

## A GREAT ANNIVERSARY

In 1863, from October 26 to 29, an International Conference was held in Geneva, convened by the International Committee for Relief to Wounded Soldiers, that group of five men — the offspring of the Geneva Public Welfare Society — which later assumed the title of International Committee of the Red Cross. An invitation had been sent out on September 1, followed a fortnight later by a “ Supplement to the Convocation to an International Conference in Geneva ”, the initiative for which had been taken by Dunant and Basting in Berlin.

The 31 people who responded and who attended the meeting at the Palais de l’Athénée were met by Dufour, Dunant, Moynier, Appia and Maunoir. Sixteen States and four philanthropic societies were represented. Justice demands that tribute be paid to the participants for it was they who, fired by the enthusiasm of the five Genevese, implanted the Red Cross in their countries. They were :

Dr. Unger, Physician-in-Chief of the Austrian Army; Dr. Steiner, Physician-Commander, representing the Grand Duchy of Baden; Dr. Dompierre, Head Physician Artillery Corps, for Bavaria; Dr. Landa, Surgeon-Commander, for Spain; Mr. de Préval, Junior Intendant of the Imperial Guard and Dr. Boudier, Physician-in-Chief, for France; Mr. Chevalier, French Consul in Geneva; Dr. Rutherford, Inspector-General of Hospitals, for Great Britain; Mr. Mackensie, British Consul in Geneva ; Dr. Oelker for Hanover ; Major Brodrück, Battalion Staff Commander, for the Grand Duchy of Hesse ; Mr. Capello, Italian Consul in Geneva ; Prince Henry XIII of Reuss, delegated by the Order of St. John of Jerusalem ; Dr. Basting, Physician-Commander, and Captain Van de Velde,

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<sup>1</sup> *Plate.*

former naval officer, for the Netherlands ; Dr. Loeffler, Physician-in-Chief of 4th Army Corps, and Dr. Housselle, Counsellor and Member of the Ministry of Health, the two Prussian representatives ; Captain Kireiew, aide-de-camp of the Grand Duke Constantin and Mr. Essakoff, Librarian to the Grand Duchess Hélène Pavlovna, delegates from Russia ; the Saxony representative Dr. Gunther, Chief Military Physician ; Dr. Skoeldberg, Administrative Officer of QM Medical Supplies, and Dr. Edling, Physician-Commander, for Sweden ; Drs. Hahn and Wagner from Wurtemberg ; the Swiss delegates Dr. Lehman, Chief Military Physician, and Dr. Brière ; Professor Sandoz, representing the Neuchâtel Society of Social Science ; Mr. Moratel, from the Society of Public Welfare of the Canton of Vaud ; and finally, in a private capacity Mr. de Montmollin, Mr. de Perregaux and Dr. Engelhardt, Divisional Physician in the Swiss Army.

Within three days, the Conference reached unanimous agreement and passed the following resolutions and recommendations:

*The International Conference, desirous of coming to the aid of the wounded should the Military Medical Services prove inadequate, adopts the following Resolutions:*

#### ARTICLE 1

*Each country shall have a Committee whose duty it shall be, in time of war and if the need arises, to assist the Army Medical Services by every means in its power.*

*The Committee shall organize itself in the manner which seems to it most useful and appropriate.*

#### ARTICLE 2

*An unlimited number of Sections may be formed to assist the Committee, which shall be the central directing body.*

#### ARTICLE 3

*Each Committee shall get in touch with the Government of its country, so that its services may be accepted should the occasion arise.*

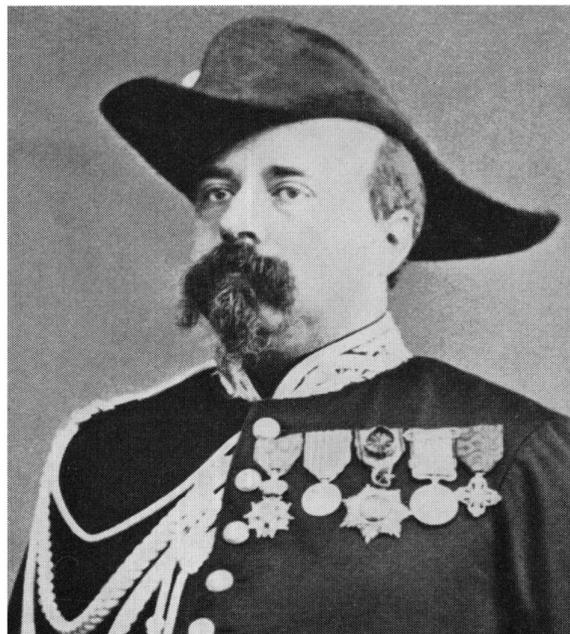
#### ARTICLE 4

*In peacetime, the Committee and Sections shall take steps to ensure their real usefulness in time of war, especially by preparing material*

# MAIN PARTICIPANTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF 1863



**Wurtemberg:** Dr. Hahn



**France:** M. de Préval

**Hesse:** M. Brodrück



**Italy:** G. Capello





**Spain:** Dr. Landa



**Prussia:** Dr. Loeffler

**Sweden:** Dr. Skøldberg



**Baden:** Dr. Steiner





**Switzerland:** Dr. Lehman

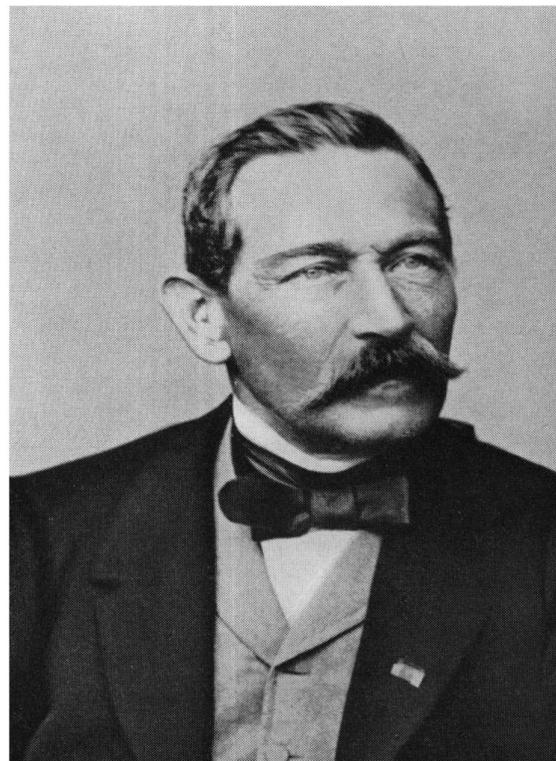


**Saxony:** Dr. Grünther

**Russia:** A. Kiréiew



**Austria:** Dr. Unger





**the Netherlands:** Dr. Basting



**Bavaria:** Dr. Dompierre

**Great Britain:** Dr. Rutherford



**Order of St. John of Jerusalem:**  
Prince de Reuss



*relief of all sorts and by seeking to train and instruct voluntary medical personnel.*

#### ARTICLE 5

*In time of war, the Committees of belligerent nations shall supply relief to their respective armies as far as their means permit; in particular they shall organize voluntary personnel and place them on an active footing and, in agreement with the military authorities, shall have premises made available for the care of the wounded.*

*They may call for assistance upon the Committees of neutral countries.*

#### ARTICLE 6

*On the request or with the consent of the military authorities, Committees may send voluntary medical personnel to the battlefield where they shall be placed under military command.*

#### ARTICLE 7

*Voluntary medical personnel attached to armies shall be supplied by the respective Committees with everything necessary for their upkeep.*

#### ARTICLE 8

*They shall wear in all countries, as a uniform, distinctive sign, a white armlet with a red cross.*

#### ARTICLE 9

*The Committees and Sections of different countries may meet in international assemblies to communicate the results of their experience and to agree on measures to be taken in the interests of the work.*

#### ARTICLE 10

*The exchange of communications between the Committees of the various countries shall be made for the time being through the intermediary of the Geneva Committee.*

*Independently of the above Resolutions, the Conference makes the following recommendations:*

- (a) that Governments should extend their patronage to Relief Committees which may be formed, and facilitate as far as possible the accomplishment of their task ;*
- (b) that in time of war the belligerent nations should proclaim the neutrality of ambulances and military hospitals, and that neu-*

*trality should likewise be recognized, fully and absolutely, in respect of official medical personnel, voluntary medical personnel, inhabitants of the country who go to the relief of the wounded, and the wounded themselves;*

- (c) *that a uniform distinctive sign be recognized for the Medical Corps of all armies, or at least for all persons of the same army belonging to this Service; and that a uniform flag also be adopted in all countries for ambulances and hospitals.*

In the *International Review* (March 1963) Mr. Pierre Boissier recalled the circumstances leading up to the Conference of 1863 and it is not necessary for us to dwell thereon. We would merely quote a passage from his book<sup>1</sup> which has just been published, in which he adds: "The resolutions and recommendations adopted at the Conference of October 1863 constitute the fundamental charter of the relief work on behalf of persons wounded in war. They are part of those few texts which have wrought changes in the world. They have not eliminated war but they have diminished its hold over men and have deprived it of innumerable victims. In the balance sheet of mankind, they will show on the credit side."

The great importance of the International Conference and its results could not be better defined. It was in Geneva, a century ago, that the idea of the neutrality of medical personnel, the cornerstone of the Red Cross edifice, made its first appearance in official circles.

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<sup>1</sup> "De Solférino à Tsoushima, Histoire du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge", p. 109.