

In Poland

Seminar on International Humanitarian Law

For the past few years the Polish Red Cross, in collaboration with the ICRC, has been organizing a series of seminars on international humanitarian law for various target groups.

The following seminars were intended for an international public:

- the regional seminar in Warsaw, in 1977, for members of European Red Cross Societies;
- the seminar in Gdansk, in 1978, for young people in Red Cross Societies;
- the seminar in Krakow, in 1979, for professors of international public law, attended by 39 participants from 20 countries of Europe and North America;
- the seminar in Warsaw, in 1980, for Red Cross medical and para-medical personnel;
- the course in Warsaw, in 1980, for advanced law students from European and North American universities.

At the same time the Polish Red Cross and the ICRC are carrying out a long-term programme for the dissemination of knowledge of humanitarian law among the Polish public by publishing booklets and organizing courses for local Red Cross committees, the armed forces and the universities. The first course for Polish law students took place at Sopot, at the University of Gdansk, in 1981.

A second course for university staff was organized recently by the Polish Red Cross, with the participation of the ICRC, and was held in Warsaw from 21 to 23 April 1983. It was designed for young teaching and research staff of departments of international public law at all Polish universities and similar institutions, with the intention of arousing

their interest in international humanitarian law so that they in turn would teach it to their students. In this way about one thousand law students in Poland would receive tuition in international humanitarian law each year. The seminar was attended by 25 people from eight universities or colleges, the Institute of Law of the Polish Academy of Science and the Polish Institute of International Affairs.

It consisted of a number of lectures, each followed by a discussion. There were first three lectures on the current problems of international humanitarian law. Professor R. Bierzanek of the University of Warsaw spoke on "Contemporary Armed Conflicts and International Law"; Professor R. Jasica of the Silesian University dealt with "The Notion of Combatant in the Additional Protocol I"; and Colonel Marian Flemming, a member of the Polish Red Cross, presented an exposé on "The Protection of Prisoners of War in International Law".

A second series of lectures, given by representatives of the ICRC, dealt with various subjects. Mr. Hans-Peter Gasser, ICRC legal adviser, gave an analysis of "The Current Problems of ICRC Activities in the World"; Miss Laura Speziali, ICRC delegate in Poland, spoke on "The Development and Principles of ICRC Activities"; Mr. André Collomb, head of the ICRC-League delegation in Poland, gave an account of "The Mission of the ICRC and the League in Poland".

Finally, a third subject of the seminar was presented by Dr. K. Drzewicki, of the University of Gdansk, in his lecture entitled "Introductory Remarks on the Teaching of International Humanitarian Law—Aims, Scope and Methods".

The opinions expressed by participants during the discussions show that one of the main results of the seminar will be to generate constructive dissemination of international humanitarian law in Poland. They consider that similar seminars should be organized in the future, but for other groups of university teachers, for instance of political science or medicine. They also feel that in view of its success, the seminar which has just been held in Poland might serve as a model for the organization of seminars on similar lines in other countries.
