

IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE RED CROSS ON PEACE

As announced in a previous issue of the *International Review*, a World Conference of the Red Cross on Peace was to be held from 11 to 13 June 1975. The Conference, which took place at Belgrade, in the Parliament building, was attended by representatives of some eighty National Societies, of the international institutions of the Red Cross and of the Henry Dunant Institute.

The Conference was jointly organized by the League of Red Cross Societies and the Red Cross of Yugoslavia. At the opening meeting a message was read out from President J. B. Tito, saluting the Red Cross and its useful role as a factor for peace. Dr. Nikola Georgievski, President of the Red Cross of Yugoslavia, then expressed his country's pleasure at being the host of a Conference which was important for the Red Cross. He was convinced that delegates from all countries would find a common tongue to define the role of the Red Cross in the action for peace. Mr. Henri Beer, Secretary General of the League, then read out a message from Mr. José Barroso, Chairman of the Board of Governors, who was unable to attend owing to ill-health, and who called upon one and all to struggle for the establishment of peaceful relations between men and between States. He said that anything that stood in the way of peace must be attacked. Lastly, Dr. Eric Martin spoke on behalf of the ICRC of which he is President. He urged the delegates to focus on what united them in a common yearning for peace despite any differences of views and hostility, in order to establish a programme of action for peace. He dwelt on the fundamental principles of the Red Cross, in particular on those of neutrality and independence, which forbade the Red Cross to

take sides in any conflict, in order that it might continue to provide relief and to defend the humanitarian rules at all times.

The Conference was presided over by Mr. Marcellin Carraud, President of the French Red Cross. The ICRC presented two reports, one on the alleviation of the suffering of victims of conflicts as a contribution to peace, and the other on the development of international humanitarian law and the diffusion of the Geneva Conventions.¹

A "Programme of Action of the Red Cross as a Factor of Peace", was formulated by a drafting committee under the chairmanship of Mr. S. Ranganathan, President of the Red Cross of India and was submitted to the Conference for examination. The programme provides for measures to strengthen the practical action of Red Cross institutions on behalf of victims of conflicts and to encourage the development of international humanitarian law. It also contemplates an increased Red Cross role in the prevention of conflicts, when circumstances permit. We shall revert to the subject after it has been discussed at the international Red Cross meeting at Rabat next October.

¹ The text is given elsewhere in this issue.