

IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

20th WORLD RED CROSS DAY

World Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Day was conceived as a day when each National Society would join its sister Societies in publicizing, in a variety of ways, its own activities and its participation in the universal Red Cross movement. Birthdate of Henry Dunant, 8 May was chosen in March 1948 by the League Executive Committee "as a publicity day for the Red Cross and for the ideal of peace." It has been celebrated by a growing number of National Societies ever since. Each 8 May has been devoted to a different theme illustrating the diversity and universality of the Red Cross movement : Red Cross and Volunteers, Red Cross and Aid to Disaster Victims, Universality in Action, The Red Cross—Bond of Solidarity and Factor of World Understanding...

It will be recalled that the theme chosen for 1966 was *No frontiers for the Red Cross*. This inspired the members of National Societies, as the commemoration of World Day was most successful and was celebrated in eighty countries. As an illustration of this we would mention some of the events which took place on that occasion :

Australia.—Press, radio and television campaign for the Red Cross. Exhibition at an airport.

Bulgaria.—Address by the Society's President which was given wide press and radio publicity. Competition amongst members of the Junior Red Cross in the country's school medical posts.

Ecuador.—Ceremonies throughout the country and rallies of the Junior Red Cross in various towns. Distribution of layettes to mothers of children born on 8 May.

Ethiopia.—Distribution of relief. Procession of nurses and first-aiders.

Jamaica.—Excursions organized for handicapped children.

Pakistan.—Processions in the streets of the main towns¹. Broadcast and televised addresses by leading members of the Red Cross.

New Zealand.—International competition of drawings based on the humanitarian ideal. Campaign for the prevention of accidents.

Mexico.—Public demonstrations carried out by Red Cross first-aiders.

Togo.—8 May Transmission on the national broadcasting station.

Tunisia.—Displays throughout the country. Distributions of relief to children in need¹.

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In this year of 1967 which will mark the 20th commemoration of World Day, the theme chosen : *Protect health, prevent accidents, save lives through the Red Cross* will propose to members of our movement practical ways of rendering service. It can encourage all National Societies to look more especially towards those primordial questions of health and safety on the local as well as on the national level and to launch appeals to the public, so that it may elicit mass participation in putting Red Cross health programmes into effect. This is indeed emphasized in the messages of the Chairman of the Board of Governors and the League's Secretary-General :

Mr. José Barroso.—*Never before in the history of humanity has the tantalising opportunity to live a long and healthy life been so great for mankind as it is today, with the tremendous advances now being made in the fields of medical science and technological developments.*

Never before, on the other hand, have the daily risks of accident and

¹ *Plate.* Procession in the streets in Pakistan—Distribution by the Tunisian Red Crescent of clothes to children in need.

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natural disaster been so appalling, nor has the spectre of hunger and disease hung so heavily over vast segments of the human race.

While veritable armies of experts of every kind—doctors, scientists, agriculturalists, civil protection and safety specialists—fight these threats, they can do nothing without the active participation of all of us, through Red Cross. There is an enormous task to be faced by ordinary men, women and young people of good will in the fields of health education, accident prevention and life saving in all its forms. First aid, disaster relief, blood donation, nutrition and vaccination campaigns, health in the home, and all the other humanitarian work which Red Cross, through its trained volunteers, can perform—this is the vital link between the experts and the people in need.

That is why this year's theme for World Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Day "Protect Health, Prevent Accidents, Save Lives through your Red Cross" is such an eminently practical one.

It is an urgent challenge to all seeking to give meaningful service to humanity.

Mr. Henrik Beer.—*Red Cross offers many practical ways in which the individual can help his community to better health. Advances in medical science may have made an enormous contribution to the decline of once-dreaded diseases, especially in the highly industrialized countries where health services are available to all and where health education has contributed, over many decades, to developing among the public a positive attitude towards health.*

But in large parts of the world, old and new threats to health are menacing millions who are ill-equipped to fight them. It is in the newer nations, where health services are often embryonic, that the Red Cross faces its biggest challenge as auxiliary to the public health authorities.

To the individual, this challenge means an opportunity to give meaningful voluntary service, especially in the field of prevention of disease, by taking part, through Red Cross|Red Crescent|Red Lion and Sun in health activities. One good example is the smallpox eradication programme in which Red Cross is participating in many countries.

The need for volunteers to work with the authorities in community and national health programmes is not limited to the so-called "developing" countries. It is equally important where the pressures

of 20th-century civilization are running neck and neck with the developments in health services.

A recent World Health Organization publication speaks of "the new epidemics" which threaten life and health today. It classifies them in four groups: those which are on the increase—lung cancer, leukaemia, coronary diseases, mental illness; those which are important threats, though not increasing—cancers and chronic diseases such as diabetes and arthritis; those which are on the decline (though not fast enough), including any number of other chronic conditions; and finally, a menace which rivals in importance the worst of these "new epidemics"—accidents.

It may seem strange to some to find accidents described as "epidemic". But open any daily paper and you will find the proof of this assertion—that more people under the age of 45 die as a direct result of accidents than from any other cause.

PROTECT HEALTH, PREVENT ACCIDENTS, SAVE LIFE THROUGH YOUR RED CROSS/RED CRESCENT RED LION AND SUN, *the theme of this year's World Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Day, sums up in a few words how men, women and young people can work for better health by contributing actively to improve conditions in their homes, their schools, their communities; by training in first aid and accident prevention on the road, in the factory, in the home; by training in mother and child care and health in the home; by making that most precious gift of all, the donation of blood with its multiple uses in the treatment of accident victims, in hospitals, in epidemics.*

Every National Society is rich in the human resources which must be mobilized, particularly the young people who not only can do so much, but want to. The League of Red Cross Societies, for its part, is ready to give the technical assistance needed to recruit, train and arm this peaceful army for the only war worth fighting.

It is known that the Red Cross today appeals ever more widely to modern methods of information. On the occasion of World Day a radiophonic transmission prepared by Radio Suisse Romande will be broadcast probably by the community of programmes in French from the stations of Belgium, Canada, France, Luxemburg, Monte-Carlo and French-speaking Switzerland. Its purpose will be to illustrate the present various activities of the ICRC and the

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League, little known to the general public. Arrangements have been made for the delegates of the two institutions to effect this by speaking with Geneva direct, from the studios closest to their field of action, on the humanitarian tasks in process in countries in which are taking place at this moment fighting, repatriations, movements of populations and other events which require aid from the Red Cross.

A televised transmission on 8 May 1967 will also be devoted to the activities of the International Red Cross. This will take place in Eurovision, provided five European countries associate themselves with the plans which will be proposed to them by Television Suisse Romande. The latter will at all events undertake its diffusion.

This transmission will be of about twenty to thirty minutes' duration and will consist of three parts. One will be devoted to the action of the ICRC, the second to that of the ICRC and the League and of a National Society in a different part of the world and lastly, to the work of the League and a National Society in yet another continent. Information material will be supplied to the television bodies by the League and the ICRC.

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The theme chosen for 8 May 1967 means that all can receive training in hygiene, first-aid and home-care and that once instructed they can make an effective contribution to the improvement of health. One solution coming to the fore more and more, and which appears on the agendas of international conferences, is that of resorting to volunteers. One can call especially upon the young who have the necessary possibilities and enthusiasm and to whom it is right to offer opportunities of serving. Mr. Ralph Wendeborn, National Director of the Canadian Junior Red Cross writes to that effect in *The Red Cross World*¹ :

“ Everyone agrees that the volunteer needs training today. I think the volunteer also needs motivation. In Junior Red Cross we can do some of the training, and we can do a great deal of the motivating. I think that by starting a motivation programme with

¹ Published by the League of Red Cross Societies, Geneva, 1966, No. 4.



Addis Ababa: Opening of the Seminar by H.I.H. the Crown Prince of Ethiopia, President of the National Red Cross (*on his right*, Mr. Warras and Mr. Phillips, *on his left*, H.E. Tsahafi Tezaz Tafarra Worq and Mr. Hoffmann).



In Pakistan, procession in the streets.

8 May 1966

In Tunisia, distribution of clothing to needy children.



youth at a very early age we may develop patterns of voluntary service that will last a lifetime.”

In the same publication, Major-General C. K. Lakshmanan, Secretary-General of the Indian Red Cross, looks at the opportunities open to young people as volunteers in his country. He points out that the National Society numbers more than four and a half million Junior members based on some 40,000 schools. Describing the practical work, he concludes :

“ The Minister of Health is Chairman of our Society. We are thinking of launching an expanded nutrition programme, and she is keen that the Red Cross should be the organisation which undertakes this activity.

How do we become involved in international programmes, such as the smallpox eradication campaign?

When the programme was launched in India we were requested by the Ministry of Health to help. I took up the matter at a meeting of the Red Cross Secretaries of various States, and we discussed how they could assist. I am hoping it will be possible for us to get together the younger generation who are very anxious and keen to help. In some parts they are doing it already, as in the villages, getting people together, impressing on them the need for vaccination and why it is necessary. I should mention the health education aspect which runs throughout any programme. There the Red Cross is doing a tremendous lot and again must work through our volunteers who can popularise these activities.

The volunteer will try and educate the village community so they can accept the measures being introduced, and the Red Cross worker himself should take part or collaborate with the local authority in carrying out the programme. In a village population you will not find everybody taking part in a programme, but it is up to the Red Cross worker to pave the way for them to accept it.”

The Junior Red Cross, voluntary work, the spirit of service, these words will often be repeated during the forthcoming World Red Cross Day. They will be an inspiration to all those taking part in it and will make of them ever more widely the exponents of a high ideal.