Yugoslav Red Cross and one of the Governors of the LRCS. Other members of the delegation were members of the Yugoslav Red Cross: Dr. Olga Milošević, Secretary-General, Professor Rudi Kiovski, member of the Executive Committee, and Anita Milin, Head of the External Relations and Secretary of the delegation. See *XVIIIth International Red Cross Conference, Toronto, July–August 1952, Proceedings* (Toronto: Canadian Red Cross Society, 1952), p. 18.

¹²⁷ I. Vonèche Cardia, *Hungarian October*, pp. 11-12.

¹²⁸ Mostly related to the constantly perpetuated Soviet allegations towards ICRC’s activities during the Second World War, see “Reply of the International Committee of the Red Cross to certain Accusations concerning its Activity.” In: *International Committee of the Red Cross. Report on the Work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (January 1 to December 31, 1952)* (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, 1953), pp. 94-114. See also *Documents sur l’activité du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge en faveur des civils détenus dans les camps de concentration en Allemagne (1939-1945)* (Genève: Comité International de la Croix-Rouge, 1947), and *The Work of the ICRC for Civilian Detainees in German Concentration Camps (1939-1945)* (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, 1947).

¹²⁹ *XVIIIth International Red Cross Conference*, pp. 101-102.

¹³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 86.

¹³¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 33-39, 53-67, 96-101. More on the conflict, generated by the Soviet representatives, see C. Rey-Schyr, *From Yalta to Dien Bien Phu*, p. 103 ff.

Yugoslavia and the ICRC normalized their relations in the mid-1950s when the Yugoslav Red Cross and the Yugoslav authorities cooperated with the ICRC in several serious projects. What was already evident during the 18th International Red Cross Conference, held at Toronto in 1952, it has been especially demonstrated during the Revolution in Hungary (1956). In October 1956, following the events in Hungary, the ICRC and the LRCS coordinated their relief activities. The ICRC took on the administration of relief in Hungary, while the LRCS coordinated relief for Hungarian refugees in Austria, and Yugoslavia, based on an Agreement between the ICRC and the LRCS of November 2, 1956.¹³² On the problem of reunification of dispersed persons and repatriation of Hungarian refugees, Yugoslavia announced that it wanted to work with the ICRC, and that “the Yugoslav Red Cross wanted very much to collaborate with the ICRC.”¹³³ However, the normalization process began even earlier. For example, the Yugoslav Government has paid the Contribution towards the regular funding of the ICRC in the amount of 7,000.00 CHF for the work of the ICRC in the year 1952, and 14,000.00 CHF for two previous years, but with no participation of the Yugoslav Red Cross. Likewise, the ICRC sent a special mission to Belgrade, and during negotiations on the issue of repatriation, held in June 1952, ICRC’s representatives concluded, “Concrete results were achieved thanks to the goodwill of the authorities and the co-operative spirit of the Yugoslav Red Cross.”¹³⁴

Final remarks

The ICRC carried out its activities during times of war in favor of all victims, no matter of their national, religious or any other declaration. According to the basic principles of its work, the ICRC maintained official as well as unofficial relations with the then existing National Red Cross Societies, no matter if those societies were recognized or not; how it was, for instance, with the National Red Cross Society of the Independent State of Croatia. Thus, at the end of the Second World War, the ICRC established official relations with the members of the Partisan Movement of Yugoslavia. It was known that in the aftermath of the Second World War, the new communist authorities of Yugoslavia did not adhere to the prescribed and signed provisions of the

¹³² André Durand, “Origin and Evolution of the Statutes of the International Red Cross,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 23 (1983), no. 235: 199.

¹³³ I. Vonèche Cardia, *Hungarian October*, pp. 50-51, 54.

¹³⁴ *International Committee of the Red Cross. Report on the Work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (January 1 to December 31, 1952)*, pp. 20-21, 34. For more, see pp. 11, 26, 30-39, 74.

International Law of Armed Conflict. However, some other Yugoslav actions have strained relations and increased tensions between Yugoslavia and the Allies. Tens of thousands of refugees, stateless individuals, and displaced persons who did not want to be repatriated to Yugoslavia found refuge in the Allied camps in Italy and Austria. A significant number of these people were marked as war criminals by the Yugoslav authorities, and they constantly have been requesting their extradition. The Allied military authorities rejected all of these requests. At the same time, following the United Nations General Assembly Resolution of February 12, 1946, the ICRC expressed its negative attitude towards the Yugoslav requests. Subsequent events have shown that that is one of the reasons for the conflict.

The conflict began at the Preliminary Conference of the National Red Cross Societies, held at Geneva in the summer of 1946, where Yugoslav representatives supported previous Soviet allegations towards the ICRC. The Yugoslav delegates became the primary attackers on the work of the ICRC carried out during the war. However, on the agenda, apparently, was the issue of refugees and displaced persons of Yugoslav origin, settled in the Allied refugee and displaced persons camps in Italy and Austria. The importance of the issue was confirmed even by the words of the Yugoslav delegate Petar Guberina, who pointed out that the Red Cross should not have competence on the matter of post-war refugees. Already expressed negative attitude of the ICRC concerning the issue of repatriation of these persons resulted in the dispersing of Yugoslav allegations over all ICRC's activities carried out in Yugoslavia during the war. The official Yugoslav press accused the ICRC of collaborating with the authorities of the German Reich, for covering Nazi atrocities, the fate of the Jews, and the fate of Yugoslav and Soviet POWs in the German Reich. In late 1946, when it became obvious that refugees and displaced persons would not be extradited to Yugoslavia, the communist press intensified negative propaganda on displaced persons of Yugoslav origin settled in the Allied refugee camps in Italy and Austria. Although the Yugoslav authorities have requested the extradition of these persons to punish them for committed war crimes, the Allied military authorities intended to concentrate them in the Allied refugee and displaced persons camps in Germany, with the intention of resettling them to the South America.

The conflict continued at the sessions of the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee within the discussions on the founding of the *International Refugee Organization* (IRO). At the end of 1946 and in the first half of 1947, representatives of the Yugoslav authorities took part in the conflict. One of the most important questions came from the Yugoslav Minister of Foreign Affairs, who requested an explanation of the negative attitude of the ICRC towards the repatriation of displaced persons. Although the Yugoslav

authorities were well aware of the United Nations' Resolution of February 12, 1946, which provisions prohibited involuntary repatriation, and the ICRC's attitude towards the issue was based on it; the Yugoslav attacks over the ICRC's activities have continued. In late April 1947, the Yugoslav authorities accused the ICRC of covering up Nazi crimes, again, and requested an explanation as to why the ICRC recognized the Independent State of Croatia.

The question of the issuance of ICRC travel documents was another obstacle between Yugoslavia and the ICRC. Following political changes all over Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War, many people could not or did not want to be returned to their country of origin. Some of them used travel documents of the ICRC to reach their desired destination. After the war ended, the permanent delegations of the ICRC in Rome and Naples issued circa 7,500 travel documents to the people of Yugoslav origin from the Allied camps. Actually, the ICRC continued the issuance of its travel documents in Austria and Italy almost to the end of 1940s. Following these actions, the Yugoslav government issued special instructions to the Yugoslav delegation at the *Advisory Council for Italy* on various modes of preventing the departure of displaced persons to South America. Due to the conflict, the National Red Cross Society of Yugoslavia turned up to the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies with the intention of marginalizing the role of the ICRC. The attitude was confirmed at the Preliminary Conference of the National Red Cross Societies, when the Yugoslav delegates expressed a desire to strengthen the Power and Authority of the LRCS. Yugoslav Delegation declared that it considers the LRCS to be the only body competent to examine and take decisions with regard to all questions of the Red Cross, and, according to them, the Conference convened by the ICRC was incompetent to make the decisions, and they considered it as private and informative. In mid-December 1946, the first annual General Assembly of the Yugoslav Red Cross confirmed the attitude with the adoption of a resolution containing guidelines for the strengthening of the National Red Cross Society.

Numerous Yugoslav allegations have forced the ICRC to pay close attention to it. In mid-1946, they began preparing extensive documentation regarding several areas of their respective activities carried out during the war. The consulted documentation resulted in the making of several memorandums on ICRC's activities in favor of victims of Yugoslav origin during the Second World War (1941-1945), which was distributed among central committees of all recognized National Red Cross Societies, in late April 1947. After that, further discussion was adjourned. It had been expected the conflict to culminate at the 17th International Red Cross Conference convened for the summer of 1948, to be held at Stockholm. However, Yugoslavia refused to participate in the Conference, and very soon, due to the conflict with the USSR, it was

expelled from the Cominform and isolated by the international community. The Yugoslav attitude towards the ICRC had changed, as it was evident at the 18th International Red Cross Conference (Toronto, 1952). The cooperation started earlier in resolving the issue of Greek refugees; however, the ICRC and Yugoslavia normalized their relations in the mid-1950s, and it was especially evident during the revolution in Hungary (1956). However, if we put aside the relations, actually no relations, and open hostilities of the USSR towards the ICRC, Yugoslavia was in fact one of the few—if not the only one—states that had been generating open hostilities towards the ICRC in the aftermath of the Second World War.

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