

The International Committee expressed its gratitude to Mr. Rodolfo Olgiati for the useful service he gave with unstinting generosity to the Red Cross cause.

A Tribute from the ICRC

Mr. Frédéric Siordet recently celebrated his seventieth birthday. On that occasion the International Committee, of which he is an honorary member, awarded him its Silver Medal as a testimony of profound gratitude. It was presented to him on 9 December 1970 at an informal ceremony attended by his colleagues.

The President, Mr. Marcel A. Naville, paid tribute to him in the following terms:

... It was in 1943 that you joined our ranks, at the height of the war which was devastating the world and setting us unprecedented tasks. The way was strewn with difficulties and pitfalls, so that your assistance was particularly welcome. You soon displayed the extent of your dedication, your talent, and your personality. The Committee conferred on you the title of counsellor, a title for which no one was better qualified, for in those troubled times your wisdom, your ideal and your charism for conciliation worked wonders.

After taking an active part in the diversified work of that period, you described it convincingly in "Inter arma caritas".

Then you were closely associated in the great work of translating experience acquired into legal codification, an enterprise in which you gave your legal science free rein. You took part daily, as an expert, in the Geneva Diplomatic Conference. The revision of the Geneva Conventions in 1949 and the conclusion of a new Convention relative to the protection of civilians culminated this huge joint effort. The articles concerning supervision and the famous article 3 which has rendered such signal service in internal conflicts bear your indelible stamp.

Then, when these laws had been adopted by the Powers, you applied yourself, together with your colleagues, to drawing up commentaries on them which are recognized as authoritative.

In 1951 the International Committee invited you to become a member. You soon became one of its Vice-Presidents and you retained

that office for many years. As a member of the presidential council you gave the benefit of your considerable experience and humanity.

It is impossible to review everything you have done. But I would mention that you have represented us at many congresses, that you have undertaken missions which took you to the far corners of the world, in Australia and China, and that you upheld steadfastly and with enthusiasm the cause which you knew to be noble and worthy of being defended wherever you spread the good word, the message of the heart and of the mind which alone gives life to our work.

Mr. Siordet expressed his thanks in moving terms. He recalled some personal memories, expressed his attachment for the common cause and affirmed his faith in the indestructible ideal of the Red Cross.

New Year message for 1971

As in past years, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross sent a message, transmitted on radio and television in many countries, in French, English, German, Spanish and Italian :

Civilian populations reduced to famine, women and children buried beneath the ruins of their bombed homes, burnt-out ambulances, prisoners and detainees deprived of communication with their families and subjected to intimidation and torture, statesmen and diplomats kidnapped or assassinated, aircraft hijacked and their passengers held as hostages, unbridled violence and brutal repression; such was the horror of war during the year which is now drawing to a close.

With the escalation of hate and suffering, there is a risk of discouragement, resignation and capitulation to brute force. Such an attitude would be disastrous. The efforts of so many previous generations to establish international rules for peaceful co-existence and the protection of the human being must not be allowed to come to nought. The rule of law must be reaffirmed. We must believe in it. That is a duty of us all.

The task facing the Red Cross is clear. It is the development of international humanitarian law, the extension of the application of