

M I S C E L L A N E O U S

ALBERT SCHWEITZER AND THE RED CROSS

On learning of the death in Lambaréné of Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the President of the ICRC sent the following telegram to the daughter of the great philanthropist :

Most distressed by the death of your father Dr. Albert Schweitzer, who gave his eminent support to the universal movement of the Red Cross, our institution associates itself in deep sympathy with your grief.

We would recall that the *International Review* published an article concerning the thought and action of this man of vision who was so responsive to suffering and to all appeals.

On April 9, 1953 Dr. Schweitzer addressed a message, through the intermediary of Radio-Genève, which was broadcast on the fourth international transmission of the Red Cross. This message, sent out on May 8 of that year, marked the 125th anniversary of Henry Dunant's birth, which was the reason for Schweitzer's paying special tribute to the promoter of the Red Cross. However, this was such a strong affirmation of the Red Cross idea and task that we think it appropriate to reproduce several extracts from it. The Red Cross, in its turn, expresses its deep appreciation of one who struggled with all his strength to alleviate human suffering :

“ ...Hundreds of thousands of people benefited during the two world wars and in the post-war years from the humanitarian work created by Dunant. Let us hope that they will not forget to think of him on the anniversary of his birth and will gratefully recall what they owe him. This great benefactor of mankind deserves that all of us throughout the world feel it our duty to remember what

he was and what his work was. He was a man who, fortuitously, was the witness of the carnage at the battle of Solferino in 1859 and of the distress of the wounded and dying on the field. In 1862 he described all he had seen in a book entitled *Un Souvenir de Solferino*. In conclusion, he asked in the name of mankind, that is to say of human feeling and civilization, that relief societies for the wounded be founded and that an international Convention assure these societies rights and the possibilities of concerning themselves with these unfortunate ones.

He knew how to persuade the European Governments of the time to recognize a Convention in 1864 which was drawn up by a committee in Geneva. This was the origin of the Red Cross which has increased in importance throughout the years and during the disastrous wars which have taken place since then. Today it is an institution affirming with authority and success the rights and aspirations of civilization in a world of confusion and despair.

That there is this island of effective civilization in our world is the work of Henry Dunant. Let us have the courage to hope for a rebirth of civilization and through it the arrival of a spirit which will enable a spirit of peace to be established. Lifting ourselves up by this hope, we will advance along the path taken by Henry Dunant...

...The Red Cross is a larger and more powerful organization than its founder would ever have dared imagine. It is more than this, for it represents in our sorrowful post-war world the truth that man is called upon to feel, to think and to act with that compassion and devotion which are intrinsic to his nature, and that the peoples of the world, an association of human beings, should conduct themselves in the same way.

It reminds us of that ideal which we know, but to which we are so unfaithful. It teaches it to those who did not know it before and encourages us to wish for a better world in the future than the one in which we live.

We pledge deep gratitude to one who lit the beacon illuminating our darkness. It is for us to ensure that it is not extinguished."
