

## GANDHI AND THE RED CROSS

Over twenty years ago the *International Review* recalled Gandhi's constant interest in Red Cross work.<sup>1</sup> His interest was not only in ideas but also in practice: after having been a lawyer in Bombay he went to South Africa and, as described in a recent issue of the *UNESCO Courrier* <sup>2</sup>;

“... He fought for the rights of Indians in South Africa.

Yet when the whites were in a painful predicament during the Boer War he organized a Red Cross team and served in the most dangerous battle zones. Again, when the Zulus rose in rebellion he nursed the wounded Zulus and whites....”

In 1899 and again in 1906, Gandhi wore the khaki uniform and Red Cross armband of the medical corps, thus acquiring first-hand experience of assistance on the battlefield, and giving effect to his ideal of active charity. Later, his attention was directed to the problems of social and international tensions, just as today the Red Cross counts the problem of peace among its major concerns. In the same issue of the *UNESCO Courrier*, the Indian writer and educator Humayun Kabir wrote in this connection:

“... Searching for causes, Gandhi concluded that injustice and inequality among individuals and nations are the basic causes of tensions and hatred. The State seeks to reduce causes of internal tension by ensuring equality of all in the eye of law. Progressive taxation to reduce inequalities in wealth is intended to serve the same purpose.

The growing contacts among nations demand the application of similar methods to ensure justice and reduce glaring inequalities. It is a paradox of the modern age that the more the world is coming together through technological advances, the more barriers are being set up by States to prevent the free intercourse of men.

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<sup>1</sup> See *International Review*, August 1949.

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO, Paris, October 1969.

## MISCELLANEOUS

The world is irresistibly impelled towards unity today but two conditions must be satisfied before a world order can emerge. The first is the guarantee of full cultural autonomy and freedom to even the smallest constituent unit of mankind. One of the most fascinating developments in the last fifty years has been the emergence of giant powers accompanied by an insistent demand for greater autonomy by smaller and smaller constituent units. The second condition is the creation of a body of enlightened opinion throughout the world. Civil authority gained in power as its impartiality was increasingly recognized. The world authority will also acquire greater acceptance by ensuring justice and equitable consideration for all.

Gandhi was a revolutionary who sought to transform human nature itself. He was also a realist and knew that people would judge his recipes by their results. He therefore began with the individual and sought to change him first. He believed that the smallest beginning may lead to the most far-reaching consequences....”

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## CONFERENCE ON BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL WARFARE

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom held a conference in London from 21-23 November on biological and chemical warfare. The ICRC was represented with observer status by Mr. Jean Mirimanoff, lawyer, member of the Legal Department. This question was one which the ICRC was requested to give particular attention by the XXIst International Conference of the Red Cross in its Resolution XIV on weapons of mass destruction.

The authors of the papers submitted at the London conference, some of them eminent scientists from various countries, aimed especially at analyzing the report of the United Nations Secretary-General on biological and chemical weapons and their effects,<sup>1</sup> and also considered the position of governments in relation to warfare of this kind.

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<sup>1</sup> A/7575, 1.7.1969. The question of general and full disarmament: Secretary-General's report on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and their effects.