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The International Red Cross Museum in Geneva

## Emotion leads to Motivation

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum has been open to the public for almost three years. It enables people from many nations and of all ages to learn about the development, thinking and creation of this worldwide movement, and come to understand its purpose.

No one leaves this place unaffected, and many would like to help wherever they are able. Young people are really gripped by the desire to actively participate in humanitarian work. Older visitors have the feeling that they are re-living the terrible times of the world wars and their aftermath. Deeply moved, they reflect on the present world situation. The horror they experience is subdued somewhat by the humanitarian gestures which are shown over and over again in picture and on film. The computers installed at the exit are in continual use, above all by schoolchildren and teachers. They comprise Red Cross games as well as question and answer quizzes. These deal with current events concerning the Red Cross, international law and other topics of an historical and operational nature.

### Permanent Exhibition

The overwhelming architecture of this museum, which is partly situated underground, immediately grips visitors who enter from the Avenue de la Paix. In the entrance hall the emblems of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, stretched out like sails, subdue the light, and everyone stands breathless in front of the sculpture entitled «The Petrified». These muffled, silent figures symbolise the victims to whom the International Red Cross brings help and protection.

This permanent exhibition, covering an area of 1800 m<sup>2</sup> is organised chronologically. The most modern audio-visual methods place humanitarian thinking and action in a worldwide historical perspective. Past and present events, help in areas of conflict and catas-

trophe, as well as the aims and development of the Red Cross Movement and of humanitarian international law are depicted in a lively and comprehensible way.

#### Main themes:

- Portrayal of humanitarian thinking and action since primeval times
- Slide show entitled «The Battle of Solferino», the founding of the Red Cross

In conjunction with the 700th Anniversary celebrations of the Swiss Confederation, visitors will be admitted to the Museum *free of charge between 1 June and 30 October 1991*.

The following two special exhibitions will also be on show during the same period:

#### – *Outlook on Humanity*

A series of cartoons by well-known artists and press illustrators describing the seven Red Cross principles and their implications

#### – *Road to Peace*

(under the patronage of the Canton of Geneva)

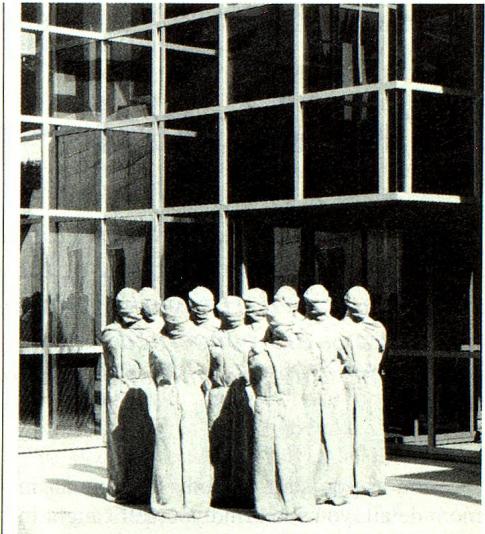
This guides spectators in a most novel and instructive way from the Place des Nations Unies to the Museum and the United Nations.

Expatriate Swiss are particularly recommended to visit both these exhibitions.

**Address:** International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum, 17, avenue de la Paix, 1202 Geneva, Tel.: 022-734 52 48

- The Wall of Time (1863 until the present day)
- The International Central Office for prisoners of war
- The First World War, the inter-war period, the Second World War and consequences
- The work of the Movement during the Cold War
- Duties of the National Societies in peace-time
- The ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) and political prisoners
- The Gulf War and other current events

At the time of writing (mid-April 1991) the



The Museum from the outside showing Carl Bucher's sculpture 'The Petrified'. Picture: Pierre-Yves Dhinaut (Archive photo)

video film which concludes the tour reports on the consequences of the Gulf War – civil war and the migration of peoples.

### Forum for Humanitarian Work

Today the museum, situated at the bottom of the ICRC hill, can certainly be described as a forum for humanitarian work. The number of

**Status:** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum is at present a private foundation. The financial means for its creation and upkeep come from public and private sources.

visitors is continually on the increase – although the entrance fees do not begin to cover costs.

In addition to the numerous 'occasional' visitors, there is a loyal following of 'regular customers', thanks to a wide variety of events such as:

- temporary exhibitions and monthly talks on humanitarian and related themes
- summer concerts, special films
- renting out of rooms for company events

The aims and purpose of the museum are successfully achieved; dialogue is established with the public, (often difficult and time consuming) questions are answered, information material is sent out all over the world. In short, the museum provides greater insight into and understanding for the difficult task of the world famous – but sometimes misunderstood – Red Cross Movement.

Verena Hay

International Red Cross Museum

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in Switzerland:

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