

DEATH OF ALEXANDRE HAY

Former ICRC President Alexandre Hay died on 23 August in Geneva at the age of 72. With Mr. Hay's passing the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has lost a true champion of the humanitarian cause, wholly committed to upholding the law and the Movement's ideals and to promoting peace through dialogue.

Mr. Hay was born in 1919. He was educated in Geneva and qualified as a lawyer in 1944. In 1945 he joined the Swiss Federal Political Department in Bern. After serving from 1948 to 1953 as Secretary at the Swiss Legation in Paris, he was appointed director of the international relations division of the Swiss National Bank in Zurich. In 1955 he moved to the Bank's headquarters in Bern, where he became Director-General in 1966 and later Vice-President, a post he occupied until 1976.

Mr. Hay joined the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1975, and the following year became its eleventh President, a position he held for nearly 11 years. After stepping down from the Presidency in 1987, he continued rendering invaluable services to the Movement in his capacity as Chairman of the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace and as President of the World Campaign for the Protection of Victims of War.

The unprecedented expansion of the ICRC during Alexandre Hay's decade in office — a decade marked by innumerable crises¹ — bears witness to his profound attachment to human values, his dedication, his overwhelming generosity and his leadership qualities. Sound judgement and compelling sincerity were among Mr. Hay's most outstanding attributes. He never compromised on matters of principle and showed remarkable courage and clear-sightedness in campaigning for greater humanity in the world.

¹ See "Under the Presidency of Mr. Alexandre Hay: the ICRC from 1976 to 1987 — Controlled expansion", *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 261, November-December 1987, pp. 621-638.



A memorial service was held on 30 August in St. Peter's Cathedral in Geneva. A large congregation, including the members of the ICRC Assembly and Executive Board and many of the staff, representatives of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their federation, the League, and representatives of the Swiss federal and cantonal authorities, attended the service and heard the moving tribute paid to his predecessor by ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga. The *Review* would like to share this tribute with its readers.

The Review

Tribute to Alexandre Hay

Alexandre Hay bore the last few months of his illness, which he knew was extremely grave, with lucidity and fortitude. He had full confidence in his doctors but as a deeply religious man he knew that, while our duty as human beings is to strive for success in what we do, the final word lies with the Creator. He never made a show of his religious conviction, but at the hour of reckoning did not hesitate to affirm his unreserved submission to God's will.

Mr. Hay and his family remained confident right up to 23 August, and we all shared their confidence, hoping against hope. Alas, our hopes were in vain and we had to face grim reality. Everyone at the ICRC and all his friends in the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement were deeply shocked and saddened, sharing the pain felt by his family and particularly by Mrs. Hay, who had surrounded her husband with loving care from the onset of his illness.

In the days that followed we slowly began to measure our loss. Alexandre Hay, with his warm and generous personality, is no longer with us. Little by little, however, grief is giving way to thoughts about the course his life had taken, about all he gave us and the Red Cross as a whole, and about all he did to alleviate the suffering of so many victims of conflict throughout the world.

We recall things we already knew, but which we now perceive with renewed admiration. How could this artistically gifted man move with so much ease, and without sacrificing any of his inclinations or basic convictions, from law to diplomacy, from diplomacy to finance, and