

IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

WORLD RED CROSS DAY

Each year on May 8, the anniversary of Henry Dunant's birthday is celebrated as World Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Day. In 1968, the theme chosen, *The Red Cross concerns us all*, meant that every one of us may have need of the Red Cross and, what is still more important, that we can all do something for the Red Cross. This is an appeal to men of goodwill and is also an affirmation of the power of the humanitarian ideal in the world today.

As usual, the radio and television networks associated themselves with the various events organized in a large number of countries. Radio Suisse Romande, for example, made a special international broadcast on May 8, produced by Jean Martel, describing recent Red Cross action in different places. Reporters and special representatives gave eye-witness accounts of what they had seen in Vietnam, Biafra and on the Jordan West Bank. On the other hand, more than thirty National Societies made use of a radiophonic programme specially prepared for them by the League.

On May 8, the television services of 17 countries presented on Eurovision the message read by Mr. Henrik Beer, Secretary-General of the League, on behalf of the two international Red Cross institutions, the text of which is as follows:

Once a year, the 8th May, the Red Cross in all its 109 member countries, tells its story to the world.

In most cases, ours is an unpopular task. To be the neutral intermediary, to try and work for humanitarian principles in conflicts is not a thing the powers of the world always like, but it must be done.

Vietnam, Nigeria, the Near East, Yemen are examples enough. The Red Cross is there to give assistance to the victims, to repatriate refugees, to watch over the treatment of prisoners and internees.

It also has to do a daily job—famine, wars, internal conflicts, disasters are there every day, and every day our concern.

The 214 million Red Cross members and their organisations in Geneva, must do even more to fight the causes of suffering, not only rush in as a fire-brigade after they have taken their toll.

That is why prevention, and not only intervention, is our motto. To take part in the fight against ignorance and illness we must create dynamic organisations, teach people to help themselves, especially in the new countries.

The Red Cross works hard to adapt itself to the modern world, in 1968, it is far advanced from the effort of its founder Henry Dunant, whom we also honour today. But its fundamental principles stay the same, that all people have the right to health and happiness, the right to be respected as human beings and the right to live in peace.

It should be pointed out that certain radio and television stations had arranged special programmes. They presented, in particular, documentaries on the Red Cross and films on ICRC work in the Middle East in June 1967 or the ICRC's mission in the Yemen.

The commemorative day of May 8 is also an occasion for National Societies to organize ceremonies whose purpose it is to make known to an ever increasing public the tasks carried out by our movement and principles animating it.¹ According to reports already received in Geneva these were some examples: distribution of toys to children in schools, galas in favour of the young, first-aid demonstrations, election of a Red Cross queen, lectures on the theme "The Red Cross concerns us all", press campaigns, organisation of Red Cross weeks, inauguration of a school for the handicapped, setting up first-aid posts of junior sections in various towns, processions of voluntary auxiliaries, concerts and variety

¹ *Plate.* — World Red Cross Day 1968: Ladies of the Tunisian Red Crescent distributing toys in a school; Dr. V. Laroche, President of the Haitian Red Cross, presents a boy-scout with the Red Cross first-aider's certificate.

evenings by well-known performers and visits by the Junior Red Cross to orphanages, old people's homes and hospitals.

The manifestations which took place in 1968 in a large number of countries gave proof by their very diversity of the growing success of World Red Cross Day.

JUNIOR RED CROSS

As we have already said, the League's Junior Red Cross Bureau has a five-year plan which it started to put into effect in 1965. The plan has a different theme for each year. The first three were: Health Education; First-Aid and Accident Prevention; and Health in the Home. The theme for the fourth year was lately announced: Leadership Training. The aim is to bring to the fore youngsters of leadership calibre. We give below an extract from a document issued by the League in which it examines the impact of Junior Red Cross leadership training programmes.

Anyone following events on the radio, press or television in recent months would have felt concern over what is apparently a youth revolt. In cities around the world young people are protesting against conditions in their countries and demanding a voice in the changes that must be made. When their demands are ignored, they often resort to violence.

While protest is a sign of concern and involvement, violence often leads to a worsening rather than improvement of a situation. Are there not other ways of voicing discontent and of working for change? Other ways do exist, but it seems that young people are either unaware of them or find them ineffective.

What has this question to do with Red Cross? For one thing, we say that our programmes give young people—through the