

Dissemination of international humanitarian law

Summary of work in 1979

In 1979 the ICRC, the League and the Henry Dunant Institute, in co-operation with several National Red Cross Societies and, in certain cases, other institutions, organized a number of seminars, regional meetings and training courses intended primarily to disseminate knowledge of international humanitarian law and of Red Cross principles.

As it did last year, *International Review* gives below a summary of some of the work in 1979. It also gives an abridged version of reports on some meetings organized by institutions other than the Red Cross which also take an interest in the dissemination of international humanitarian law.

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Since 1977 the ICRC, with the co-operation of National Societies and the League, has organized regional seminars for the study and dissemination of international humanitarian law in Warsaw (1977), Mombasa (1978), Kuala Lumpur (1978), Bogota (1979) and Tunis (1979). An account of the latter two is given below. Another will take place in Amman in April 1980.

Seminar in Colombia

The First Inter-American Seminar on the dissemination of international humanitarian law took place in Bogota from 5 to 15 March 1979. It had been organized jointly by the Colombian Red Cross and the ICRC. It was attended by 22 National Societies of Latin America, a delegate from the League and several from the Spanish Red Cross.

The purpose of the seminar was first and foremost to give participants a general idea of the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, and then to examine with them the most appropriate ways and means for dissemination among the armed forces, universities, schools and the general public, bearing in mind the peculiarities of each country.

The first week of this seminar was devoted to general lectures on subjects such as "History and nature of international humanitarian law", "The law of war and the Geneva Conventions", "Protocol I and the Geneva Conventions", given by experts from Geneva, Spain and Latin America.

During the second week the participants split into two working groups. One examined methods for dissemination among the armed forces, institutes of higher education, schools and other government institutions. It also considered leadership training and the possible role, scope and methods of National Societies in those circles. The other working group examined dissemination methods among National Societies and the general public; it, too, considered the question of leadership training.

The work of both groups was summarized in the form of conclusions which were then adopted in a plenary meeting. These conclusions constitute an inventory of dissemination methods most suitable to the various circles examined by each group.

In Tunisia, first French-speaking African seminar

This seminar, organized jointly by the ICRC and the Tunisian Red Crescent, took place in Tunis from 9 to 19 October 1979.

It proceeded along similar lines to those adopted by the Bogota seminar: the first week was given over to a series of lectures on various aspects of international humanitarian law given by experts from the ICRC and the African continent.

During the second week the participants split into two working groups which endeavoured to find practical solutions, adapted to each country and each sector, for the dissemination of international humanitarian law principles.

Each working group adopted conclusions which were approved in a plenary meeting.

Seminar in Poland

Following the regional seminar in Warsaw in 1977, the Polish Red Cross decided to organize, in co-operation with the ICRC, three more seminars on international humanitarian law for specific kinds of audiences. The one held in Gdansk in 1978 was for young people; the one we describe below was for university teachers; the third, for doctors, will take place towards the end of 1980.

From 27 August to 1 September 1979 a European seminar on the teaching of international humanitarian law in universities was held in Krakow. This was attended by 39 professors of international public law from 20 countries of Europe and North America. It was organized jointly by the Jagellonian University of Krakow, the Polish Red Cross and the ICRC. The League and the Henry Dunant Institute were also represented at the seminar.

Lectures were given on various aspects of the 1977 Protocols and their impact on international humanitarian law by Professor Nahlik (Poland), Professor Kalshoven (Netherlands), Professor Herczegh (Hungary), Professor Bothe (Federal Republic of Germany), Professor Denise Bindschedler-Robert (Member of the ICRC) and Professor Patrignoc (of the League).

Swiss Red Cross seminar

The Swiss Junior Red Cross, jointly with the "Société pédagogique vaudoise" organized a European seminar for secondary school teachers. It took place from 9 to 15 July and was attended by ICRC and League representatives.

The theme of the seminar was "How to teach the fundamental Red Cross principles". Discussions, based on the "Commentary" by Mr. Jean Pictet, centred on only four of the principles, namely humanity, impartiality, voluntary service and neutrality. The meeting drew up a form of guide for schoolteachers giving instruction in the fundamental principles.

Seminar of the Spanish Red Cross

From 1 to 4 November 1979, a seminar on the assessment and dissemination of the *Red Cross Teaching Guide* was held in Sitges, near Barcelona.

This seminar, organized by the Spanish Red Cross, was attended by delegates from the Junior sections of eight European National Societies and by representatives from the League and the ICRC.

In the course of the meeting, participants exchanged experiences on the dissemination of the *Teaching Guide*; the information enabled delegates from countries not yet using the *Guide* to devise a programme for its introduction in the schools in their countries and for its dissemination.

Libyan Red Crescent seminar

The Second Regional Seminar for Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Youth Leaders was held from 10 to 19 December in Tripoli (Libya) and was attended by about seventy participants from sixteen countries. It had been organized jointly by the Libyan Red Crescent, the League and the ICRC.

As in the case of other similar seminars, the ICRC Documentation and Dissemination Division delegated one of its staff to speak on various aspects of the history of the Red Cross, international humanitarian law and ICRC publications.

The Arabic versions of the school textbook *The Red Crescent and My Country* and the *Red Cross Teaching Guide* were very fully commented upon by the ICRC and League delegates. During the seminar, a number of ICRC films with Arabic commentary were shown.

The participants expressed their keen appreciation of the ICRC's publications in Arabic and hoped that its activities in this sphere would be continued.

Introductory course in international Red Cross activities at the Henry Dunant Institute

Since 1974, the Henry Dunant Institute has organized training courses for senior members and leaders of National Red Cross Societies, with the purpose of acquainting them with the international activities of the Red Cross. The first course was given in September of that year; the second, at which the lectures and discussions were in French, in May 1978.

A third course of this kind, in English, was organized by the Institute. It took place from 10 to 17 May 1979 and was attended by 29 participants from 20 countries of Europe, Asia and Africa.

A fourth course, in French, will be held in May-June 1980 and with the invaluable assistance of the Spanish Red Cross it is planned to organize a fifth in November-December 1980 for the leaders and senior officials of Spanish-speaking National Societies.

Seminar for medical officers at Geneva

The International Committee of Military Medicine and Pharmacy, taking the San Remo courses as a model, organized, from 24 to 31 October 1979, the First Seminar on International Humanitarian Law for Officers of the Medical Services of the Armed Forces. This was the first seminar of its kind, designed to meet the needs that had become apparent at the Eighth International Proficiency Course for Young Military Doctors in 1977 at Munich.

This seminar, conducted in French and placed under the high patronage of the Swiss Defence Department and of the ICRC, took place at the Henry Dunant Institute, Geneva. It was led by Division Colonel Käser, former director of the Swiss Army medical service and former head physician at the ICRC, for the intention of officers and some directors of the medical services of the following countries: Algeria, Argentina, Belgium, Central African Republic, Germany (Federal Republic of), Haiti, Italy, Ivory Coast, Mali, Peru, Poland, Spain, Switzerland and Venezuela. This first attempt having proved to be satisfactory, a similar seminar, this time in English, will be organized in the second half of 1980, in Geneva.

Seminar for journalists at the Henry Dunant Institute

From 4 to 9 November 1979, fifteen Danish journalists gathered for a seminar at the Henry Dunant Institute in Geneva. The initiative for this seminar was taken by the Danish Red Cross, which bore the cost.

Several members of the ICRC secretariat delivered lectures, and during a visit to the International Committee of the Red Cross Headquarters the journalists had talks with various officials on subjects in which they were particularly interested.

The journalists also visited the League, the UNDRO and HCR and met their colleagues accredited to the United Nations in Geneva.

The seminar organizers endeavoured to give a vivid image of the International Red Cross, illustrating with actual examples, so far as possible, the various themes discussed during the seminar.

The Henry Dunant Institute plans to develop such seminars on the Red Cross and international humanitarian law for people who are not members of the Red Cross.

Second African Seminar in Cameroon

With the purpose of contributing towards the dissemination of international humanitarian law and in order to give effect to the wishes expressed by the First African Seminar in 1977, the Henry Dunant Institute and the Cameroon Institute of International Relations organized the Second African Seminar on international humanitarian law, held at Yaoundé from 27 November to 5 December 1979.

The programme included an examination of the principles and fundamental rules of humanitarian law and the study of some specific questions relating to human rights. The seminar ended with a round table meeting to discuss "Africa and international humanitarian law".

Forty-eight persons from twenty African countries took part in the seminar. They included representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of the armed forces, and professors and teachers from many African universities.

International courses for officers at San Remo

In 1979, the International Institute of Humanitarian Law organized two international courses on the law of war for officers. The courses were held at the Institute at San Remo and were directed by Lieutenant Colonel de Mulinen (general staff officer of the Swiss Army), delegate of the ICRC to the armed forces and director of the military courses of the Institute.

The sixth course, conducted in English, took place from 2 to 9 May and was attended by participants from fifteen countries: Belgium, Canada, Egypt, Finland, Germany (Federal Republic of), Iraq, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States and Yugoslavia. The seventh course was in French and was held from 5 to 12 September with officers from the following seven countries: Benin, Canada, Egypt, Germany (Federal Republic of), Italy, Spain and Switzerland.

In the light of the lessons learnt at the previous five courses, the study of the law of war was based even more completely on tactical

information, so as to come closer to reality. Using a sand table and a number of model vehicles, weapons, ambulances, houses of different kinds and toy figures representing soldiers and civilians, it is quite a simple matter to devise exercises and practical demonstrations (for example, to show the use of the red cross or red crescent).

The participants' level of education, abilities and ranks have all tended to rise. At general staff level, the work was accordingly more detailed and the discussions went deeper. Consequently, as from 1980, the courses will take up ten full days (two five-day periods, Monday to Friday) and the main emphasis will be laid on air and naval warfare.

International colloquium in Monaco

An international colloquium on the teaching of human rights through children's newspapers was held in Monaco from 1 to 16 November. It was organized by the Monaco National Commission for UNESCO and the World Association of Young People's Friends, on the initiative of the UNESCO Human Rights Division.

The purpose of the meeting was to give effect to one of the recommendations contained in the final report of the International Congress on the Teaching of Human Rights in Vienna, September 1978, according to which it was important to develop education in Human Rights not only in school but also as an extra-mural subject.

The ICRC, which intends to produce strip cartoons on the Red Cross, took part in this colloquium in order to examine the possibility of launching such publications on the children's newspaper market.