

*DISSEMINATION OF THE GENEVA  
CONVENTIONS*

**A TEACHING PLAN FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

*The XXIIInd International Conference of the Red Cross, at Teheran last November, unanimously adopted Resolution No. XII calling upon governments and National Societies to intensify their efforts to disseminate the Geneva Conventions. It also requested the ICRC to support such efforts, inter alia by preparing information material and by advising National Societies in their plans for the dissemination of the Conventions and Red Cross principles. Consequently, the ICRC is now putting forward a teaching plan for secondary schools. The plan is based on the experience of the Austrian Red Cross, and we reproduce it hereunder.*

*Incidentally, we should not omit to mention in this connection the remarkable efforts of the Japanese Red Cross, as reported in an article by Mrs. Sachiko Hashimoto, then Director of the Japanese Junior Red Cross, published in our issue of December 1961. That article, similar to the paper which Mrs. Hashimoto delivered to the World Conference of Educators,<sup>1</sup> described the work undertaken among the youth of Japan. It was concluded by the author's declaration of faith in the effectiveness of the work of teachers and Red Cross youth to promote the dissemination of the Red Cross idea "to which", she said, "the Conventions give concrete expression".*

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<sup>1</sup> This Conference was held at Lausanne in 1963, on the occasion of the Centenary of the Red Cross.

From the end of 1972 to the beginning of 1974, a National Society—with the close co-operation and support of the Ministry of Education of the country concerned—held six central courses on international humanitarian law and the Red Cross for secondary school teachers, in different types of school where ages ranged from ten to twenty. The teachers who attended the central courses were teachers of history, regarded as the most suitable subject for the teaching of Red Cross principles and international humanitarian law. A representative of the ICRC took part in the effort from the outset and lectured on certain subjects.

Following the central courses, regional courses are to be held for the training of teachers who in turn will deal with the subject in their classes.

Since the system has proved itself, it seems desirable to bring this to the notice of all National Societies and to suggest that they too should use it, with the agreement of the competent national Authorities. The ICRC would be prepared, if so desired, to lend its assistance as far as possible.

The following plan contains the technical information necessary for the organization of such courses.

### I. *Basics*

1. The teaching will be planned and co-ordinated nation-wide, in close co-operation with the Ministry of Education and the National Red Cross, Red Crescent or Red Lion and Sun Society.
2. The teaching will be incorporated into a major branch of learning; history would seem to be the most appropriate.
3. The teaching will be in stages: the basis will be a central course for teachers who, in turn, will instruct their colleagues in the provinces: finally, teaching in the classrooms.

### II. *Organisation*

1. Base: a group of three persons
  - one of whom will be from the Ministry of Education (with the backing of the authorities to ensure acceptance of the course); and

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- two of whom will draw up and disseminate the teaching programme in the central courses. At least one of these people shall be a member of the National Society.
2. Central Courses
    - (a) Programme:
      - first part (1½ days): description of the Red Cross and of international humanitarian law;
      - second part (½ day): working out of a teaching programme (e.g. how to give a standard lesson).
    - (b) Participants:

Ideally, there should at each course be about 30 teachers from various regions and types of school: too many at a time would be detrimental.
  3. Courses in the provinces

Participants in the central courses will, in turn, for their own provinces, instruct one or more persons per school (e.g. the history teacher or teachers).
  4. Classroom teaching
    - Take advantage of a suitable opportunity (e.g. in history classes or, even better, in connection with some topical event).
    - Avoid making the lesson too long, but return to the subject several times.
    - Use audio-visual material as much as possible.

### III. *Subject matter*

1. Central courses (5 talks)
  - History of the Red Cross and of international humanitarian law.
  - The Red Cross: ICRC, League, National Societies, and outline of the “ International Red Cross ”.
  - The 1949 Geneva Conventions and the draft Additional Protocols (main talk).
  - The basics of international humanitarian law.
  - History and activities of the National Society.

There should be sufficient time allowed after each lecture for discussion and questions and answers.

2. Courses for provincial instructors and in the classes.

The subjects will be the same as in the central courses, but the provincial teachers themselves will prepare the lessons they will be called upon to give, in accordance with their own ideas, or with the programme taught them in the central courses.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The ICRC can make the following material available for use in your courses:

- “*The Red Cross*”, published by the Henry Dunant Institute. Sw.fr. 1.— (English, French, Spanish, Arabic, German);
- *Course of Five Lessons* on the Geneva Conventions. Sw. fr. 8.— (French, English, German, Spanish);
- Colour slides “*The Geneva Conventions*”. A series of 20 slides with comments. Sw. fr. 20.— (French, English, Spanish, German, Arabic, Italian, Russian, Portuguese).