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January 8th 1948

To the International Red Cross Committee,
Juridical Section,

7, Avenue de la Paix,
Geneva

AR/hc

Re: Service of medical personnel with an enemy power.

Dear Sirs,

The Norwegian Red Cross has on several occasions been approached by jurists defending Norwegian medical personnel, who voluntarily have served with the German army during the war.

We are also acquainted with the fact that one of these jurists, a certain Mr. Finar Grimsø of Høy, Helgeland, has addressed himself directly to the International Red Cross Committee on this subject. The President of the Committee on July 3rd 1947 sent a letter to the Norwegian Minister of Justice (your reference CJN/YB CR 189 G.20 G.85) on the same subject. Finally, we have received a letter of August 13th 1947 signed by Miss L. Odier (reference CR.189 G.85 CJN/YB) in which Miss Odier states that she would be grateful for learning the Norwegian Red Cross point of view on the question of such personnel, in view of the next International Red Cross Conference in Stockholm.

In a letter of October 23rd 1947 the Norwegian Red Cross made its position clear to Miss Odier. A copy of this said letter is enclosed herewith.

In the meantime a certain Mr. Arvid Holt-Seeland has visited our office. In his opinion, and according to him, also in the opinion of many influential persons in Norway, medical personnel in an occupied country, who voluntarily serve in the medical service of the army of the occupying power, are not to be punished on their return.

Mr. Holt Seeland is of opinion that general humanitarian principles support his view, and that such an enlarged protection for medical personnel can be deduced from the principles upon which the Geneva Conventions of 1929 are based.

We have promised Mr. Holst Seeland to submit the question to the International Red Cross Committee, and we should be grateful for your views in this matter.

If you consider it necessary, we would propose that the matter be generally discussed at the Stockholm Conference.

Apart from the arguments stated in our letter of October 23rd, we should like to emphasize the following point:

The medical service of an army is part of the army. It seems to us that if any citizen of a belligerent country by entering the medical service of an army, could chose which side he would join, whether his own country or that of the enemy, would lead to a situation which no authorities or belligerent countries could tolerate.

We are further of opinion that international conventions containing such provisions would stand small chances of being ratified, under the present conditions. We should however, be most grateful for your studying the matter ~~and~~ and informing us of your views.

Very truly yours
For the NORWEGIAN RED CROSS

Arnold Sirholt
Secretary General

Encl.