

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF THE RED CROSS

The doors of the International Exhibition of the Red Cross in Geneva were opened to the public on August 15. This event enabled visitors to become acquainted with the history of the Red Cross, its present activities and its outlook for the future¹.

The theme *One hundred years of service to humanity*, was brought to the attention of the public throughout the first part of the vast exhibition. Several sections evoked in a manner which was simple, suggestive and original, the birth, the development and the diversification of Red Cross activity from its beginnings to the present day. Other sections were devoted to different aspects of that activity—"Relief to victims of armed conflicts", "Assistance to victims of disaster", "Health"—as well as to the co-operation which had been initiated with various official bodies, such as the Army Medical Service, Postal Authorities (stamp issues), etc.

Some 90 countries were officially represented at the Exhibition, which remained open until September 15. The National Red Cross Societies of many countries made available documents and material which, apart from introducing an exotic element of particular attraction in this vast complex of the Red Cross activities, clearly demonstrated the diversity of means for the pursuit of a common ideal.

The official inauguration ceremony took place on August 14, 1963, in the presence of representatives of the Federal and Genevese

¹ We would mention that in the January 1963 issue of the *International Review*, an article was published on the celebrations for the Centenary of the Red Cross in Switzerland, in particular on the organization and general programme of the exhibition.

authorities, leading international personalities and of members of Red Cross institutions with headquarters in Switzerland, as well as of the heads of the three organizations responsible, Mr. Léopold Boissier, President of the ICRC, Mr. Henrik Beer, Secretary-General of the League, Professor A. von Albertini, President of the Swiss Red Cross. A large audience was present. After Mr. J. Pascalis, deputy Secretary-General of the Swiss Red Cross, had given a welcoming address and spoken of the exhibition's general theme, Mr. Martin Bodmer, President of the Sub-Commission of the Exhibition, and Mr. Edouard J. Logoz, Executive Secretary of the Exhibition, in turn mentioned the objects the organizers proposed to attain and the principles guiding the realisation of this international Exhibition.

Mr. Frédéric Siordet, President of the Centenary Commission of the Red Cross in Switzerland, then received the key of the Exhibition. The symbolic ribbon was cut by Mr. Bodmer enabling the gathering to visit the very colourful stands, which retraced the history of the Red Cross in the world since 1863 and which covered an area of 17,000 square yards.

We cannot do better than reproduce the text of the speeches delivered on that occasion, as they fully express the general feelings in which the Exhibition was conceived. This was in fact a notable success, since large numbers of people came to visit it from all countries, and it was widely greeted by the press, radio and television, as being an event for making the work of the Red Cross better known and thus diffusing its ideal¹.

Mr. M. Bodmer

It was in the midst of a world war, in June 1942, that the ICRC held its first Exhibition on the overall activities of the Red Cross at the Musée Rath at Geneva. The aim and spirit of today's exhibition is the same : to inform the public of the development and activity of our institution.

There are three patron organisations who spearhead the work of the Red Cross : the ICRC, the League of Red Cross Societies and the

¹ *Plate.*



Official inauguration: Mr. Bodmer cutting the symbolic ribbon
(on his left, Mr. Siordet).

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS EXHIBITION

General view.

Photos: Jean Zbinden



INTERNATIONAL
RED CROSS
EXHIBITION



Central theme.

«Serpentarium». Taking venom for the preparation of vaccines.



Swiss Red Cross. These organisations, fully supported by the various national societies have carried out the work of the Red Cross in both wartime and peacetime, throughout the world. If the extension of our work is so considerable, it is because so many ideas and so much support come from many quarters of the globe, establishing a two-way network : in both giving and receiving, the members of our organisation maintain a happy equilibrium.

Our activity is unhappily not really well-known to the public, and even certain official bodies are under the impression that a Red Cross Exhibition would show nothing more exciting than bandages and arm bands. But there was always the spark which burned in the heart of Henry Dunant, and it will always burn. Without this awakening of the spirit, this mobilisation of moral force, the unbelievable expansion of the idea of Henry Dunant could not be explained. It was in order to bring about a wider comprehension of this expansion, that we decided to organise this exhibition. The necessity was apparent and the Centenary provided the occasion.

Our aim is to recreate an atmosphere through the material exhibited. An idea put into pictures is always more forceful. An exhibition brings to life the facts sleeping in the files and hidden away in the index cards. It brings into the light of day much work that has been accomplished silently and which would otherwise have remained unknown. Not only will examples of this work be shown, but it is also hoped to convey the spirit in which it is done : we hope to present not only principles and acts, but the true ' spirit of charity ' which knows no frontiers. The Red Cross is without question the sole institution in the world which embraces men of goodwill, regardless of religious or political opinion, of language, race or nationality, or any other reason. But it is far from remaining a simple ideal. It has always been firmly founded on reality, and if it has to limit itself to the possible, within these limits it accomplishes much.

This exhibition is a reflection of its work. It is up to you to judge whether it succeeds and how far it achieves this aim. Does the general effect convey a burning desire for peace? We hope so. It is also our ardent desire that the young people should understand us. That they should know about us, join us and help us. If all the young people of the world held out their hands... in the spirit of the Red Cross... the future would look reassuring !

To answer a very down-to-earth question which many visitors rightly pose, namely, the source of the financial resources which have enabled us to undertake such an extensive enterprise, we answer thus : not one 'centime' has come out of relief funds. The exhibition has been financed exclusively by our own economies, and by public and private donations. We are extremely grateful that these benefactors have also maintained their regular donations towards our relief work.

Our warmest gratitude also goes to all those who have contributed to the successful accomplishment of this Exhibition. All have put their heart into their work. The task was hard, threatened by delays. Every member of the organisation is therefore worthy of congratulation and in particular the Secretary General and the Consultant Designer, Mr. P. Bataillard. Without their untiring energy, their talent and their knowledge, the Exhibition would not be what it is.

Mr. J. E. Logoz

" Utopian. Yes, of course I am ; but this is the word that cynics apply to all of us who dream ; utopians they say. But surely, some of us must stand out against this so-called " realism " of our age, which is more often than not, nothing less than pure materialism of heart and soul."

The Centenary Commission of the Red Cross in Switzerland has certainly been " utopian " in the sense defined by Gilbert Cesbron in a speech which he gave on the 27th May 1963, on the occasion of the Red Cross Centenary in France. It has demonstrated both faith and courage :

- courage in arranging an exhibition*
- faith, in hoping to reach the public through this means and gain new sympathizers.*

It was therefore with great sincerity of feeling that we approached the general concept of this exhibition. A concept aimed at presenting the aims and principles of the Red Cross, to the great variety of visitors who would come to look round, and leaving each one of them with some new and interesting knowledge on the Red Cross.

The aim of the venture having been defined, it was left to find the means to realise it, reaching as high a standard as possible within the limits imposed by considerations of economy, so as to be worthy of the Red Cross ideal.

Thus simplicity and clarity became the basis of this study : simplicity in the choice of materials and constant research to find the most balanced solution, which is often the best : but above all simplicity, which resulted in the adoption of a chronological order, not only in the historical section, but also in the presentation of the various themes. Thus, the wounded and shipwrecked are considered before the prisoners-of-war and civilians.

This principle alone justifies the " one-way traffic " system that has been adopted inside the exhibition, and lends itself admirably to a " serious contemplation " of the story being unfolded. Wherever possible the main exhibits have been limited to one side as the visitor walks along, while the opposite wall ensures restfulness for the eye.

In order to assist the understanding of the public, the different subjects of this thematic exhibition have been presented in the form of chapters, complete in themselves and with clearly defined boundaries. In addition, each section will have a separate and appropriate colour setting so that the change from one theme to another is clearly indicated.

Having accepted that the best way to present the Red Cross was to follow its history, the first part of this exhibition has been devoted to the historical section, which shows the development of the Red Cross since its foundation until the present day. " One is not encouraged to see the exciting side of war, and close one's eyes to its sad consequences ". These words of General Dufour explain the initial dramatic sight which greets the visitor and shows him immediately the atmosphere which gave birth to the Red Cross. The important dates of its history are brought alive through photographs and by actual exhibits, while thanks to certain landmarks (technical developments, political events) they are related to the context of general history.

The second part has been devoted to the " Topical " section, which emphasizes both the unity and diversity of the Red Cross, unity because of a common ideal and diversity because of the different national characteristics. There are no National Stands but certain specific activities have permitted the introduction of an exotic and even popular attraction : for example, the snake-pit. The " Topical "

section attempts to show that even after one hundred years, the Red Cross is a living force, ready to tackle the new tasks with which it is continuously being challenged. "The glory and good works of the Red Cross do not live in the past, but in the pages that will be written in the future along avenues it has opened up itself", commented Clara Barton.

The exhibition closes with a section entitled "Conclusions" which is certainly an innovation in exhibition techniques, and presents in a condensed form the problems confronting the Red Cross and the solutions adopted. A "rest-room" gives the visitor a chance to quietly reflect on the means whereby he personally, can assist the Red Cross.

The third part of the exhibition is reserved for the "Information" section: press, radio, documentary films, television, as well as philately, numismatics and posters. There will be two cinemas, one showing films of general interest for the public, and the other films of a specialist nature.

Army medical equipment has been distributed amongst various sectors where it was most appropriate. The participation of the Army Medical Services does in fact enable a parallel to be drawn between the Medical Services and the Red Cross and to underline the importance of the Conventions.

Finally, a section entitled "Equipment in the service of mankind" has been organised to give trade and industry the opportunity of presenting some of the equipment they have produced which is suitable for the Red Cross and the Medical Services.

In brief, this exhibition purports to show the development of the Red Cross through the years, its activity at the present time and to suggest its possible scope in the future.

Basing ourselves on the premise that success is dependent upon the manner of presentation, we have endeavoured to invest this exhibition with its own style, both distinctive and dynamic. Thus the ideas, instead of being imposed, are suggested by a logical sequence and stressed by audiovisual aids. Demonstrations have been laid on and, whenever this has been possible, we have sought to invite visitors to take part in them.

Without wishing to court absurdity by seeking the unusual at any cost, we have aimed at presenting an exhibition worthy of the event. We hope we have succeeded and are delighted to take the opportunity

here of expressing our gratitude to all those who have helped us in our efforts : first of all, to the Commission of the Exhibition, and, in particular, its President, to the working groups who have set the scenes and chosen the subjects, to the heads of sections who have carried out the work, to the section designers and architect to whom we owe a great variety of representations, and, finally, to the consulting designer who has succeeded in assuring an overall uniformity, so that this event represents a harmonious whole. We should also like to express our thanks to all our colleagues who worked behind the scenes and to the workers of the various trades.

We should also like to thank all those who have helped us to organise this Exhibition by contributions in cash, in kind, or in services : the authorities, National Societies, museums, organisations, undertakings and private persons.

Finally, we should like to pay tribute to those who have enabled this event to take place, that is to say those who have been the actors of this remarkable saga of the Red Cross, who, by contributing their help or suffering, have written the pages of its history, and without whom this Exhibition would have had no justification.

Let us now visit the Exhibition which is divided into three main sections : historical, topical and information, each of which are themselves sub-divided into eleven sectors. These are :

Historical.—From Solferino to the present day. How the Red Cross was founded and how the Geneva Conventions were created.

International Organization of the Red Cross and of humanitarian law.—The elements constituting the International Red Cross and under what form the Geneva Conventions were drawn up.

Assistance to the victims of armed conflicts.—In the event of international war, what can the Red Cross effect on behalf of military and civilian victims ? The interventions of the ICRC delegates and the activities of the Central Tracing Agency.

Relief to the victims of natural disasters.—The work accomplished by the Red Cross over the past few decades in natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, typhoons, fires, tidal-waves, avalanches

etc. . . . How a relief operation by the League of Red Cross Societies develops.

Health.—The activities of National Societies in this sphere : prevention of accidents, instruction in first aid, blood transfusion, training of medical personnel, efforts on behalf of the handicapped, courses in home care, mountain rescue methods, extraction of venom from serpents for the manufacture of anti-venomous serums, detection of nuclear radiation, aid on the roads, ambulance services, etc. . . .

Junior Red Cross.—Three forms of activities are open to the young : the protection of life, mutual aid, international friendship. Recruitment is made in schools in the bush as well as in modern schools and its members carry out activities varying according to age : personal and collective hygiene, aid to the aged and sick, useful actions for the community, protection of animals, gift-boxes, etc. . . .

Conclusions.—One has seen the Red Cross at work everywhere in all latitudes and in every sphere.

Information.—The Red Cross has need more than ever of making itself known to the public. It is helped in this by the press, broadcasting, television and the cinema. The ICRC, the League and the National Societies publish books, reviews, pamphlets and handbooks and prepare teaching material.

Philately.—Through stamps and correspondence the whole history of the Red Cross is unfolded : correspondence of the first relief committees to the wounded in 1870-71, franked vignettes issued during the same period, stamps issued on many occasions in honour of and to the profit of the Red Cross, etc. . . . Since its foundation the Red Cross has benefited from the close co-operation of most postal authorities.

Numismatics.—A hundred years in the life of the Red Cross thanks to the commemorative medal, to coins, badges and decorations struck by the international institutions of the Red Cross, National Red Cross, Red Crescent, Red Lion and Sun Societies,

as well as by States and various other organizations on different occasions. Medals and decorations awarded to Henry Dunant and Gustave Moynier, and also to the ICRC and the League.

Posters.—The Red Cross has used thousands of posters to reach the public. Four hundred of these have already enabled the varieties of the possibilities of expression to be seen and they constitute a visual summary of what the Red Cross is doing in every region of the world, by recalling the appeals made on different occasions.

One should add that at the very centre of the International Exhibition, a central theme was formed by the emblems of the red cross of large size superimposed at various levels and inscribed on a tabular frame. At the foot of this construction, emerging from a pond in which were the five continents, flew the flags of countries possessing a National Red Cross, Red Crescent or Red Lion and Sun Society, recognized on the international level. Around this theme ran a hand-rail along which a series of sixteen photographic panels depicted the present programme of the development of the Red Cross. National Societies of ancient foundation adopt new techniques, and old Societies co-operate with those created more recently, helping them to organize and develop themselves. Finally, the young National Societies, in their turn, undertake the traditional tasks and actions are repeated under new horizons.

One would point out that the maps indicating those countries in which a National Society has been recently formed or is in the process of formation, demonstrate, as a splendid affirmation of the International Exhibition of the Red Cross, the constant expansion and the growing strength of our movement, at the beginning of a second century of existence.
