

The Law of Armed Conflict and Human Rights

(Mr. G. Best, Professor at Edinburgh University)

Non-International Armed Conflict and Human Rights

(Mr. I. Blishchenko, Professor at the Institute of International Relations, Moscow)

The International Committee of the Red Cross and its Delegations

(Mr. J. Moreillon, ICRC Delegate-General, Geneva)

The Protection of the Civilian Population during Armed Conflict

(Mr. A. Cassese, Professor of International Law at the University of Pisa)

National and International Repression of Violations of the Law of Armed Conflicts

(Mr. B. Roeling, Professor at the University of Groningen)

The courses will be followed by seminars and study groups on the application of humanitarian law. The documents relating to this series of courses on human rights and the law of armed conflict are being sent to National Societies and to Faculties of Law and Political Science the world over.¹

Lebanon

Many and useful are the activities of the Lebanese Red Cross. The following article, written by Miss Françoise Bory, ICRC press attaché, after a recent visit to that Society, shows this very clearly.

Any attempt at a brief description of the activities of the Lebanese Red Cross would be doomed to failure because those

¹ Various institutes and organizations are providing scholarships on this occasion. The Henry Dunant Institute is offering two scholarships of Fr. Fr. 500 each, to cover the cost of the stay at Strasbourg University, and two scholarships of Fr.Fr. 250 each. Further particulars can be obtained from the National Society of each country or direct from the Henry Dunant Institute, 3 rue de Varembe, 1202 Geneva. Requests for admission should reach the Henry Dunant Institute not later than 15 May 1973.

IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

activities are so varied. A visit to the National Society's headquarters alone convinces one of that. In addition to the directorate and administrative services, the premises on Spears Street in Beirut house a nursing school with some 120 pupils a year whom it prepares for the State diploma, with theoretical courses and practical training in the Beirut hospitals; a well-equipped blood bank run by three doctors and several nurses; a medical library, and, lastly, a number of bureaux: Red Cross Youth, voluntary workers, first-aiders and the medico-social service, to mention only a few.

Everywhere smiling young women, clad in a blue uniform, explain the essence of their work in a few words to the visitor, showing faultlessly up-to-date card indexes, photographs, figures and statistics. The big house is a hive of activity and ideas. In Lebanon, voluntary service is not an idle word. About a thousand persons are ready to give the Society their time at a moment's notice, on a telephone call, and Red Cross Youth now includes more than 3,500 schoolchildren who attend first-aid courses during playtime.

The Red Cross is doing a very big job for the population. Besides the aid which its chapters in southern Lebanon are rendering the victims of fighting, in the socio-medical field it acts by epidemic control, teaching the elementary principles of hygiene, and providing care.

In this spirit, the Gemmayzé dispensary, in a crowded district of Beirut, is a vivid example of what can be achieved by enthusiasm plus intelligence and tenacity. It was founded twenty-five years ago, in a small house with orange shutters. A steep staircase, painted white, leads to several rooms, all of which are also white.

The director, a social worker who has a nursing diploma, received us. Day after day, she and her voluntary helpers carry out their duties. In addition to medical consultations, which range from general medicine to stomatology, the centre is responsible for ante-natal information, child care and courses on hygiene.

However elementary the programme may be, here it is vital. There is a striking contrast between the standard of living in the business centre and in the poorer districts of Beirut, where statistics indicate a 50 per cent infant mortality rate.

“ Girls get married at the age of thirteen or fourteen. By the time they are twenty-five, they may already have eight children and know nothing whatever ”, the director of the dispensary told us. “ They have not the remotest idea about cleanliness or hygiene, and they have no money . . . Yet they are anxious to learn and take great pains once their confidence is won.”

The courses are held in the large dispensary hall. On the morning of the visit, the young mothers were learning how to prepare a bottle. About a dozen of them were sitting on the benches with their children, wrapped in blankets, on their laps. One of them had registered at the centre that very morning. Under the veil, her face looked fierce with its tattoo-marks. She was seated cross-legged, and her slippers were lying on the floor. In front of her was a bundle containing the dirty rags which had clad her baby. Here, she, who had never washed her baby's clothes because there were no other clothes for it to wear, was going to learn how to sterilize the bottle before feeding the child.

Patience, understanding and, above all, great kindness would be needed to instil in her gradually, during the lessons, the elementary concepts of hygiene of which she was unaware after having had six children. Later, the dispensary's social worker would visit her and ascertain how her “ pupil ” was putting what she had learnt into practice. “ It is a long and sometimes hard task, but how pleased we are with the results ! When you see properly fed, healthy, clean children who without your help might not have survived, you feel that your efforts were worth while ! ”

And that was what the visitor felt as she tiptoed out of the Gemmayzé dispensary. The voluntary workers looked up from what they were doing just long enough to smile, but no longer. There is no waste, no time is lost in chattering.
