

C O P Y

112422

Arvid Holt-Seeland  
Oslo

Hollbugt. 11.

To the  
international Red Cross,  
c/o the Chief Secretary,

Geneva / Switzerland.

6.1.48.

Ref.: the punishment of norwegian  
nurses, performing in the  
German Red Cross.

Dear Sirs,

The 30. ult. I had the pleasure of a conference with the General Secretary Herholt of the Norwegian Red Cross and with G. sec. Melbye about the above mentioned question.

I'm representing the opinion and work of a very big lot of people, not concerned with this question in other ways than that we are considering the punishment of Red Cross-nurses as a black spot on our liberation and our culture of law. Personally I am political prisoner from 1941 under the Gestapo, and I'm only mentioning this fact to show that the opinion represented by me is not originated by people punished under the law of treason.

The leading persons in our Norwegian Red Cross were of an other opinion than I am, and were trying to convince me of the opinion represented by them and - our Supreme Court. But most of our people, most of our lawyers, are scarcely to be convinced that the wrongs done against these nurses can be explained, they are contrary to law.

Giving sentences from 3 1/2 years forced labour downwards for helping sick and wounded and suffering people under the sign of the Red Cross is contrary to peoples sense of justice, and the behaviour of the Norwegian Red Cross has given astonishment to us all. And we are asking too: WHY DID'NT THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS TRY TO INTERVENE AND TRY TO HELP THE NURSES THAT WERE PUNISHED UNDER THE SIGN OF THE RED CROSS?

Germany too was a member of the International Red Cross, and the nurses listing under the German Red Cross were thought that they were standing under the protection of Geneva.

We are expecting that the International Red cross will do something to live up to the expectations set in them by a world considering the I.R.C. worthy of the Nobel-prize of peace. We are expecting you to use whole your influence, whole your goodwill to do something for the unhappy Red Cross-nurses, punished for following yours ideals.

Most of them enlisted in the German Red Cross only out of their wish to help, following the ideals of humanity, knowing that they were going to horrors and sufferings. But not expecting and expecting and knowing that they afterwards would be let down and would be treated as out-casts.

Enclosed I send you a copy and translation of an illegale circular I got the 31.12.47, just to show you the general opinion.

and to give you just an exact example, I quote the details of a Red Cross-nurse case and its development:

Ruth Pedersen, born 24.5.15. Skien/Norway, serving in the German Red Cross out of idealistic belief in humanity, was taken prisoner after the capitulation and transported from Copenhagen to Oslo. When the police called for the Norwegian Red Cross, compelled to do so by R. Pedersen, who appealed to the protection of the Red Cross the general secretary just answered: put her in gaol, we have nothing to do with her.

After two months at Bredtveit gaol, she was released until judgement. November 1946 she was sentenced to 18 months forced labour. She was giving a petition for mercy, which was not granted and she was in November 1947 made known that her petition was denied, and that she should be put in gaol immediately.

She had been in medical treatment in the last two years for her shattered nerves, shattered by horrors in the last months of war. She gave a certificate from her doctor and from the best reputed Norwegian psychiatric specialist, professor Dr. Gabriel Langfeldt in Oslo, that she was not fitted to be put in prison at the time being. Giving these certificates to the police, the time passed until 10th of December 1947. She was then arrested on demand of the Crown prosecutor, the certificates were neglected, and she was put in prison under a nervous break down. As late as 29.12.47 I had the opportunity to control the case by a personal talk with Mrs. Pedersen, who has a complete mental break down. But nevertheless, she has not been released or transferred to a hospital.

That's the punishment for not even one year service in the German Red Cross, nursing mostly Russians at the hospital near Hamburg and afterwards children in the epidemic department of the hospital at Flensburg. Being put in prison to destroy the mental condition and sanity, suffering damages not cured in years.

WHAT ARE YOU TO DO ABOUT HELPING THE NOW SUFFERING NURSES?

It should perhaps be advisable to gather my material about these problems and to take a personal conference with your organisation by going to Geneva. What is your opinion?

Expecting to hear from you

I remain, dear Sirs,  
Yours respectfully

sign. Arvid Holt-Sæland

Copy.

R E D C R O S S .

In Aftenposten (Monday 3rd of September 1945) there was reported a trial against a Red Cross-nurse from Avje in Setendal, Miss Skajo, for trespassing against the "Landssvikenordning". (Law of treason) pgr. 3, jfr. pgr. 2, 4 and 1, having served as Red Cross-nurse in The Norwegian Legion and later in Germany until 7.5.1945.

MISS SKAJO WAS SENTENCED TO 3 1/2 YEARS FORCED LABOUR.

The Nobel-prize of Peace was given in 1944 and 1945. The first was assigned to the International Red Cross, and the president of this institution, Mr. Max Huber, declared under the act of assignment: "Our work is completely humanitarian, we have no enemies, but are working for everybody".

Therefore a Red Cross-nurse is not only working in peace, but also in war, and then specially for friendly nations and for enemies. THAT'S her duty, when working under the sign of the Red Cross.

Red Cross is:

1. An organisation, working under the sublime cristian-humane idea of brotherhood between nations and help to sick and suffering people in peace and in war, to friend and to enemy.
2. And furthermore with the duty as Red Cross-nurse to give help and service to sick, wounded and suffering people at the front lines, notwithstanding friend or enemy.

This has been generally acknowledged between the civilized nations and is popularly believed. But the abovementioned sentence is talking quite an other language and our people will ask in astonishment:

DID WE REALLY MISUNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS SO TOTALLY?

It's clear that such sentences will give doubts.

It is to be asked:

HAS THERE BEEN AN ENCROACHMENT AGAINST THE SPIRIT, LAWS AND INFORMATIONS OF THE RED CROSS?

The question is of general and actual interest, and we are expecting a satisfactory answer by the Red Cross.

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Until now, december 1947, the answer has still not been given by The Red Cross.