

*negative forces which are today destroying our world, this world which must be transformed into a place where life is worth living, to ensure that man's future will be abounding in promise.*

*The Red Cross is already active in this field, and there is no doubt that its 230 million members throughout the world will do everything in their power to co-operate through their National Society in the measures taken in all countries to improve the human environment. I am convinced that this is further proof of the fact that our movement, over a hundred years old, not only carries on its traditional tasks with enthusiasm, but also closely follows the evolution of our world so that it can, with the maximum efficiency, accomplish the mission entrusted to it by its founder, namely the prevention of human suffering.*

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## DISSEMINATION OF THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS

*Information continues to reach us from National Societies on the dissemination of the Geneva Conventions in their countries; the latest to be received is given below by way of information.*

### U.S.S.R.

The Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR has sent the ICRC a communication the main points of which are summarized as follows:

- I. The very important role played by Russia in the past and by the Soviet Union today in the formulation of rules for the purpose of alleviating the condition of victims of war, of ensuring the application of such rules and providing for penal sanctions should they be violated is very well known.

The USSR has traditionally paid wide attention to the study and future development of the norms of humanitarian law, as may be observed in the field of international law as well as in matters concerning the teaching of humanitarian rules applicable in time of armed conflict.

II. The curricula governing the teaching of international humanitarian law in Soviet higher institutes differ from previous programmes in the following essential aspects:

- (a) The teaching of international law in Soviet Russia makes a sharp distinction between, on the one hand, unjust wars, wars of pillage and wars of aggression, and, on the other hand, just wars, defensive wars and wars of liberation. To this end, great attention is directed, in the USSR, to the problem of working out norms of international law against aggression, and the experience gained by the Soviet Union during a just and liberating war has been borne in mind. Emphasis is laid on the close links that must exist between the nature and true objectives of a war and the belligerents' humane behaviour. At the same time, it is shown that wars of aggression waged by States are characterized by the violation of all the laws and customs of war.
- (b) In the syllabus of international law adopted in Soviet higher institutes, an important place is devoted to such essential measures for the prevention of war as disarmament and the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction.
- (c) Great importance is assigned to questions of responsibility for war crimes, crimes against peace, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide.
- (d) In Soviet higher institutes, more than ten per cent of the time taken up by the study of public international law is given over to the teaching of the norms of international law in the fields of prevention and humanization of war, the alleviation of the condition of victims of war and the responsibilities incurred for violations of humanitarian rules in armed conflicts, thus testifying to the attention devoted to these subjects. Further, these are included in

Soviet courses of military penal law and are touched upon in special courses given at higher and intermediate medical colleges, while it is planned to introduce them in certain special courses intended for Asian, African and Latin American students of developing countries who have come to study in the USSR.

In several higher institutes (for example, at the Institute of International Relations), a course is given on "International protection of human rights", half of it being devoted to problems concerning the protection of human rights in armed conflicts and, in particular, to the rights and duties of International Red Cross bodies.

III. In the Soviet teaching of international law, certain subjects, relating to the prevention of war and the guarantee of the dictates of humanity in time of armed conflict, are treated in the context of the following themes:

1. History of international law.  
Historical development of contemporary international law.  
Russia's role in the evolution of international law.  
Significance of the Decree on Peace and other Soviet Government decrees on the evolution of contemporary international law.  
Second World War and international law (Soviet efforts to bring about the punishment of war criminals).  
Significance of decisions by Soviet Communist Party Congresses and Programmes and Conference Documents of Communist and Workers' Parties on the theory and practice of contemporary international law.
2. Essential concepts and characteristics of modern international law.  
Peaceful co-existence among States with differing socio-political systems.  
International law and ethics.  
Obligations according to modern international law.
3. National liberation movements and international law.  
Recognition in modern international law of the right to resort to armed force to achieve freedom and independence.

4. The object of international law.  
Recognition of a belligerent.  
The concept of responsibility in international law.  
Draft law on crimes against peace and humanity.
5. USSR proposal to refuse to use force as a means of settling territorial disputes.
6. International co-operation in the defence of human rights.  
The UN Charter on international social co-operation.  
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.  
Treaties on human rights.  
Declarations and convention on the banning of racial discrimination.  
Convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide.  
The status of refugees and displaced persons.  
Crimes against humanity and international efforts to eliminate them.
7. Codification in international law.
8. The peaceful settlement of international disputes.
9. International ways and means of preventing war.  
Prohibition in international law of wars of aggression and bellicose propaganda.  
Disarmament in international law (Soviet project for total world disarmament).  
Practical measures relating to disarmament and arms limitation.  
Neutrality in modern international law.
10. Armed conflict and international law.  
Marxist-Leninist study of war. Just and unjust wars. The laws and customs of war and their codification.  
The legal significance of a declaration of war.  
Armed forces, methods and regulations to be observed in war on land. Military force against a peaceful population is not permitted.  
Combatants and non-combatants. Partisans.  
Military occupation.

## IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

Prisoners, their status.  
Regulations pertaining to civilians, wounded and sick.  
Laws and customs of war at sea.  
The law of air warfare.  
Neutrality in wartime.  
Cessation of hostilities and state of war.  
Peace treaties.  
The responsibility of war criminals. Material responsibility in aggression. Convention on the imprescriptibility of war crimes.

IV. Information on humanitarian principles applicable during armed conflict: meetings, conferences. In addition, Soviet scientists publish articles on this subject and at present a book sponsored by the Soviet Red Cross and entitled "International Humanitarian Law" is being prepared. It takes present-day developments into account. Moreover there is in the USSR a compendium of documents on responsibility in the event of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

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### GUYANA

The Guyana Red Cross Society having undertaken to promote the Geneva Conventions is doing so by means of:

- (a) radio talks over the two local stations,
- (b) talks and discussion with groups,
- (c) distribution of manuals and booklets to the armed forces and the police,
- (d) assisting police lecturers by providing relevant literature.

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### IRELAND

Dissemination of the Geneva Conventions is actively promoted by the Irish Red Cross Society. Its four-page summary of the Conventions is widely circulated, having been sent to all post-primary schools by the Department of Education and circulated

through the Society's branches. A set of slides made by the International Committee is available on loan and the Junior Red Cross News Letter has occasional articles on the Geneva Conventions.

At the request of the International Committee, the National Society has been in touch with universities in an effort to encourage the systematic teaching of humanitarian law, in particular the Geneva Conventions, in the faculties of Law, Political Science and Medicine.

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## JORDAN

For several years the Jordan Red Crescent has been conducting a nation-wide campaign to make the Geneva Conventions better known among the public. According to details supplied by the National Society recently, the main aspects of the campaign are as follows:

Two booklets in Arabic were published by the National Society in 1971; one is a summary of the Conventions, the other a study on the use and abuse of the Red Crescent emblem. In addition, the school textbook "The Red Crescent and My Country", published by the ICRC in Arabic, has been widely distributed, 50,000 copies having so far been issued to school children. Of the "Soldier's Manual", 25,000 copies have been provided to the armed forces, together with copies of the "Summary of the Geneva Conventions for Members of the Armed Forces and the General Public".

Information about the National Society's activities, Red Cross principles and the Geneva Conventions, have several times been broadcast by radio and television, especially on 8 May, World Red Cross Day. Lectures on the same subject are given at the Military College and in the Jordan University courses on international humanitarian law. University students have also been provided with information and documentary material. On various occasions lecturers, such as the President of the National Society, have explained to their audiences the significance and importance of the Geneva Conventions.