

But EMIR's sphere of action is wider still and it breaks new ground in rendering available at all times a special unit reserved exclusively for relief operations. It is basically different from the system whereby certain units, varying according to circumstances, are drawn from general army reserves, such as, for instance, a mobile field hospital which may be only temporarily available.

A unit such as EMIR provides today the best possibility to meet medical needs. In the case of an armed conflict, only its military character may seem to be unsuitable. But that is not a real problem, for the demilitarization or neutralization of the unit with its personnel and material can easily be prepared beforehand, as far as may be necessary, if its special assignment is known.

As medical assistance on a large scale may be needed at any point, or even at several places at the same time, it would appear desirable to set up a world-wide network of EMIRs. Not all countries may, of course, be able to afford such formations, but a widely distributed system of EMIRs, of "humanitarian task forces" as they have been described, could constitute a worthy contribution which the richer States could make towards the less fortunate areas of the world.

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## **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL WELFARE**

The XVIth International Conference on Social Welfare for which the responsible body was the International Council on Social Welfare, a permanent world organization with headquarters in New York, was held from 13 to 19 August 1972. The theme of the Conference was:

**Developing social policy in conditions of rapid change — the role of social welfare**

## MISCELLANEOUS

A key-note address on the theme itself was presented at the opening plenary session, while problems under various headings, such as "Youth and the Future" and "Developing social policy—perspectives for the future", were also dealt with in plenary session.

The Commissions and Discussion Groups each considered a special subject, including the following: "*The volunteer—what of his future role in the social services?*"; "*The role of youth in social welfare policy*"; "*Social welfare problems of new towns*"; "*Training social workers*"; "*The influence of social research on social policy*"; "*The social welfare aspects of education*"; "*Social policy in rehabilitation*".

A meeting of members of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, numbering 32 delegates from 17 National Societies attending the Conference, was organized by the Netherlands Red Cross, which gave some information on its various current activities and showed a film on holiday projects for invalids. Mr. H. Beer, Secretary General of the League of Red Cross Societies, then spoke at length on "Red Cross involvement and interdependence of community services". He pointed out the relations between the social activities of the Red Cross and those organized by official community organs and other groups. After describing the effects of the rapid evolution of world social conditions, he analysed the impacts these changes had upon life in big cities.

Mr. Beer went on to say: "We are living in an extremely complicated society, and not only the society as such, but the simple basic communities change, with a dynamic force which we very often cannot comprehend and even less control".

"We have to create tools to handle and to be able to give services within these communities to a maximum number of people by a maximum number of people—and this based on the simple fact that we operate for the sake of the human being, but specialize in various fields, different, yet closely interrelated... This is easy to say in theory, but extremely difficult and complex to execute. That's why we must find ways and means to do it, based on knowledge and insight and a willingness to co-operate... The problems must be faced with unity of purpose and planning".

In conclusion, Mr. Beer stated that the Red Cross must "give, even more than now, a new, imaginative contribution to make our communities a better place to live in".

The name of Dr. René Sand, one of the great men of the Red Cross movement, is kept alive by an award bearing his name, which, at every International Conference on Social Welfare, is made to the social worker who has most highly distinguished himself. This year, the recipient of the "René Sand Award" was Miss Julia Henderson, Secretary General of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, who gave an address on "Developing population policy in relation to social change and social welfare".

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### TEAMWORK FOR WORLD HEALTH

*This volume is a record of a symposium on contemporary world health problems organized at Istanbul in 1970, under the auspices of the Ciba Foundation.<sup>1</sup> The symposium grew out of an earlier meeting, held in 1967, on "Health of Mankind", at which the disturbing imbalance between the urgent need for medical care in many parts of the world and the lack of manpower in the health services was made very clear.*

*It was Florence Nightingale who came to be fully conscious of a similar situation in most dramatic fashion, and she brought to it, for her part, and under certain given circumstances, a practical solution. On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of her birth, the Ciba Foundation convened its symposium in Turkey, not far from Scutari, where the "Lady with the Lamp" cared for the wounded and sick of the Crimean War.*

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<sup>1</sup> J. & A. Churchill, London, 1971, 242 pp.