

RED CROSS YOUTH

Rendez-vous 67 was an international gathering of young people at Ottawa from August 14 to 19, 1967, organized by the Canadian Red Cross to mark the Centenary of the Canadian Confederation¹. More than 400 Junior Red Cross delegates from the following countries attended: Algeria, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Burma, Chile, Congo, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Finland, France, German Democratic Republic, German Federal Republic, Great Britain, Greece, India, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Korea (Republic), Lebanon, Liberia, Mexico, Monaco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, the United States of America, Upper Volta and Yugoslavia.

At the opening session various speakers dealt with the importance of the Red Cross today and youth's contribution to the Red Cross cause.

Speaking on "Red Cross Youth and International Affairs", Mr. Paul Martin, Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs acknowledged that know-how alone was inadequate to engender international understanding, and that goodwill was what was most needed. Mr. Martin told the youthful audience: "For you the future is one of enhanced opportunity and responsibility in a world where the stakes are higher than ever before. Whatever your country, whatever your heritage, whatever your individual capacities, a great deal will depend upon the way you respond to the challenge... It is superfluous for me to speak to you about responsibility and service. I understand that among the criteria for your selection to take part in *Rendez-vous 67* has been the willingness to serve

¹ Plate. — Ottawa, *Rendez-vous 67*, International Red Cross Youth seminar: Youth speaks to youth.

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and to assume responsibility. As you have been chosen from 80 million Red Cross Youth members—I never cease to marvel at that huge enrolment for service—it would be hard indeed if you did not possess the motivation and approach to world problems which I have been talking about."

Mr. John A. Partridge, National President, Mr. W. H. Vandeburgh, Honorary Adviser on Youth Affairs, and Major-General Arthur E. Wrinch, National Commissioner, then spoke on behalf of the Canadian Red Cross and a girl from Toronto greeted participants in the name of Canada's youth.

The themes for the Conference were presented at the first plenary session by Mr. C. A. Schusselé, Director of the Junior Red Cross Bureau of the League. He outlined the place which the Red Cross could carve out for itself in tomorrow's world and concluded his speech as follows:

An international Junior Red Cross Study Centre is a major event for all those taking part, for the whole of Red Cross and perhaps even all of humanity, seeking stability, happiness and peace.

Individually, we can do much to bring happiness to our fellow men; together, united in enthusiastic teams, we can multiply to infinity the efficiency of our efforts.

Earlier, we sketched the great peaceful crusades of our times for literacy, health, and against hunger; and, we may add, for the world's youth. Tell us how you see the Red Cross taking part in these crusades. Tell us also what you, young people, plan to undertake in your own communities and elsewhere.

We must not allow these great actions of international aid on a world scale to hide another problem of exceptional gravity, which is preoccupying governments, educational and medical authorities: I am referring to the problem of youth—your problem.

I am saluting here a healthy and enthusiastic youth: it brings to my mind even more intensively that other despairing youth which adults, television, the press and the radio depict as lost youth. In each of our countries, youth is threatened by one blight or another. Boys and girls without employment, without ideals, without hope, seeking their last refuge in vice, drugs, violence, when it is not in death. Millions of children and adolescents have lost the notion of the family and the community. Millions of

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others are hungry, other millions are stricken by disease or are handicapped. And even those millions of young people who, apparently in good health and communicatively enthusiastic, are they really happy? Are they prepared to face their lives as men and women?

So here is my last question, which is also my conclusion:

Does the Red Cross Youth of 1967 really meet the needs, the aspirations, the state of mind of today's youth? Is it really making use of all the means of action at its disposal to permit all young people to discover a new happiness in teamwork in the service of others?

To all of you, I say thank you for all that you have done for the Red Cross; but it is today and even more tomorrow that you will go into action to make of the Red Cross a modern and universal movement of social solidarity, a refuge and hope for humanity.

Each day's work was based successively on the following themes: Health Education, World Food and Nutrition Problems, International Co-operation, Youth and International Understanding. The objective was to define Junior Red Cross responsibilities to meet the major problems of the modern world.

On the last day, Mr. Ralph E. Wendeborn, National Director of the Canadian Junior Red Cross, assessed the significance of this important international seminar. He described the fundamental and effective contribution of youth to the building of a peaceful world: "What has happened at *Rendez-vous 67* has shown that talk of solidarity and brotherhood is not only idealistic, it is reality. We have shown this here. Let each of us, individually, go back to our own homes and work there to develop this sort of understanding."

The texts produced as a result of the work of this seminar in Ottawa, which was one of the greatest Junior Red Cross events, give hope for the future and a confidence in youth which finds expression in the lines of the poet Maxwell Anderson, quoted by one of the speakers:

" Yet astonishing improvement is discernible today! "