

DISSEMINATION OF THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS

A resolution on the implementation and dissemination of the Geneva Conventions was adopted by the XXIIInd International Conference of the Red Cross at Teheran, calling upon the ICRC to centralize all information on the dissemination of, and instruction in, the Geneva Conventions in the world, in order to support the efforts of Governments and National Societies in this sphere.

Continuing, in its section devoted to the "dissemination of the Geneva Conventions", the publication of reports sent to the ICRC by National Societies on the measures taken by them to ensure the dissemination of the Conventions, the International Review gives practical expression to this resolution.

POLAND

On the invitation of the Polish Red Cross, Miss F. Perret, delegate of the ICRC, was in Poland from 10 to 21 December, visiting Warsaw, Gdansk and Olsztyn, on a mission related to the joint efforts of the ICRC and National Societies to ensure a wider dissemination of the Geneva Conventions. Miss Perret, with the full co-operation of the Polish National Society and with the help of the ICRC's audio-visual techniques, gave a number of lectures on the Geneva Conventions to Red Cross members and to groups of persons belonging to the armed forces and university circles.

This mission enjoyed a great measure of success, as it benefited from the remarkable efficiency with which the Polish Red Cross, which enjoys widespread support from everyone throughout the country and is thus able to spread the Red Cross principles

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among all sections of the population, organized its information sessions. For example, the Gdansk Committee is active among seamen while the Olsztyn Committee is doing much useful work in the blood donors' club founded by it.

The Government of the Polish People's Republic, too, is taking measures to spread knowledge of the Geneva Conventions in Poland. We are sure readers would be interested to know the indications communicated to the ICRC by the Government in reply to the ICRC's request for information on this matter.

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Since the time it became a party to the Geneva Conventions, Poland has always attached great importance to the dissemination among the population of the principles upon which the Conventions are based, as it is well aware that the action itself of dissemination constitutes a prior condition for their full application.

The Government of the People's Republic of Poland already informed the ICRC, in its reply to a memorandum of 21 November 1966, that several branches of activity have been undertaken in this field and that they are being constantly continued and developed.

I. For example, a number of publications relating to the law of war were printed by the Armed Forces Publishing House:

- (a) in 1969, a booklet was issued, entitled "Some problems concerning the law of war";
- (b) a chapter entitled "Some problems concerning the law of war" was included in the "Soldier's Manual", issued in 1969;
- (c) a chapter, also entitled "Some problems concerning the law of war", was included in the "NCO's Manual", issued in 1971;
- (d) a course on "Selected problems concerning the law of war" was reprinted in stencilled form, and the issue of a set of lectures was also continued.

II. The military regulations, printed for use by all military units and issued by the military publishing press, now include the following additions inserted in the " Polish Military Legislation ": the full text of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 for the Protection of War Victims, the text of the Hague Convention of 14 May 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the text of the law relating to the Polish Red Cross.

III. Problems concerning the law of war have been introduced among the subjects taught every year in the curricula of military schools at all levels and in the courses of instruction to soldiers in military units. The set syllabus of these courses exceeds in extent the minimum programme set by the ICRC, annexed to its 1966 memorandum.

The following items are included in the course of instruction:

1. protection of the wounded, the sick, and prisoners of war;
2. rights and duties of occupation armies in time of war;
3. protection of the civilian population and cultural property in time of armed conflict;
4. war crimes responsibility;
5. laws of war, principles regulating the use of means of warfare;
6. the problem of neutrality in contemporary law of war.

IV. The Geneva Conventions are mentioned in the military regulations of the various services concerned.

V. With regard to articles that have appeared in legal periodicals, several papers have been published describing the development at international level of the law of armed conflicts, among which the following may be mentioned: " New concepts in the field of respect for human rights in armed conflicts ", " The work of the ICRC on the development of the law of war ", " Some observations on the legal status of partisans and of the civilian population in occupied territory ", " The United Nations Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations

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to War Crimes—present situation and future outlook”, “ Agreements on human rights and the Geneva Conventions for the protection of war victims”, “ Development of the law of war”, “ An international convention for the protection of journalists in time of armed conflict”, besides many others.

VI. Several books have been published on subjects relating to the international law of armed conflicts, including a monograph on respect of human rights in armed conflicts. Another important monograph is in the press, on the subject of the legal situation of the civilian population in time of armed conflict.

VII. Courses in public international law, dealing with these subjects too, are also given in all faculties of law.

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS ASSISTANCE IN INDO-CHINA

Khmer Republic

With the recrudescence of fighting round Phnom Penh, thousands of persons living on the outskirts have sought refuge in the centre of the city. Delegates of International Red Cross Assistance in Indo-China (AICR) have met the emergency by distributing plasma and medicaments to hospitals and organizing the distribution of essential relief supplies. The construction of provisional shelters is contemplated.

The medical team furnished by the Swedish Red Cross has been transferred from Kompong Cham to Kompong Chhnang, where the 300,000 local population has been increased by over 40,000 displaced persons. To ensure more aid for the victims of fighting, the Belgian Red Cross has strengthened its surgical team at Svay Rieng by an additional surgeon and two nurses.