

from the United States the delegations of other United Nations states having forces in Korea. The allegations were familiar ones and the evidence equally familiar. There were charges of bacteriological warfare, of murder, cruelty and various atrocities toward prisoners of war and of indiscriminate bombing of civilians. A great majority of the Conference, while expressing disbelief in the allegations, showed no disposition to whitewash the United Nations Command. Tradition, constitutionality, loyalty to the International Committee and plain common sense indicated that the proper authority within the Red Cross to investigate the charges was the International Committee; and this was clearly the desire of the Conference. The Communists, having evidenced their unwillingness to accept an enquiry by the Committee, and the Committee having — surprisingly and rather dramatically — disavowed any claim to unique jurisdiction on this field, the Conference, while reaffirming its confidence in the Committee, reached no more specific recommendation than that the parties concerned should agree upon a form of enquiry acceptable to all. From this innocuous resolution nobody dissented. The Conference declared its own inability, constitutionally and in justice to the parties, to examine "evidence" offered to it by certain Communist delegations. This "evidence" was made available to the press and proved to be that which has been already highly publicized.

In the political art of drafting, amending and voting upon resolutions the Communists were less adept than they normally are at the United Nations. The lesser Communist delegations and the Chinese communists too obviously waited for the nod from the Russian delegation, and the Russians lacked sufficient adroitness to take advantage of the inexperience in political warfare of the International Red Cross leaders. It was, indeed, the non-politically minded amateurs of the Western Red Cross delegations who by giving repeated evidence of their intense and sincere desire to use the Conference for no other than humanitarian purposes and to preserve the universal character of the Red Cross, won the propaganda battle on the floor. The series of resolutions finally put on the record, while not apt to influence the course of events profoundly, honestly reflects the views of nearly all delegates from outside the Iron Curtain and (one sometimes felt) even a considerable number of those within the Communist fold, had they but dared to say so.

Conference Activities

This article has said, and will say, very little about the non-political aspects of the Toronto meeting. To the lay observer, at least, the purposes of the quadrennial Conferences in normal times appear to be to legitimize decisions already largely agreed upon in the executive bodies, to make and renew acquaintanceships within the movement and to refresh and strengthen, by mutual consultation and exhortation, the spirit and traditions which underlie Red Cross activities. The Conference also renewed the elected membership of its Standing Commission. The Commission consists of two nominees of the International Committee, two nominees of the League and five members elected by the Conference, sitting as individuals not as representatives either of Red Cross societies or governments. The five members elected at Toronto are respectively citizens of Brazil, France, India, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States. The Conference accepted the invitation of the Indian Red Cross Society to hold its next meeting in India. Instead of, as normally, "accepting" the reports of the national societies, the Conference "received" them and directed that they be filed; this was because of a reference in the report of the Communist Chinese Red Cross Society to "germ warfare started by the American Government". Reports of the various financial committees were accepted; there was, rather surprisingly no discussion of the financing of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Several resolutions concerned the work of the Junior Red Cross; there were resolutions on: reading as therapy for mental cases, relief to children, famine relief, disaster relief, legal assistance to refugees and voluntary services. On the health side, the highlight of the Conference was a symposium on manual methods