

THE SOUTH AFRICAN RED CROSS AND DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

Since the Mombasa seminar on the dissemination of international humanitarian law, in August 1978, the South African Red Cross has continued its efforts to disseminate knowledge of that law and we believe readers might be interested in the main directions of its efforts.

In the first place, the Society has issued several publications for various sectors of the public.

The study written by its President, "The Influence of the Red Cross upon Public International Law, with special reference to Southern Africa" has been widely distributed in university circles. In addition, the Society encourages law students to write theses on subjects related to humanitarian law.

In other schools, it distributes many copies of *The Red Cross and My Country* and the accompanying *Teacher's Manual*, both of which were published by the ICRC.

The South African Red Cross has also had the Geneva Conventions translated into Zulu and Xhosa, so that these treaties may be accessible to a wide public.

Apart from promoting these publications, the South African Red Cross has organized several training seminars.

From 29 October to 2 November 1979 a seminar on the dissemination of knowledge of the Geneva Conventions was held in Johannesburg, attended by representatives of the National Societies of Botswana, Kenya and Mauritius, and of the ICRC. Important resolutions were adopted with a view to encouraging the dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law, particularly among the armed forces, and in schools and universities.

In the years 1979-80 various branches of the South African Red Cross also organized local seminars on the Geneva Conventions, such as the one held in Capetown in February 1980.

The South African Red Cross endeavours to make the principles of international humanitarian law known to the general public. For that purpose it has published articles in the press and broadcast on the subject by radio and television.

This summary does no more than mention the action taken, but all who work for the dissemination of knowledge of humanitarian law will appreciate the sum of thought, work and dedication necessary to make a success of such undertakings.

MUSEUM OF THE SOVIET RED CROSS

In November 1979, Mr. V. A. Baltiyski, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR, opened the Soviet Red Cross Museum in Moscow. Those present included the participants in the fifth plenary session of the Alliance's Executive Committee, veterans and staff of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and the representatives of various organizations and associations.

Five years earlier, the *Soviet Red Cross Review* had asked readers to send in any objects and documents which could be used to illustrate the history of the Red Cross in the USSR. There was an extraordinarily big response to the appeal, and today the museum has a large collection of manuscripts and printed material, albums, medals and various objects dating from the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, many of which are unique. The USSR Defence Ministry's museum of military medicine gave models of ambulance wagons, medical vehicles and aircraft of the type used during the First World War.

Each of the eight rooms of the museum is arranged like the interior of a field dispensary. Visitors moving through the various rooms may follow the development of the Red Cross in the USSR from the time it was founded under the Tsarist régime until today, and may learn all about its present organization and activities.

In the course of the one hundred and thirteen years of its existence, the Red Cross Society has become one of the most important institutions in the USSR. Very soon after coming to power, Lenin said: "We need a Red Cross which works sincerely and loyally for the State, the workers