

## The Centenary Celebrations of the Baden-Württemberg Red Cross

*The Centenary of the Red Cross of Baden-Württemberg was celebrated in 1963 by a number of events of which we will be reading an account below which we owe its Secretary-General. We would, however, like to refer to the historical background of a hundred years ago in relation to the recent celebrations in Stuttgart. The origin of the oldest Society of Aid to Military Wounded and Sick, founded in 1863, should in fact be recalled. The destinies of Württemberg were at that time in the royal hands of Wilhelm I, who agreed to send representatives to the International Conference convened in Geneva in October 1863. These were the Reverend Christoph-Ulrich Hahn, delegate of the Minister for War, accompanied by Dr. Wagner. For discussion and adoption was a "draft agreement" of the Committee of Five which was to be the basis of the Convention signed in Geneva a year later.*

*When leaving Geneva, Dr. Hahn had this to say: "I was full of enthusiasm and exhilarated at the thought of the charitable work we had been discussing . . . It would then be necessary to transform it into a live spark." As soon, therefore, as he returned to Stuttgart, he gathered round him men and women of good will, animated by the new ideal of the Red Cross.*

*The collecting of funds and equipment gave encouraging results, soon enabling a Society to be constituted, which drew up its statutes in the spring of 1864 and came to the aid of the victims of the war in Schleswig-Holstein. In the enlightened hands of Dr. Hahn and with support from the Court, the young Society was to do pioneering work in fields which were to be progressively opened to it, under the pressure of events.*

*As regards Baden, this was then a Grand-Duchy where the humanitarian ideas, of which Henry Dunant was to be the herald, found receptive soil. Under the inspiration of that fine personality, the Grand-Duchess Louise, daughter of the Empress Augusta who herself played such an important rôle in her country's Red Cross movement<sup>1</sup>, a "Society of Women of Baden" had been founded in Karlsruhe as early as 1860, whose objects were similar to those which the Red Cross was to assign to itself. It was not long before it was given the opportunity of going into action alongside the Army Medical Services, to give aid to the sick and wounded in the field.*

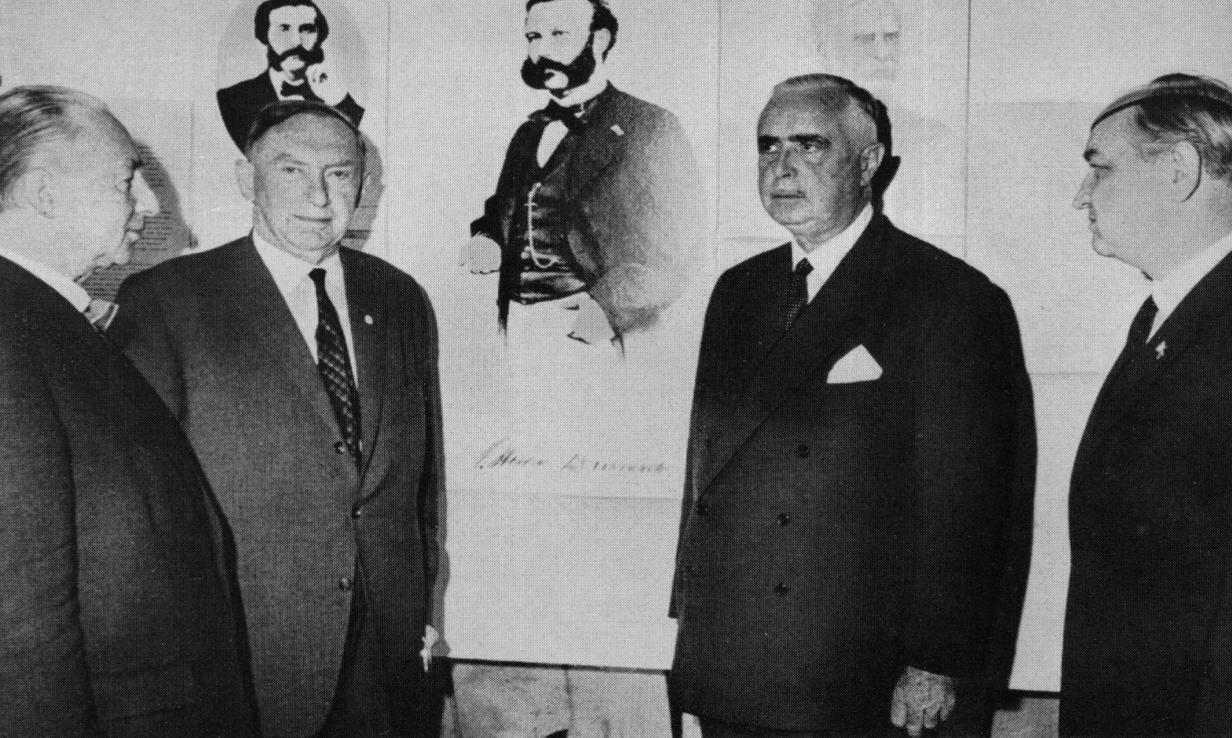
*Following the example of the Württemberg Central Committee, that of Baden signed a Convention on April 20, 1869, with the Prussian Central Committee, relative to the general organization of the German Societies and the creation of a Central Committee in Berlin, on which all Societies would be represented. The advent of the Empire after the Franco-Prussian War set a seal on this state of affairs, although the Red Cross Societies retained their independence. Today, the Red Cross of Baden is linked with that of Württemberg and the ICRC has taken pleasure in warmly congratulating that Society on the centenary of its foundation. (Ed.)*

The ceremonies organized on the occasion of the Centenary of the International Red Cross aroused interest throughout the world. The National Red Cross, Red Crescent, Red Lion and Sun Societies commemorated the event with much dignity. It was therefore most fitting for the "Landesverband" Baden-Württemberg of the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic, the oldest Red Cross institution after Geneva, to celebrate its own centenary in 1963.

A whole week of inforamatory activity, organized in January 1963, preceded the events. Speakers from the Red Cross world from Geneva and Bonn, as well as delegates from Baden-Württemberg and well known official personalities dealt with the historical mission and the present tasks of the Red Cross. Max Huber's works and Mr. Jean Pictet's study on the principles of the Red Cross served as bases for discussion.

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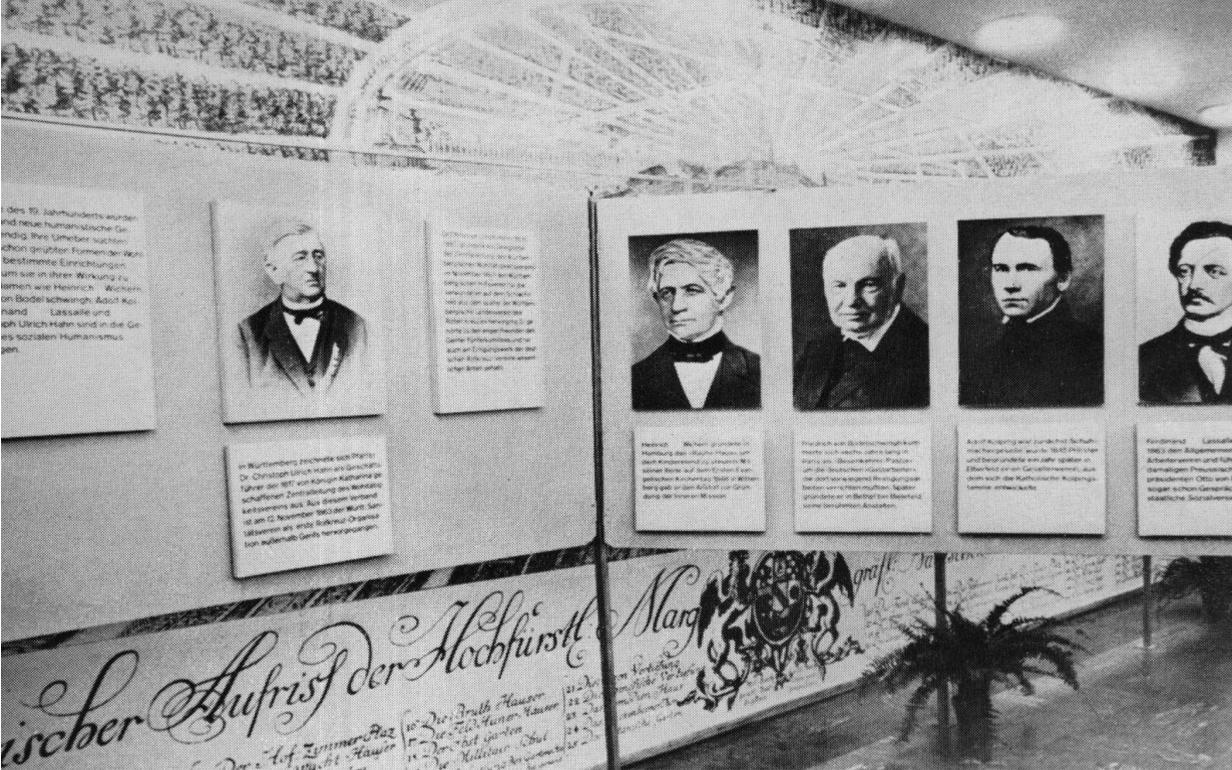
<sup>1</sup> Articles were published, on the Grand Duchess Louise, in the *Revue Internationale*, September 1960 and on the Empress Augusta in the *International Review*, September 1961.



Before the portraits of the founders of the Red Cross. **From left to right:** the Honorary President of the « Landesverband » Mr. A. Klatt, President of the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. von Lex, Mr. C.J. Burckhardt, member of the ICRC and Mr. J.P. Brandenburg, President of the « Landesverband ».

800 children at a party given for the Centenary of the Red Cross of Baden-Württemberg.

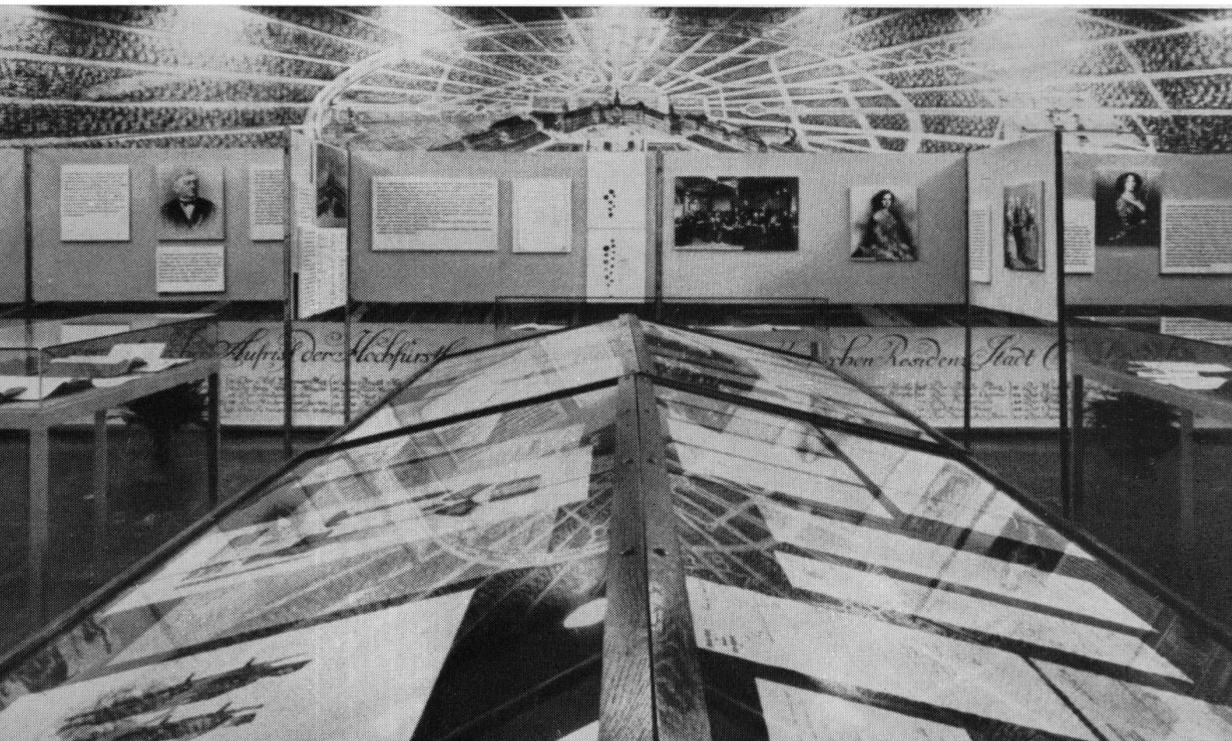




Panels describing the history of the Red Cross of Baden-Württemberg

### EXHIBITION

Historical documents.



During the various events arranged for the months which followed, the public's attention was drawn to the Centenary which was to be celebrated in Geneva and also to the fact that the "Landesverband", as the legitimate successor of the Württemberg Medical Society and of the Society of the Women of Baden, is the heir to a noble inheritance. In September 1963, the review of the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic at Bonn and the "Bulletin" of Stuttgart, both published a long report on the origins of the "Landesverband", in order to determine the future lines of its activity, by recalling a tradition which was henceforth to become centennial. This report was based on research undertaken in Bonn, Stuttgart and Geneva and of which we think it will be of interest to produce the following brief summary :

The "Landesverband" Baden-Württemberg is pleased to be able, at the same time as the International Red Cross, to celebrate in 1963 a century of activity. This birthright which it holds in Germany, and confirmed by numerous documents, is undisputed today. But we also realize that both past and present circumstances urge us to redouble our efforts, for, during the century which has passed since the founding of our Society, many things have taken courses different from those envisaged by the promoters of the Red Cross.

The history of the Red Cross as far as South-West Germany is concerned abounds with the names of men who have become famous in other spheres. But we know that the promoters of the Red Cross were more often than not anonymous. These unknown workers of the Red Cross justified the confidence which our association has acquired, animated by an active philanthropical spirit. In the country of Baden-Württemberg, this group of volunteers, which knew how to impose itself strongly, succeeded, by its interventions, in attenuating the effects of historical upheavals. If frank and friendly criticisms sometimes led to storms, they also resulted in examinations of consciences which were most salutary. The Red Cross world has never lacked courage for new ventures.

Finally, our Society attempts, by leaning on all that it knows of the history of the Red Cross itself, to state precise facts concerning the origins of the Red Cross. We see that, for our activity, we have to decide upon reasonable projects in order to avoid all illusions when making plans for the future. This is the lesson which a Society like ours can learn from the teaching of a hundred years.

These ideas were taken up by the Honorary President of our Society and Mayor of Stuttgart, Mr. Arnulf Klett, when he inaugurated a Red Cross exhibition on November 29, 1963 in the Town Hall. The President of the "Landesverband", Mr. Johann Peter Brandenburg, stressed the harmonious co-operation which had been created during many decades between the Grand Duchess Louise of Baden and the "patriarch of the Red Cross", the Reverend Christoph-Ulrich Hahn. The two parts of the "Land" Baden-Württemberg should, he said, congratulate themselves on having jointly taken part in the development of our humanitarian work.

Mr. Carl J. Burckhardt, member of the ICRC, delivered a speech for this occasion. He described the life of the Red Cross delegates, the difficulties encountered by missions and he recalled his own experiences as a representative of the International Committee. He laid emphasis on the fact that the success of a relief action depends to a large extent on those who undertake it from a practical point of view and that all from the most junior to the senior levels carry with them the responsibility of the idea and the work of the Red Cross in the world. We would add that good wishes were brought from Geneva by representatives of the ICRC, the League and the Centenary Commission of the Red Cross in Switzerland.

The close links binding Stuttgart and Karlsruhe with Geneva were also demonstrated by an exhibition which, under the title, "A book changes the face of the world", took Dunant's work *A Memory of Solferino*<sup>1</sup> as its theme. Presented for the first time during the General Assembly of the Red Cross, which was held at Pforzheim (Baden-Württemberg) in September 1962, it has since then obtained considerable success in various other towns.

The photographic panels had explanatory descriptions of the part taken by the former German States in the founding of the Red Cross. Mention was thus made of three of the five founders who had had connections with Baden-Württemberg: General Dufour, who was born at Constance, Dr. Louis Appia, who studied medicine for five years at Heidelberg University, and Henry Dunant, who lived for several years in Stuttgart. Original documents were exhibited in the display cases, as for example those conferring

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

honorary doctorates on Gustave Moynier and Henry Dunant in 1903 by the University of Heidelberg. It was also possible to follow the pioneering work accomplished by the Grand Duchesse Louise, who blazed the trail by founding the Society of the Women of Baden. In Stuttgart, much mention was made of C. U. Hahn's many-sided activities and of his founding the Württemberg Medical Society on November 12 or December 5, 1863 (according to whether one chooses the date of the resolution or of the proclamation) as being a valuable contribution to "the charitable work of Geneva". His report on the questions debated at the Conference meeting in Geneva in October 1863, and of which he distributed off-prints, was one of the most impressive items of the exhibition.

The influence of Dunant's ideas and the fact that they had wide repercussions in Baden-Württemberg were strikingly revealed by the various documents showing the loyalty of his friends in Stuttgart to the author of *A Memory of Solferino*. During the commemorative celebrations all that was prophetic in Dunant's work was recalled, but it was also mentioned that, if it had not been for the intervention of Moynier and other protagonists of humanity, this work would most likely not have had the effects which we know, from the practical point of view.

The exhibition and the attendant ceremonies proved, furthermore, the desire to draw attention to the universal character of the Red Cross, by sound and also by visual methods, and the determination to go beyond "local patriotism". Thus, mention was made of the contemporaries of the founders of the Red Cross who had followed similar ends. Emphasis was also laid on the activities of the League of Red Cross Societies. Philatelic collections, a private one from Stuttgart and one of the "Landesverband" Saarland of the German Red Cross, were exhibited. Finally, many visitors took an interest in the demonstrations, especially in those of first-aid, in which the present various activities of the Red Cross were demonstrated.

One can once again affirm how fruitful are such exchanges between "people of the Red Cross" and we would conclude with a few remarks concerning the celebration of the Centenary of its foundation by our Red Cross Society. These observations could also be of use to other Societies and their regional branches.

What is important above all is that the greatest possible number of Red Cross workers take an active part in events. In Stuttgart

there took place, during the course of the commemorative celebrations, an extraordinary meeting of the Regional Committee at which the heads of the different districts were present. On the platform beside the Centenary flag there was a group of five first-aid workers which had several times won first-aid competitions organized by the "Landesverband". One could also see the Red Cross banner which a high-grade student of Stuttgart, in his traditional Swabian costume, had carried during the Centenary processions in Geneva.

Furthermore, a Henry Dunant medal, offered by the "Landesverband", was handed to several leading personalities attending the ceremonies, and other marks of honour were also bestowed upon members of the Society. We would add that Mr. Heuss, former President of the Federal Republic of Germany, and an honorary member of the "Landesverband", had sent the Society a cordial message a few days before his death.

These days of commemoration ended with a party for five hundred children <sup>1</sup> who had arrived in buses from many different parts of the country. Musical selections were played by groups of school children from Stuttgart and Mannheim. Invitations had also been sent to orphans, to the children of foreign workers, and to those of an Albert-Schweitzer village and a refugee camp. Youth was thus associated with the celebrations recalling a past century during which the Red Cross has not ceased to expand. One could also look into the future, to another hundred years of humanitarian action.

**WALTER GRUBER**

Secretary-General of the  
"Landesverband" Baden-Württemberg  
of the German Red Cross in the  
Federal Republic of Germany

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