

Round Table in San Remo

The International Institute of Humanitarian Law held its eighth Round Table on the current problems of international humanitarian law and Red Cross Symposium from 8 to 11 September, attended by about a hundred lawyers, diplomats and representatives of National Red Cross Societies. The ICRC was represented by its President Mr. Alexandre Hay, by Committee members Mr. M. Aubert and Mr. D. Schindler, and by several staff members.

The first day's work was concerned with "The United Nations forces and international humanitarian law: applicability and instruction". The second day of the Round Table was devoted to the subject "Journalists in armed conflicts: their role, responsibility and protection on dangerous professional missions". The third day was reserved for the "Protection of refugees in armed conflicts and internal disturbances". On the fourth day an ICRC report was given on "Follow-up action on the resolutions adopted by the Twenty-fourth International Red Cross Conference" (in Manila in November 1981).

After the Round Table, the Council of the Institute held its annual assembly. Note was taken of the year's activities; these are developing satisfactorily, particularly the courses on the law of war. The Council decided to hold another Round Table in 1983 and organize courses on the refugees law for the first time this winter, under the sponsorship of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Congress on penal military law

The International Society of Penal Military Law and Law of War held its 9th International Congress from 2 to 6 September 1982 in Lausanne, Switzerland.

On its agenda were several problems arising from recent developments in the law of war. Each State has to give guidelines to its armed forces. It must first of all incorporate the new international norms into its own legal system and subsequently give the explanations and orders necessary for their application.

It appeared particularly appropriate to consider the following points: better protection, under the new international law, of the civilian population against the dangers resulting from hostilities; widening of the categories of combatants entitled to prisoner-of-war status in case of capture, which raises problems of responsibility and interpretation; training of legal advisers to the armed forces, whose status and responsi-

bility must be clearly defined; and adaptation of national legal systems and of directives to military commands with a view to averting breaches of the new law.

Some two hundred specialists from over thirty States on all continents took part in the 9th Congress, such as senior officers (judge advocates and combatants), professors of law, civil servants, etc. The ICRC was also represented.

As customary, the International Society of Penal Military Law and Law of War will be publishing the proceedings of the 9th Congress.

Inter-American Seminar in Costa Rica

An Inter-American Seminar on State Security, Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, organized jointly by the ICRC and the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, met at San José de Costa Rica from 27 September to 1 October 1982. More than one hundred people from academic, military or political circles from some twenty-five countries, or members of inter-American human rights organizations and of the ICRC, took part in the seven working sessions.

The following subjects were discussed at the seminar: legal and material conditions of detention; guerrilla warfare; terrorism; basic human guarantees; mechanisms to enforce law and the dissemination of law. The aim of the seminar was to provoke serious discussion on the relationship between the demands of State security, human rights and international humanitarian law, and each subject had to be examined and discussed with regard to the requirements of these three factors.

Despite the diversity of nationalities, professions and political allegiances of the participants, the meeting was very successful: politicization, which is too often observed in meetings at this level, was nearly always avoided, which meant that the atmosphere was very conducive to dialogue. Although delicate subjects had been introduced, such as guerrilla warfare and terrorism, references to specifically Latin American problems were absent from the majority of interventions, thus deliberately leaving room for constructive discussion on such contentious subjects.

The ICRC's presence probably had a lot to do with the success of the seminar: its candour, its scrupulous respect for a neutral attitude, its interventions always linked to its humanitarian activities first of all showed the deep meaning of its activity and its *raison d'être*, and then the way to a fruitful discussion.
