

Reforms and Social Changes | Health | Epidemics and international organisations

“How is it possible that the poorer classes can remain healthy...? What can one expect but that they should suffer from continual outbreaks of epidemics and an excessively low expectation of life?” Friedrich Engels

The 19th century witnessed major epidemics such as cholera, which caused millions of deaths in Europe and in Asia. The "Spanish flu" pandemic in 1918 caused more deaths than World War I. Other illnesses, such as tuberculosis, also had a devastating effect. Doctors and researchers worked to identify viruses (e.g. plague and tuberculosis bacilli), to find vaccinations (e.g. against rabies), to improve examination methods (e.g. auscultation, radiography) and to discover new drugs. Surgery progressed rapidly, thanks to new asepsis and anaesthesia techniques. The spread of scientific knowledge and education helped people to understand the importance of hygiene in fighting germs and contagion. Associations were set up to help people with diseases. The Red Cross was set up in Europe in 1864 to provide care for wounded soldiers regardless of country or rank. The Red Crescent was subsequently founded in Arab and Ottoman countries.



Working Number: FR 084

Name: Médailles d'honneur d'or et de 1er mérite [...] Biberon-Robert, flexible, patented [...]

Holding Museum: Only the very best doesn't let your child go thirsty

Date: National Library of France

Materials: 1882

Curator: -

Justification: In order to prevent contagion and infant diseases related to inadequate hygiene, doctors and hygienists worked to teach mothers new habits. Manufacturers adapted their products to the new hygiene rules.



Working Number: FR 086

Name: Clothes for prisoners of war. Charitable organisation attached the French

Holding Museum: [Red Cross]. Donations both in cash and in kind should be delivered to the organisation's headquarters, at 63 Avenue des Champs-Élysées.

Date: National Library of France

Materials: 1916

Curator: -

Justification: Humanitarian associations such as the Red Cross played a particularly important role during World War I, not just for the wounded, but also for prisoners of war.



Working Number: FR 088

Name: Fighting the influenza epidemic in England [with medicine for children]

Holding Museum: National Library of France

Date: 1919

Materials: -

Curator: The fight against epidemics became increasingly better organised in the early 20th century, although the techniques used remained very empirical in some cases.

Justification:



Working Number: FR 089

Name: [Red Cross] Have you answered the Red Cross?

Holding Museum: National Library of France

Date: 1914–1918

Materials: -

Curator Justification: Humanitarian associations such as the Red Cross played a particularly important role during World War I, not just for the wounded, but also for prisoners of war.



Working Number: IT1 039

Name: The Benefits of Hygiene. Hydrotherapy

Holding Museum: Archivio unico regionale di deposito – Solomeo di Corciano

Date: c. 1908

Materials: -

Curator Justification: In the late 19th century, European states became aware that the rudiments of hygiene would be better learned and understood if they were taught at school.



Working Number: MO 085

Name: Photograph of a queue of people following the government's public vaccination campaign

Holding Museum:

Date: National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco

Materials: 1919

Curator Justification: Paper

Justification: The invention of vaccinations helped to save many lives, such as the vaccination against smallpox, a very contagious and sometimes fatal disease.



Working Number: MO 084

Name: Photograph illustrating the response to the government's public vaccination campaign

Holding Museum:

Date: National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco

Materials: 1916

Curator Justification: Paper

Justification: The invention of vaccinations helped to save many lives, such as the vaccination against smallpox, a very contagious and sometimes fatal disease.



Working Number: IT1 062

Name: “The conqueror of Europe”

Holding Museum: State Library of Modern and Contemporary History

Date: 13 October 1918

Materials: -

Curator Influenza was still taking millions of lives in the early 20th century.

Justification:
