

The Testimony of Youth . . .

Youth's Contribution to the Red Cross was the subject of an international essay competition organized by the Yugoslav Red Cross in 1963 on the occasion of our movement's centenary. It was open to young people between the ages of 15 and 20. The Society received 188 entries from twenty countries. All were carefully examined by the jury, which chose the twelve best. These were passed on to the *Junior Red Cross* section of the League, which brought them to our attention.

Six competitors earned the best award offered by the Yugoslav Red Cross ; a three week holiday in Yugoslavia. The other six were awarded objects or publications describing the work of youth and the Red Cross in Yugoslavia.

We believe our readers will be interested in the short extracts and paraphrases of the entries which we give below in order to bring out the main ideas which seem to have been the source of inspiration for these young authors. In this way can be observed how earnestly they are imbued with a spirit of their responsibility in the field of humanitarian duty.

A Sense of Civic Responsibility . . .

John Clement Easmon, Ghana.—In my country, school children carry out Red Cross activities everywhere, doing practical work even in isolated communities where the people are usually ignorant about hygiene. In villages, youths take upon themselves the responsibility of nursing small boys and girls who are poor and cannot pay to go to hospital. The life of the Red Cross depends on youth because it is youth with its vitality which supports the society. Our work covers

a wide field as, in our country, youths carry out tasks which are almost " medical ".

Sunanda Roy, India.—It is in these villages (of India) that we have to show our mettle in carrying out the aims of our Red Cross Society . . . The introduction of the Junior Red Cross groups in rural schools has brought about a marked improvement in the school-life and, indirectly, to a certain extent, in the life of the neighbouring community. Participation in health propaganda drives and slum-clearance weeks has also formed part of the Red Cross youth activities in the rural areas. When natural disasters occur, disciplined and enthusiastic Red Cross youths go into disaster-affected areas—at times at great danger to themselves—and help in the distribution of medicines, food and clothing.

Getsie Manikam, India.—All youth, by active contribution, should manifest its interest in this essentially humanitarian task of helping the sick and the needy. This would automatically tend to create sound bonds of fellowship among school-children . . . Young people in good health can donate their blood to save the lives of casualties.

Augusta Philomena Omamov, Nigeria.—In the same way as an ocean can gradually be made by drops of water, the little odd jobs which on the surface appear very trivial contribute immensely to the continued existence of the Red Cross Society and since it is only the young who can be called at a moment's notice and who can afford the time required for such jobs, their importance can never be over-emphasized.

Looking back on the above facts, it will readily be accepted by everyone that in view of youth's natural active interest and enthusiasm and since much of the practical work which is the backbone of the Red Cross Society is done by youths, their contribution to the Society is considerable. Without youth, the National Society would be seriously weakened.

Getsie Manikam, India.—Young people are of enormous help to the refugees. They take part in relief work and they contribute

towards Red Cross development, peace, prosperity, friendship and goodwill among the nations.

The Struggle against Suffering . . .

Grazina Kozak, Poland.—Our school has several medical teams ; my own has twelve members. . . . We carry out various duties, in accordance with the medical team training programme. We hope to undertake important tasks in order that our work in the Polish Red Cross shall be even more useful.

The author goes on to relate how their wish was fulfilled during an excursion. They came upon a hospital for children suffering from poliomyelitis and they were allowed to bring comfort to the patients by sharing in their games. Later they were able to show their consideration for the inmates of a home for the aged ; theirs was the joy which comes of having accomplished something worthwhile with the conviction of having acted in the true Red Cross spirit.

The Future . . .

Sunanda Roy, India.—The greatest and perhaps most valuable contribution is yet to be given : help to our nation, protecting it by giving it our practical support in humanitarian action. We have to strengthen the services offered by our Society by volunteering to go to the forward areas and man the Red Cross hospitals, organize and operate ambulance services. . . . In return, the Red Cross and the Nation can give us, the youths of today, opportunity and help to “ become the citizens and the leaders of tomorrow ”.

John Clement Easmon, Ghana.—As youths we should be prepared at any time to give help to other countries which suffer from famine, earthquake, flood disaster, epidemics and so on. It is essential that we youths in Africa should encourage other people to familiarize themselves with much humanitarian work since it plays a vital rôle, especially in breaking down the barriers of illiteracy and misunderstanding.

On a world scale . . .

Hilary Whitehouse, Great Britain.—One of the major objectives we must strive to attain : to link together all the children of all countries of the world in a great chain of human sympathy . . .

Getsie Manikam, India.—Friendship on a world scale has always been cultivated by youth. Children of various countries communicate with each other, which enables them to learn about other peoples and to understand them.

John Clement Easmon, Ghana.—Youths should try their best to help build international goodwill by writing letters and describing their respective customs in their countries. This, I believe, will act as a benevolent intermediary between youths in Red Cross Societies even in time of war. Finally, all would be induced to think of further means by which Red Cross activities can be extended throughout the world for the betterment of mankind.