

IN THE RED CROSS WORLD

WORLD RED CROSS DAY

The *International Review*, in its March issue, recalled the significance henceforth attached to the anniversary of Henry Dunant's birth and it mentioned the various events which took place in Geneva and in many countries to celebrate May 8 in 1965.

The commemoration of World Red Cross Day was a great success again this year. As is known, the theme was "No frontiers for Red Cross"; it was an opportunity to celebrate a work of humanity which should be extended to all men in all countries. We will revert to this event when we receive information from National Societies on how it was celebrated. We can already bring to our readers' attention the following message which the ICRC received from the Vatican over the signature of Cardinal Cicognani:

On the occasion of World Red Cross Day, the anniversary of Henry Dunant's birthday (May 8), the Sovereign Pontiff congratulates the Red Cross for its unfailing efforts in favour of the great cause of suffering humanity and of peace; he readily assures the Red Cross of divine blessing for all its peaceful work and he sends his best wishes to all who support it.

In addition, the leaders of the International Red Cross sent messages on May 8, 1966, to 106 National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun Societies. These messages which were widely covered by the press and radio are given below:

Mr. Samuel A. Gonard, President of the ICRC:

The help given by the Red Cross seems to us to be entirely natural today, as if it can always be expected whenever some calamity arises.

However, if Red Cross aid is so readily accepted, one is apt to forget to what extent the movement's promoters had to overcome apathy,

scepticism and often even hostility, to have their ideal of humanity accepted. It was only many years after its foundation that the Red Cross was able to show of what it was fully capable and become what it intends to remain, namely an instrument always available to the fellowship of man.

It is not always realized either how difficult and multiple are the crises which men and women of the Red Cross still have to face today in accomplishing their task, especially when this involves aiding the victims of a conflict. Their efforts sometimes encounter a regrettable lack of understanding.

The history of the Red Cross, of the International Committee in particular, is marked by such episodes which are an extension, in spite of technical developments, of the courageous undertakings of the last century. They demand the same faith, courage and tenacity.

The experience of history has also shown that no government or authority ever had cause to regret having opened its frontiers to the Red Cross. That is why, when celebrating this World Day of 1966, the International Committee expresses the wish that the Red Cross, a movement which is more universal than any other, may see the last barriers fall which here and there in the modern world still obstruct its beneficent actions.

Mr. José Barroso, Chairman, League of Red Cross Societies :

On 8th May, all of us who are privileged to play a part in the world's greatest adventure in humanitarian service will pay homage to the founder of Red Cross. Born this same date 138 years ago, Henry Dunant inspired our 1966 theme, "No Frontiers for Red Cross." Today not only governments and international organizations but men and women of every country see not only the value but the absolute necessity of recognizing the principle of universality as visualized by Dunant. "Above all nations is humanity," he cried to the world. "All men are brothers." This cry heard first at Solferino, has since echoed and re-echoed from every corner of the world. Henry Dunant's influence on the moral advancement of our world is beyond measure. We will do his memory honour, we will serve our cause well if we will use World Red Cross Day as a platform to restate in all possible ways our understanding of the universality principle.

Mr. Henrik Beer, Secretary-General of the League of Red Cross Societies :

In its narrowest sense, Red Cross is an idea around which we have built an organizational structure. In its widest sense, Red Cross represents the only ideal to which all men everywhere can subscribe without violating other allegiances.

There is no doubt that ours is the most universal of all organizations, but we must question whether we are taking full advantage of this factor of universality. Our symbol for World Red Cross Day is a bridge. A bridge is not a resting place ; it is a means of crossing more easily over difficult areas. Never before in history has Red Cross been faced with such monumental problems. Yet never before have we been as confident as we are today.

We must remember that each of us has an influence not only in our communities and nations but throughout our world. This is the greatness of Red Cross. Our hope for World Red Cross Day 1966 is that we can communicate to all in our areas of influence the true meaning of " No Frontiers for Red Cross."

In addition, and for the seventeenth time in succession, an important International Red Cross radio broadcast took place on the evening of May 8, with participation by the main European countries. It was presented by the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation and produced, like previous broadcasts, by Mr. Georges Hardy.

In order to keep the initial announcement short, certain countries were asked to present a group of countries. For example Paris spoke on behalf of the French-speaking countries and Madrid of the Spanish-speaking countries.

Then a short musical work was broadcast from Geneva for all the radio stations taking part in the broadcast. This work was sung by a choir " a cappella " ; the words, sung in several languages, evoked the fundamental principles of the Red Cross as adopted last year in Vienna. This music was composed specially for the occasion by the Swiss composer Julien-François Zbinden and was performed by the choir of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation.

The broadcast also included a report by Pierre Ichac dealing with the special tasks facing an African Red Cross Society, in this instance the National Society of Senegal.

The Berne Studio of the Swiss Broadcasting and Television Corporation presented a programme in German on the theme "The Red Cross helps you ; help the Red Cross ", during which two ICRC delegates being interviewed described certain of their humanitarian interventions in India, Pakistan and Vietnam.

For transmission by the Swiss short-wave studio, Mr. L. Tschannen, Head of the English Language Department of the European and Overseas Service, Swiss Broadcasting Corporation, prepared a programme which was relayed eight times in five languages to all continents, during the day and night of May 8, 1966. This programme included the messages from Mr. S.A. Gonard and Mr. H. Beer, mentioned above.

The League of Red Cross Societies also arranged a radio programme on the World Day theme " No frontiers for Red Cross " ; it was an illustration of our movement's fundamental principles. It recalled various Red Cross actions in time of war and in time of peace ; the voices of several ICRC and League delegates were heard as well as those of spokesmen for National Societies and also the testimony of a former detainee. The programme was recorded and sent to the English, Spanish and French-speaking Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

On the same day the Swiss French-speaking television network presented a film on Henry Dunant. This was produced jointly by the Bavarian, Austrian and Swiss Television Corporations from a scenario by M. Vitali. The film portrayed the life and work of the founder of our movement, from his birth in Geneva until his last days in the hospital at Heiden. Finally, we may mention that in all countries the press participated in this great anniversary and that various national radio and television programmes were based on documents and information sent from Geneva, thereby manifesting once again the unity and universality of the Red Cross.
