

WORLD RED CROSS DAY

In its March number, the *International Review* indicated what World Red Cross Day, on 8 May 1970, with its particularly important theme: *Protect Man; Thwart War*, would be like. 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 countries about the essential principles of the Geneva Conventions and about Red Cross humanitarian action in time of war. The utilization of mass media on the widest possible scale had also been planned, in the fields of broadcasting and television.

These aims were achieved, and National Societies responded widely to the appeal, since 45 of them ordered material from the ICRC. Many others had prepared their own activities, drawing their inspiration from the kit samples, as well as from the poster prepared by the ICRC. Moreover, a programme to be broadcast on 8 May, as well as messages from the presidents of international Red Cross institutions, had been placed at their disposal. The message from Lady Limerick, Chairman of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross, concluded with the following words:

The Red Cross was founded, just over 100 years ago—in the courage of a conviction that people of good will could unite in a common cause for the good of humanity no matter what differences might divide them—and this belief was embodied in the Geneva Conventions, the greatest effort made yet to safeguard the best interests of the human race, even in the ultimate tragedy of war.

The Red Cross investment in Peace is to develop and extend its universally accepted humanitarian activities, thus promoting the spirit of good will among nations and helping to bring about a better understanding between the peoples of the world.

The message from Mr. Marcel A. Naville, President of the ICRC, was as follows:

The 8th May is World Red Cross Day, and the motto for this celebration is "Protect Man: Thwart War".

That protection becomes each day more firmly integrated and manifest in the International Committee of the Red Cross' activities.

Those activities are based on the Geneva Conventions which form the most complete legal instrument yet devised for man's protection against the evils of war.

Those Conventions, which have been ratified by sovereign Powers, are essential to Red Cross action. But they are of no value if the States which sign them do not apply them. They will give but illusory protection unless the world community insists that governments honour their signatures loyally and generously.

That is why the International Committee of the Red Cross, which was the promoter and is the guardian of those Conventions, addresses itself to each and every one of you individually. The protection of the human being and of human dignity is everyone's duty and concern.

Indeed, man must be protected, for neither the defence of society as we know it, nor the promise of a new society, can ever justify the slaughter of innocents, the torture of detainees, the systematic organization of fear.

War must be thwarted, for although there may be just causes, there are no just wars, and violence, whatever the motive, is always an odious form of oppression.

This twofold theme: "Protect Man: Thwart War", is more than an invitation to think; it is an invitation to act, it is an appeal demanding the response and involvement of each and every one of us.

Mr. J. Barroso, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the League, recalled that the Red Cross is open to men of all races, religions and ideologies, and that it represents thus a permanent invitation to peace, a fitting subject of meditation for all members of the institution. He concluded as follows:

The Red Cross is the real path to peace, to peace within and without; to a peace which does not debase the nature of man, which unites us in adversity and makes us generous in time of plenty.

That is why today, placing confidence in the inherent nobleness of men's hearts, we are appealing, on World Red Cross Day, to all men

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of good will to rally to our movement and join its ranks, in the hope that by common effort we achieve our purpose the better to avoid war and protect mankind.

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Finally, it should be mentioned that radio and television services in many countries had prepared special programmes¹, following the official messages reproduced above, consisting for the most part of documentaries showing Red Cross activities throughout the world. They all had as their object the demonstration that this kind of protection for defenceless people was of itself an obstacle to war, and that it foreshadowed a world at peace to which the Red Cross was contributing by its action.

The *International Review* will give more news on this topic when the information which the ICRC has asked National Societies to provide concerning the programmes which each country has carried out on World Red Cross Day is received.

¹ In the field of broadcasting: French Swiss, German Swiss and Italian Swiss Radio Services, Swiss Short Wave Broadcasting Service, Bavarian and Austrian Radio Services.

Through the European Broadcasting Union, 25 national broadcasting stations, throughout the world, re-broadcast the programme of 8 May.

With regard to television, 11 national television services in various countries ordered the programme of the Swiss French Language Television Service.