

# The International Red Cross Committee and the national Red Cross societies [to be continued]

Autor(en): **Jobin, L. S.**

Objekttyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1944)**

Heft 1026

PDF erstellt am: **22.07.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-687715>

## **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Inhalten der Zeitschriften. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern.

Die auf der Plattform e-periodica veröffentlichten Dokumente stehen für nicht-kommerzielle Zwecke in Lehre und Forschung sowie für die private Nutzung frei zur Verfügung. Einzelne Dateien oder Ausdrucke aus diesem Angebot können zusammen mit diesen Nutzungsbedingungen und den korrekten Herkunftsbezeichnungen weitergegeben werden.

Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Die systematische Speicherung von Teilen des elektronischen Angebots auf anderen Servern bedarf ebenfalls des schriftlichen Einverständnisses der Rechteinhaber.

## **Haftungsausschluss**

Alle Angaben erfolgen ohne Gewähr für Vollständigkeit oder Richtigkeit. Es wird keine Haftung übernommen für Schäden durch die Verwendung von Informationen aus diesem Online-Angebot oder durch das Fehlen von Informationen. Dies gilt auch für Inhalte Dritter, die über dieses Angebot zugänglich sind.

## THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS COMMITTEE AND THE NATIONAL RED CROSS SOCIETIES.

*(This is one of the many interesting articles taken from the publication commemorating eighty years' activity of Red Cross organisations. To many the relations (if any) between the International Red Cross Committee and the National Red Cross Societies are somewhat nebulous and the following article may throw some light upon this topical matter. Copies of this superbly illustrated publication can still be obtained from the offices of the International Red Cross Committee, 55 Pall Mall, London, S.W. 1, at the price of six shillings, 6d. extra for postage.)*

Had Henry Dunant's "Memory of Solferino" ended with his general reflections on the inadequate measures taken to alleviate the sufferings of wounded soldiers in the field, that fateful pamphlet would doubtless have prepared the way for some organisation like the Red Cross, but would not have been its actual source. And Dunant, though certainly one of the inspirers of such a movement, would not have counted as its founder. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the author and his work is that he was able, in the space of two or three concluding pages, to describe, propose and justify a system of humanitarian service which, when it came to be translated into action, could be carried out exactly as he had seen it in his mind's eye.

The following are the pages with which he closed his book, and opened a new and glorious chapter in the moral history of the world:

"For a task of that nature—the succour of the wounded—mercenaries will not do; too often paid nurses grow hard, disgust turns them from their work, and fatigue makes them lazy. Moreover it is necessary that the relief be brought without delay, for what can save a wounded man to-day will no longer save him tomorrow; lost time means the setting in of gangrene, which carries off its man. The need is therefore for men and women nurses, voluntary, steadfast at their task, experienced and trained in it. Recognised by the leaders of armies in the field, they must be supported in their mission and given facilities for carrying it out. The personnel of military ambulances is insufficient everywhere; doubled and tripled, it would still be insufficient, and will be so always. Recourse to the public is unavoidable in the long run; one is forced to call upon the civilian population, and so it should be, for without their co-operation there can be no hope of ever doing what needs to be done.

"An appeal should therefore be sent out, a petition addressed to the men of all countries, of every

walk in life, to those in high places and to the smallest artisan, since all, in some way, each within his sphere and to the extent of his capacities, can, if he will, lend a measure of aid to this good work. An appeal of this kind is to women also, from the lofty princess whose seat is on the steps of a throne, to the humble orphan girl serving her masters with devotion, or the lowly widow in her lonely countryside, who would gladly offer her last remaining strength for another's sake. Others too, should be appealed to, the general and the *maréchal-de-camp*, the philanthropist and the writer, who from the shelter of his study, can lend his talent to expound and publish a matter embracing not simply mankind as a whole but in a more special sense, each nation, each province, each family even, since none can know for certain whether he will always be immune from the hazards of war.

"Certain occasions, such as the meetings at Cologne or Châlons, bring together princes of the art of war belonging to many different countries. Would it not be desirable that they should profit by the exceptional opportunity afforded by this kind of congress, to formulate some international principle to be duly consecrated in a solemn agreement which, once approved and ratified, would then serve as the basis upon which to found Relief Societies for the Wounded in various countries of Europe? The conclusion of an accord and adoption of appropriate measure in advance is the more important in that, once hostilities have begun the belligerents are already ill-disposed towards one another, and consider all questions from the sole and narrow point of view of their own countrymen.

"Civilisation and humanity alike imperiously demand a work such as is indicated here; one might even say that it is a duty, towards the fulfilment of which every man of influence should lend his aid, and every man of heart contribute at least a thought. Which prince, which sovereign would refuse his support to these societies, or be other than rejoiced to give the soldiers of his army the full assurance that they would be immediately and properly cared for, should they be wounded in the fight? Which State would withhold its protection from those whose purpose is but to preserve the lives of useful citizens for their own country's good? Or does not the soldier struck down while defending or serving his country deserve all its solicitude? Which commander, which officer, if he truly considers his soldiers as his children, would not desire to facilitate the task of such nurses? Which army surgeon would not gratefully accept the assistance of a cohort of intelligent persons, trained to act with discipline and discretion under good and wise direction?

"And lastly, at a time when there is so much talk of progress and civilisation, and since, unhappily, wars are not always to be avoided, is it not urgent to insist that some attempt be made, in a spirit of humanity and true civilisation, to forestall, or at least mitigate, the horrors of a war?

"To put into practice on a large scale, this work would require, it is true, very considerable funds, but it is not money that would ever be lacking when it was needed. In wartime everyone would bring his largesse or his mite in eager response to the appeals which the societies would issue; the public does not

### Ship through WORLD TRANSPORT AGENCY LTD.

ESTABLISHED 1913.

1, MARTIN LANE, LONDON, E.C.4

Tel: MANsion House 3434

MANCHESTER      LIVERPOOL      GLASGOW  
NEW YORK      BASLE

remain cold and impassive when the sons of the nation are gone out to fight. The blood that is poured out in battle is the same that flows in the veins of those at home. It is hence no obstacle of this kind which would threaten the career of an enterprise such as the Relief Societies. The difficulty does not lie therein; the question at issue is the serious preparation of a work of this nature, and the establishment of the societies themselves.

"If the new and terrible means of destruction now ready to every nation's hand seem likely to shorten the duration of future wars, it would also appear that, on the other hand, they will render them far more murderous than in the past. Moreover, in this century so greatly influenced by the unforeseen, might not wars occur, in this or that quarter, in the most sudden, unexpected manner? Do not such considerations as these alone give more than enough reason for wishing not to be taken unawares?"

As its founder had conceived it in 1861, the year made notable by the appearance of "A Memory of Solferino," so, two years later, it became a reality: a national and international action to make the consequences of war less atrocious to those engaged in it, an action strictly limited in scope—it was to widen out immeasurably afterwards—but unlimited as to its participants.

Wisely this evangelist of mercy, though himself a devout Christian, avoided all mention of religious motives in the creation of the national Voluntary Aid Societies. The denominational factor, with its inherent snares, was thus excluded at the outset. The presence of coloured troops among those whom Dunant and his helpers had succoured at Solferino, foreshadowed the future radius of a movement designed to encompass the peoples of the globe without exception, beyond all differences of race and creed.

(To be continued).

### SWISS STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

Through the courtesy of the London Office of the Swiss Bank Corporation we are enabled to publish the quotations of some of the leading stocks in Switzerland.

	30/6/44.	21/7/44.
Confederation 3% 1936	... 101.80	102
Confederation 3½% 1932	... 101.60	102
Confederation 4% 1931	... 103.55	103.50
Swiss Bank	... 507	519
Crédit Suisse	... 535	543
Industrie Aluminium	... 1655	1810
Brown Boveri	... 654	675ex.
Chade ABC	... 890	920
Chade D	... 163	162
Ciba (Industrie Chimique)	... 4850	4950
Fischer	... 875 ex rt.	900
Nestlé	... 919	949
Oerlikon	... 435	458
Suisse Réassurance	... 3660	3775
Sandoz	... 8950	9200
Saurer	... 695	710
Sulzer	... 1225	1285

### POWER SHORTAGE IN SWITZERLAND

(From *The Economist*, July 15th).

Ever since imports of coal have been drastically cut down, Switzerland has increasingly been forced to depend on her own resources of fuel. These are proving insufficient, and for the second year running the authorities have been compelled to curtail the consumption of electricity during the winter months. Production has been unable to keep up with a higher demand, and the situation has been worsened by the abnormal drought which has prevailed since 1941. According to the latest figures, the production of electricity has increased in almost geometric progression since 1900.

	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1943
Kilowatts (thousands) ...	131	420	810	1,520	2,034	—
Kilowatt-hours (milliards)	0.2	1.2	2.8	5.1	8.2	9.2

The recent increases in consumption have been particularly great in industry and domestic use. At present, the percentage distribution of electric power, according to official figures, is as follows:

Domestic use	... ..	12 per cent.
Art and craft	... ..	9 "
Industry	... ..	46 "
Railways	... ..	10 "
Losses and pumping	... ..	11 "
Export	... ..	19 "

In 1941, there were 6,030 electric power plants in Switzerland, 130 of them being responsible for 95 per cent. of the total output, 99 per cent. of which came from water power plants. Since then, two big hydroelectric plants have been put in service, the Verbois plant on the River Rhône, near Geneva, which, until its completion next year, is yielding only two-thirds of its potential production, estimated at half a million kilowatt-hours a year, and the Handeck-Innertkirchen plant, which yields 600 million kwh. a year. The latter is the most powerful plant in Europe. It consists of three composite plants fed by the river Aar and by two artificial lakes on the Grimsel Pass, containing altogether 4,236 million cubic feet of water. The two highest plants have been in production for the past three years, and the third and lowest, at Innertkirchen, began producing just over a year ago. The construction of these works involved the boring of seven miles of tunnels in the granite. The Innertkirchen plant, the first bomb-proof power-plant in Switzerland, is entirely hewn in the rock.

Even this is not sufficient, and the Government, strongly backed by industrialists and local authorities, have set up a scheme for adding another 1,000 million of kwh. to Swiss electrical production. Some of the new constructions are under way; the Ruppenswil plant, on the river Aar, which will be finished next year, will yield 100 million kwh. to the Federal railways, and to the new Bois Noir plant on the river Rhône, and the Rossens plant in Canton Fribourg. Other schemes are still being examined; among others one for creating an artificial lake at Gletsch, on the Furka Pass, and one involving the flooding of the Upper Rhine valley, at Hinterrhein, on the Splügen Pass road. This last scheme is strongly opposed by nature lovers, as well as by the natives of the district, as the completion of the scheme would result in the transfer of 600 people from the villages of Hinterrhein, Nufenen and Medels, which would disappear under a lake containing 9,884 million cubic feet of water. The proposed plant would yield some 300 million kwh. a year.