

ROUND TABLE MEETING OF INSTITUTIONS AWARDED THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the birth of Henry Dunant, the first recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1901, a Round Table meeting on peace, organized by the ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies, was held in Geneva on 27 and 28 April.

Under the chairmanship of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the meeting was attended by representatives of the nine institutions which have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, namely: the Institute of International Law (recipient of the Prize in 1904), the International Peace Bureau (1910), the Society of Friends (Quakers) (1943), the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (1965), the International Labour Organisation (1969), Amnesty International (1977), the League of Red Cross Societies (1963) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (1917, 1944 and 1963). Three journalists representing three major trends of world opinion also attended the meeting, namely Mr. Vikenti Matveev (URSS), Mr. Pierre Salinger (USA) and Mr Tarzie Vittachi (Sri Lanka).

The purpose of the meeting, the first of its kind, was to bring representatives of the nine institutions together to seek ways and means of increasing the contributions of international organizations to peace.

After the meeting on 28 April, the Round Table appealed in the following terms to the international community:

APPEAL OF THE ROUND TABLE

Peace is not only the absence of armed conflict, it is also a dynamic set of relationships of coexistence and cooperation among and within peoples, characterized by the respect for the human values set forth particularly in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with the concern to provide the greatest possible well-being for all.

Peace is increasingly threatened each day by the accumulation of weapons of mass destruction, by the great economic and social inequalities which divide mankind, and by contempt for basic human rights and the dignity of the individual.

Peace requires ever greater efforts to overcome these threats. It is only possible in a world in which the observance of international law replaces violence, fear and injustice, in which States voluntarily agree to limit their national sovereignty in the general interest, and in which States employ existing procedures for the peaceful settlement of disputes between nations. To build such a peace, everyone must feel a responsibility and should be educated in that sense from childhood.

Deeply concerned by the threats to peace in spite of the efforts of people of good will, the Round Table of institutions awarded the Nobel Peace Prize appeals to governments to respect scrupulously the international commitments and the ideals to which they have solemnly subscribed, notably in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Geneva Conventions, to progress resolutely toward general disarmament and the elimination of the nuclear threat and to make such sacrifices as may be necessary to establish greater economic and social justice among peoples.

The Round Table calls upon inter-governmental institutions to redouble their efforts to assure the effective implementation of the regulations which they themselves have drafted. It invites non-governmental organizations to contribute to those efforts, to promote in a concerted manner awareness of and respect for economic, social and political human rights and to intensify their efforts for disarmament.

Finally the Round Table asks the mass media to employ to a greater extent their skills and immense resources toward building and maintaining peace to foster a spirit of equity and solidarity among peoples and to draw attention to the personal and collective sacrifices inherent in the pursuit of those ideals.