

IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

WORLD RED CROSS DAY

Each year, 8 May is celebrated as International Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Day. In 1971, it was celebrated with great verve and the heads of international Red Cross institutions issued a message in which they explained the significance of the theme chosen:

Mr. Marcel A. Naville, President of the ICRC:

In the world we live in, the state of war is a permanent feature. One conflict ends, another breaks out. Civil wars, disturbances, internal tension can, sometimes in a few hours, crush thousands of people under the heel of oppression, captivity and occupation. What words, therefore, could better describe the mission of the International Committee of the Red Cross, whose specific field of action is war, than the theme chosen to celebrate 8 May this year: "Red Cross Working Round the Clock"?

The Red Cross must never cease its relentless efforts. Despite the obstacles, the opposition and the difficulty of gaining acceptance everywhere for the humanitarian standards laid down in the Geneva Conventions, it is comforting to note that the trust placed in the Red Cross is steadily increasing. More and more it is likely to be reckoned with and relied on, above all when peace must be preserved.

Such vast undertakings under the Red Cross emblem would hardly be possible were they not based on that impressive legal instrument, the Geneva Conventions. They have greatly improved conditions for a number of categories of war victims. Nevertheless, we must realize that, in spite of the extensive development of these Conventions in 1949, they are inadequate at times in the face of the new situations arising in contemporary conflicts.

Mandated by the last International Conference of the Red Cross and with the full support of the United Nations, the ICRC therefore initiated two meetings this year, one of Red Cross experts held recently

in The Hague, and the other of Government experts, to open in May in Geneva. Their aim is to begin to draw up new rules extending wider protection for victims of conflicts.

The Government experts, from all parts of a tragically divided world, will, we are certain, like those of the Red Cross, be able to put aside their differences in the common desire to limit the field of human misery.

This active solidarity in the face of suffering expresses the very spirit of our movement. May this year's 8 May provide yet another such shining example.

Mr. José Barroso, President of the Board of Governors of the League:

Round the clock, the Red Cross is on the alert. Its volunteers stand ready, to act whenever there is a need, to relieve suffering in peacetime as in war, and in the day-to-day accidents which occur with such frequency.

On this day dedicated to the Red Cross it is our duty to take stock, to take time to see where we stand and where we are going, to reflect on the profound significance of our constant readiness to help those who suffer, to combat adversity "Round the clock".

The expansion of our movement is a great encouragement: year after year, thousands of newcomers swell the ranks of those whose desire to help others has led them to join an organization which is today the pride of all men of goodwill.

For the Red Cross, "working round the clock" is an expression of faith and confidence in mankind and a heartfelt urge to work for man and to prevent all that can cause him suffering. In short, it signifies respect for others through self-respect; to live and show the way to a better life; to fight against war, death, hunger and destitution; to fight against the fury of the elements; to fight for peace.

We must repeat untiringly that all men, all races and all peoples are duty bound to seek peace through dialogue and understanding; that violence is our main enemy, undermining human dignity, integrity and the elementary rights of the individual. We must combat it in all its forms, wherever it is to be found. We have a heavy responsibility to bear.

Young people must be given the chance to participate in all our activities: the role of adults is to set an example, to give the necessary guidance for those who wish to take a fuller part and assume greater responsibilities in all aspects of Red Cross work.

Indisputably we live in a period of enormous problems and confusion, but when at the same time great strides are being made in the field of technology. If we look to the future with optimism and

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recognize the positive values which are to be found in all men, we can continue to work to ensure the greatest possible well-being for generations to come.

As usual radio and television took part in the celebrations planned in many countries. The League of Red Cross Societies provided more than 70 National Societies and radio stations with recorded magazines, regional programmes, interviews and other material for broadcasts which included messages prepared in close collaboration with the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation and with the help of the European Broadcasting Union. Many television networks, too, celebrated World Day both in their home transmissions and through the Eurovision link or by two-way exchanges of films or documentaries. These exchanges were made possible with the help of the E.B.U.

Finally, the League sent out about 8000 kits containing very well illustrated documentation by means of which both the press and members of National Societies throughout the world were able to play an important part in the general effort to make this year's World Day yet another success.

NURSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF LEAGUE MEETS IN GENEVA

Delegates from 14 National Societies in Africa, America, Asia and Europe met at the headquarters of the League of Red Cross Societies in Geneva, from May 11th to 13th, to discuss progress in the field of Red Cross nursing and to plan for better use of these nursing services in the world. The agenda included the major subjects of "Structuring nursing activities within National Societies", "Participation of nurses in national and international emergency relief actions" and "Red Cross and nursing in community health programmes".