

THE RED CROSS AS A FACTOR FOR WORLD PEACE

One of the most important questions to be dealt with by the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross was the item on its agenda entitled " The Red Cross as a Factor for World Peace ". This no doubt traditional subject which has for a long time engaged the attention of International Conferences, is now more topical than ever in view of present-day circumstances.

The ICRC had submitted to the XXth Conference a report which defined and summarized the conception which, in the course of its first century, the Red Cross had formed of its role in the promotion of peace. The report concludes with some practical suggestions for developing further the Red Cross contribution to the defence of peace and understanding among nations. We think our readers will be interested in this document which is quoted below.

We would add that a number of draft resolutions, covering a variety of ideas, were submitted to the Conference. Thanks to the comprehension of a special commission whose task was in part to reconcile the various points of view, under the chairmanship of a representative of the ICRC, a joint resolution (No. X) was reached. This was approved almost unanimously by the Conference ; the text was as follows :

*The XXth International Conference of the Red Cross,
noting with satisfaction the Resolution entitled " Red Cross as a Factor
in World Peace " adopted by the Council of Delegates (Geneva, 1963),*

*recalling Resolutions previously adopted in this field particularly by
the XIXth International Conference of the Red Cross (New Delhi, 1957),*

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welcomes the efforts made by various Governments to eliminate the danger of armed conflicts through disarmament and, in particular, through the conclusion of the 1963 Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space, and under water and also the 1963 Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly banning the stationing of weapons of mass destruction in outer space,

expresses its profound anxiety with regard to the suffering endured by the populations of a number of countries where armed conflicts are being waged,

further expresses its deep concern at and deplors the repeated use of force directed against the independence or the right to self determination of all peoples,

urges all Governments to settle their international disputes by peaceful means in the spirit of international law,

appeals to all Governments to pursue their efforts to reach agreement on the ban of all nuclear weapon tests and on general and complete disarmament under effective international control as well as to consider taking such partial measures as the establishment of nuclear free zones and agreements for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons,

encourages the International Committee of the Red Cross to undertake, in constant liaison with the United Nations and within the framework of its humanitarian mission, every effort likely to contribute to the prevention or settlement of possible armed conflicts, and to be associated, in agreement with the States concerned, with any appropriate measures to this end,

urges the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies, the National Societies and Governments to redouble their efforts with a view to the universal and scrupulous application, in a spirit of humanity, of the Geneva Conventions, in all armed conflicts,

expresses its appreciation for the efforts of the ICRC, the League, the National Societies and Governments for the alleviation of suffering, and encourages them to continue such efforts in the future.

During discussion of this question, several delegates spoke in favour of the practical suggestions contained in the ICRC report. Such statements cannot but encourage the International Committee to continue its efforts in this direction.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1963, at the Centenary Congress, the ICRC submitted a detailed report on "The Red Cross As A Factor for World Peace" and concerning the part it had been called upon to play during the Cuba crisis in the autumn of 1962¹. By accepting in principle the responsibility of carrying out inspections, subject to the consent of all States concerned, the ICRC helped to ease international tension and, consequently, to maintain peace.

This present report is more general and of a completely different character. Its aim is to take stock of the evolution of the doctrine of the Red Cross, and especially of the ICRC with regard to the subject under study, as well as to try to describe how the Red Cross contributes towards world peace.

This brief summary and sometimes even sketchy examination can be justified for several reasons. The twentieth meeting of the Red Cross supreme deliberative assembly will provide an opportunity for examining the progress made in this field. Moreover, the sentence on peace incorporated in the declaration of Red Cross principles, the draft of which was adopted in 1961, and the whole of the declaration itself must be finally approved by the Vienna Conference. Lastly, it would be wise to remind new National Societies and new Red Cross directors that the subject of this report has long been a matter of interest to our great movement.

At the end of this study, the ICRC will put forward a constructive proposal which follows from the evolution outlined in these pages.

One point must be made clear from the outset. Several expressions have been used to describe the Red Cross activities in ques-

¹ Concerning the ICRC's role during this crisis, the Council of Delegates, at its meeting during the Centenary Congress in 1963, adopted the following resolution (No. XXIV):

The Council of Delegates,

- after having taken cognizance of the conditions in which the International Committee of the Red Cross was invited by the United Nations Organisation, with the agreement of the parties concerned, to intervene in the Cuba incident,
- considering it is desirable that the Committee respond to the call made upon it simultaneously by States in conflict to act as intermediary or assist in the proper discharge of the obligations they have undertaken, thus contributing to the maintenance of peace,
- approves the action taken by the International Committee in the Cuba incident and congratulates it for having accomplished that action.

tion: apart from the phrase "factor for peace", mention has been made of the Red Cross' contribution towards "the rapprochement of nations", or "mutual understanding amongst peoples".

The word "peace" has several meanings: it may denote a specific type of organisation of the international community and, in this case, it includes politics in which the ICRC must not interfere because of its principles. It may also imply the absence of war in general as well as describing a certain frame of mind, the spirit of peace. This is essentially the meaning of the term "peace" in this report. In the words of former President Max Huber "The Red Cross can influence and wants to influence only the moral rapprochement of peoples." That is why the "round table" meetings, which will be mentioned later, preferred the term "mutual understanding", as the word "rapprochement" alone may imply that the Red Cross is taking direct action which might become political.

II. THE EVOLUTION OF THE DOCTRINE UP TO THE SECOND WORLD WAR

It has often been stressed that the Red Cross was born on the battlefield, that for a long time it concentrated its attention on war victims, and later on the victims of natural disasters and disease. Neither the Statutes of the ICRC nor those of the League provide for work to promote peace, despite the fact that ever since 1919 many resolutions adopted by international conferences referred to this field of activities.

However, it is true that since the Red Cross began its work, the question of its relationship with peace has sometimes been raised: instead of helping the victims of conflicts, would it not be wiser to do its utmost to combat war? This dialectic which has continued through this century, was first started by Dunant and the great pacifist, Bertha von Suttner. Dunant succeeded in convincing her that while the Red Cross was concerned with war, it was in no way opposed to the establishment of peace. On the contrary, the Red Cross by its very nature, contributed towards the achievement of this goal.

For a long time, however, this controversy and above all the relationship between the Red Cross and peace played no part in the

work and development of the Red Cross: at the beginning, the ICRC and the National Societies were too busy implanting in the minds and life of people the principles of the Geneva Conventions and of assistance, without discrimination, to victims of conflicts. Gradually, some personalities came to recognise that the bonds of solidarity linking National Societies in the accomplishment of their work and the moral credit the Red Cross had gained through this achievement were factors which promoted mutual understanding and peace.

But very few voices echoed this recognition. It was only after the Second World War that the Red Cross, sharing the hope of the peoples for a lasting peace, took a stand with regard to its contribution to the spirit of peace. At the request of the Xth International Conference, the ICRC and the League launched the important appeal of July 1921, addressed to all the peoples and declaring that the Red Cross, not satisfied with contributing towards putting an end to war by mutual assistance throughout the world, "not satisfied with working in peace-time, wants to do more for peace". Since then, nearly all the International Conferences adopted resolutions on "The Red Cross As A Factor For World Peace".

1. Two Ways in which the Red Cross Contributes to the Spirit of Peace

Examination of all these resolutions and the attitude of the International Red Cross, show clearly that this contribution falls into two main categories, between which there is an evident distinction.

a) Indirect Contribution to Peace

Part of the resolution on peace adopted by the XVIIth International Conference (1948) is quoted below to describe this first concept:

The Red Cross has as its primary function the relief of human suffering on an impartial basis without regard for differences of nationality, race, or religious or political belief. In discharging this responsibility at home and abroad the Red Cross offers to all men an opportunity

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for positive action to meet human need and at the same time contribute to that better understanding among peoples which is essential to the maintenance of peace.

As can be seen, in this case the contribution of the Red Cross to peace is a consequence of its action for alleviating or preventing human suffering and distress: by undertaking such action in conformity with the principles of our movement and manifesting international fellowship, the Red Cross promotes the spirit of peace. However, the main goal of Red Cross work is linked to human suffering. The more the Red Cross develops these activities, the greater will be its contribution to the spirit of peace.

Although a consequential contribution there is nevertheless the link of cause and effect, and these two aspects are therefore closely related. That is why the sentence on peace does not constitute a separate principle but is an integral part of the principle of humanity adopted by the Council of Delegates in 1961.¹

b) *Direct Contribution to Peace*

The contribution of the Red Cross to the spirit of peace can also take the form of activities which are specifically for that purpose. To illustrate this, part of the resolution adopted by the International Conference of 1930 is quoted below:

The XIVth International Red Cross Conference . . . expresses its conviction that the Red Cross, by its efforts to establish these points of contact will bring the support of its moral force and prestige to the world movement towards comprehension and conciliation, the essential guarantees for the maintenance of peace, and will thus work efficaciously against war as the sole means of preventing that suffering the mitigation of which originally formed the primary object of its activity.

According to this concept, it is obvious that the foremost aim of this action is no longer to prevent or alleviate suffering but to

¹ A recent example of this type of contribution is the part played by the ICRC during the Santo Domingo crisis. The ICRC intervened in favour of concluding a truce in order to gather the wounded and bury the dead. As a result of this truce, hostilities ceased for a long time.

foster mutual understanding, which will, consequently, avoid conflicts between peoples and therefore prevent human suffering. An example of such specific activities is visits between the Junior Red Cross organized by National Societies.

It should be pointed out that the resolutions of the International Conferences have never considered the second type of Red Cross contribution to peace as the sole activity of National Societies. These resolutions, just as the aforesaid principle of humanity, show that specific activities for promoting the spirit of peace can only complement the other Red Cross tasks related to suffering and distress. It is precisely thanks to the prestige and credit the Red Cross is winning by alleviating suffering and maintaining health that it can sometimes go further and promote the spirit of peace itself.

2. Specific Activities for Mutual Understanding

In practice, what can the Red Cross do to promote mutual understanding as a contribution towards peace? Although several resolutions declare that the Red Cross must work also in this field, almost no mention is made of the measures to be applied. It would therefore be useful to dwell briefly on some results achieved between the two World Wars, in order to understand the obstacles which hamper any practical action in this field. These achievements fall into three categories: influence on the Press and the "round-table" meetings of the ICRC; the Red Cross Truce; Junior Red Cross work for Peace.

a) *Influence on the Press — The "Round Table" Meetings of the ICRC*

The President of the Swedish Red Cross, Prince Charles of Sweden, sent an important message to the International Conference of 1930 about "The Red Cross as a Factor for the Rapprochement of Peoples". He laid special emphasis on the rôle of the Press in international relations and pointed out that during critical periods the Press sometimes exerted an extremely harmful influence by stirring up hatred; he wondered to what extent the Red Cross could fight against this state of affairs.

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The President of the ICRC, Mr. Max Huber, after expressing himself in suitable terms on the subject, then submitted the above-mentioned Resolution to the Conference which it adopted, expressing "its conviction that the Red Cross, by its efforts to establish these points of contact will bring the support of its moral force and prestige to the world movement towards comprehension and conciliation".

In 1933, when many representatives of National Societies came to Geneva for the International Relief Union, the ICRC, in agreement with the League, invited them to participate in a "round-table" meeting to study the question of the rapprochement of peoples. Through a simple exchange of views, this informal and non-committal meeting enabled the National Societies as well as the ICRC and the League to have a better understanding of their practical possibilities of responding to the wishes expressed in the 1930 Resolution. The framework and the scope of the discussion had already been outlined in the circular which invited these representatives. This debate left aside the questions of the Red Cross Truce and Junior Red Cross activities (which will both be dealt with later in this report) and it stressed the need of carefully avoiding the political field.

It was under these circumstances that two "round-table" meetings were convened at ICRC Headquarters, on July 11th and September 22nd, 1933, under the chairmanship of Mr. Huber. Delegates from a dozen National Societies were present. Thus, for the first time, a Red Cross meeting was systematically reviewing its practical possibilities of making a further contribution to the spirit of peace. The results obtained from this exchange of views were submitted to the International Conference of 1934 in a special report of the ICRC. Its main points are examined below.

The possibility of exerting influence on the Press was of course one of the main topics of discussion because of the above-mentioned message from the Swedish Red Cross in this respect. The Report states that :

. . . The possibility of using the Press to rouse the public's interest in Red Cross and its national and international activities was borne in mind. What seemed more important was the "negative" influence which National Red Cross Societies and their sections could exert by

preventing the occurrence of dangerous situations caused by the publishing of sensational news which might breed strife between peoples and provoke groundless terror. However, according to the majority of those who spoke on the subject, it would be too onerous a task for the National Red Cross Societies, which were not prepared for it; moreover, by accepting it they would risk causing misunderstandings and thereby forfeiting the respect of their government and of powerful political groups, etc.

The "Round table" meetings rejected the idea of "moral disarmament". The Report goes on to say that since National Societies were set up to carry out mainly practical activities, it would be difficult "to assign to them an intellectual task for which they do not appear to be adequately prepared and which, it seems, should not be entrusted to them".

Some of the participants spoke of sociological studies of the basic organisation and conditions of international co-operation and understanding, which could be carried out or promoted by National Societies themselves. Although it was recognised that such studies could exert a good influence, the idea was considered too alien to Red Cross activities and difficult to put into practice: "the Red Cross should be careful not to sacrifice its energy and means on activities which are so distant from its immediate goals."

Lastly, the "round table" meetings examined two other fields of action: personal contacts between members of different National Societies ("the importance of which should not be exaggerated") and above all, relief work. The Report states that participation in relief operations in peace time "not only contributes to the rapprochement of men of good will of all nations, but also encourages them to have greater respect for each other".

With regard to relief, however, the "round table" meetings did not really envisage specific activities for the promotion of peace. It is therefore obvious that these meetings did not achieve very positive results with regard to specific activities; according to the Report, their discussion "seems to have revealed that it would hardly be possible to make concrete suggestions now". Nor was the ICRC's report to the 1934 Conference followed by any practical measure. Nevertheless, this first endeavour was a very interesting one.

b) *The "Red Cross Truce"*

The aforesaid "round table" meetings purposely left aside the question of the "Red Cross Truce", which was being simultaneously studied by a special Red Cross Commission. What was the nature of this "Truce"?

After the First World War, the Czechoslovak Red Cross initiated the idea of observing an annual two or three day truce in the country, when the newspapers and other information media would carry out an active publicity campaign for public health, relief and child protection. Then, this Society developed its idea further and suggested that during this truce pernicious polemics in news articles, theatres, cinemas should be replaced by this peaceful kind of propaganda, in accordance with the spirit of the Red Cross.

The International Conference of 1930 showed interest for this initiative and entrusted a three-member Commission (American, Belgian and Italian Red Cross) with studying on the spot the aspects and results of this Truce. After several visits to Prague, the Commission submitted a detailed Report on the "Red Cross Truce" to the XVth International Conference of 1934. This Report mainly stressed the fact that this Truce had to be prepared with scrupulous care: the official proclamation of the establishment of the Truce in Prague itself in the presence of the Authorities, the organising of festivities and ceremonies throughout the country and, lastly, the communication of publicity material for peace to the Press.

The Report pointed out that this was not an attempt to rouse vague and abstract feelings in the public. It laid particular emphasis on the two fundamental aspects of this initiative: to suspend polemics against other countries and thus give the "Truce" its real meaning (which responds to the wish expressed in the Swedish message) and, instead, to turn the public's attention to constructive subjects (which would change every year, such as "Health and Peace", "Nurses", "Child Welfare", "Respect for Old People", "Cleanliness Everywhere").

On the basis of this Report, one of the resolutions adopted by the 1934 Conference recognised the fact that the Truce was an effective way of promoting international understanding, and urged National Red Cross Societies to examine the conclusions reached

by the Commission as well as the possibility of putting them into practice in their countries. However, apart from the Czechoslovak Red Cross which pursued its work in this field and submitted another Report to the 1938 Conference, and the Belgian Red Cross which furthered this idea by planning a "week of kindness" in 1937, no other National Societies seem to have organised a Red Cross Truce, at least not in the way it was carried out in Czechoslovakia (which was perhaps due to the extremely favourable circumstances and the prestige of the Red Cross in that country). In any case, no further mention was made of this Truce at later Conferences.

Thus, the original concept of this extremely interesting initiative had in general no practical effects (although later "World Red Cross Day" was indirectly based on it, as shall be seen further on).

c) *Junior Red Cross Work For Peace*

The Junior Red Cross was made official for the first time, as it were, by the International Conference of the Red Cross, in 1930, which defined its rôle and encouraged its future expansion in an important resolution. This resolution recognised in particular its contribution which would bring about understanding between young people of different countries.

What was, then, its contribution to specific activities for peace? It mainly developed international inter-school correspondence by publishing albums under the conditions laid down by the League Secretariat, as well as by an exchange of national Junior Red Cross Section reviews.

However, if these activities were to keep their value as a factor for international friendship, they would have to be in conformity with the principles of which both the League and the ICRC reminded all National Societies in the important circular No. 14 (1931) on Junior Sections. The circular stated that: "By carefully avoiding any reference in this correspondence to questions which might sow the seeds of dissension, the "Juniors" will contribute towards one of the major goals of the Red Cross: promotion of the rapprochement of peoples . . . Furthermore, the principle of political and religious neutrality must be strictly observed by the editors of

Junior Red Cross reviews. They might seriously fail to comply with one of their foremost duties if they do not realise that this is a vital principle for the whole of the Red Cross, a sacred obligation of its very ideal ”.

Just before the Second World War, it must be admitted, the Red Cross bodies, on the whole, had not been able to contribute much to further the resolutions which Conferences adopted concerning specific action for the promotion of mutual understanding. This explains why, on the eve of the war, in September 1939, the President of the ICRC was more pessimistic, in his article “ The Red Cross and the Prevention of War ”, about the possibilities of promoting peace than he had been in 1930. He stressed the fact that the real and principal rôle of the Red Cross was still to assist victims, and added that: “ the noble wish to look further, to see more, to be more constructive, is sometimes a temptation to which we must not succumb.” This warning can be understood in the context of the 1939 situation, and it can still serve as a lesson drawn from experience which must be taken into consideration even when efforts are being made to go beyond this stage.

III. THE EVOLUTION OF THE DOCTRINE AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

As soon as International Conferences were able to meet again they confirmed many times the Red Cross’ hate of war and its wish to work unceasingly for the development of international understanding. However, none of these resolutions have anything fundamentally new to add to those adopted before 1939. They mainly contain the two aspects already described. It is, therefore, in texts other than these resolutions that we shall find the most characteristic features of the doctrine’s evolution with regard to the peace work of the Red Cross. As its history is very recent it can be briefly reviewed.

a) *Articles Published in “ The International Review of the Red Cross ” (1951).*

In 1951, the Review issued by the ICRC published two consecutive articles on “ The Red Cross and Peace ” which are no

doubt the most important on the subject ¹. They took up the ideas of Mr. Huber and developed them in the light of more recent experience. The first article, written by Mr. Pictet, Director for General Affairs of the ICRC, explained again why efforts to protect victims of all kinds of armed conflicts had never meant that the Red Cross accepted war, and did not hamper the promotion of the spirit of peace.

The second article was written by Mr. J.-G. Lossier, the editor of the *International Review*, who gave a more positive answer to the question Mr. Huber had anxiously raised on the eve of the war, by considering an evolution whose scope the former President of the ICRC could not have suspected in 1939, namely the development of arms of mass destruction. In some cases, the use of such arms could be so destructive that it would be impossible for the Red Cross to carry out its "traditional" task. However, this situation does not relieve the Red Cross from its duty to be ready to assist victims of all kinds of armed conflict which unfortunately still exist in the world. It lays an even heavier responsibility upon it to prevent war.

These were Mr. Lossier's conclusions. He wrote that "It is partly these new and terrifying elements which have obliged the Red Cross to adopt a different but always more resolute attitude towards the problem of war and peace." These words heralded the ICRC's attitude twelve years later during the Cuba crisis of 1962.

While these articles clearly raised the question of the responsibility of the Red Cross for peace, they (especially Mr. Lossier's article) laid more stress on the peaceful value of Red Cross work in alleviating suffering, from the moral and sociological point of view, and were not concerned in defining fields in which the Red Cross could carry out specific activities for peace.

b) *The Elaboration of Red Cross Principles*

This doctrinal movement was of course assigned its place in the draft declaration of Red Cross principles, adopted by the Council of Delegates in Prague (1961). Following the discussions, it was decided to add a sentence on the contribution of the Red Cross to

¹ See *Revue internationale*, English supplements for February, July, August, November, 1951.

peace, at the end of the “principle of humanity”. The wording of this principle, as submitted to the XXth International Conference, at the same time as others, was the following:

The Red Cross, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours—in its international and national capacity—to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, co-operation and stable peace amongst all peoples.

As this discussion took place recently, it is unnecessary to dwell on it. It should just be pointed out that, although certain delegations planned at some point to lay down a separate principle on the contribution of the Red Cross to Peace, they finally abandoned the idea. Thus, according to the above-mentioned text, this contribution is generally closely linked with the protection of the individual.

c) *The Motto of the League of Red Cross Societies*

The last development to report is the adoption of a special motto for the League, which refers to peace since it is the Latin phrase “Per humanitatem ad pacem”. This motto was adopted in 1961 by the Council of Delegates, at the proposal of the Swiss Red Cross.

It should be stressed that this motto does not in any way contradict that of the ICRC, “Inter arma caritas”¹ but, on the contrary, supplements it to cover the activities of National Societies not connected with armed conflicts. The sponsor of this proposal, the President of the Swiss Red Cross, duly explains the significance he attaches to the Red Cross contribution to Peace.

The Latin motto “per humanitatem ad pacem” expressed the conviction that the Red Cross, in our times, was called upon to extend its efforts towards the realization and the maintenance of peace in its most complete sense. It implies that such efforts should be exercised in the domain of humanity and translated into humanitarian work. No other

¹ Several National Societies have also adopted this motto.

base could be admitted. Never could the Red Cross mix in political or ideological controversies, but must work for the establishment of peace by alleviating the sufferings of human beings, without consideration of their race, their nationality, their religion or their ideology.

Specific Activities for Peace

How has the Red Cross contributed in practice to the spirit of peace since the Second World War in the light of this doctrine's evolution? Its contribution to peace as a result of its work connected with suffering and health and through its international activities has certainly increased with the constant development of the Red Cross, both with regard to the variety of its tasks and the number of its members. A detailed description of this contribution would in fact be a survey of the work carried out by the Red Cross.

On the other hand, what specific contribution has the Red Cross made to peace? Here the situation is different.

Can *World Red Cross Day* be considered as coming within the meaning of specific activities? It is known that, in 1946, the Council of Delegates, drawing its idea from the Red Cross Truce of the Czechoslovak Red Cross, urged its members to explore the possibility of adopting a "Red Cross Day" and fixing a date for it. Following these studies, the "World Red Cross Day of May 8th" was established and has since been regularly celebrated by most National Societies.

This day is devoted to publicity which enables the Red Cross to draw the public's attention to its national and international achievements. The subject of the 1964 Day shows precisely the contribution of mutual assistance and fellowship within the Red Cross to mutual understanding.

Although the establishment of a World Red Cross Day is extremely interesting and useful it has not taken up one of the characteristic ideas of the Red Cross Truce conceived by its sponsors: to put an end to polemics and create a spirit of peace for one or two days by having recourse to newspapers and other information media (sometimes called "mass media"). In the present state of affairs, a television broadcast about the Red Cross on May 8th—which is in itself a constructive element for peace—may be preceded

or followed by a broadcast exalting violence and hostilities. The influence of the latter, which unfortunately is rather strong according to sociologists, can do much to vitiate the effect of the Red Cross broadcast. This also applies to other information media. However useful the World Red Cross Day may be, it is nevertheless difficult to assimilate it entirely with activities specifically promoting mutual understanding.

At the beginning of this Report, mention was made of the rôle of the ICRC in the Cuba crisis of Autumn 1962. As has been pointed out, the ICRC was then able to contribute to peace and the easing of international tension. However, the ICRC itself felt that although this rôle had been vital it was too exceptional in character to be considered at the same level as other regular peace activities; the less so since this rôle was not concerned with mutual understanding, which is of a special interest here.

So, finally, in order to find examples of such specific activities, we must turn once more to the Junior Red Cross. Since 1946, it has been trying to develop item 3 of its Programme: "International Friendship and Understanding." Although the exchange of inter-school correspondence albums seems to have somewhat diminished, more stress has been laid on international exchange visits between groups of Juniors, on organising international exhibitions and international study centres.

The resolutions of the Centenary Congress on the Junior Red Cross even requested National Societies to take important concrete measures: to inform school authorities of the possibilities of international friendship provided by the Juniors' programme (Resolution XX, C) and to adopt practical means of diffusing the ideals of peace and mutual respect among young people. Resolution No XXII adds that this is an "intrinsic duty of the Red Cross".

In due course, it will be very interesting to learn about the achievements of National Societies in this field.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The contribution of the Red Cross as a consequence of its work designed to alleviate human suffering has continually increased with the expansion of its activities. On the other hand, its contribution to

peace in the form of activities specifically designed to that end still remains—with the exception of the Junior Red Cross—a desire often expressed but difficult to put into practice.

The Red Cross has gained such moral credit and prestige through its humanitarian work that, naturally, from time to time, suggestions are made either inside or outside this movement that the Red Cross should place its considerable moral resources directly at the service of peace.

Thus, in 1957, at the International Conference of New Delhi, the Indian Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru, raised the question of what the Red Cross could still do, not only to lessen suffering resulting from armed conflicts, but also to prevent war at its very root, that is to say in the minds of men. “. . . you should root them (wars) out from the minds of men. If we indulge in what is called cold war, that is indulging in war in our minds, and indulging is something worse than war . . . that is hatred and fear.” He ended by saying: “. . . more than any other group of people this gathering represents the touch of healing, the soothing touch, and what the world requires today more than anything is this touch of healing not only to the body but to the tortured minds of humanity.”

That is why the ICRC representative, on submitting the resolution on peace to this Conference, stated that: “The ICRC convened Red Cross experts with a view to limiting the evils caused by war. Why should the Committee and the League not do the same in order to find out whether by means of concrete and practical measures the Red Cross could contribute still further to peace? Any idea relating to the development of our movement must be carefully considered, particularly when it comes from the Prime Minister of the great country which has given us such a splendid welcome.”

Yes, why should not such an endeavour be resumed, as in 1933 by the “round table” meetings? This first attempt is already behind the times and a new one is fully justified because of the evolution of ideas and facts. Of course, such an enterprise should be scrupulously prepared; it should take into account the vital necessity of neither encroaching on the political field, nor in any

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way hampering mutual assistance and relief activities which will always be given priority; it should also avoid venturing into fields entrusted to other international organisations concerned with this subject, such as UNESCO, which also wishes to promote understanding among peoples. However, even within these limits, the field of action seems sufficiently vast for an investigation.

The extent to which certain concrete achievements of the Junior Red Cross might spread to the whole of the Red Cross could also be examined.

If the Conference approves this idea, the ICRC, in agreement with the League, is prepared to examine the possibility of convening on suitable occasions one or several "round-table" meetings. Red Cross and other personalities could attend these meetings whose task would be to exchange detailed views on strengthening our movement's possible contribution to peace.

In view of the importance of this problem, the ICRC concludes by asking National Societies to carry out a detailed study thereon and to submit any suggestions they may have to the forthcoming Vienna Conference.