

## WORLD RED CROSS DAY

### 1970 celebrations of World Red Cross Day

For World Red Cross Day on 8 May 1970, the ICRC, in full agreement with the League, had undertaken to prepare the documentary material to be offered to National Societies, which would enable the latter to inform the general public in their own countries about the essential principles of the Geneva Conventions and about Red Cross activities in time of war. Attention was drawn, by the choice of the theme "Protect Man; Thwart War", to one of the main subjects discussed at the XXIst International Conference of the Red Cross, that of the development, application and diffusion of humanitarian law.

With the aim of evaluating the results of the celebrations organized in 1970 for World Red Cross Day, the ICRC sent to all National Societies a questionnaire so as to gather supplementary details about what they had done (ceremonies of various kinds, the part played by the press, radio, television, and so on). Replies were received from 75 Societies, including some still in process of being constituted.

These replies from National Red Cross Societies show that they all organized events:

- 57 at the Society headquarters, and
- 46 at various local branches as well;
- 62 National Societies chose 8 May for their events;
- 13 of them had to postpone their celebrations.

Not all National Societies adopted the theme proposed. Some adapted it and others chose a quite different slogan. On the whole,

as in previous years, the commemorative ceremonies were enhanced by the presence of the Head of the State and other important persons; many speeches were made and innumerable festivities were organized, such as gala film shows, dinners, balls, concerts, theatre plays, variety shows, folklore dancing, country fairs, lotteries. In many countries there were processions of Red Cross members in uniform and in some there were first-aid demonstrations.

Many National Societies chose 8 May for the presentation of diplomas and medals to their personnel or voluntary workers. A number of National Societies visited hospitals, prisons, children's homes or institutions for the aged, distributing gifts, flowers, magazines, clothing and delicacies. Fifty-one National Societies chose World Red Cross Day to launch their appeals for funds, sales of badges and key-rings and to recruit members and blood donors.

All the National Societies which replied to the questionnaire mentioned the use of mass media such as the press, radio and television for reports on their celebrations. The articles specially prepared by the International Committee and the League have been reproduced in full or in summary form.

Thirty-one National Societies had broadcast on the radio the World Red Cross Day messages from the Presidents of International Red Cross institutions.<sup>1</sup>

Many also broadcast messages from their own national leaders. The 8 May programme in five languages was broadcast in 23 countries.

On television:

- 12 National Societies broadcast President Naville's message, prepared in five languages;
- 23 National Societies had special programmes either on their activities or their celebration of World Day;
- 7 National Societies had the Middle East film shown on the occasion of World Day.

It can be seen that National Societies made last year a big effort to draw public attention to the importance of this event.

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<sup>1</sup> See *International Review*, June 1970.

## Plans for World Red Cross Day 1971

The theme chosen for the forthcoming World Red Cross Day is:

### **Red Cross working round the clock**

The League has prepared, for this occasion, some documentary material, most attractively presented and extensively illustrated. It has been sent to all National Societies, and some extracts from the introductory section are given below. They admirably show the meaning which this World Day should have, by symbolizing as widely as possible throughout the world the presence of the Red Cross, the Red Crescent and the Red Lion and Sun, in all places and circumstances :

*Twenty-four hours in the life of the world and the human race . . . do we ever really stop to think what this means and represents . . .*

*Every minute, every second, somewhere in the world, in large towns and in isolated country districts, people are in danger, huge numbers may be in need of assistance.*

*There are countless causes of human misfortune: wars erupting on the frontiers of, or inside, seemingly peaceful countries; natural disasters whose speed and destructive force take us by surprise; the unforeseeable accident at home, on the road, at work or on holiday; the handicaps of illness, old age and so many other ills and woes.*

*No one, whatever part of the world he lives in, can feel safe from these permanent threats to a life's stability and men's happiness. But at the same time, around the clock and across the world, countless groups of men, women and young people are ready to intervene, help and bring relief in accordance with the Red Cross Principles which inspire and motivate them to serve in the name of an ideal, in a humanitarian spirit, without any distinction as to race, religious belief or ideology.*

*Round the clock and across the world, Red Cross is always present—a chain of effective solidarity which is sometimes invisible but always a force to be reckoned with.*

*Round the clock the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun are on the alert preventing misfortune, taking action, easing suffering and bringing relief.*

*Whatever their allegiance men, women and young people of the Red Cross are ceaselessly helping to save life or give comfort—more often than not to total strangers. In peace or war, anywhere, everywhere and at any time.*

We wish all success to this twenty-fourth World Red Cross Day, which shall be the occasion for National Societies to spread humanitarian ideas, recruit new members, raise funds and illustrate the work of the members of first aid societies, of nursing and medico-social personnel and of the volunteers and the young belonging to the 114 National Societies operating today all over the World.

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## Belgium

*Having received an article from the pen of Mr. G. Jambers who gives some interesting details on the National Blood Institute founded by the Belgian Red Cross, we quote extracts thereof below :*

The Brugmann Square district in Brussels owes its tranquillity to the proximity of tree-lined avenues and the *Bois de la Cambre*. The Belgian Red Cross has some buildings there in which there is the Medico-Surgical Institute and the National Blood Institute. The latter was founded in 1950 and moved into this building in 1968. The building, with brown brick and window frontage, is functional in design but not without an aesthetic dignity.

By way of introduction we would define the National Blood Institute as the most important department of the Belgian Red Cross National Blood Service. In it are represented the national services which provide for the whole country the various stable blood derivatives, in solution, frozen or dried (Production Services) and also supervision of equipment required by the Blood Transfusion Services for the collection of blood and blood derivatives prepared by the Production Services (Control Laboratory). The National Blood Institute includes also the National Blood Service, a library and the Brussels Blood Transfusion Centre with its various sections for the drawing of blood, laboratory analysis and distribution for the Brussels area.

When all citrated blood was preserved solely for the purpose of transfusions, it was the prerogative of the Blood Transfusion Centres.

The use of various blood constituents in modern pharmacology resulted in the setting up of blood institutes, and centres for