

DISSEMINATION OF THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS

At virtually any point on the globe there are Red Cross Societies, ICRC delegations and other persons of good will, working independently and free of any official ties to spread knowledge of the Geneva Conventions and the principles of the Red Cross, aware of the fact that they are thus helping to establish an atmosphere of better understanding among men.

As Professor Hans Haug, President of the Swiss Red Cross, wrote in his message for World Red Cross Day 1977,

... Every day, and almost everywhere in the world, the Red Cross is doing inestimable humanitarian work in its struggle against the ills of mankind in all their forms and regardless of their cause. The Red Cross tries to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human person. Its principles of "humanity" and "impartiality" demand that it reject any form of discrimination in performing its activities. No one in need should be given preferential treatment or be neglected on the grounds of his nationality, race, religion, social origin or political opinion. This work which, in its protection and assistance activities, is guided by unconditional humanitarian thought and which does not recognize the barriers erected between individuals and peoples, may be considered a work of peace. It helps to draw men together, to reconcile them and to deepen their mutual understanding, it improves their living conditions and thereby strengthens the spirit and faith so indispensable for peace.

This is the Red Cross spirit which those working to disseminate the Geneva Conventions are trying to spread. In its February 1977 issue, *International Review* gave some examples of the work being undertaken in connection with this long-term activity; further instances are given here below.

Jordan

Last April, the head of the ICRC delegation in Amman gave the Director of the Education Department of the Jordanian Army 600 copies of the booklet "Summary of the Geneva Conventions" and 600 copies of the "Soldier's Manual" at a ceremony held at Armed Forces H.Q. and attended by several senior officers and journalists. Those booklets, in Arabic, have been published by the ICRC and will be distributed among the units of the Jordanian Armed Forces to instruct the troops in the Conventions.

Afghanistan

The Afghan Red Crescent has opened a library and reading room where Red Cross publications, including basic works, general books and periodicals will be made available. The walls are bedecked with posters issued by the ICRC and the League, providing a constant reminder to visitors, the members of the Afghan Red Crescent and the general public of the ideals of the Red Cross and the principles of our movement.¹

Tunisia

The Tunisian Red Crescent organized a National Week from 2 to 8 May on the theme "Peace through people", as proposed by the League. The press, radio and television gave the various events organized by the Red Crescent a broad coverage. In the provinces, the occasion was marked by the annual distribution of first aid and blood donor certificates.

In his public declarations, and especially during a press conference held at the Red Crescent Headquarters in Tunis on 7 May, Dr. Fourati, President of the Tunisian Red Crescent, appealed for more first aid workers, whose number is considered to be too low in proportion to the population, and he also asked that the public adopt a more understanding attitude towards blood donating. Even so, to date the Red Crescent has trained 5000 first aid workers, 300 assistant instructors and 100 senior instructors.

The Tunisian Red Crescent had invited the ICRC to send a representative to lecture on the Geneva Conventions in military academies, nursing schools and regional Red Crescent Committees. The ICRC delegated Mr. Pierre Gaillard who was well received wherever he went and who found, from the many questions put to him, that there was a lively interest in the Conventions and ICRC activities. At the end of each meeting, the ICRC film, "In the beginning, Solferino", was shown.

¹ Plate.

The lectures on the Conventions were delivered successively in Tunis—at the Regional Committee, the Red Crescent Nursing School and the National Health School; at the Military Academy in Fondouk Jedid; at the National Security Force School in Carthage; at the Regional Red Crescent Committee in Sfax, and at the National NCOs' School in Bizerta. The lectures on the Geneva Conventions were thus delivered to large and varied audiences, which included members of the Red Crescent who were naturally well acquainted with the subject, and also trainee nurses, officers and NCOs of the three forces, police officers, police cadets and NCOs to whom the subject was less familiar. Wherever he went, the lecturer was asked for documentation and publications on the subjects of his lectures—the Geneva Conventions and the activities of the ICRC.

Throughout the National Week, the Tunisian Red Crescent put in a considerable amount of work and its efforts were crowned with success for which it is to be congratulated.

M.T.

INTRODUCTORY COURSE ON THE LAW OF NATIONS IN TIME OF WAR

Geneva

The twenty-fourth introductory course on the law of nations in time of war, which has been organized by the Swiss Army since 1965, was held in Geneva from 26 to 29 April 1977. It was attended by 93 Swiss officers of different grades and a senior officer of the Moroccan Army.

The April 1968 issue of *International Review of the Red Cross* contained an outline of the basic elements of this course which have not been modified since; they cover the Geneva Conventions, the 1907 Hague Regulations, the 1954 Hague Convention for the protection of cultural property, and the law of neutrality, which form the backbone of the course. For four days there were theoretical lectures, practical exercises, films and talks on these various subjects. The course, conducted by fourteen lecturers and group leaders, included several staff members of the ICRC, university lecturers and senior civil servants. The interest which this idea, first introduced in 1965, aroused in participants in the course seemed to be as strong as ever.

J. de P.

THE TEACHING OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AT THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL SCHOOL

United States

The Judge Advocate General School is a part of Virginia University in Charlottesville. It provides courses in military law for lawyers and other members of the armed forces as well as for civilian government lawyers. The courses are divided into several streams—administrative and civil law, penal law, international law and the law of war.

The courses on international humanitarian law, which form part of the syllabus, are aimed at preparing military lawyers to give legal advice to soldiers and their officers, and to examine military plans and operations in order to ensure that they comply with the law of war. The students are also trained to be able to give or run courses on the law of war for other soldiers and officers of the US Armed Forces. The school comprises several grades, each of which contains a course in international humanitarian law.

All officers embarking on a career as judge advocate have to take the basic course which is attended by some 250 to 300 officers every year.

The advanced course is restricted to judge advocates who have completed about five years of active military service. It prepares career military lawyers for the profession of general staff judge advocate.

There is a special course for officers who wish to become instructors in the law of war. This lasts one week and is open to officers who are already judge advocates or who have specialized in other subjects and have had some experience as commanders. It is given four times a year.

Finally, there is a special guidance course for senior officers—colonels or lieutenant-colonels who hold high commands in the armed forces. This course essentially involves discussions—in the form of seminars—on the responsibilities of commanding officers who have to ensure that international humanitarian law is taught to their subordinates and that its rules are included in the practical applications devised during field exercises.

The instruction is given by highly qualified staff who also have practical military experience. This ensures that the instruction given is of the very highest level while not being exclusively academic, and that it includes practical examples and actual case studies. Modern technical media such as films and audio-visual aids are used in the course.

Jiri Toman.

Portugal

Last year, the school textbook "The Red Cross and my Country" and the "Teacher's Manual" in Portuguese were distributed by the Portuguese Red Cross to all students completing their training as primary school teachers. In so doing, it arranged for a lecturer to visit each of the teacher training colleges for primary school teachers throughout the country to give an introductory course on the Red Cross, its national and international organization, its activities and its principles, and on the Geneva Conventions. The above-mentioned publications were distributed to the participants at the end of the course. The lectures were organized by the Portuguese Red Cross, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, at 27 schools specializing in the training of primary school teachers. The lectures were very well received by the 4,000 or more students who followed the course and received the ICRC publications.

M. T.

EXHIBITIONS

Switzerland

Of recent months, an exhibition, organized by the Swiss National Museum of Zurich, has been on show in a number of Swiss towns on the subject "Switzerland's good offices." In the section devoted to "Humanitarian action" the ICRC describes the work it does under the following headings: the history of the Red Cross, the role of the ICRC, the Geneva Conventions and the Central Tracing Agency. In addition, there are two showcases containing documents relating to the Geneva Conventions and the Agency. This exhibition will also be taken to Linz in Austria, next autumn.

A Geneva bank has made its show-windows available to the ICRC for an exhibition of showcards and photographs. The ICRC is exhibiting in them documents illustrating the landmarks in its history and activities. Two of the windows are devoted to the activities of the Geneva Red Cross branch.

R. B.

Spain

The Spanish Red Cross has devoted much of the April issue of its review, "Cruz Roja Española" to the ICRC and its activities.

After introducing the ICRC and explaining how it is composed and the neutral role it plays as intermediary, the review goes on to discuss two important aspects of its activities—the origin and development of international humanitarian law and the Central Tracing Agency—each in a well-documented and well-illustrated text written with great understanding and feeling. Another aspect of ICRC activities—its relief work and the protection it has afforded in recent armed conflicts—is explained in pictorial form by a magnificent selection of coloured photographs showing ICRC delegates at work among prisoners of war, refugees and wounded, in the Middle East, the Asian Subcontinent, Indo-China, Africa and other places.

This issue of the "Cruz Roja Española" is superb. The excellent articles, while compiled in straightforward language that can be easily understood by nonspecialized readers, maintain a high standard of writing. We should like to congratulate the Spanish Red Cross on this success.

We would suggest that this part of the Spanish Red Cross review might also be read by Spanish-speaking readers in other parts of the world and that it might be reproduced by some National Societies to provide information for their own members and for the public at large.

M. T.
